

PROPOSED BY: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
INTRODUCED: JUNE 23, 2026

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AMENDING THE OFFICIAL WHATCOM COUNTY ZONING MAP UNDER THE 2025-2026 PERIODIC UPDATE OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UNDER THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

WHEREAS, every ten years as part of the periodic update, RCW [36.70A.130](#)(1)(a) requires Whatcom County to take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations to comply with the requirements of Chapter [36.70A](#) RCW (the Growth Management Act); and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Planning and Development Services has proposed amendments to the official Whatcom County Zoning Map as part of the 2025-2026 periodic update to implement the plan's updated goals and policies, fulfill the mandatory elements required for Comprehensive Plans under the GMA, and ensure internal consistency pursuant to RCW [36.70A.130](#)(1)(a), RCW [36.70A.070](#), and WAC [365-196-500](#); and

WHEREAS, the County Council docketed PLN2023-00001 to implement development regulation updates associated with the 2025-26 periodic update of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan; ~~and.~~

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED that the Whatcom County Council adopts the recitals above and legislative record as findings and further makes the following additional findings:

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

Section 1. FINDINGS OF FACT.

1. The zoning map amendments were studied under the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan [Environmental Impact Statement](#) (EIS) issued on August 22, 2025, under file number SEPA2024-00001.
2. Notice of Intent to Adopt Development Amendment was submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on each of the proposed zoning map amendments as detailed below:
 - a. Blaine Zoning Map Amendments:
 - i. 60-Day Notice of Intent to Adopt Amendment emailed 2-17-2026
 - ii. Assigned Submittal ID Number 2026-S-11522

- b. Bellingham UGA, Everson UGA, Nooksack UGA, Cherry Point UGA, Birch Bay UGA, Columbia Valley UGA, Hinote's Corner, Pole & Guide Meridian, and Custer LAMIRDs Zoning Map Amendments:
 - i. Request for Expedited Review emailed 4-14-2026
 - ii. Assigned Submittal ID Number 2026-S-12706
 - iii. Granted 4-28-2026
 - c. Lummi Island Zoning Map Amendments:
 - i. Request for Expedited Review emailed 5-6-2026
 - ii. Assigned Submittal ID Number 2026-S-12796
 - iii. Granted 5-21-2026.
- 3. The Whatcom County Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed zoning map amendments on [February 26, 2026](#), [April 23, 2026](#), and [May 14, 2026](#).
- 4. The County Council encouraged early and continuous participation by the public and interested parties in the comprehensive plan update process by holding multiple public meetings, public comment periods and work sessions between February 10, 2026 and _____ as reflected in the legislative record, consistent with requirements for a public participation program required pursuant to the Growth Management Act. County Council futher held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed amendments contemplated by this ordinance on _____.
- 5. Adoption of the zoning map amendments implements applicable requirements under the Growth Management Act pursuant to RCW [36.70A.130](#)(1)(a), RCW [36.70A.070](#), and WAC [365-196-500](#).
- 6. The proposed recommended zoning map amendments are consistent with the following GMA Planning Goals under RCW 36.70.020:
 - a. Number 1: *Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner;*
 - b. Number 2: *Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;*
 - c. Number 5: *Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within*

the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities;

- d. *Number 8: Natural resource industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses;*
 - e. *Number 9: Open space and recreation. Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities;*
 - f. *Number 10: Environment. Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water; ;*
 - g. *Number 11: Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.*
7. The amendments are consistent with the current and amended goals and policies of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

Section 2. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW. Whatcom County Council concludes the following in regards to the proposed amended ordinance:

- 1. The amendments are in the public interest.
- 2. The proposed amendments do not include or facilitate spot zoning.
- 3. The amendments are consistent with applicable approval requirements for zoning map amendments under WCC [22.10.060](#).
- 4. The amendments implement and are internally consistent with the updated associated goals and policies of the 2025-2026 Comprehensive Plan pursuant to RCW [36.70A.130](#), and WAC [365-196-500](#).
- 5. The amendments are consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW [36.70A](#)) and its Planning Goals (RCW [36.70A.020](#)).

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that the zoning map amendment relating to the pending City of Blaine de-annexation area, of approximately 573 acres, shall only take effect upon finalization of de-annexation and returning the land to the unincorporated Whatcom County land base; and

~~NOW THEREFORE~~ BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that amendments to the official Whatcom County Zoning Map are hereby adopted as shown in Exhibits 1 through 11; and

BE IT ~~FURTHER~~ FINALLY ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that, should any part of this regulation be held to be illegal, unconstitutional, or otherwise unenforceable, the remainder of the regulation shall apply.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2026

