



Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2022-036

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Assigned to:	Council	Final Action:	02/22/2022		
Agenda Date:	02/22/2022	Enactment #:	ORD 2022-015		

Primary Contact Email: maamot@co.whatcom.wa.us

TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Ordinance repealing the Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan and deleting a reference to the Subarea Plan in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

Ordinance repealing the Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan, which was adopted in 1981, and deleting a reference to the Subarea Plan in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

Date:	Acting Body:	Action:	Sent To:
01/25/2022	Council	INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING	Council
		Aye: 7 Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner	
		Nay: 0	
		Absent: 0	
02/08/2022	Council	HEARD PUBLIC TESTIMONY	
02/08/2022	Council	FORWARDED FOR CONCURRENT REVIEW	Council
		Aye: 6 Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner	
		Nay: 0	
		Absent: 0	
		Temp Absent: 1 Elenbaas	

02/22/2022 Council

ADOPTED

Aye: 6 Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, Galloway, and Kershner
Nay: 0
Absent: 0
Abstain: 1 Byrd

Attachments: Staff Memo, Draft Ordinance, Planning Commission Findings

PROPOSED BY: Planning & Development Services
INTRODUCTION DATE: January 25th, 2022

ORDINANCE NO. 2022-015

**REPEALING THE
CHERRY POINT FERNDALE SUBAREA PLAN
AND DELETING A REFERENCE TO THE SUBAREA PLAN IN THE
WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, The Whatcom County Planning Commission held public hearings and issued recommendations on the proposed amendments; and

WHEREAS, The County Council considered Planning Commission recommendations;

WHEREAS, The County Council held a public hearing; and

WHEREAS, The County Council hereby adopts the following findings of fact:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The subject amendments include:
 - a. Deleting text in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan relating to the Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan.
 - b. Repealing the Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan (1981).
2. Notice of the subject amendments was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on April 3, 2018.
3. A determination of non-significance (DNS) was issued under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) on April 23, 2018.
4. Notice of the Planning Commission hearings for the subject amendments was posted on the County website on June 26, 2018 and October 18, 2021.
5. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing for the subject amendments was published in the Bellingham Herald on June 29, 2018 and October 15, 2021.
6. Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was sent to the County's e-mail list on July 3, 2018 and October 18, 2021.

7. The Planning Commission held public hearings on the subject amendments on July 12, 2018 and October 28, 2021.
8. Pursuant to WCC 22.10.060(1), in order to approve the proposed comprehensive plan amendments the County must find all of the following:
 - a. The amendment conforms to the requirements of the Growth Management Act, is internally consistent with the county-wide planning policies and is consistent with any interlocal planning agreements.
 - b. Further studies made or accepted by the Department of Planning and Development Services indicate changed conditions that show need for the amendment.
 - c. The public interest will be served by approving the amendment. In determining whether the public interest will be served, factors including but not limited to the following shall be considered:
 - i. The anticipated effect upon the rate or distribution of population growth, employment growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the comprehensive plan.
 - ii. The anticipated effect on the ability of the county and/or other service providers, such as cities, schools, water and/or sewer purveyors, fire districts, and others as applicable, to provide adequate services and public facilities including transportation facilities.
 - iii. Anticipated impact upon designated agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands.
 - d. The amendment does not include or facilitate spot zoning.

Growth Management Act

9. The Growth Management Act (GMA) allows, but does not require, a county to adopt subarea plans under RCW 36.70A.080 ("Comprehensive plans – Optional elements").
10. However, the GMA requires that subarea plans must be consistent with a county's comprehensive plan. Specifically, RCW 36.70A.080(2) states: "A comprehensive plan may include, where appropriate, subarea plans, each of which is consistent with the comprehensive plan."

11. The Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan was adopted in 1981, prior to enactment of the GMA in 1990. The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1997 and subsequently amended from time to time.

County-Wide Planning Policies

12. The County-Wide Planning Policies do not require the County to retain old subarea plans.

Interlocal Agreements

13. There are no interlocal agreements relating to the Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan.

Further Studies/Changed Conditions

14. The GMA, adopted in 1990, included a requirement to designate Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). The 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan does not address UGAs.
15. The GMA was amended in 1997 to include criteria for limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs). The 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan does not address LAMIRDs.
16. The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan utilizes a planning horizon of 2036. The 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan utilized a 15-year planning period (which ended in 1996).
17. The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan contains population projections through the year 2036. The 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan contains population forecasts through the year 2000.
18. The 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan contains density policies that are not consistent with the Whatcom County Zoning Code.
19. The 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan is inconsistent with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the Subarea Plan does not address UGAs, contains different land use designations, is inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan's rural element, has a different planning period, and contains different population projections.
20. Changed conditions including enactment of the GMA, adoption of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, and the passage of time warrant repealing the 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan.

Public Interest

21. Repealing the 1981 Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan will serve the public interest by removing a plan that is inconsistent with the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. Removing a reference to the Subarea Plan in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is consistent with repealing the Subarea Plan.

Spot Zoning

22. The subject proposal does not involve rezoning property.

CONCLUSION

The subject comprehensive plan amendments, which include repealing the Subarea Plan, are consistent with the approval criteria of WCC 22.10.060.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that:

Section 1. Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan amendments are hereby adopted as shown on Exhibit A.

Section 2. The Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan is hereby repealed as shown on Exhibit B.

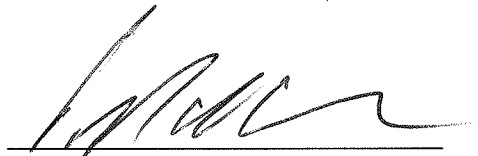
Section 3. Adjudication of invalidity of any of the sections, clauses, or provisions of this ordinance shall not affect or impair the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any part thereof other than the part so declared to be invalid.

ADOPTED this 22nd day of February, 2022.

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

ATTEST: 

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk



Todd Donovan, Chairperson

APPROVED as to form:

Approved () Denied

/s/ Royce Buckingham



Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Satpal Sidhu, Executive

Date: 2/25/22

Exhibit A – Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan – Chapter 2

Policy 2L-2: Retain and periodically review the adopted Subarea Plans (Lummi Island, ~~Cherry Point Ferndale~~, Urban Fringe, Birch Bay Community Plan, Foothills, and Point Roberts). . .

No changes to the remainder of this policy.

Rationale: The Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan (1981) would be repealed. Therefore, the reference to this Subarea Plan would be removed from the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

Exhibit B – Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan Repeal

Repeal the Cherry Point Ferndale Subarea Plan in its entirety (see attached).

Repeal

CHERRY POINT FERNDALE SUBAREA

a component of the

Whatcom County Comprehensive Land Use Plan

- Pt. Roberts Subarea
- Lummi Island Subarea
- **Cherry Pt. - Ferndale Subarea**
- Lake Whatcom Subarea
- Urban Fringe Subarea
- Lynden - Nooksack Valley Subarea
- Birch Bay - Blaine Subarea
- Chuckanut - Lake Samish Subarea
- South Fork Valley Subarea
- Foothills Subarea

Repeal

CHERRY POINT - FERNDALE SUBAREA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

MAY, 1981

Whatcom County Council

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Jon Donnellan
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Repeal

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Repeal

THE CHERRY POINT-FERNDALE SUBAREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
A COMPONENT OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted this 9th day of DECEMBER, 1980
by the Whatcom County Planning Commission.

John Vanderhage 12-9-80
John Vanderhage, Chairman
Michael E. Nicholson
Michael E. Nicholson, Secretary

Certified this 21st day of May, 1981
by the Whatcom County Council

Shirley Van Zanten
Shirley Van Zanten, Chairperson

Approved this 5th day of June, 1981
by the Whatcom County Executive.

John Louws
John Louws, Executive

Adopted this 5th day of June, 1981
by the Boundary Review Board.

Dr. Elreco Barnett
Dr. Elreco Barnett, Chairperson

Attest: Joan Ogden, County Auditor
and ex-Officio Clerk of the County
Council.

By: Carol Ebergen
Deputy

Repeal

introduction

Repeal

I. INTRODUCTION

Statutory Authority

Statutory authority for county comprehensive land use planning is established in the Washington State Planning Enabling Act, in which it is stated that "each planning agency shall prepare a comprehensive plan for the orderly physical development of the county or any portion thereof..." (RCW 36.70.320). The Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea Comprehensive Plan has been developed in response to statutory authority, as well as in recognition of the widely accepted principle that future Whatcom County land use decisions should be made in a coordinated and responsible manner by both the public and private sectors.

Definition & Application

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is defined as an official public document to be utilized by both the public and private sectors as a policy guideline for making orderly and desirable decisions concerning the future use of land in the county. The plan has been formulated by the Whatcom County Planning Commission and is comprehensive, general and long-range in nature. Comprehensive, in that it encompasses major geographic areas of the county and the functional elements that bear on physical development; general, in that it summarizes major policies and proposals and is not, by statute, a detailed regulation; and long-range, in that it not only addresses current issues, but also anticipated problems and possibilities of the future.

The purpose of this document is to foster a responsible process of land use decision-making. The goals, policies and land use plan map contained herein serve to amend the 1970 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan for the geographic area covered by the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea. The 1970 plan served as a good and basic plan for the 1970's, but as times change, people's attitudes, technologies, and economies also change. Consequently, the primary decision-making document of local government must be revised to address current and anticipated issues of the future.

In consideration of the changes that have occurred since the existing plan was adopted, the Planning Commission resolved in December, 1978 to revise and update the 1970 Comprehensive Plan. The Commission is also aware that changes will continue through the 1980's and has realized that the policies contained herein will be subject to modification and revision over a period of time. As is discussed in the following section, this Subarea Plan will be revised on a five-year basis.

Subarea Planning Concept

Because of the county's diverse physical and cultural make-up, the Planning Commission elected to revise the plan on an individual geographic area basis. Thus, the Commission divided the western one-third of the county into ten logical geographic areas where the planning process could be applied in a uniform and consistent manner. Denoted as "subareas," these geographic areas were delineated to address various land use related issues that appeared to be unique to particular areas of the county.

Repeal

The criteria utilized by the Commission to delineate the subarea boundaries include natural and physical features; political subdivisions, such as special purpose districts (sewer, water, fire, school, etc.); existing land use patterns; and the presence of a city or town (where applicable) to act as a nucleus for the area. Thus, subareas are planning units determined through the application of criteria and considered as a practical means of revising the comprehensive plan in a consistent orderly fashion.

