

## 5.0 Rural Element

The Rural Element of the Comprehensive Plan applies to lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resource uses. The GMA requires that Counties plan for a variety of rural densities and uses. In addition, the rural element must provide direction and support for measures applying to rural development that will protect the rural character of the area. Rural character is defined based on the local circumstances of each county. Fundamental to the goals of the rural element is providing guidance that reduces the conversion of undeveloped land into inappropriate low-density development, focuses permitted development into appropriate rural places (such as existing rural communities and crossroad areas), assures visual compatibility of rural development with the surrounding area, protects critical areas and surface and ground water resources, and protects against conflicts with uses of agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands. Most of these principles and priorities also underlie the Land Use and Natural Resource elements of the Plan.

### 5.1 Rural Goal

*It is the Rural Goal of Stevens County to:*

*Protect and enhance the character and quality of rural areas in ways that promote traditional rural lifestyles and industries, including timber, agriculture and mining, while also allowing for a diversity of uses, densities, and innovative development.*

### 5.2 Rural Policies

*In furtherance of this Rural Goal and the overall goals of the GMA, it is the Rural Policy of Stevens County to:*

#### **Rural Growth**

- RU-1            Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development and reduce the proportion of county-wide growth occurring in the rural area.
- RU-2            Encourage rural land use activities and development intensities that:
- A. Are consistent with and build upon the existing character of the rural areas, and do not result in rural sprawl,
  - B. avoid interference with resource land uses,
  - C. provide appropriate protections for critical areas as required by RCW 36.70A.170,
  - D. strengthen the long term viability of small communities and rural economic activities, and
  - E. are contained and limited within appropriate areas; and
  - F. do not require or lead to extension of urban services or facilities, except as may be permitted by the Comprehensive Plan.

## Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs)

- RU-3 Recognize existing rural communities and areas of development and allow them to develop, infill and/or redevelop consistent with Growth Management Act criteria for Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs) and the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Development within such areas shall be limited and contained and consistent with rural character.
- RU-4 The Comprehensive Plan recognizes or designates three types of LAMIRDs, as follows:
- A. Type I LAMIRDs which includes villages, hamlets, crossroads, rural activity centers, or shoreline development, which were in existence as of September 1993. These existing areas may include areas characterized by residential, commercial and/or industrial activities or a mix of such uses, and public services and facilities serving them. Such areas must be contained by a logical outer boundary, as described in policy RU-5.
    - 1. Existing Rural Communities Arden, Loon Lake, West Kettle Falls
    - 2. Crossroads Development: Blue Creek, Cedonia, Daisy, Evans, Ford, Fruitland, Gifford, Marble, Onion Creek, Rice, Summit Valley, Tum Tum.
  - B. Type II LAMIRDs, which may include the intensification or new development of small-scale recreational or tourist uses, such as small resorts, and, and which may include commercial uses to serve them, but which exclude new residential uses.
    - 1. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the following existing small-scale recreation & tourist uses/resorts: Willow Bay, Granite Point, Shore Acres Resort, Deer Lake Resort, West Bay Resort, Zak's Shacks, Sunrise Point, Waitts Lake Resort, Silver Beach Resort, Winona Beach Resort, Jump Off Joe Resort, and Beaver Lodge.
    - 2. The appropriate size of new or expanded small resorts, and the range of uses that are appropriate within them, should be defined in development regulations. Those portions of small resorts that are intensively developed with buildings and impervious surfaces should be limited in area; recreational facilities, such as linear trail networks, may be more extensive in area.
  - C. Type III LAMIRDs, which may include the intensification, expansion or new development of isolated non-residential development, including new development of cottage industries and small-scale businesses that provide

job opportunities for rural residents. Type III LAMIRDS are not required to be designated on the Future Land Use Map.

- D. Recognize that Stevens County contains numerous existing Type III LAMIRDS which are an important part of the Stevens County economy.
- E. Additional Type I and II LAMIRDS may be recognized through amendment of the Future Land Use Map and/or zoning map, whichever is appropriate. The County may also use a sub-area planning process to define appropriate boundaries and activities.
- F. Recognize the Loon Lake community on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map and prepare a sub-area plan to address environmental and development issues within the watershed. Issues that should be evaluated in a sub-area plan should include, but are not limited to, hydrogeology, water quality, critical areas, and appropriate land use and density designations.

RU-5

- A. The range and intensity of permitted land uses within each type of limited area of more intensive rural development shall be consistent with these policies, the type and density of existing land uses within each LAMIRD, and with adopted development regulations. LAMIRDS that are currently developed at greater than densities permitted by applicable rural zoning classifications may infill and redevelop consistent with current densities.
- B. The logical outer boundary of Type I LAMIRDS (existing villages or communities and crossroads developments) shall be designated on the Future Land Use Map. A logical outer boundary will be established, within which development shall be limited and contained, based on criteria relating to the following:
  - (i) features of the built environment,
  - (ii) the presence and character of existing neighborhoods,
  - (iii) physical boundaries such as topography, streets and water bodies,
  - (iv) prevention of irregular boundaries, and
  - (v) the ability to provide services and facilities without permitting sprawl.

RU-6

Encourage tourism and recreation-oriented uses, small rural businesses and other traditional rural development activities. These activities should be designed in ways sensitive to preserving or enhancing existing conditions and rural character.

RU-7

Recognize existing crossroads communities and the essential businesses and services these communities or areas provide. Crossroad community businesses shall have the ability to continue in operation and expand to a limited degree over

time to serve the County's growing population and tourism industries.

- RU-8 Protect and enhance the economic viability of existing rural industrial or heavy commercial areas by allowing a range of new industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and heavy commercial uses as well as uses that support or are derivatives of the main uses, consistent with criteria for development within LAMIRDs.

### **Managing Rural Development**

- RU-9 Rural character is defined to include reference to a visual landscape that is rural in nature, dispersed but confined crossroad areas and rural communities with a limited range of businesses to serve the surrounding area, and which acknowledge the remoteness of many outlying areas in Stevens County, and the tradition and necessity for self-sufficiency in the rural area. Rural character may evolve as the County develops in the future
- RU-10 Encourage cluster development, density transfer, design guidelines, conservation easements and other innovative techniques as a means of preserving rural character and open space, protecting critical areas and resource lands, and preventing large lot, low-density sprawl. Any incentives associated with clustering should not result in inappropriate densities.
- RU-11 Establish development regulations within designated rural lands with a variety of densities not to exceed 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres. Densities shall recognize geographical, topographical, hydrological, transportation and other development-related factors that dictate actual density in order to provide for a variety of lot sizes.
- RU-12 Recognize and protect agricultural and grazing lands which do not meet the criteria in NR-3.
- RU-13 Consider using average density rather than minimum lot size to regulate rural activities and to encourage preservation of open space. Density shall be subject to the density limitation of the applicable zoning classification. Ensure that the use of this and other flexible tools is consistent with goals and policies for rural areas.