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

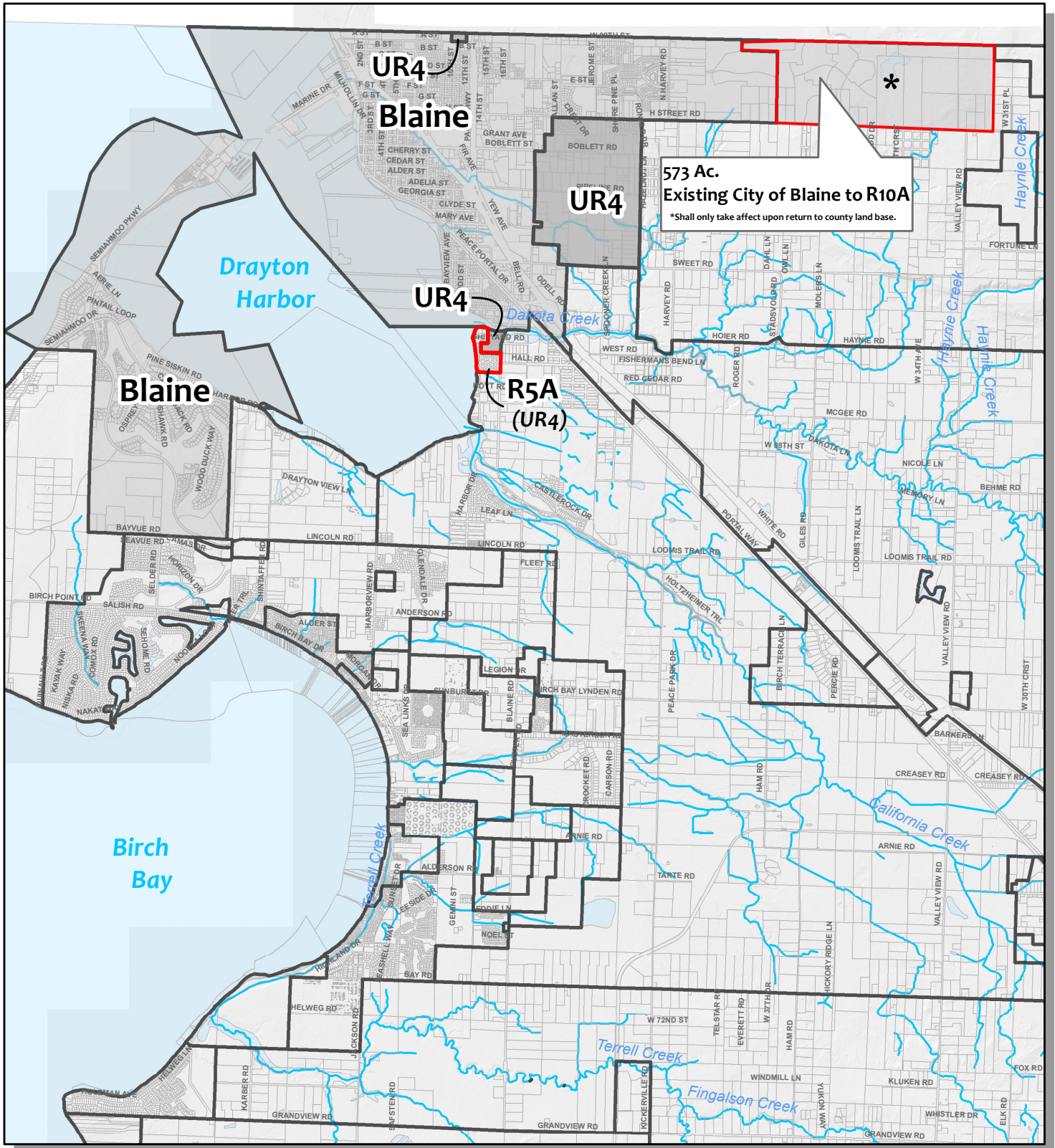
Kimberly Thulin by email (6.23.2026/ko)

Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

() Approved () Denied

Date Signed: _____



- Blaine

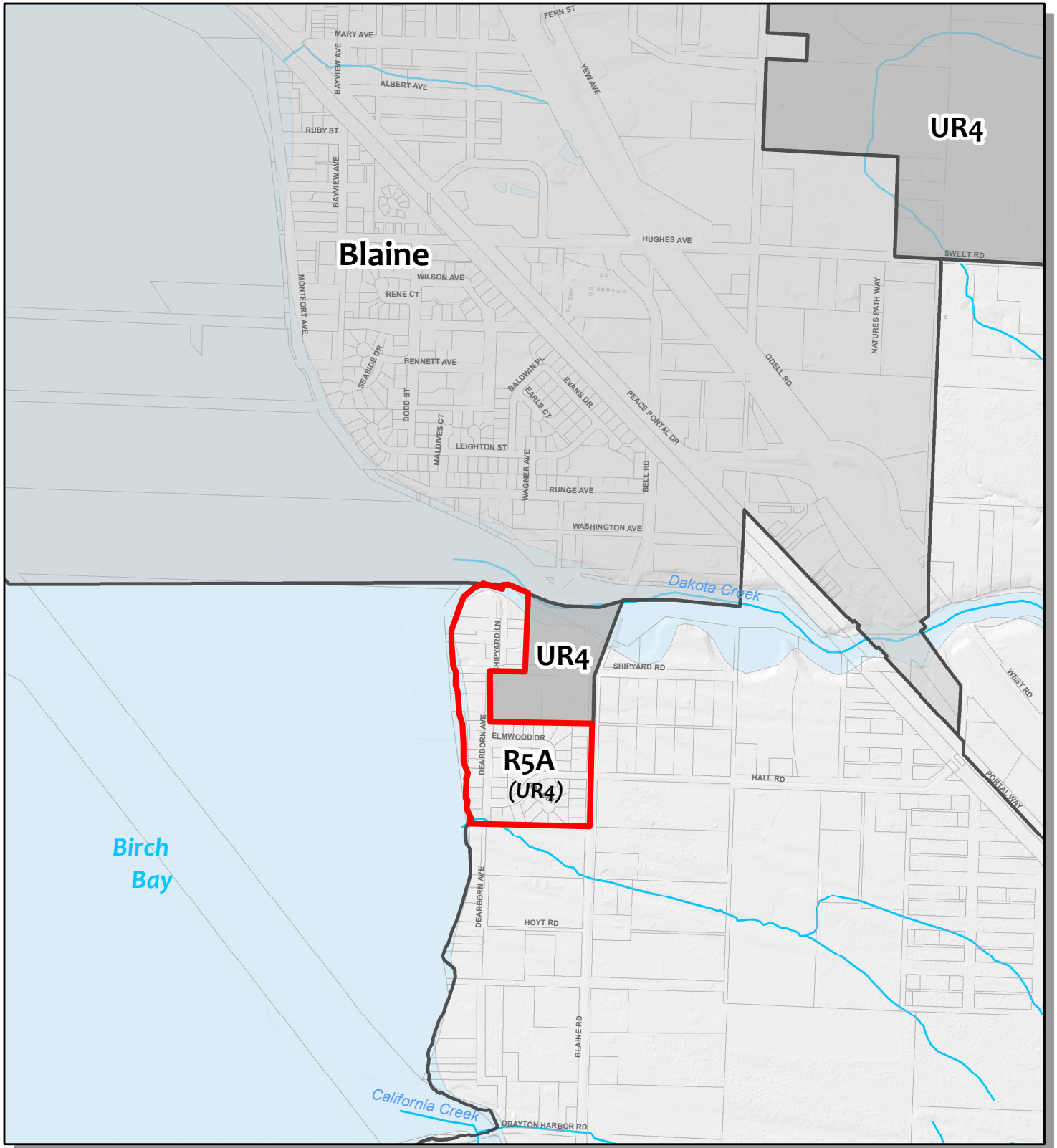
- Urban Growth Area
- Urban Growth Area Reserve
- Proposed Zoning Designations (existing designations in parentheses)
- Existing Zoning Designations



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0 650 1,300 2,600 3,900 5,200 Feet