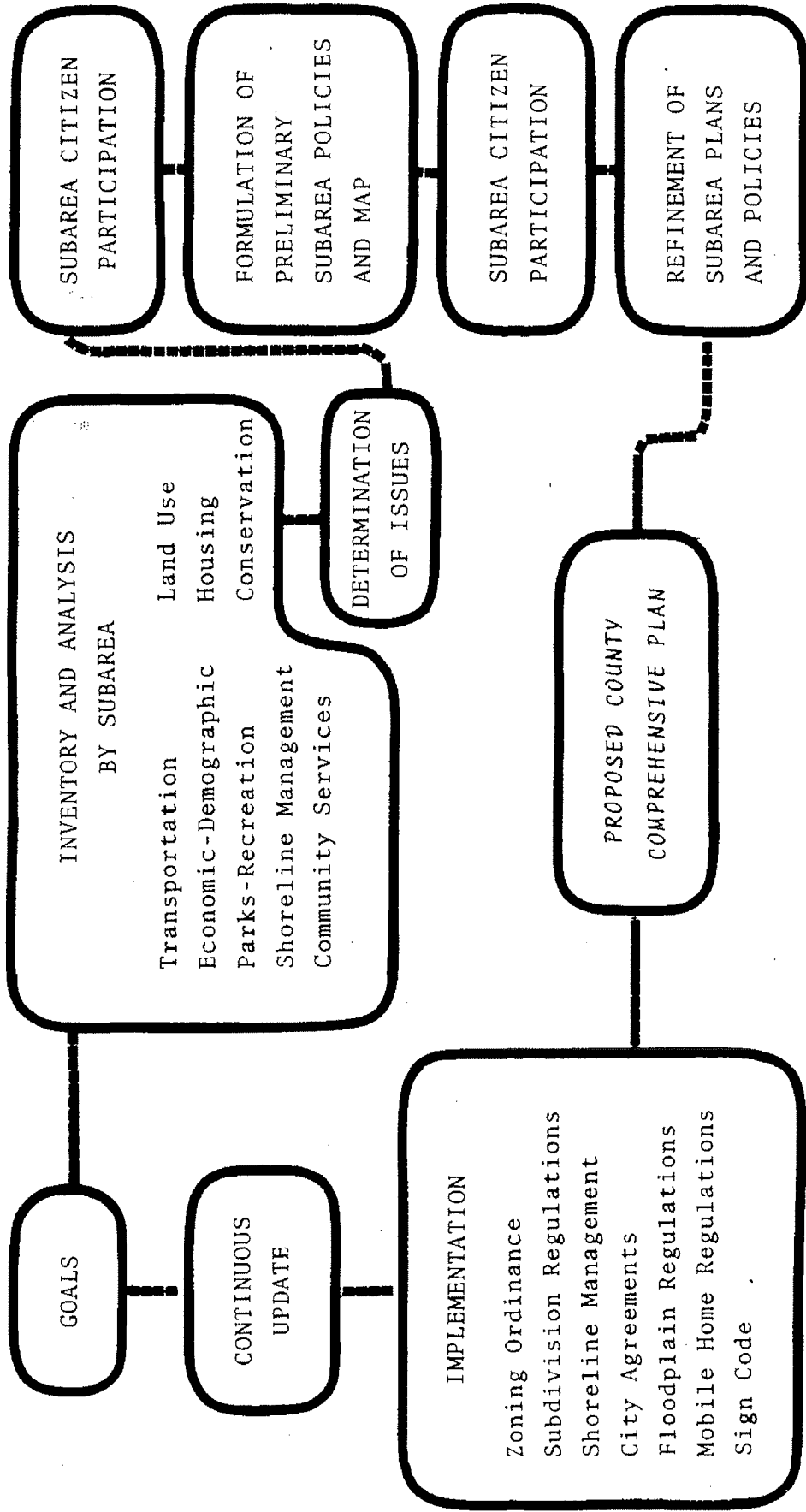
Whatcom County Planning Process

The Whatcom County comprehensive planning process is defined as a continual program of evaluating goals, conducting various land-related studies, and then utilizing such goals and studies to fashion a balanced and practical set of land use policies and proposals for the future use of land in our county. Stated differently, the planning process serves as a blueprint for the logical development of the comprehensive plan, as well as the formulation of effective implementation tools.

The process describes, through a logical sequence, the various land use related factors that must be considered to effect the formulation of responsible and meaningful land use policies and proposals. These factors concern the following: the definition of county-wide goals; the inventory and analysis of land use, community facilities and utilities, and environmental resource characteristics; the forecasting of population levels and the county's economic vitality; the comprehension of issues, both technical and citizen related; the development of policies to resolve and/or address the relevant issues, and the transformation of policies into the plan map and attendant implementation tools.

The planning process is continual. It involves not only the formulation of the comprehensive plan document, its implementation through the application and use of various regulatory tools, but also continual monitoring and periodic updating. The success of the planning process in Whatcom County relies heavily upon the county's ability to keep the major components of the plan current. Thus, the plan should be updated every five years by the Planning Commission and such revisions should adhere to the various sequential stages of the planning process.

whatcom county planning process



Repeal

Format

The Comprehensive Plan for the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea includes the necessary information for the appropriate formulation of land use decisions by both the public and private sectors of Whatcom County. The components of the Plan include the following:

1. Subarea Description: To generally define Subarea characteristics and establish issue topics, as determined by area residents, the Planning Commission, planning staff, and Jones and Associates, the consulting firm which prepared the background planning study for the Subarea.
2. Population Forecasts: To correlate anticipated population levels with the land use policies and map.
3. Goal Statements: To provide the overall direction for land use planning in Whatcom County.
4. Rationale and Locational Criteria: To establish the necessity of the land use designations and the spatial requirements to be utilized for policy application to the Comprehensive Plan Map.
5. Policies: To provide the primary decision-making tools required to resolve the land use, community facility and utility, transportation/circulation, and environmental issues of the Subarea.
6. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map: To reflect the spatial distribution of the policy statements; perhaps the most widely utilized component of the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Amendment Criteria: To assist both the public and private sectors with respect to revisions of the Comprehensive Plan Policies and Map.
8. Adoption Certification: To acknowledge the acceptance by the Whatcom County Planning Commission and Council, and the Boundary Review Board, of the Goal Statements and the Subarea Policies and Map.

Repeal

subarea
description

Repeal

II. SUBAREA DESCRIPTION

General

The Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea encompasses approximately 63 square miles. The boundaries are formed by Bay and Harksell roads on the north, Aldrich and Wiser Lake roads on the east, Slater Road on the south and the Strait of Georgia and Birch Bay on the west. The City of Ferndale, with a 1980 population of 3,855, is the predominant residential and commercial node of the Subarea.

Findings

In November 1979, Jones and Associates, in fulfillment of a contract with the Whatcom County Planning Department, submitted a Comprehensive Planning Study for the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea of Whatcom County. A portion of the study contains descriptions of existing conditions within the Subarea for land use, the physical environmental setting, transportation/circulation, utilities and community facilities. Additionally, the report identified specific issues for the aforementioned topics. It is intended in the process of plan revision that issues identified by all participants (consultant, staff, Planning Commission and citizens) shall be resolved and/or addressed by adoption of specific policy statements by Whatcom County.

Excluding the City of Ferndale, the study area contains 37,229 acres. The primary land use of the Subarea is agriculture, consisting of 27,594 acres. This acreage includes uses related to full-time commercial or part-time farming activity and is situated in the Nooksack River floodplain, between Ferndale and the Cherry Point industrial area, and in the northeast portion of the study area. Forest cover, a major secondary use, consists of 5,786 acres and is generally located west of Ferndale in the Cherry Point area and near Birch Bay. Single-family residential and industrial activities are also major uses in the Subarea, consisting of 2,221 and 2,155 acres respectively. Residential uses predominate adjacent to Ferndale and in the North Bellingham and Point Whitehorn areas. Industrial uses are concentrated in the Cherry Point area where a potential exists for continued development based upon deepwater port, rail and road access. A significant visual and land use characteristic is vacant land which comprises 1,402 acres. Retail commercial areas are situated in the West Smith/Northwest roads and Portal Way areas. Other land uses, such as light industry and public, are minimal.

The physical environment of the study area includes six shorelines (Terrell Creek, Nooksack River, Ten Mile Creek, Lake Terrell, Tennant Lake, Barrett Lake). All of the shorelines are subject to flooding and also provide wildlife habitats. Areas located near Lake Terrell, Tennant Lake, Gulf Road and the Terrell Creek outlet have been identified as critical wildlife habitats in the Washington Environmental Atlas. Other aspects of the study area identified locations having variable groundwater levels with certain areas being subject to seasonally high water tables.

Urban type services, such as sewer and water facilities, are generally available within the Ferndale city limits. Although Ferndale will sell water to users outside its incorporated area, sewer service is not extended unless the property to be served is annexed to the city. Other water users

Repeal

are primarily served by individual on-site wells, water associations, Whatcom County Water District No. 8 or P.U.D. #1.

Community facilities, such as law enforcement agencies, fire protection, health care and recreational facilities, are thought to be adequate. Educational facilities in the study area are not overcrowded.

The existing roadway system is thought to provide an adequate level of service. However, some segments of major arterials are substandard, and a number of intersections have a high accident ratio.

Citizen Participation and Subarea Issues

The issues of the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea are associated with land use, community facilities and utilities, transportation/circulation, and the physical environment. Issue development has its origin in the Subarea background planning study, as conducted by Jones and Associates, and has been augmented by inputs from the Subarea citizens, Ferndale officials and the Whatcom County Planning Commission. The Whatcom County planning staff presented the issues to Subarea citizens at four separate meetings and proposed policies, intended to address or resolve the issues, were later presented to the Subarea citizens at two separate meetings. (A detailed list of issues can be found in the Appendix of the Jones Planning Study). The following is a summary of issues as presented to Subarea citizens.

The area adjacent to the City of Ferndale includes several major land use issues as reiterated by Subarea citizens. Of utmost concern is determining the most effective method of reserving land for future urban development while avoiding the occurrence of nonurban uses and densities which typically present land use transition and service conflicts. Other issues involve the definition of urban and rural services consistent with geographic location, future transportation planning, and conservation of environmental features.

A predominate land use pattern exists in the North Bellingham area which is characterized by low density residential enclaves situated within a rural setting. The major concern to area residents is maintenance of the residential-rural character while retaining future options regarding the provision of urban services and attendant urban densities.

Of particular concern to residents of the nonurban rural portions of the Subarea is the recognition of large contiguous areas which are not considered as a prime land for either agriculture or urban uses. Because of the soil conditions, absence of existing or planned services, and a very low density land use pattern, the major issue relates to the most appropriate application of a future land use designation. Inherent in such land use designations must be provisions for maintaining the rural character, allowing a multiplicity of uses, and acknowledging the physical and cultural limitations of the area.

The major issue involved with agriculture is expansion of the existing Agricultural land use designation to accommodate those commercial agricultural pursuits situated in the Nooksack River floodplain and on Prime Farmland soils as classified by the Soil Conservation Service and the Cooperative Extension Service. A related issue involves minimizing the pressure on commercial agricultural land for conversion to nonagricultural

Repeal

uses; thereby encouraging the continuation and conservation of Whatcom County agricultural activities.

A predominant land use pattern in the Subarea is associated with the heavy industry located at Cherry Point. Issues that arose as a result of the existing and effective buffering of surrounding nonindustrial uses, the concern that major industrial developments will cause a need for improved services and facilities, and to what extent major industrial operations should be financially responsible for such services. A related issue involves the need to provide land in optimal locations for spin-off light industrial uses.

The major issues concerning Subarea transportation planning include the identification of major arterials linking the Cherry Point industrial area with I-5, the coordination of transportation planning with the City of Ferndale, and the consideration of alternative transportation modes consistent with demand levels.

The response to and guideline for resolving the aforementioned issues is contained within the policies of this document.

Repeal

III. POPULATION FORECASTS

Introduction

The purpose of population forecasting as it relates to land use planning is to accommodate the long-term spatial requirements of various land uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and public uses. Population forecasting may also be of assistance in decision making for land use related matters such as determining the appropriate scale and location of public works facilities and land development activities. In addition, population forecasts are subject to revision and as such, revision may be accomplished in the five-year comprehensive plan update process.

The population information contained herein is a summary of the forecasts prepared by various agencies. Because of the technical difficulties involved with current and projected population assessment on a Subarea basis, the information is presented by total county, incorporated community and unincorporated county. Furthermore, this information has been utilized in a qualitative manner, or as a general guideline, rather than as a specific numerical forecast. To relate this information to the Cherry Point-Ferndale Comprehensive Plan, the following assumptions are established:

1. Unincorporated areas situated adjacent to Ferndale will tend to experience growth at the same rate as Ferndale, and this growth will tend to concentrate primarily in the URBAN RESERVE area and secondarily in the RESIDENTIAL RURAL area.
2. Unincorporated areas not situated in immediate proximity to Ferndale will tend to experience growth at the unincorporated county-wide rate, and this growth will tend to be situated in RURAL areas.