- Blaine - Harbor Shores UGA

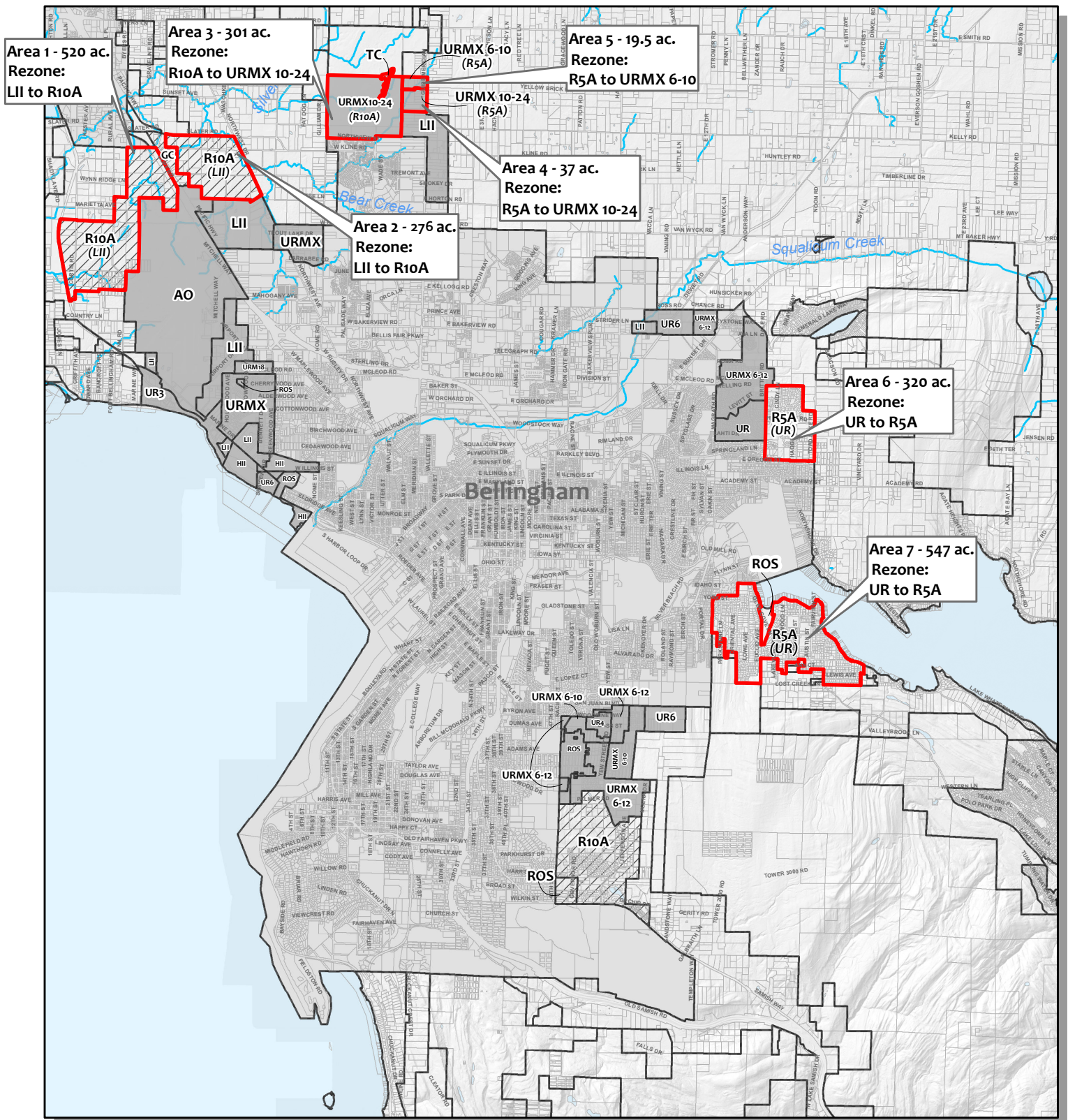
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0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet



- Bellingham

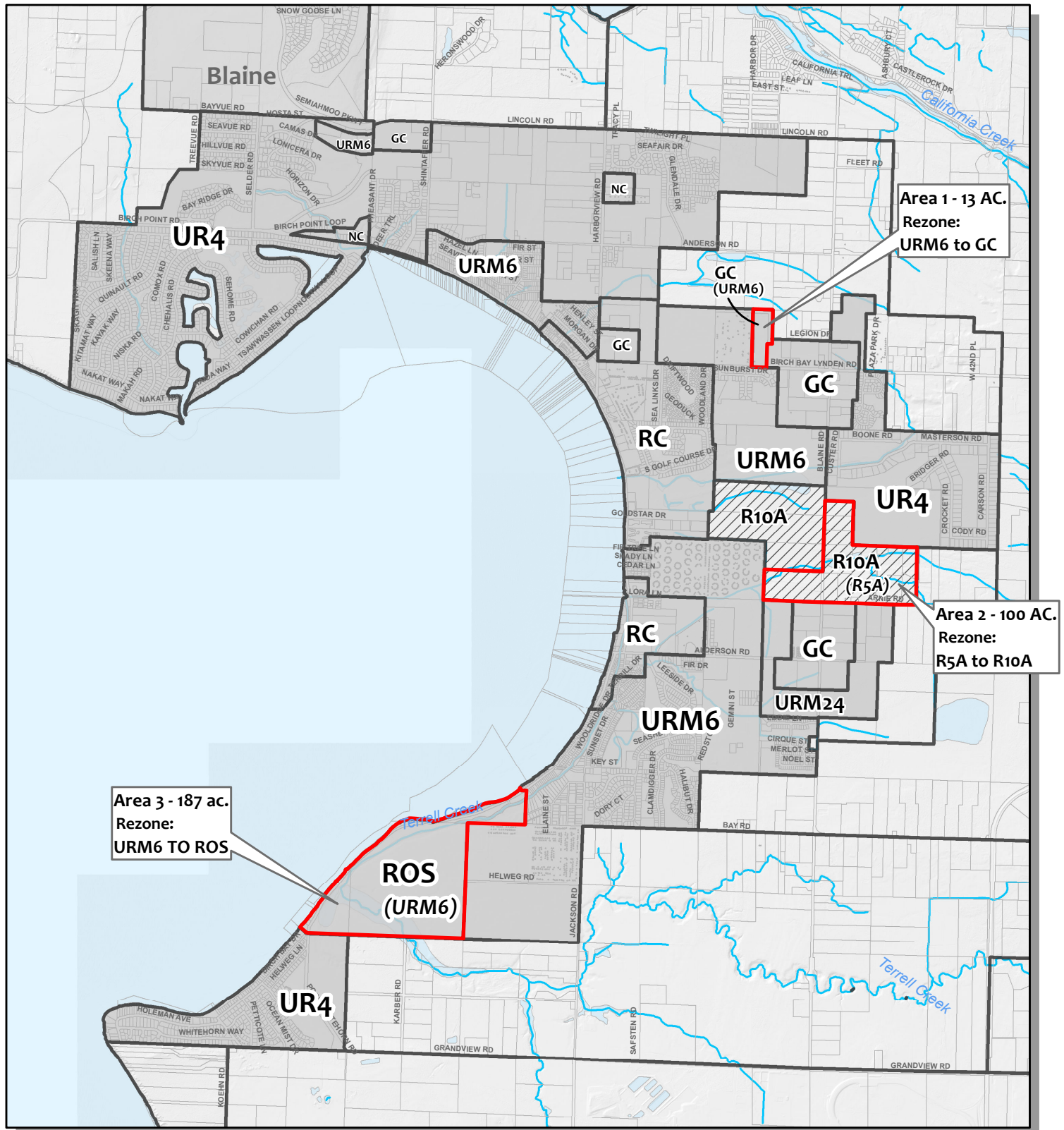
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0 9001,800 3,600 5,400 7,200 Feet