Tables A, B and C, respectively, relate to Ferndale, unincorporated Whatcom County and total Whatcom County population forecasts. Figures 1, 2 and 3 present this information in a graphical format. The remainder of the information summarizes the various assumptions and variables which affect the included population forecasts.

FERNDALE POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS: 1970 - 2000

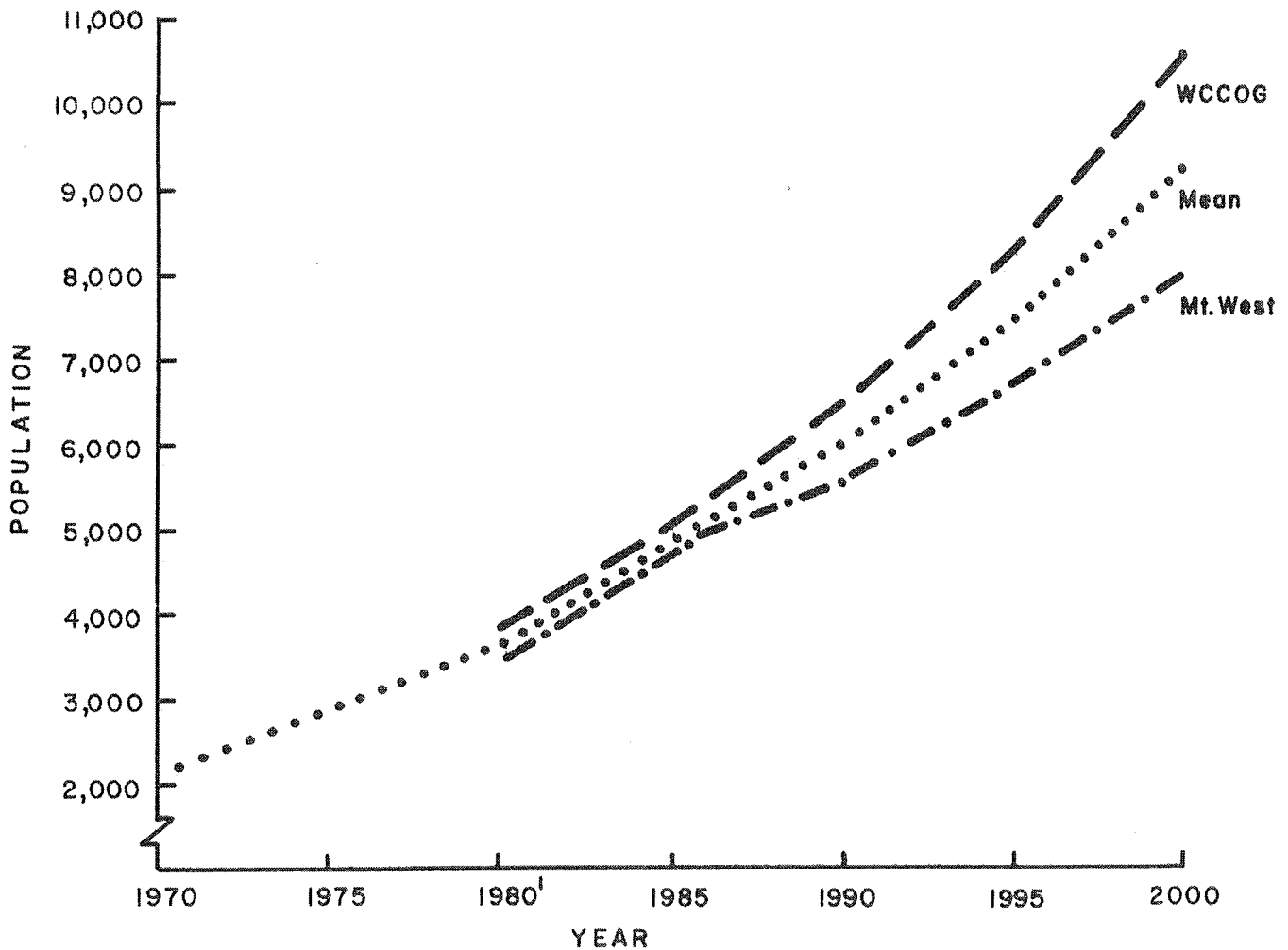


TABLE A

FERNDALE POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS: 1970-2000

RESEARCH AGENCY	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
U.S. CENSUS	2,164	3,653 ¹				
MT. WEST ²		3,751	4,844	5,620	6,752	8,041
WCCOG ³		3,860	5,020	6,530	8,335	10,640
MEAN		3,806 ⁴	4,932	6,075	7,544	9,341

ANNUAL GROWTH RATES

1970 - 1980	1980 - 1990	1990 - 2000
5.38% PER YEAR ⁵	4.79% PER YEAR ⁶	4.40% PER YEAR ⁶

*Refer to page 13 for footnotes.

Repeal

FIGURE 2
UNINCORPORATED WHATCOM COUNTY
POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS: 1970-2000

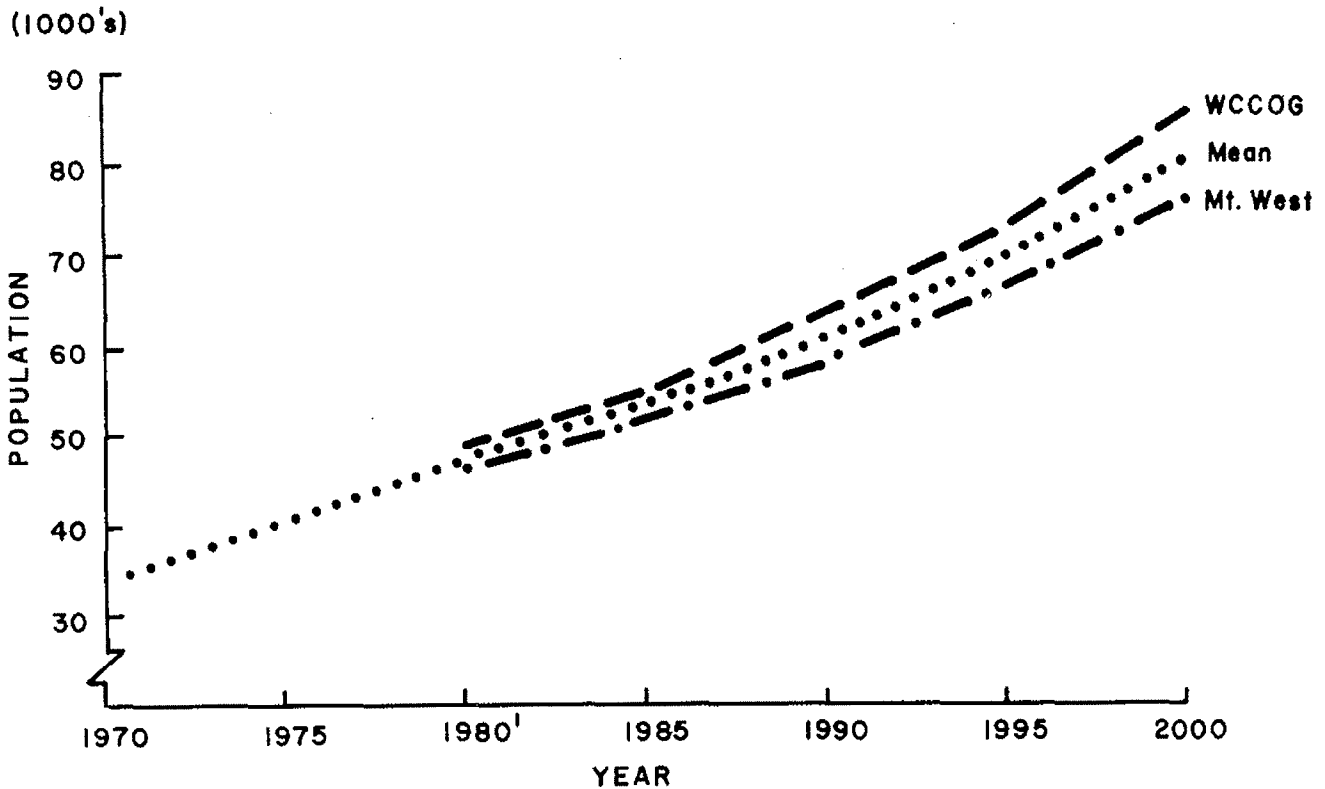


TABLE B
UNINCORPORATED WHATCOM COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS AND
FORECASTS: 1970 - 2000

RESEARCH AGENCY	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
U.S. CENSUS	34,004	47,652 ¹				
MT. WEST ²		44,238	52,441	58,621	66,987	76,401
WCCOG ³		46,451	55,340	64,305	73,603	86,210
MEAN		45,345 ⁴	53,891	61,463	70,295	81,306

ANNUAL GROWTH RATES

1970 - 1980	1980 - 1990	1990 - 2000
3.43% PER YEAR ⁵	3.09% PER YEAR ⁶	2.84% PER YEAR ⁶

*Refer to page 13 for footnotes.

Repeal

FIGURE 3¹

TOTAL WHATCOM COUNTY

POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS: 1970-2000

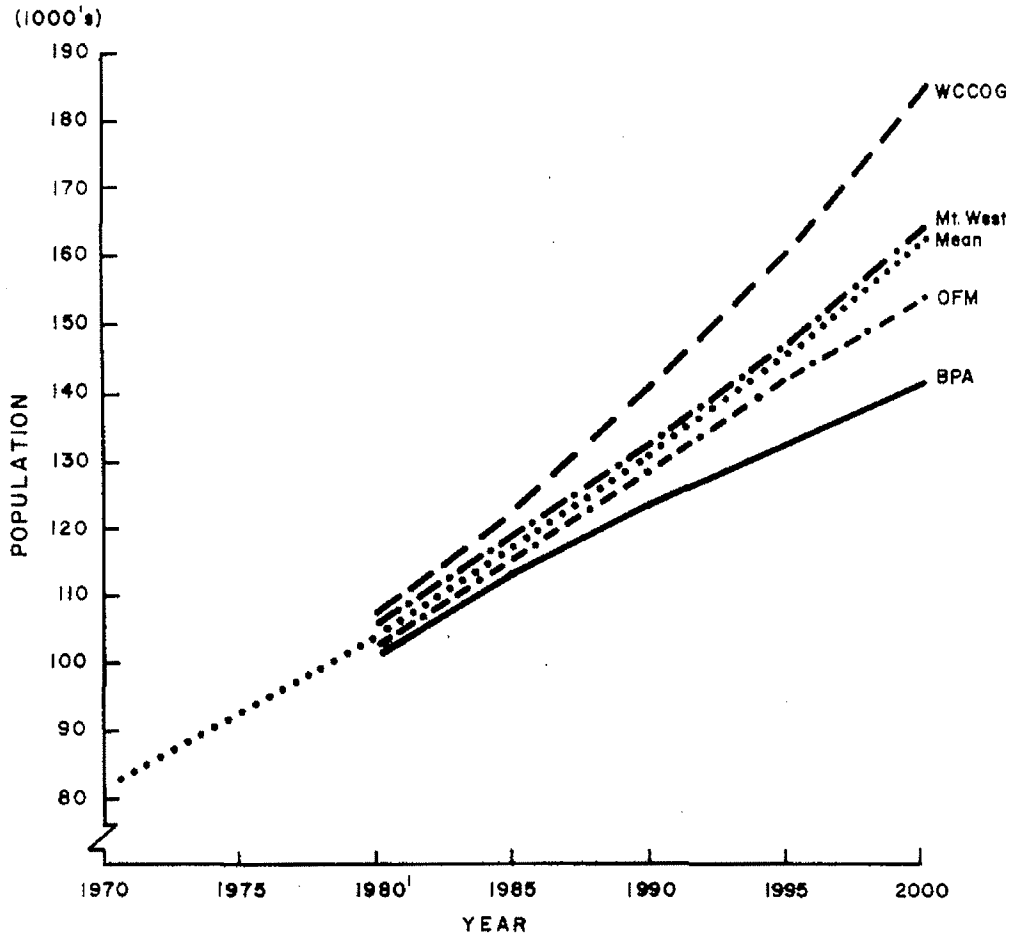


TABLE C

TOTAL WHATCOM COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS AND
FORECASTS: 1970 - 2000

RESEARCH AGENCY	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
U.S. CENSUS	81,983	103,941 ¹				
MT. WEST ²		101,497	117,578	129,758	146,013	164,241
WCCOG ³		104,876	122,300	141,160	160,623	184,910
OFM ⁷		103,100	115,700	128,569	142,470	153,841
BPA ⁸		102,350	113,625	123,925	132,750	141,350
MEAN		102,956 ⁴	117,301	130,853	145,464	161,086

ANNUAL GROWTH RATES

1970 - 1980	1980 - 1990	1990 - 2000
2.40% PER YEAR ⁵	2.43% PER YEAR ⁶	2.10% PER YEAR ⁶

*Refer to page 13 for footnotes. 11

Repeal

Assumptions Relating to Population Forecasts

All population forecasts are based on assumptions which affect the numerical results, and population forecasting agencies do not make the same assumptions. The following items are intended to present an overview of assumptions as they relate to Whatcom County populations:

1. In-migration⁹ will continue to substantially contribute to population increases at the Washington State and Whatcom County levels.
2. The trend of decreasing family size and population per household will continue.
3. Labor market potential and location will affect population distribution, and gross natural increase and in-migration levels.
4. The purpose of the populations forecast affects assumption utilization, which in turn affects the results.

Variables Affecting Population Forecasts

Agencies which prepare population forecasts often make revisions due to changes in the variables related to assumptions. The following variables are intended as an overview for potential Whatcom County population forecast revisions and may not affect all the agencies whose forecasts are contained herein:

1. Changes in Whatcom County birth, death and in-migration rates.
2. Changes in the level of industrial development and the related labor market potential of the Cherry Point area, as well as other locations within the county.
3. Changes in the Canadian economy and the related level of Canadian spending¹⁰ in Whatcom County.
4. Changes in the demand for local resources (agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining raw materials or products) with respect to local consumption or state, national or international export markets.

*Refer to page 13 for footnotes.

Repeal

population
forecasts

Repeal

Footnotes

- ¹ Preliminary 1980 U.S. Census figures, July 1980.
- ² Mountain West Research, Preliminary Population Forecasts as contained within the Demographic Impacts Supplement to the Chicago Bridge and Iron Environmental Impact Statement, June 1980. (Figures are subject to revision)
- ³ Whatcom County Council of Governments, Population Forecasts, June 1980.
- ⁴ The preliminary U.S. Census figure is not included in the mean calculation.
- ⁵ Growth rate based upon U.S. Census figures.
- ⁶ Growth rate based upon mean population forecast figures.
- ⁷ Office of Financial Management, "Special Report #24," November 1979.
- ⁸ Bonneville Power Administration, Population, Employment and Households Projected to 2000, July 1979.
- ⁹ In-migration is equal to total population less natural increase, in which natural increase is equal to total births less total deaths.
- ¹⁰ The Whatcom County Council of Government's population forecast exhibits a high correlation with that of the Canadian Impact Study; thus, it is presumed to accommodate Canadian spending.

Repeal

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IV. GOAL STATEMENTS

The following goals provide the general direction for making land use decisions in the Subarea and Whatcom County as a whole. They were developed and adopted by the Planning Commission and County Council in July 1979.

A. Regional Design Goals:

1. Future urban development should occur within or immediately adjacent to existing urban areas in order to eliminate sprawl and strip development, assure the provision of an adequate range of urban services, conserve agricultural and forestry lands, optimize investments in public services and conserve energy resources.
2. Future development in rural areas should be low density, complement existing rural character, contribute to the conservation of agricultural and forest land, and not result in demands for urban-level services.

B. Growth Management Goals:

1. To promote a conscientious program designed to plan, guide and influence the appropriate location, timing, intensity, type and servicing of diverse land use patterns.
2. To determine the required amounts of land anticipated to be utilized within the planning period (15 years) while retaining options for future land use decisions beyond the planning period.
3. To encourage a predictable pattern of urban and rural development which utilizes previously committed land areas and existing facility investments before committing new areas for development.
4. To ensure that a beneficial balance exists between the supply and demand for public services. To encourage the cooperation among municipalities, special districts, and associations in the planning and provision of public services. To discourage the proliferation of unnecessary special purpose districts.
5. To develop a concise, equitable, and practical set of land use regulations intended to implement the goals, policies and proposals of the County Comprehensive Plan in a timely and orderly fashion.

C. Land Use Goals:

1. To conserve the agricultural and forest lands of Whatcom County for the continued production of food, forage and timber crops while promoting the expansion and stability of the county's agricultural and forestry economies.
2. Urban residential development should be planned in areas that can be economically and efficiently served with existing or planned services, optimize energy use, function as integral neighborhood units, and can environmentally support intensive land uses.

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3. Adequate community and neighborhood commercial facilities should be encouraged in appropriate locations while avoiding incompatible land uses and the proliferation of unnecessary new commercial areas.
4. To encourage a balanced and diversified economy in order to assure desirable local employment opportunities, and to strengthen and stabilize the tax base. To accommodate anticipated economic development in an environmentally responsible manner with due consideration for public cost, energy availability, land use compatibility and transportation accessibility.
5. To promote the availability of economical and attractive housing for all income, age and ethnic groups, while also enhancing the integrity and identity of existing communities.
6. To promote a functional, coordinated and multi-mode transportation system which provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, avoids undesirable environmental impacts, and optimizes public investments and the conservation of energy resources.
7. Adequate facilities and services which provide diverse education, recreation, cultural and social opportunities should be encouraged.

D. Cultural and Natural Resources:

1. To identify and manage environmentally sensitive areas in such a manner as to prevent destruction of the resource base and reduce potential losses to property and human life.
2. To continue the identification of cultural and natural resources and formulate viable methods to preserve and conserve such resources in recognition of their irreplaceable character.
3. To promote a park and recreation system which is integrated with existing and planned land use patterns, and is diverse, abundant and assures maximum public access and usage.

E. Citizen Involvement and Intergovernmental Coordination:

1. To assure opportunity for citizens to be involved in the formulation of land use goals, policies and proposals, and to provide a structure for citizen participation in the planning program of federal, state, regional and local agencies.
2. To participate in intergovernmental coordination with federal, state, provincial, regional and local agencies, to develop a coordinated approach to problems which transcend local government bodies and to create an environment for the exchange of information and technical assistance.

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V. RATIONALE & LOCATIONAL CRITERIA FOR LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The comprehensive land use map, together with the policies, designates the most appropriate locations for the various land use patterns of the Subarea. The land use designations as illustrated on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map represent the most appropriate uses of land in the Subarea for the planning period. These designations have been developed as a means of addressing or resolving particular land use issues. To be consistent in the application of the designations, as well as to avoid confusion about how the land use map was drawn, the following rationale and locational criteria for each land use designation is set forth.

A. URBAN RESERVE

Rationale:

It is a well established fact in the western U. S. that urban areas have traditionally responded to growth pressures by adhering to policies of outward expansion. As long as this trend continues, there will be an almost constant demand for land, the most fundamental of all urban resources. Although outward urban expansion is accepted as a common city planning practice, problems have typically arisen when potential urban lands have been committed to long-term "nonurban" uses. Primarily caused by the lack of written public policy among governmental jurisdictions, this situation has resulted in uncoordinated and costly service systems, inefficient transportation networks, and unmanageable land use patterns.

As a means of curbing this situation that is currently developing in the urban "fringe areas" of the county, the revised Comprehensive Plan establishes the URBAN RESERVE land use designation. The rationale underlying the designation is to reserve certain land in the fringe areas of cities for future urban purposes and encourage interim uses that are complementary and compatible with future urban densities and service levels. When urban services are eventually provided to this area, land use densities shall increase and result in an orderly, economic and expeditious transition from rural to urban land use patterns. Thus, the URBAN RESERVE designation is defined as those areas adjacent to municipal boundaries which may be urbanized at such time that a full range of urban services (sewer, water, fire and police) can be efficiently provided. In addition, land proposed for annexation to an adjacent municipality shall be evaluated by the Boundary Review Board pursuant to RCW 36.93.170.

Locational Criteria:

The criteria to be utilized for the application of the URBAN RESERVE designation includes the following:

1. Land areas adjacent to the City of Ferndale that are of sufficient size to adequately accommodate the projected demands for residential, commercial, industrial, transportation and public land uses for a ten- to fifteen-year time frame.
2. Land areas where a range of urban level services, i.e. sewer, water, fire and police protection, and parks and recreation, presently exist or can be economically and efficiently expanded in the near future.

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3. Areas that contain an adequate supply of vacant urbanizable land to avoid the artificial inflation of land values.
4. The boundaries of the URBAN RESERVE designation should:
 - a. be well defined, logical, provide a physical "sense of community", and be capable of being expanded to accommodate additional urban growth as the need arises; and
 - b. acknowledge existing and potential land use densities as to their urban or rural character. Urban land use densities should be included within the urban service areas; whereas, rural land use densities may be grounds for excluding such areas.

B. RESIDENTIAL RURAL

Rationale:

Not all citizens desire to live in concentrated urban areas but instead desire a setting of less density. This setting commonly implies that urban level services are not available, roadway traffic is minimal and that the natural landscape is visually different than urban areas. However, citizens desirous of such an environmental setting usually rely on urban amenities and are not solely self-sufficient. The RESIDENTIAL RURAL designation then is intended to provide the opportunity of a nonurban living experience while minimizing public service costs.

Locational Criteria:

The RESIDENTIAL RURAL land use designation should be applied to land areas where past public commitments have been made for moderately dense residential, public and commercial uses; where a full range of urban level services are not planned; and where capital improvements to existing roadways are only maintenance oriented.

C. RURAL

Rationale:

Certain lands of the county may be considered to be in transition between previous full-time agricultural or forestry activities, and current residential and/or industrial uses. The present land use pattern is characterized by part- to full-time farming or forestry and low density residential activity. This type of landscape can be considered as "rural," an area containing a combination of pastureland, cropland, woodlots and dispersed settlement land use patterns.

Dispersed settlement patterns are perhaps caused by the absence of past and future public commitments concerning the provision of sewer, water and roadway improvements. Additionally, physical conditions (soils, water or topography) may have imposed constraints to development. These factors will continue to affect land use trends during the planning period.

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These areas may also contain nonrenewable natural resources, such as soils which contribute to agricultural productivity, or sand and gravel deposits suitable for extraction.

The rural areas of Whatcom County offer alternative residential living styles compared to that of the urban or moderately dense residential setting. Employment alternatives also exist that are associated with part-to full-time agriculture, forestry and home occupations. In addition, the existing parcel sizes are sufficient to accommodate future land use disposition, beyond the planning period, as agricultural, industrial or moderate density residential areas.

Thus, the RURAL designation is important in the Subarea Plan in that it provides flexibility concerning low density residential, forestry and agricultural land uses while retaining future private and public options pertaining to land management.

Locational Criteria:

To define those locales where the RURAL designation may be applicable, criteria concerning "rural" character, social factors and physical conditions are employed. To be designated as RURAL, a majority of the criteria must pertain.

"Rural" character is defined by dwelling unit density, average parcel size and land use history. Dwelling unit density should be less than or equal to one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres and average parcel size should be greater than or equal to five (5) acres. Land use history should indicate a blend of part- and full-time agriculture, forestry and low density residential activities.