- Birch Bay

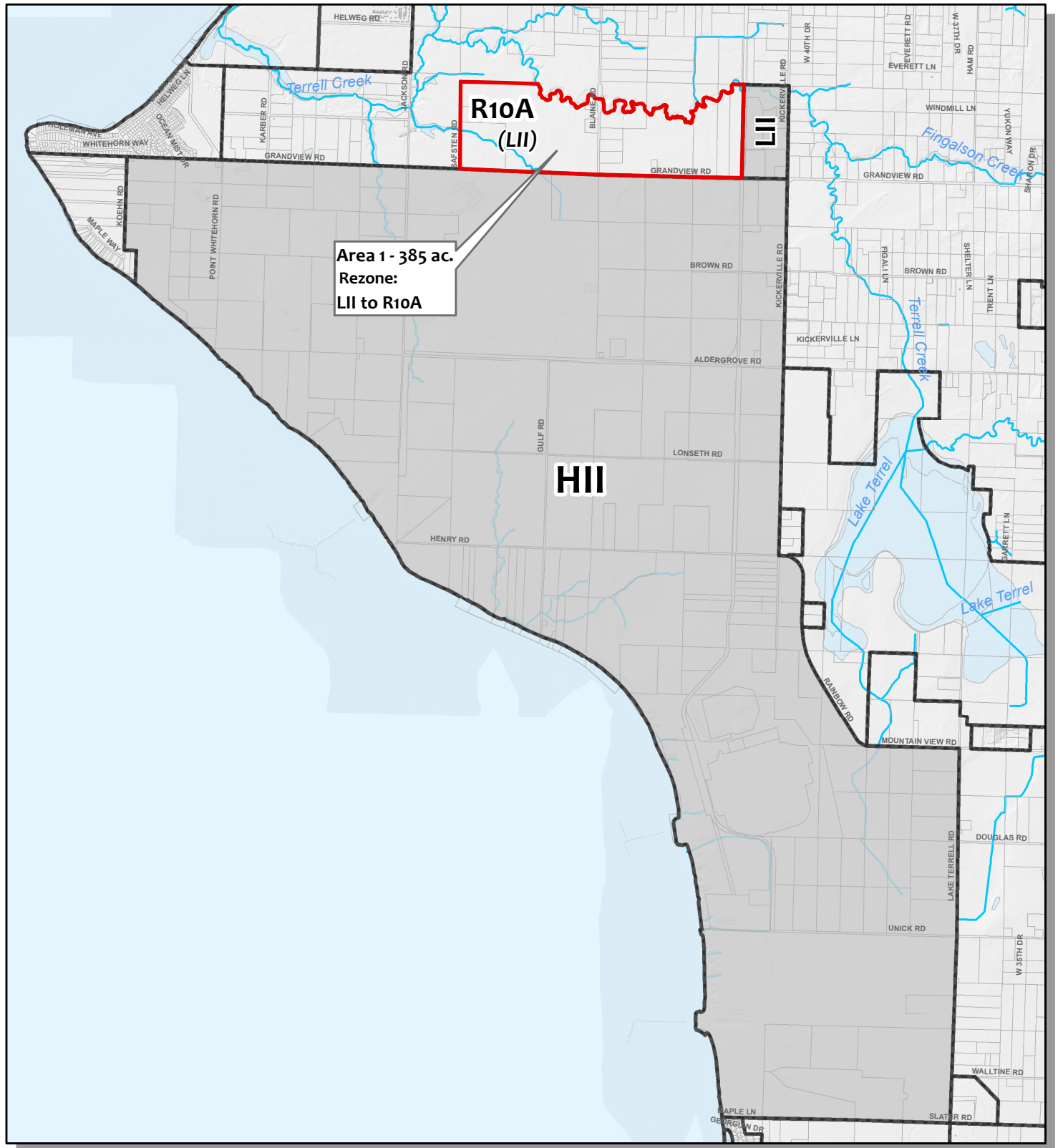
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0 405 810 1,620 2,430 3,240 Feet



- Cherry Point

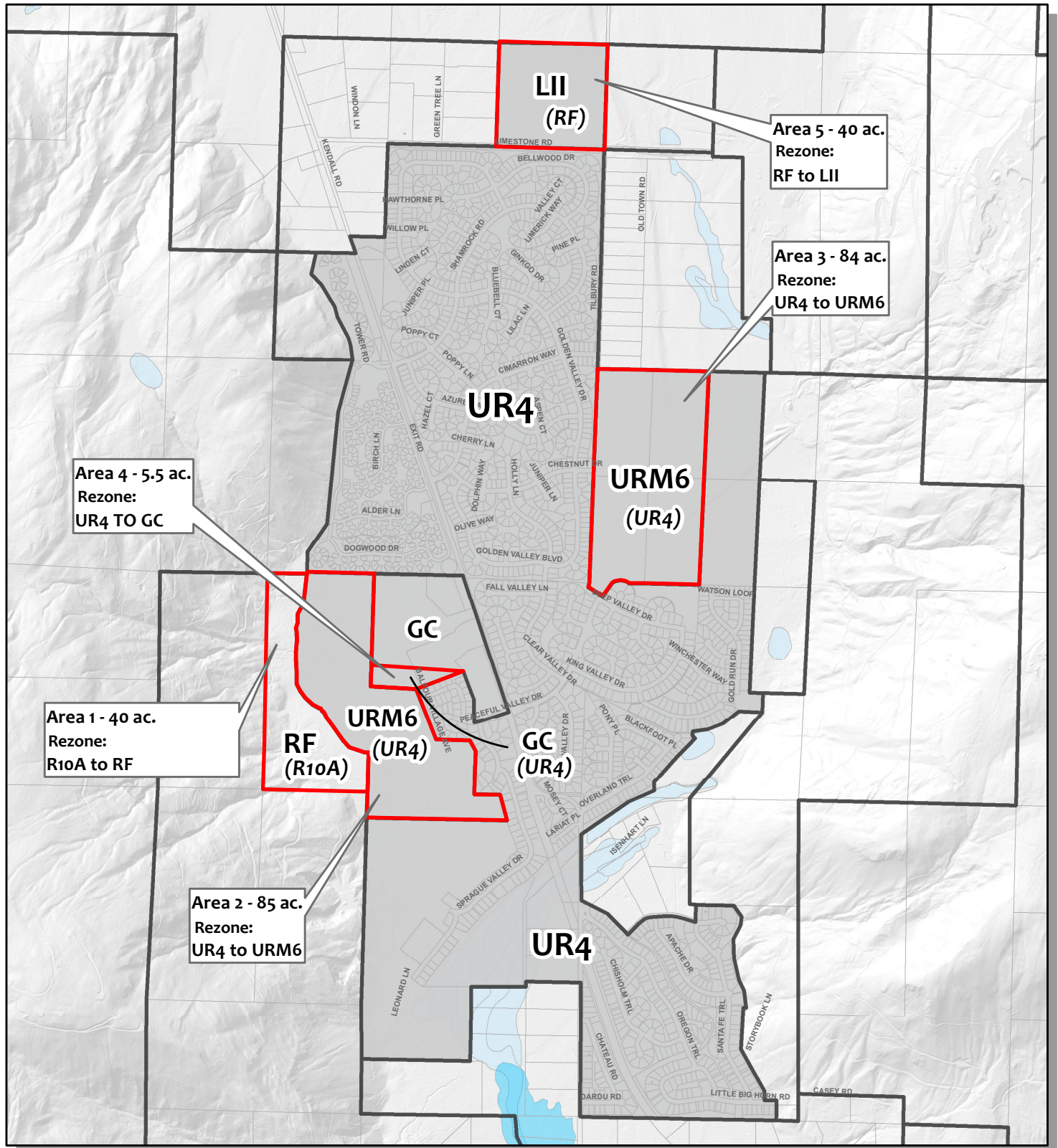
- Major Port/Industrial Urban Growth Area
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0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet



- Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area

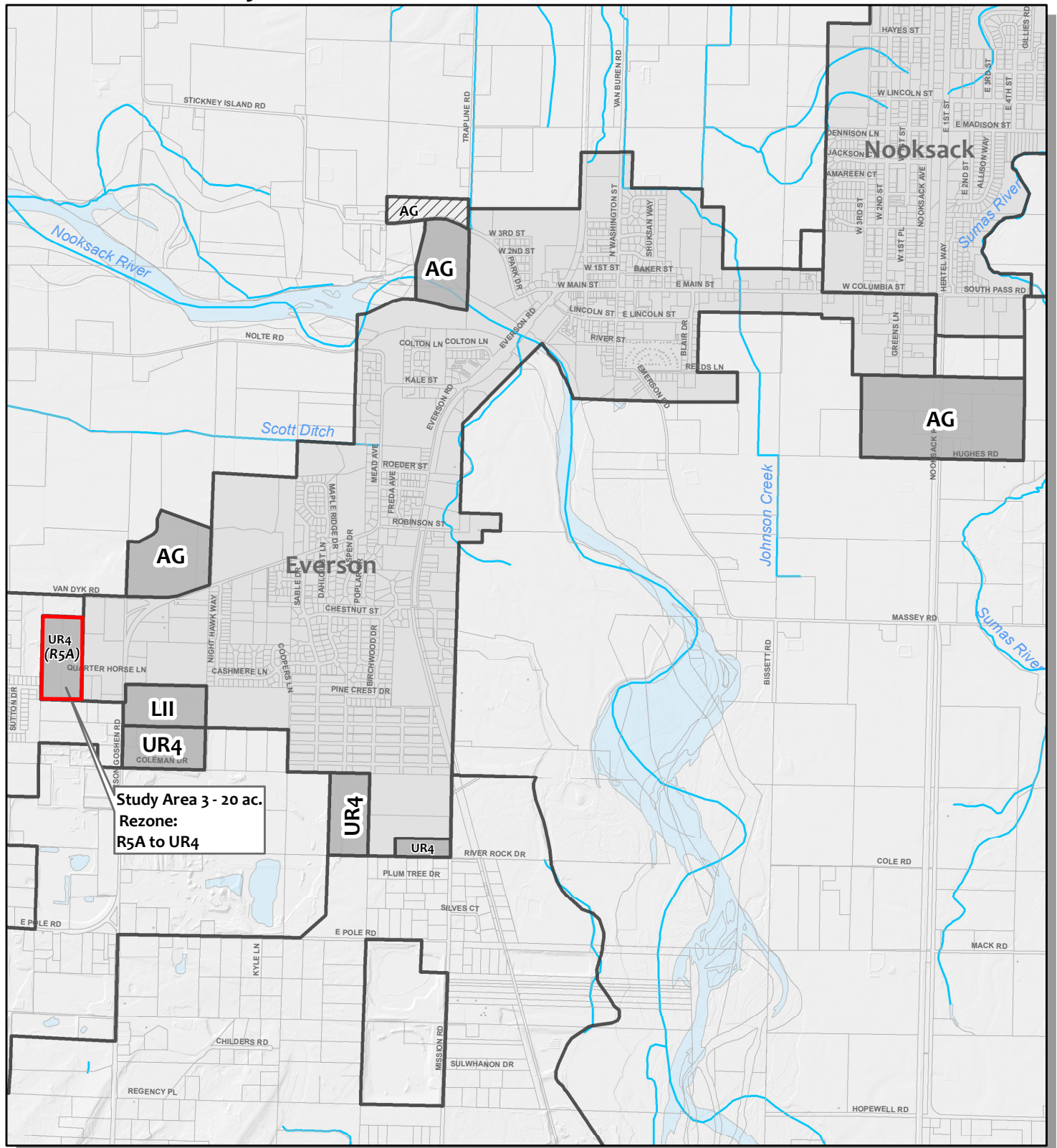
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0 220 440 880 1,320 1,760 Feet