Social factors relate to public expenditures for sewer, water and roadway provision. During the planning period, such areas have not been designated for city or county provision of sewer and water. Likewise, public expenditures for construction of or improvements to roadway systems have not been planned.

Physical conditions relate to developmental constraints or future access to nonrenewable natural resources. Developmental constraints pertain to soils and water. For example, soils which contribute to seasonally high water tables or have very slow permeability rates may impact efficient septic tank operation. Excessive depths to the regional water table, undependable surface water sources and areas of groundwater (aquifer) recharge may limit both agricultural and residential opportunities.

Future access and utilization options pertain to nonrenewable natural resources such as soil types and geological units. Such areas may contain a majority of soils designated as Farmlands of Statewide Importance (soils which may contribute to agricultural productivity) or geological units composed of sand and gravel which are suitable for extraction (Bellingham Glaciomarine Drift, Sumas Outwash or Terrace Deposits).

Thus, the RURAL Locational Criteria are intended to define areas of multiple land use suitability (agriculture, forestry, mining and low density residential) as contrasted with those areas where a single land use may be appropriate.

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D. AGRICULTURAL

Rationale:

The AGRICULTURAL land use designation is necessary to identify areas suitable for the practice of commercial agriculture. Commercial agriculture is a significant industry in Whatcom County and potentially more significant as indicated by the currently estimated farm gate income of \$76 million dollars. Related industries add perhaps another \$100 million dollars to the economy as a direct result of agricultural production. As significant as agriculture is to the local economy of the county, agricultural lands are often used for other purposes, namely urban uses. Urban encroachment can raise the assessed valuation, resulting in higher property taxes for the farmer. Premature urban development frequently forces the farmer to sell agricultural lands for urban purposes. This situation is especially pronounced in the "Urban Fringe" areas of cities, the area where urban growth pressures are most evident. However, the rapid rate of farmland conversion nationwide is being recognized at the federal, state and local levels of government. Increasingly, communities across the nation are taking steps to inventory farmlands and devise techniques to preserve farmland with the assistance and cooperation of the landowner/farmer.

As a means of addressing this emerging issue, the revised Comprehensive Plan establishes the AGRICULTURAL designation, the rationale of which is to promote agriculture by retaining lands suitable for commercial agricultural pursuits.

Locational Criteria:

Physical and cultural characteristics are employed to designate areas for commercial agricultural operations. The criteria are requirements for the AGRICULTURAL designation and it is intended that when in evidence, the area shall be designated as AGRICULTURAL. Physical characteristics include land classified as "Prime Farmland" by the Soil Conservation Service and Cooperative Extension Service and land defined as "Farmlands of Statewide Importance" by the soil Conservation Service. Cultural characteristics include areas: where the predominant land uses are full- or part-time agricultural operations, including silviculture, and it is evident that no commitment to nonfarm uses other than dwelling units has been made; where urban services, i.e. sewer and water, are not planned; where the land use history indicates farming has been a viable land use or a potentially viable use; and where there is a pattern of capital investment in agricultural operations.

E. PUBLIC

Rationale:

This designation recognizes those parcels and facilities currently in or planned for public ownership where the primary function is to provide public services. The intent of this designation is to assure continuation and potential expansion of acreages, facilities and services at levels consistent with population requirements and effected in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses.

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Locational Criteria:

To identify those areas appropriate for the PUBLIC designation, the following criteria are employed:

1. Parcels are currently owned or considered for ownership by public agencies such as the Federal Government, State of Washington, Whatcom County, city properties situated outside of municipal boundaries, and independent jurisdictions (Port of Bellingham and Public Utility District #1); and
2. the primary function of parcel ownership is to provide public services, i.e. recreation, education, utilities, communication, transportation (not including roadways), solid waste disposal and health care.

F. LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK

Rationale:

Currently, manufacturing assumes a significant role in the county's economy, and this role is anticipated to continue in the future. It is incumbent upon the county to provide a reasonable supply of land for uses ancillary to the heavy impact industrial area, as well as other manufacturing and commercial sectors of the economy. One form of industrial land use is characterized by the light industrial park.

A light industrial park is generally a pre-planned site, owned and managed in common where a variety of light industrial uses occur that negligibly impact surrounding areas. Uses primarily relate to distribution, fabrication and storage functions that optimize transportation access. Light industrial parks offer economic advantages in that auxiliary functions are shared for uses such as internal roadways, landscape maintenance, security and power, sewer and water utilities, resulting in minimized cost duplication for participating industrial interests.

The underlying rationale of the LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK designation is to supply a reasonable amount of land for anticipated light industrial and related uses that will optimize transportation access, proximity to industrial and urban areas, and compatibility with adjacent land uses while expediting efficient public and private expenditures. Currently, services may not be present; however, it is anticipated that these requisite factors will be available in the future to foster development and augment the county's economic base.

Locational Criteria:

Physical, transportation, land use suitability and cultural factors may be analyzed to determine appropriate locations for LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARKS. Physical factors consist of generally level terrain and soils having good drainage and bearing capacity. Transportation factors apply to the availability of direct rail and major arterial and/or freeway access.

Land use suitability pertains to parcels generally ranging from 40 to 320 acres in size that are currently void of potentially incompatible uses. Cultural factors are applicable to those areas where public sewer and water

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services exist or are planned, and where a three mile commuting distance from population centers of greater than 1,000 people pertains.

G. HEAVY IMPACT INDUSTRY

Rationale:

In 1954 the Mobil Oil Company constructed an oil refinery at Cherry Point in Whatcom County. That refinery was followed in 1966 by Intalco Aluminum, and in 1971 by another oil refinery constructed by the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO). Together these companies employ approximately 1,800 workers and represent a significant part of the local economic base for the manufacture of durable and nondurable goods.

The selection of the Cherry Point site by these companies was indicative of a trend by industry, over the last several decades, to relocate away from cities. Recognizing the requirements of modern industry and the commitment to water-dependent industry at Cherry Point, Whatcom County designated approximately 6,000 acres for heavy industry.

In designating a large land area for industrial uses at Cherry Point, Whatcom County has acknowledged a commitment to provide a supply of vacant land capable of development, to meet the demand for heavy manufacturing uses that are anticipated for the planning period. Additionally, Whatcom County is promoting a diversified economy to assure local employment opportunities and to strengthen the tax base.

Locational Criteria:

Two sets of locational criteria are utilized to designate areas for industrial operations: the physical environmental setting and man-made components of the environment. Any area under study for the applicable designation of HEAVY IMPACT INDUSTRIAL should be sufficiently large, flat, well-drained and have good land bearing qualities. Man-made components should include industrial rail service, good access for truck transportation, an adequate supply of labor, utilities, and a site which is relatively isolated from less intensive land uses. Moreover, the industrial area should be within a reasonable commuting distance of available housing. Unique features such as deepwater access for ocean going shipping should also be considered in site selection.

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VI. POLICIES

Introduction

The policy section of the plan provides the basis to guide and influence the appropriate location, type, intensity, timing and servicing of land use patterns within the Subarea. The policies have been developed in accordance with the county's planning process and are intended to respond to the myriad of issues identified by the public and private sectors of the county.

Whereas the goal statements indicate "where we are going" with respect to future land use decisions, the policies serve as statements of "how we get there." Thus, the policies can be viewed as specific courses of action intended to move toward the attainment of the County Goal Statements.

The following policies address the various land use designations illustrated on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, community facility and utilities, environmental features and transportation.

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A. URBAN RESERVE

Intent Statement

The primary purpose of the URBAN RESERVE policy is to promote an orderly transition from rural land uses and densities to urban uses and densities, while moving toward the attainment of the Regional Design Goal with respect to future urban development. In addition, the policy intends to encourage the responsible growth of urban areas by assuring that an adequate range of urban services (sewer, water, fire and police protection) are available to support urban level densities. When such services are available, development should occur in neighborhood units which have appropriate levels of densities, uses and circulation networks.

To facilitate future urban growth, the URBAN RESERVE policy is intended to discourage the establishment of interim uses and subdivision patterns which may foreclose significant future alternatives pertaining to urban densities and the efficient provision of services. Moreover, this policy is intended to maintain, prior to the approval of an accepted site specific plan for the implementation of services, the low density character of the area and to allow reasonable uses of property by permitting compatible residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and agricultural land uses. Finally, the designation and application of the URBAN RESERVE policy is intended to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To reduce urbanization and encroachment pressures on lands that are most suitable to intensive agricultural or forestry operations.
2. To stabilize land speculation and the artificial inflation of land values in the "urban fringe" by designating an adequate amount of land for urban growth and uses during the planning period.
3. To provide land owners with a reasonable expectation of future municipal and county land use policies.
4. To reduce inequitable taxing structures on nonurban land located near urbanizing areas.
5. To conserve energy resources by reducing unnecessary travel between living, shopping and work places.
6. To encourage the conservation of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas, both within and outside of the area designated as URBAN RESERVE.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 It is herein the policy of Whatcom County to recognize the City of Ferndale as the primary urban service authority for lands surrounding its current municipal boundaries. To facilitate the future urbanization of certain lands lying within the 1972 Ferndale Service Area, Whatcom County does hereby designate such lands as URBAN RESERVE on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. The boundaries of the URBAN RESERVE designation have been delineated in conformance with the Locational Criteria, as set forth in the previous section. The predominant land use pattern within the URBAN RESERVE area shall be residential and related forms, including neighborhood parks.

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Secondary land uses shall include commercial and light manufacturing functions, as provided in Policies 1.08 and 1.09.

- 1.02 Within the area designated as URBAN RESERVE, the future land use patterns are intended to be urban. Similarly, the level of services should be urban in nature. Thus, future urban development shall be provided with public sewer and water, fire and police protection, and standard transportation and drainage systems. If services are provided by the City of Ferndale, service levels shall be consistent with appropriate city standards and policies. If, however, Whatcom County is designated in the future as a viable service entity, the Whatcom County Comprehensive Sewer and Water Plan, and Engineering Design Standards and Specifications shall be amended to define the precise urban level standards to be applied.
- 1.03 It is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage the placement and/or extension of sewer and water lines in a manner that is contiguous to existing development(s). Such phased line placement is intended to discourage the occurrence of "leapfrog" development within the area designated as URBAN RESERVE.
- 1.04 To move toward the implementation of the county's urban residential land use goal and to further the intent of the URBAN RESERVE land use designation, it is the policy of Whatcom County to participate with the City of Ferndale in the designation and planning of future urban neighborhoods. These neighborhoods should be based on the following commonly accepted criteria: sufficient size, utilization of man-made and/or natural boundaries (roads, railroad tracks, rivers and topography); the manageable and efficient provision of sewer, water and transportation services; and an available supply of vacant developable land. The components of a neighborhood should include the following: an elementary school, if necessary; recreational facilities, including neighborhood parks; neighborhood commercial uses; a variety of residential structures and uses, including mobile homes; and efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation networks.
- 1.05 To reserve residential lands, within the URBAN RESERVE area for the eventual conversion to urban densities, it is the policy of Whatcom County to establish a land use density that shall not exceed one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres in size. To implement this policy, Whatcom County shall amend its Interim Zoning Map from Suburban District - Three (3) Families Per Acre, Suburban Farm One Acre and General Protection to the Urban Residential zoning district.
- 1.06 At such time that urban level services (sewer and water) can be provided to a designated neighborhood area, Section .251 of the Urban Residential zoning district shall be applicable. Pursuant to Section .301 and applicable to the immediate area of sewer and water line service, the allowable lot size shall be decreased from five (5) acres to 12,000 square feet per residential dwelling unit. However, if certain lands situated within the designated neighborhood are annexed to the City of Ferndale, the appropriate residential zone of the city shall be utilized, as determined by the City of Ferndale.
- 1.07 Lands within the Urban Reserve area may, however, be developed prior to the provision of urban services from the City of Ferndale. Developments proposed prior to the provision of such services shall be designed in such a

Repeal

manner as to be complementary to the eventual conversion to urban patterns and logical transportation and service extensions. To accomplish this option, proposed developments shall (a) be designed as a cluster subdivision; (b) adhere to a maximum density of one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres; (c) contain lot sizes consistent with Whatcom County Health Board Rules and Regulations; (d) be planned in relationship to the city's future neighborhood transportation network; (e) be compatible with the city's planned sewer and water service corridors; and, (f) be harmonious with the city's future annexation program.