- Everson

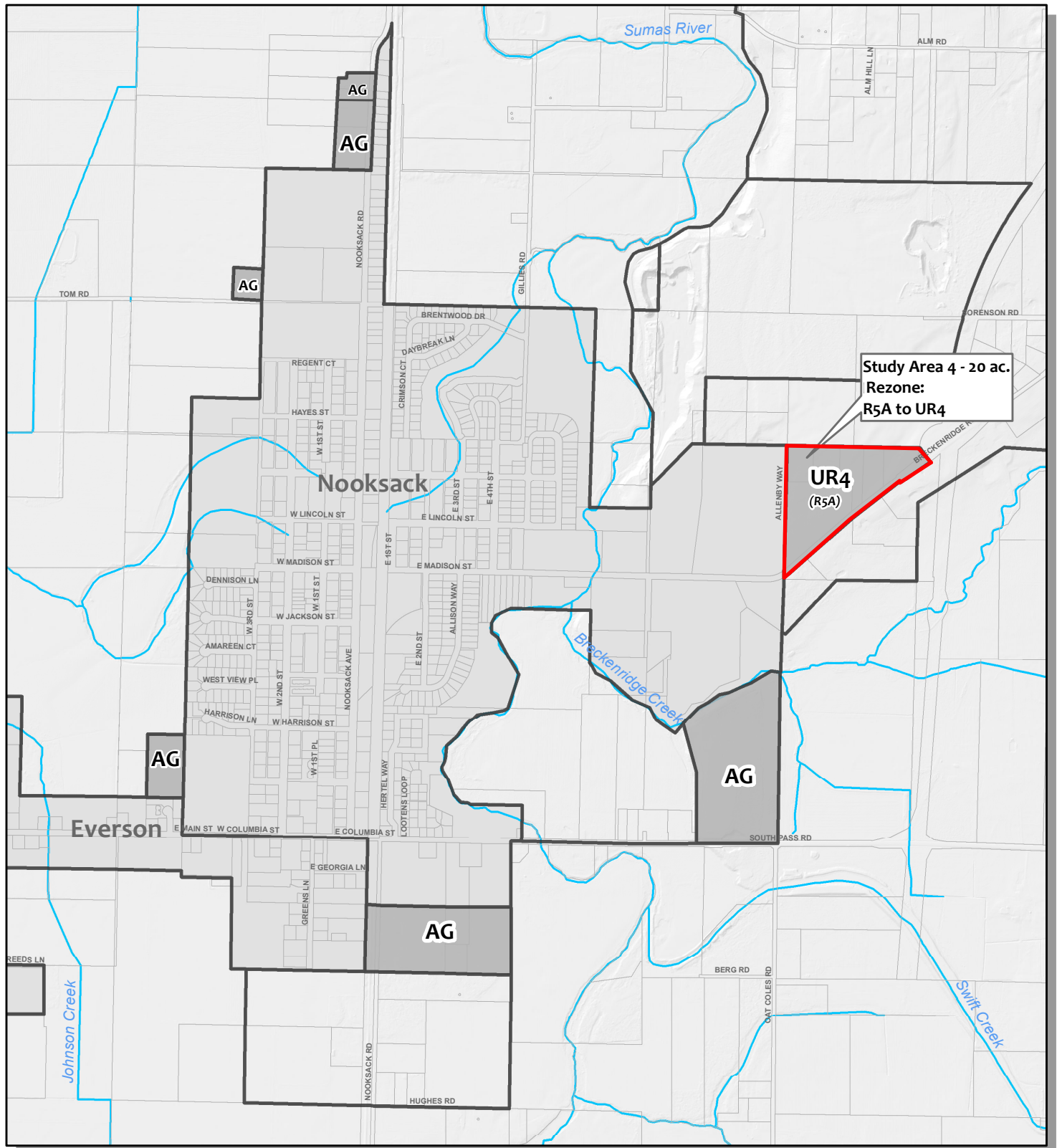
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0 290 580 1,160 1,740 2,320 Feet



- Nooksack

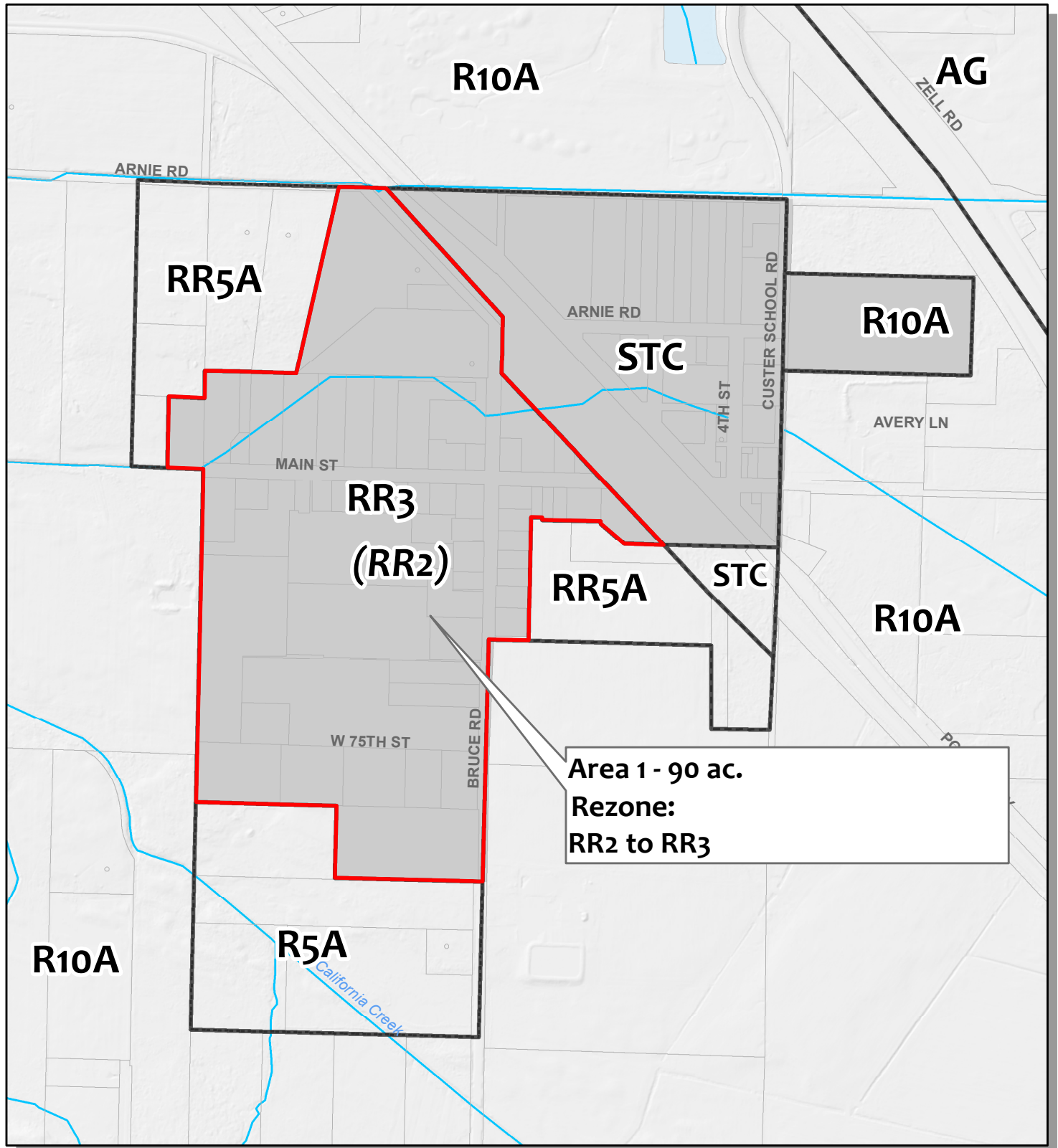
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0 180 360 720 1,080 1,440 Feet