1.07.1 The cluster method of subdivision is defined as an alternative method of creating building parcels that involves:

- (a) The concentration of spatially efficient and marketable building lots while preserving the intent of the land use district; and
- (b) The retention of options for future uses and densities by treating the land as both a commodity and a resource.

The density of the use district defines the number of allowable dwelling units per land area but does not define lot size. Lot size is determined by the landowner and Whatcom County Health Board Rules and Regulations concerning soil percolation rates. Land area not used for building purposes is designated as "Reserve Tract" and should be used for open space purposes until such time that sewer and water services can be provided by the City of Ferndale. Upon the provision of such services, said Reserve Tract will be appropriate for residential densities consistent with the City of Ferndale.

1.08 The existing land use pattern in the Portal Way corridor, between Trigg Road and I-5, is a mixture of low density residential, highway-oriented commercial and agricultural land uses. With the provision of urban services, this area will realize a more intensive land use pattern in the future. To accommodate the transition to urban densities and uses, the following policies are provided:

- 1.08.1 To designate the Portal Way corridor as URBAN RESERVE on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.
- 1.08.2 To acknowledge the existence of the general commercial land use pattern situated between the Newkirk Road area southward to the Interstate 5 overpass; however, to discourage the northerly expansion of commercial uses beyond the Newkirk Road area.
- 1.08.3 To contain the general commercial land use pattern in the Trigg, Portal Way and Enterprise Road area and discourage the northward expansion along Enterprise Road and southward expansion along Portal Way.
- 1.08.4 To implement the commercial nodes acknowledged in Policies 1.08.2 and 1.08.3, the General Commercial zoning district shall be applied.

Repeal

- 1.08.5 With reference to future commercial developments occurring within the nodes established in Policies 1.08.2 and 1.08.3, it is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage the preservation of the existing vegetative screen along I-5 and Portal Way.
- 1.09 Locations exist within the area designated as URBAN RESERVE which may not be readily incorporated into neighborhood units due to existing nonresidential land uses. When urban service (sewer and water, and police and fire protection) are provided to these locations, both residential and nonresidential land uses will intensify. To acknowledge these locations and ensure compatibility between future urban uses, the following policies are provided:
- 1.09.1 To implement the existing light industrial land use in the Thornton Road and I-5 area, the Light Impact Industrial zoning district shall be applied.
- 1.09.2 To implement the existing commercial uses situated in a portion of the area adjacent to Frontage Road and between West Smith and Byers roads, the General Commercial zoning district shall be utilized.
- 1.09.3 It is the policy of Whatcom County to require a site periphery buffer for nonresidential land uses occurring in the areas established in Policies 1.09.1 and 1.09.2. The purpose of the buffer is to minimize visual disturbances to both adjacent residential land uses and passing motorists.
- 1.10 At present, several productive agricultural or stable large lot residential land use forms exist within the area designated as URBAN RESERVE. Because of their well-established nature, it is conceivable that such areas may not be converted to urban densities in the future. As urbanization occurs on the periphery of these areas, it is important to maintain their respective character and stability while ensuring against detrimental impacts. Thus, the following design standards shall be applied to adjacent urban development:
- 1.10.1 Residential subdivisions and other urban uses shall buffer themselves with adequate landscaping, screening or fencing to prevent the encroachment of vehicles, pedestrians, animals and nuisances onto less intensively utilized parcels.
- 1.10.2 Where practicable, subdivision and other urban uses shall be designed in such a manner as to channel their activity sources (vehicular and pedestrian networks) to the interior spaces of the site.
- 1.11 As part of the effort to effectively manage urban growth, the City of Ferndale has stated that a need exists to be constantly aware of land use, service and transportation changes proposed within the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea. So that the city may be aware of major Subarea activities which may affect its best interests, the following policies are provided:
- 1.11.1 It is herein the joint policy of the city and county to establish the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea as the city's "Sphere of Influence Area."

Repeal

- 1.11.2 To further a joint exchange of information, Whatcom County shall send copies of applications of major land use, transportation and service entity activities proposed within the Subarea to the City of Ferndale within fifteen (15) days of application receipt by the county.
 - 1.11.3 The City of Ferndale shall send copies of future proposals concerning the expansion of the 1972 Ferndale Service Area boundary to the Whatcom County Planning Department. The purpose of such referral is to afford the county's input in the delineation of the boundary, as well as any related Comprehensive Plan and zone district changes.
- 1.12 While it is not anticipated that adjustments to the URBAN RESERVE land use designation will be necessary within the planning period, unexpected population growth of the Subarea may result in a need to expand the area designated as URBAN RESERVE. If such need exists, the Comprehensive Plan should be amended consistent with the Amendment Criteria Section to include additional urbanizable land commensurate with the demand.

Repeal

B. RESIDENTIAL RURAL POLICY

Intent Statement

The primary intent of the RESIDENTIAL RURAL designation is to provide an opportunity for citizens to live in a nonurban residential environment characterized by low density residential settlements which are integrated with agricultural and woodlot land use forms. In addition, this designation is intended to acknowledge existing low density residential land use patterns in which a full range of services (sewer and water) are not currently planned; however, realizing that provision of these services and concomitant densities may be considered as a future option. As a means of efficiently utilizing land, maintaining the present low density residential character and retaining future options regarding increased densities and service provision, it is the intent of the RESIDENTIAL RURAL designation to provide for the option to the applicant of "clustering" in the design of new subdivision proposals.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 Recognizing the past public commitments that have been made for low density residential and related uses, it is the policy of Whatcom County to designate the area commonly known as North Bellingham as RESIDENTIAL RURAL and depict it as such on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.
- 1.02 Within the area designated as RESIDENTIAL RURAL, typical uses shall include single-family attached and detached dwellings, preferably in a "cluster" formation; public parks and recreation facilities; agriculture and related uses; home occupations; and neighborhood grocery stores.
- 1.03 Whatcom County shall implement the RESIDENTIAL RURAL designation by application of a Residential Rural zoning district, in which the overall density of development shall not exceed one (1) dwelling unit per acre, unless Ferndale water is available, in which case the overall density of development may be increased to not more than two (2) dwelling units per acre. The purpose of this zoning district is to maintain the low density residential character of the area, retain future public and private options with respect to land use density and service requirements, and to provide to the applicant the option of "clustering" in the design of new subdivisions; thus promoting economical lot design, energy conservation and a reduction in development costs.
- 1.04 Within the Residential Rural zoning district, new land subdivision for residential purposes shall be designed consistent with the following policies:
 - 1.04.1 The overall density of development pertinent to the original parcel of record shall not exceed one (1) dwelling per acre, unless Ferndale water is available, in which case the overall density of development may be increased to not more than two (2) dwelling units per acre.
 - 1.04.2 To minimize encroachments (ingress and egress) along existing county roads, subdivision design shall be discouraged from forming lineal residential patterns adjacent to said roads.

Repeal

C. RURAL POLICY

Intent Statement

The primary purpose of the RURAL policy is to provide areas of multiple use suitability; such as agriculture, forestry, mining, low density residential and home occupations. The multiple use potential of RURAL areas may be contrasted with those of other areas within which past commitments (for example, residential subdivisions) or resource availability, such as agricultural soils or timber stands, have dictated single land use suitability.

An additional purpose of the policy is to move toward attainment of the Regional Design Goal with respect to future rural development in which residential density should be low, not result in a demand for urban services (sewer and water), conserve agricultural and forest lands, and complement the existing "rural" character. The "rural" character may be defined as an area where there is a mixture of pastureland, cropland, woodlots and dispersed settlement land forms.

The RURAL policy is also intended to acknowledge physical and cultural factors which currently are and, during the planning period, will continue to be limitations to higher densities. Physical factors relate to soil percolation rates, depth to groundwater level and steep topography; whereas, cultural factors pertain to the absence of sewer, water and circulation networks. Moreover, this policy intends to conserve environmentally fragile areas and retain future access options with respect to nonrenewable natural resources (sand and gravel suitable for extraction and soils which may contribute to agricultural productivity).

To encourage the multiple land use potential, retain the "rural" character of the area, acknowledge factors which may present limitations to higher densities, and retain future options with respect to land use decisions and natural resource utilization, it is the intent of the RURAL policy to provide for the option to the applicant of "clustering" in the design of new subdivisions.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 It is herein the policy of Whatcom County to designate those portions of the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea which are consistent with the Rural Locational Criteria as RURAL and depict them as such on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Principle uses of the RURAL policy shall include part- or full-time agriculture and forestry, as well as low density residential uses. Secondary uses shall include home occupations, utilities and aggregate extraction.
- 1.02 To implement this policy, the existing Rural, Rural Farm and Select Industrial Reserve land use designations, as applicable to the central, northwestern and southeastern portions of the Subarea, shall be repealed and amended to RURAL, consistent with the policies state herein.
- 1.03 The Rural land use designation shall be implemented through the use of the Rural zone district which allows a maximum land use density of one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres and one (1) dwelling unit per ten (10) acres. Pursuant to Policy 1.04, this district shall also contain a provision for a "cluster option" of subdivision design.
- 1.04 Within the Rural zone district, a clustering option shall be provided to the applicant for new land subdivisions. The purpose of this option is to

Repeal

provide economic flexibility to the individual property owner, promote economic lot design, conserve nonrenewable natural resources and environmentally fragile areas, retain future options with respect to land use decisions, and maintain the low density "rural" character of the area. When applying the "clustering option," the appropriate zone classification, as established in the zoning ordinance, shall be utilized to establish the overall density of the original parcel of record. For example, a forty acre parcel situated within a Rural Five Acre (R5A) zone classification could have a maximum of eight building lots with the minimum lot size governed by the zone classification's setback requirements and by the Whatcom County Health Department approval for individual on-site septic disposal systems. In addition, new land subdivisions for residential purposes shall be designed consistent with the following policies:

- 1.04.1 To minimize encroachments (ingress and egress) along existing county roads, subdivision design shall be discouraged from forming lineal residential patterns adjacent to said roads.
 - 1.04.2 When practicable, structures on open landscapes should be sited and designed to minimize disruptions of views from adjacent properties and public roadways. In addition, it is preferred that residential structures be placed at the perimeter of fields or within existing wooded areas.
 - 1.04.3 When a "cluster" subdivision is situated adjacent to less intensive uses (agriculture, forestry or large parcel residential), the subdivision shall be buffered at the site periphery to prevent the encroachment of vehicles, pedestrians, animals and nuisances onto less intensively utilized parcels.
- 1.05 The cluster method of subdivision is defined as an alternative method of creating building parcels that involves:
- (a) the concentration of spatially efficient and marketable building lots while preserving the intent of the land use district; and
 - (b) the retention of options for future uses and densities by treating the land as both a commodity and a resource.

The density of the use district defines the number of allowable dwelling units per land area but does not define lot size. Lot size is determined by the land owner and Whatcom County Health Board Rules and Regulations concerning soil percolation rates. Land area not used for building purposes is designated as a "reserve tract" and should be used for agriculture, forestry, open space or future subdivision at such time as the plan is amended. The Official Whatcom County Zoning Ordinance describes the density for various use districts where the cluster method can be utilized, the criteria to be used in designing building lots and the provisions of the reserve tract.