- Custer

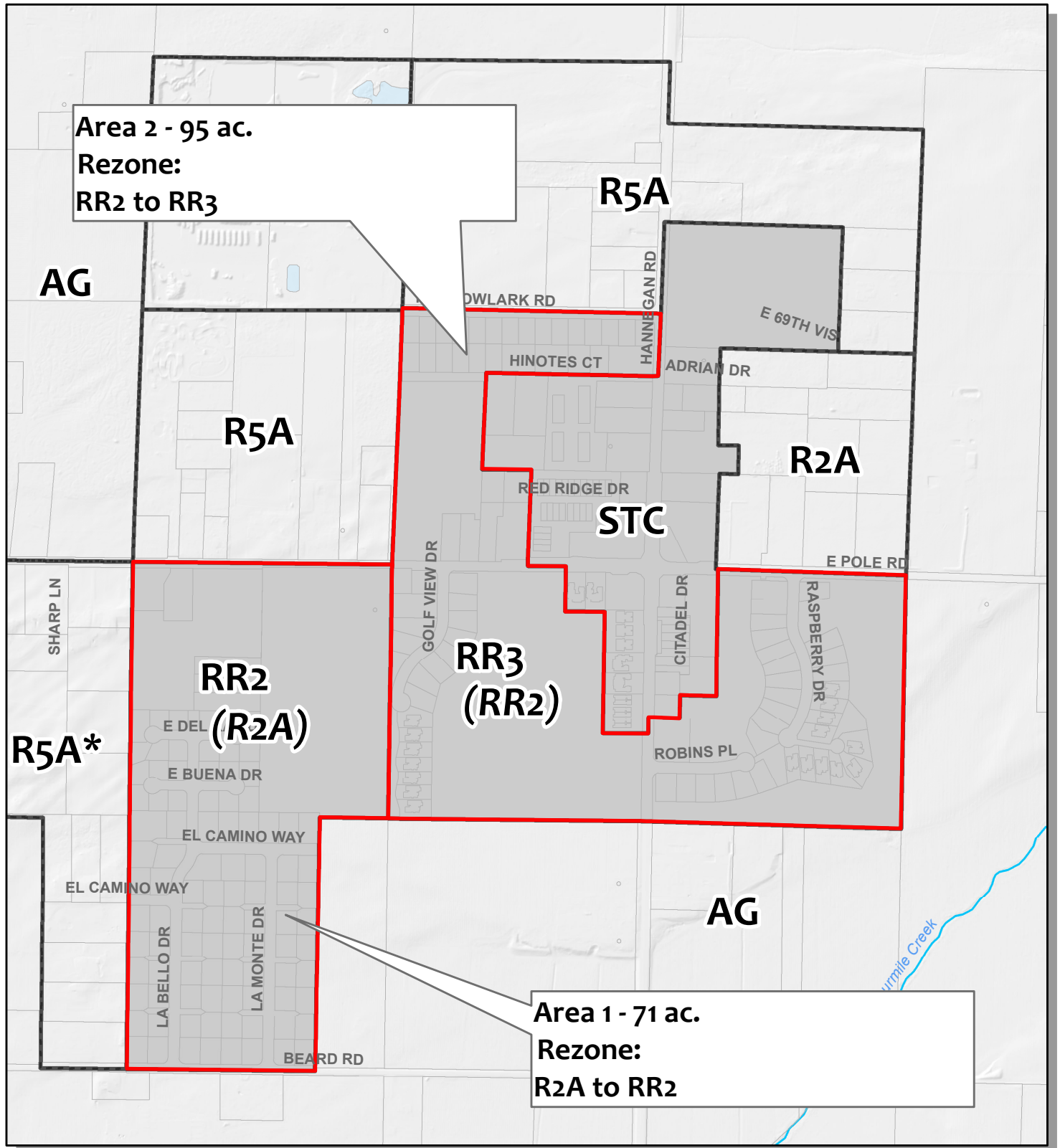
- Custer LAMIRD
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0 80 160 320 480 640 Feet



- Hinotes Corner

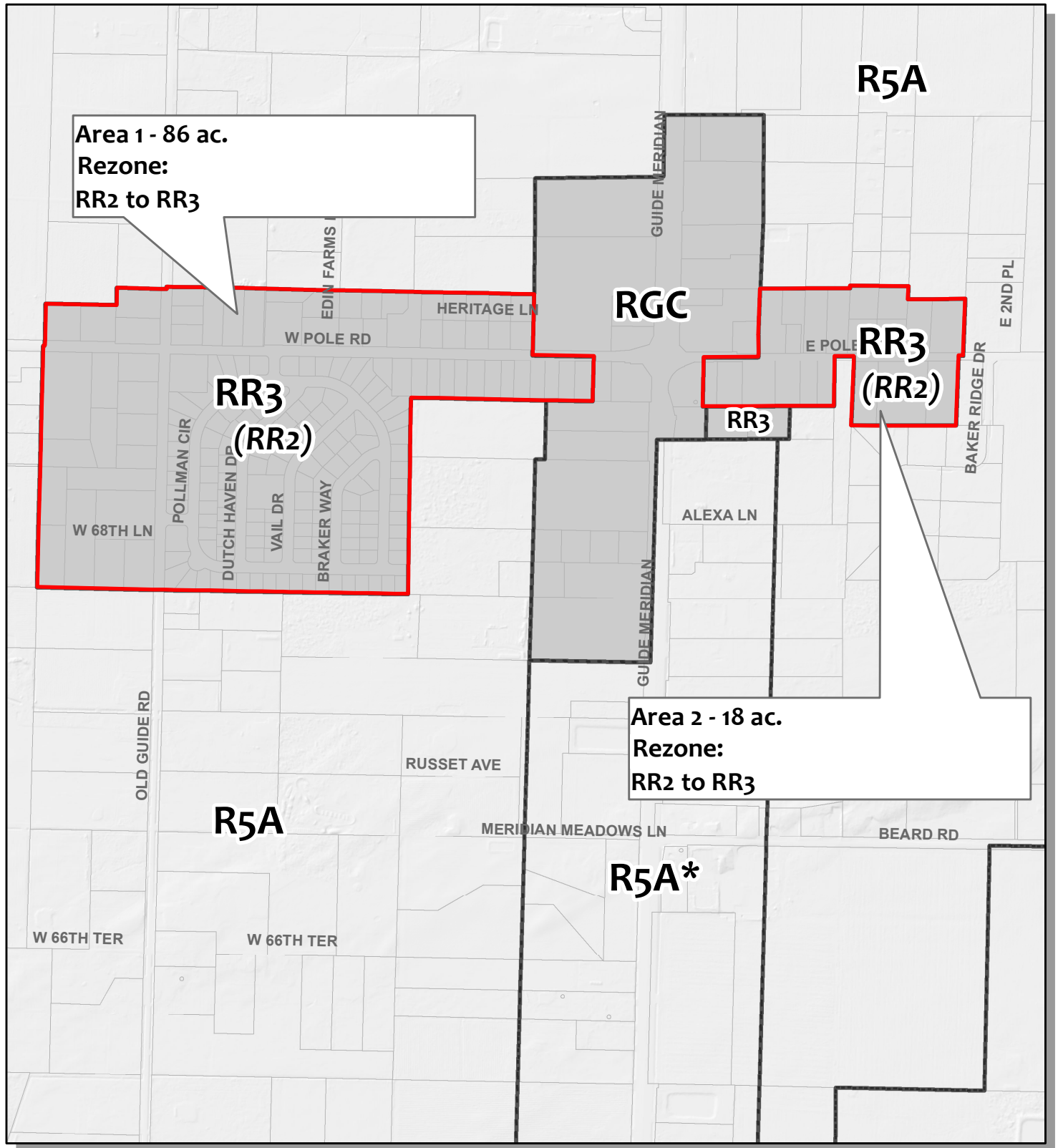
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0 95 190 380 570 760 Feet



- Pole & Guide Meridian

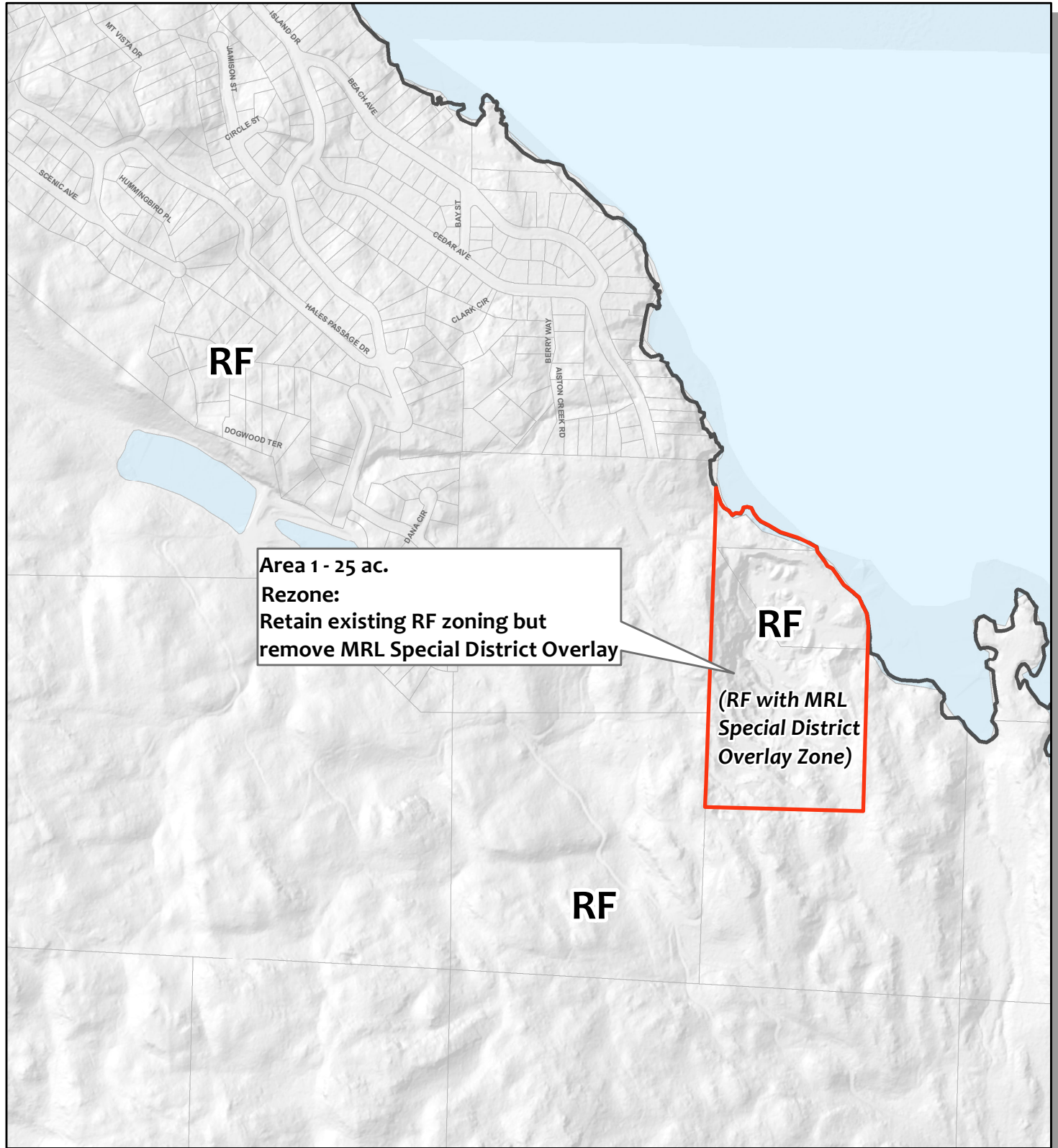
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0 95 190 380 570 760 Feet



- Lummi Island

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0 90 180 360 540 720 Feet