- 1.06 It is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage property owners to conserve Prime Farmlands, Farmlands of Statewide Importance and forested areas by utilizing RCW 84.34.

Repeal

1.07 In acknowledgement of the Light Industrial Park designation at I-5 and Grandview Road, the Heavy Impact Industrial designation at Cherry Point and the extensive vehicular usage of the I-5 corridor, it is the policy of Whatcom County to permit an area not to exceed twenty-five (25) acres in each of the northeast and southeast quadrants of the Grandview/I-5 interchange to be used for general commercial uses under the General Commercial zoning district, including a commercial truck service facility. Accessory uses associated with a "truck stop" facility should include truck fueling, repair and storage facilities, and overnight accommodations including restaurant facilities.

Repeal

D. AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Intent Statement

The purpose of the AGRICULTURAL designation is to maintain and encourage the conservation of agricultural lands in Whatcom County. Moreover, specific delineation of AGRICULTURAL areas implicitly directs nonagricultural land uses to rural or urban areas, and thus, minimizes conflicts between agricultural and nonagricultural uses. Furthermore, both the private and public sectors will retain options for future land use decisions. Additional intents of the AGRICULTURAL designation include maintaining natural systems and processes; conserving energy, in that less energy is required to farm the most fertile agricultural lands; sustaining specialty crops, such as strawberries, raspberries and blueberries; and moving toward attainment of the Whatcom County Goal Statements pertaining to the conservation of agricultural lands.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 Large contiguous areas of the county shall be designated exclusively for agriculture. All areas that are consistent with the Agricultural Locational Criteria should be designated as AGRICULTURAL, recognizing that this criteria may be augmented by additional information related to changes in technological, economic and physical conditions. Typical AGRICULTURAL uses include the cultivation, management and harvest of field, shrub, vine, greenhouse, orchard and forest crops; dairying, livestock raising and small animal husbandry; beekeeping and mushroom raising. Land designated as AGRICULTURAL shall be encouraged to continue in such uses and shall be protected from external factors which may cause conversion to nonagricultural uses.
- 1.02 To implement the AGRICULTURAL designation, the Comprehensive Plan Map shall be amended from Rural and Rural Farm to AGRICULTURAL in the Nooksack River floodplain and certain areas directly west thereof, and in the area of West Wisner Lake and West Pole Roads.
- 1.03 Zoning implementation of the AGRICULTURAL land use designation shall be accomplished by application of an Agriculture District. Minimum parcel sizes shall be determined as follows:
 - 1.03.1 When the parcel is to be utilized for agricultural purposes, a minimum parcel size shall be determined that is consistent with the acreage required to sustain an economic and intensive agricultural operation.
 - 1.03.2 When the parcel is to be utilized for nonagricultural purposes, the minimum parcel size shall be forty (40) acres.
- 1.04 Residential subdivisions and nonagricultural related uses shall be discouraged from locating within designated AGRICULTURAL areas.
- 1.05 The implementation of "special district" plans and capital improvement programs shall not result in detrimental impacts to the AGRICULTURAL lands of Whatcom County.

Repeal

- 1.06 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to encourage the retention of small family farms by supporting direct marketing programs for the Whatcom County farming community.
- 1.07 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to encourage the agricultural community to utilize the tax benefits of RCW 84.34.
- 1.08 To promote the conservation of agricultural lands and the economic stability thereof, it shall be the policy of Whatcom County to coordinate and participate in programs with the Agricultural Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service and other agricultural organizations.

Repeal

E. PUBLIC POLICY

Intent Statement

Pertinent to existing or contemplated parcels in public ownership, the intent of the following policies is to implement the Goal Statements that relate to public facilities and services, and ensure the continued public provision of a variety of services, commensurate with population levels and requirements. Furthermore, these policies are intended to optimize public investments and promote compatibility between public functions and surrounding land uses.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 It is the policy of Whatcom County to identify those geographical locations currently in or considered for public ownership and/or management, where the primary function is the provision of public services. These areas shall be designated PUBLIC on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Uses typical of the designation are facilities and services related to the provision of recreation, education, utilities, communications, transportation, solid waste disposal and health care.
- 1.02 To implement PUBLIC policies with the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea, the following functions shall be designated as PUBLIC: State, city and county-owned parks and wildlife reserves, libraries, schools, fire stations, cemeteries, nursing homes, water and sewerage treatment facilities, road maintenance facilities, and federally owned substations and transmission line corridors. As each public agency obtains parcels, the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Map shall be amended, consistent with the amendment criteria.
- 1.03 Zoning of the PUBLIC designation shall be accomplished by:
 - 1.03.1 Application of a Recreation and Open Space zone to public recreation areas;
 - 1.03.2 Designating all other public functions to be used by right or condition within all zoning districts of Whatcom County.
- 1.04 Pursuant to the Inter-Local Cooperation Act (RCW 39.34), it is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage public agencies to prepare and adopt long-range plans which address future land, facility and service requirements; the objective of which is to coordinate public and private activities, as well as to minimize potential future conflict regarding plan implementation.
- 1.05 It is the policy of Whatcom County to cooperate and coordinate with the Whatcom County Parks Department to integrate existing park plans into a Recreation and Open Space Element that will augment the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Whatcom County Parks Department shall be encouraged to participate in neighborhood park planning within the areas designated as URBAN RESERVE and RESIDENTIAL RURAL on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.
- 1.06 It is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage public agencies to attain those parcels which benefit the continued operation of their functions. Whenever practicable, joint agreements between agencies shall be encouraged to expedite efficient public expenditure.

Repeal

- 1.07 Whenever practicable, it is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage multi-purpose use of public lands, facilities and services.
- 1.08 It is the policy of Whatcom County to minimize visual and functional impacts of PUBLIC land uses through utilization of aesthetic site design which is compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

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Repeal

F. LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK POLICY

Intent Statement

The intent of the LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK designation is to implement the County Goal Statements which relate to a balanced and diversified economy by acknowledging those locations where transportation access and other light industrial siting requirements may be optimized. Furthermore, it is intended that development of Light Industrial Park sites will be contingent upon the statutorily required governmental agencies approval of sewer and water services; and that said sites employ aesthetic site design to maximize visual appearance and compatibility with surrounding land uses and general area character. In addition, the policy intends to encourage the overall master planning of Light Industrial Park sites.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 Consistent with the Locational Criteria and Policy Intent Statement of the LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK designation, it is herein the policy of Whatcom County to designate the following areas as LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK on the Comprehensive Land Use Map: (1) the area situated west of the freeway, in the proximity of Grandview and Church roads and Portal Way; and (2) certain portions of the area situated south of Terrell Creek and bounded by the Kickerville, Grandview and Saftsen roads.
- 1.02 Land uses associated with the LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK designation should have negligible off-site impacts as provided in the zoning ordinance and may include other general services to primarily accommodate the necessities of site employees.
- 1.03 To implement the LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK designation, the county shall apply the Light Impact Industrial zoning district, consistent with the policies stated herein and which will foster compatibility with surrounding nonindustrial land uses.
- 1.04 To attain compatibility with surrounding nonindustrial land uses and character, it is the policy of Whatcom County to require LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK users to employ aesthetic site design consisting of landscaping and screening at the site periphery, as well as conservation of existing natural features. In addition, site design shall minimize encroachments (ingress and egress) onto adjacent arterials and direct traffic away from residential areas.
- 1.05 Design of LIGHT INDUSTRIAL PARK sites shall be encouraged to incorporate overall master planning and the joint use of facilities common to individual users, such as internal roadways and parking utilities, and railroad spurs. Additionally, site design shall be encouraged to employ the best available architectural design standards for structures, underground wiring and unobtrusive signage, with the intent of causing said sites to become aesthetic, as well as economic assets to Whatcom County.

Repeal

G. HEAVY IMPACT INDUSTRIAL

Intent Statement

The underlying purpose of the HEAVY IMPACT INDUSTRIAL designation is to supply enough vacant land to meet the demand for heavy industrial manufacturing uses which may be anticipated during the planning period. Additionally, it is the purpose of this designation to define expected levels of industrial performance. Moreover, it is the intent of this designation to provide the opportunity for citizens of Whatcom County to endorse a diversified economic base; but, at the same time, to maintain an acceptable balance between the interests of the private sector and the impacts to the cultural aspects (employment, population, and the physical, social and economic environment) of Whatcom County.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 In acknowledgement of the past commitments in the Cherry Point Industrial Area, it is herein the policy of Whatcom County to designate the area bounded by the Koehn, Grandview, Kickerville, Rainbow, Lake Terrell and Slater roads as HEAVY IMPACT INDUSTRIAL. Implementation of this policy shall be accomplished by amending the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map to HEAVY IMPACT INDUSTRIAL and by applying the Heavy Impact Industrial zone district within the designated area.
- 1.02 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to monitor the vacant industrial property to assure a sufficient supply for the anticipated future demands.
- 1.03 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to evaluate the short- and long-range impacts to existing public facility, utility and transportation systems resulting from the proposed development of major industrial land uses. If it is determined that major industrial development will cause financial and physical impacts that exceed the scheduled capital improvement programs of various systems, Whatcom County shall request the industrial users to financially participate in the marginal costs of upgrading such systems.
- 1.04 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to encourage the monitoring of pollution control and nuisance abatement technologies by the appropriate governmental authority, such as the Northwest Air Pollution Authority, the Department of Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency. Whatcom County shall assure that industrial location and design will include consideration of other pollutant sources and environmentally fragile areas in the vicinity. The location, development and operation of industries should be such as to minimize pollution of all forms and its impact upon other areas.
- 1.05 To attain compatibility with surrounding nonindustrial land use designations and to minimize heavy industrial off-site impacts, it is the policy of Whatcom County to require industrial users to provide a buffer which is located within the designated HEAVY IMPACT INDUSTRIAL area and which adjoins said nonindustrial land use designations.

As a means of protecting the existing and planned residential uses in the Point Whitehorn area from detrimental environmental and visual impacts generated from the Heavy Impact Industrial area, a 660-foot buffer strip shall be established. Said buffer shall be situated adjacent to and south

Repeal

of Grandview Road between Jackson Road and Koehn Road; adjacent to and east of Koehn Road between Grandview Road and Brown Road; and adjacent to the east of the eastern property line of tax lots 2.27 and 2.28 between Brown Road and the shoreline. This buffer strip may be utilized for security or protective uses, parking, or the open space requirements of the Heavy Impact Industrial zone district. Land within the buffer strip which is not required for the above uses and is currently covered with natural vegetative species shall not be cleared, logged or altered in any manner which would reduce the natural screening characteristics of said buffer.

- 1.06 In recognition of the desirable natural features of deep water accessibility and large contiguous upland areas, it shall be the policy of Whatcom County to emphasize development of public and private multi-purpose ocean cargo transfer terminal facilities in the Heavy Impact Industrial area, and further that such facilities, as well as other proposed water dependent and industrial uses, be consistent with the policies and regulations of the Whatcom County Shoreline Master Program.

Repeal

H. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Intent Statement

One of the most important factors in comprehensive planning is the relationship between land use and the provision of public services. Proportionate with the increase in land use density and attendant population levels is the increase in demand for services, such as efficient sewer and water systems, functional transportation networks, adequate school and park systems, and capable fire and police protective services. As growth occurs in "urban fringe" and rural areas, local governments have been typically confronted with service issues that can be summarized as follows:

- . What governmental jurisdiction should provide the demanded services?
- . What is the difference between urban and nonurban services, and where do urban services stop and nonurban services begin?
- . Under what conditions should urban and nonurban services be provided?
- . What services can be economically provided to both city and county jurisdictions by a single service purveyor?

It is the intent of the following policies to define Whatcom County's role and responsibility concerning the above issues and to further ensure that a beneficial balance exists between the supply and demand for services, as well as encourage the cooperation among municipalities, special districts, and water associations in the planning and provision of public services.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 It is herein the policy of Whatcom County to cooperate and coordinate with the City of Ferndale, Public Utility District No. 1, Water and Sewer District No. 8, Whatcom County Fire District No. 7, Ferndale, Blaine and Meridian School Districts, and the State of Washington in planning Subarea service systems.
- 1.02 As described in the URBAN RESERVE policies, land areas inside the URBAN RESERVE designation are intended for urban-type densities and shall be provided with a full range of urban services including sewer and water, fire and police protection, urban transportation standards and drainage systems. Furthermore, the City of Ferndale is designated as the primary service authority for said area.
- 1.03 Land situated outside the URBAN RESERVE area are planned for nonurban land use densities. Whatcom County shall be the primary purveyor of services to these areas which shall include transportation and drainage improvements, parks and recreation facilities, sheriff protection, fire protection through District No. 7, solid waste management, and library services. Furthermore, the County Public Works Department shall amend the Engineering Design Standards and Specifications to reflect specific nonurban transportation and drainage standards.
- 1.04 Whatcom County shall discourage the proliferation of new sewer and water districts (junior taxing districts) in the Subarea. Sewage disposal to nonurban uses shall be accomplished through on-site methods. Water service

Repeal

shall be provided either through wells, City of Ferndale, including the area within the Residential Rural designation, Whatcom County, PUD #1 or existing water associations.

- 1.05 Whatcom County shall continue to recognize Puget Sound Power and Light and Cascade Natural Gas as the primary energy purveyors in the Subarea; however, the county encourages the use of alternative energy systems for residential, commercial, industrial and public land uses.
- 1.06 As enabled through the County Services Act, Whatcom County shall be designated as the primary service authority for the provision of public sewer and potable water to the Cherry Point and Grandview Road industrial areas. To accomplish such, the county is encouraged to undertake those actions deemed necessary to determine the alternative infrastructure systems and associated cost, as well as the inter-agency contractual agreements for the provision of shared services. The Public Works Department shall submit recommendations to the County Council to revise the Whatcom County Comprehensive Sewer and Water Plan to reflect the county's intention of providing future services to the Cherry Point and Grandview industrial areas.

If Whatcom County does not exercise the policy stated above, the prerogative of furnishing services to the Cherry Point and Grandview Light Industrial Park areas and the Grandview/I-5 Interchange commercial use area shall, subject to County Council approval, revert to other service entities including the City of Ferndale, Birch Bay Water District No. 8, or such other agencies as may be organized for this purpose.

Repeal

I. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION POLICY

Intent Statement

Transportation/Circulation is one of the key elements in comprehensive land use planning because the changes in land use density and population levels, occurring as a result of the planning process, are often reflected in a demand for an increased level of service. Thus, it is a purpose of Whatcom County to promote a coordinated transportation system which is appropriate in its intended function; that is to complement the land use density and population levels of the various areas in the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea. It is the intent of the following policies to ensure that land use and transportation planning mutually support the efficient and safe movement of people and goods while optimizing public investments in the existing circulation system. Furthermore, it is the intent to move toward the attainment of the Whatcom County Goal Statements with respect to transportation planning.

Policy Statement

1.01 It is herein the policy of Whatcom County to cooperate and coordinate with the City of Ferndale and the State of Washington in the planning of an adequate transportation system in the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea. The City of Ferndale shall be consulted for input into a change in road classification or the proposed construction of a new road which traverses an area within the Ferndale city limits.

1.02 It shall be county policy to implement the road classification plan as designated on the Comprehensive Plan Map through the development of a Transportation Improvement Program which shall support the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

A change in road classification or proposed construction of a new road shall be programmed only after land use studies have shown the need for increased carrying capacity. Such changes shall be reviewed by the Whatcom County Planning Department pursuant to RCW 36.70.530 and RCW 36.70.540.

1.03 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to evaluate the short and long-range impacts to existing county roads resulting from proposed developments. If it is determined that a proposed development will cause financial and physical impacts that exceed the scheduled transportation improvements, Whatcom County shall request the developer to financially participate in upgrading the transportation/circulation system.

1.04 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to designate specific truck routes into commercial and industrial areas to minimize the conflict between truck and automobile traffic.

1.05 It is herein the policy of Whatcom County to promote and encourage the availability of public transit as demand increases in the Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea. The public transit system shall be designed to encourage the use of said system by providing frequent and convenient access points, and by integrating transit services with other transportation modes, such as bus systems, park and ride lots for automobiles and bicycles, and bus, railroad and airline terminal facilities.

Repeal

Any major program change in the Transportation Improvement Program with respect to the circulation system shall provide accommodations for transit when warranted by the level and location of ridership.

- 1.06 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to make every effort to preserve mature trees and unique wildlife habitats and other elements of the natural environment during the design and construction of road improvement projects. Where disruption of the natural environment is unavoidable, special techniques, including rounded slopes, erosion control, reseeding and revegetation shall be employed to return roadsides to their natural state.
- 1.07 It shall be county policy to include bikeways and pedestrian walkways as an integral part of the transportation system. Bikeways and pedestrian ways shall be provided in new developments where warranted. Bikeways shall be provided to link residential areas, shopping areas, recreational areas and educational facilities. Whenever practical, bikeways proposed in new developments shall connect with the planned bikeways in the Whatcom County Trails Plan.
- 1.08 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to discourage driveway cuts on all street classifications higher than local access streets; to develop access control plans for classifications higher than neighborhood collector streets; and to require new developments to minimize the number of access points to road classifications higher than neighborhood collector streets.
- 1.09 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to discourage through traffic on neighborhood collector, local access and minor access streets.
- 1.10 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to encourage the use of noise buffers and visual screens between high volume transportation routes and residential areas.
- 1.11 It shall be the policy of Whatcom County to encourage major public and private developments to be easily accessible to existing arterials and public transit.

Repeal

J. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Intent Statement

The intent of the following policies is to minimize detrimental impacts to human life and property, conserve critical wildlife habitats in recognition of their irreplaceable character, manage nonrenewable natural resource areas in a manner which will permit future utilization, and maintain and enhance environmental quality with reference to air, water and noise.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 It is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage utilization of unstable slopes for very low density development or preferably as open space. If used for developmental purposes, structures shall be subject to safety confirmation as established by a qualified geological engineer.
- 1.02 It is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage utilization of the Nooksack River 100-year floodplain for agriculture purposes and to encourage the use of 100-year floodplains associated with stream corridors as open space.
- 1.03 Whatcom County shall encourage very low densities in areas of known mineral and nonmineral resource occurrence with the intent of retaining future access and utilization options. Surface extraction shall be dependent upon compatibility with surrounding land uses, be discouraged in areas overlain by Prime Farmlands, and be accomplished by a reclamation plan which is consistent with state regulations (RCW 78.44).
- 1.04 It is the policy of Whatcom County to conserve and retain Prime Farmlands and Farmlands of Statewide Importance by encouraging agricultural or very low density residential land uses in such areas.
- 1.05 It is the policy of Whatcom County to maintain and/or enhance surface water quality consistent with Federal and State standards by development of appropriate regulations or ordinances to carry out the intent of this policy. Furthermore, wetlands such as swamps, bogs, marshes and ponds shall be recognized for their capacity as natural catchment basins.
- 1.06 It is the policy of Whatcom County to promote continued groundwater quality.
- 1.07 It is the policy of Whatcom County to avoid the wasteful or destructive use of environmentally fragile areas or critical wildlife habitats. The identification of critical wildlife habitats will be pursuant to procedures set forth in the State Environmental Policy Act WAC 197-10-177.
- 1.08 It is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage property owners to utilize the provisions of RCW 84.34 for the preservation of open space and the preservation of environmentally fragile areas such as critical wildlife habitats and wetlands as described in the policies of this section.
- 1.09 Pursuant to the Federal Clean Air Act, it is the policy of Whatcom County to encourage pollution abatement with the intent of maintaining and/or enhancing air quality through the coordination of land use proposals and plans with Northwest Air Pollution Authority, as well as other environmental agencies.

Repeal

- 1.10 It is the policy of Whatcom County to implement such rules, regulations or ordinances as are required by state law to minimize noise impacts.
- 1.11 It is the policy of Whatcom County pursuant to the State of Washington State Environmental Policy Act (WAC 197-10-177) to identify and designate the environmentally sensitive areas, the intent of which is to establish uses which should no longer be considered as categorical exemptions within such areas as provided in the County's Environmental Policy Guideline Ordinance. The Whatcom County Environmental Review Committee is herein directed to prepare a map clearly indicating the location intent and selection of exemption of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas which shall be considered as recommendations for adoption (pursuant to WAC 197-10-177), as part of the Whatcom County's Environmental Policy Guidelines Ordinance.

Repeal

K. ECONOMIC POLICIES

Intent Statement

The intent of the following policy is to assure that economic values are given appropriate consideration along with other goals so that Whatcom County can attempt to fulfill the economic requirements of present and future generations of Whatcom County citizens. The Goal Statements of this comprehensive plan clearly indicate that future land use should recognize economic concerns in addition to environmental and social concerns to provide a balanced and diversified economy. It is therefore the policy of Whatcom County to establish a balance in its consideration of environmental and economic matters.

Policy Statement

- 1.01 It is the policy of Whatcom County to consider the positive and negative economic impacts in land use decisions on the general welfare of the citizens of the county.
- 1.02 It is the policy of Whatcom County to strengthen and stabilize the tax base through economic development.
- 1.03 It is the policy of Whatcom County to consider economic impacts, along with other considerations, of measures which implement this comprehensive land use plan.
- 1.04 It is the policy of Whatcom County to promote the wise use of both natural and man-made resources over the long run as well as in the immediate future.
- 1.05 It is the policy of Whatcom County to ensure that all county land use plans and zoning ordinances are considered in terms of their enhancement of the economy of the area and region, and are calculated to:
 - (a) Foster and promote the general welfare;
 - (b) To create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony; and
 - (c) Fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Whatcom County citizens.

Repeal

comprehensive
plan amendments

Repeal

VII. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

The Cherry Point-Ferndale Subarea Plan is a policy document that is used to guide the land use decisions affecting both the private and public sector of the Subarea. For the plan to function as an effective decision-making document, it must be flexible enough to weather changes in public attitudes, developmental technologies, economic forces and legislative policy.

The plan envisions two general types of plan amendments. The first type is a review conducted every five years. This review should re-examine the entire plan, including a re-evaluation of goals, updates of land related elements, and the reaffirmation of land use policies and proposals. This review is the responsibility of the Whatcom County Planning Commission, the Planning Department staff and the people of the Subarea.

The second type of amendment is that proposed and initiated by the private sector. The land uses illustrated on the Land Use Plan Map are the result of the application of the Plan's goals and policies. However, it is reasonable to assume that the private sector may introduce land use proposals that conflict with the Plan Map or policies of the Plan itself. In such instances, the private individual may entertain an amendment to the Plan. Private petitions for amendment of the Comprehensive Plan addressed to either the Planning Commission or the County Council shall be processed in accordance with statutory procedure for adoption or amendment of comprehensive plans. In applying for a particular amendment to the Plan or Plan Map, the private sector shall conform to the following criteria:

1. The amendment request shall conform with the goals of the Subarea plan;
2. The amendment request shall be compatible with the existing and planned surrounding land uses;
3. The amendment request shall not result in unmitigated detrimental impacts to existing transportation systems;
4. The amendment request shall not place uncompensated burdens upon existing or planned service capabilities; and
5. The amendment request shall demonstrate a land usage need which is consistent with the environmental and economic policies of this plan.

Repeal

