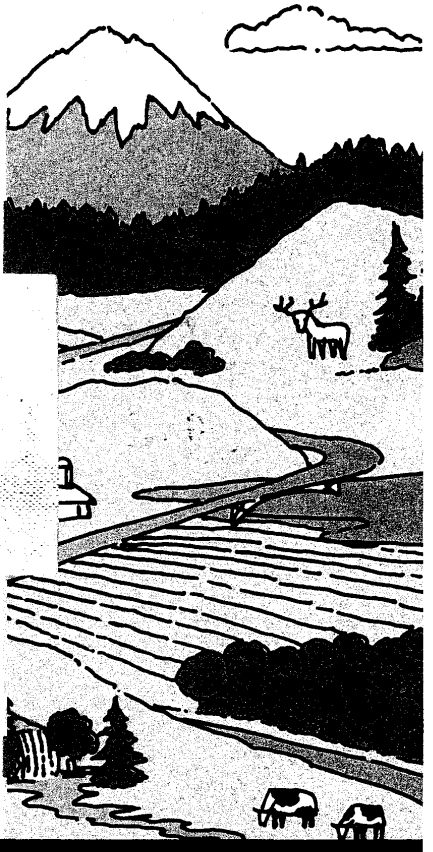
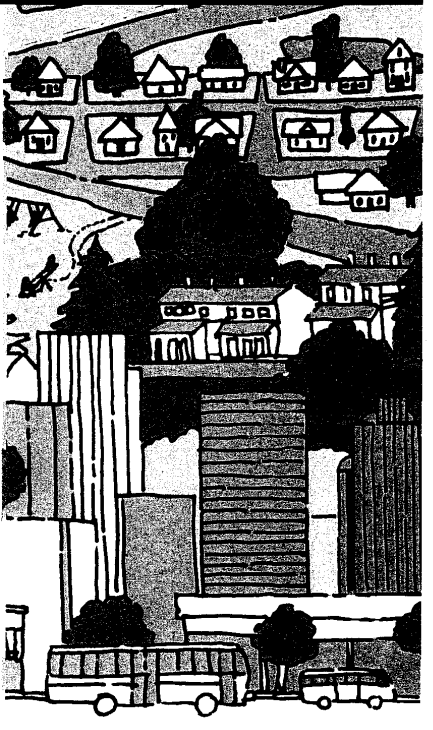


WASHINGTON STATE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF

COMMUNITY, TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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DEFINING RURAL CHARACTER
AND
PLANNING FOR RURAL LANDS

"A Rural Element Guide"

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Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development
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INTRODUCTION

The Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes a framework and provides tools to help local communities manage their growth in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. A basic tenet of the GMA is that growth should be directed first to areas already characterized by growth and where growth can be (or soon will be) supported with adequate urban facilities and services. By directing growth into growth centers, local communities can better reserve other lands for rural uses, resource conservation and environmental protection.

The GMA doesn't specifically define what rural areas are but instead defines what they aren't. The rural element is to address "lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest or mineral resources. The rural element shall permit land uses that are compatible with the rural character of such lands and provide for a variety of densities "[RCW 36.70A.070 (5)]. Urban services will be available in urban areas, but not in rural areas [RCW 36.70A.110 (3)]. GMA goals also call for reducing "the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling low-density development" [RCW 36.70A.020 (2)]. The GMA defines agricultural, forest and mineral resource lands as those which are primarily used for or have long-term commercial significance for agricultural, forestry and mineral production. Urban growth areas are characterized by urban growth (intensive use of land) or may include lands adjacent to such areas. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines rural as "of or relating to the country, country people or life, or agriculture." The same dictionary defines country as "land with farms and small towns." Although the GMA separates rural lands from commercial resource lands, rural areas are none-the-less tied up with resource lands. Rural areas support resource lands, buffer them and otherwise draw their meaning from them. Ultimately, it will be up to the counties to define rural areas in a manner which fits local conditions and needs. At the same time, the rural area approach must further GMA goals such as the goals to avoid sprawling low-density development and the need for urban services.

This guidebook will refer to resource land and critical area issues but will focus on the difficult task of planning and shaping rural area development patterns. It will briefly describe basic steps in preparing a rural element and suggest resources and sources of information to help counties with plan preparation. It will describe optional land use patterns for rural area development. It will also suggest considerations for choosing and successfully applying an appropriate mix of patterns. It will then explore a number of perplexing issues which must be addressed in planning for rural areas. The section on optional development patterns is mainly directed at problems affecting the portion of the rural lands under greatest pressure - those located

adjacent to urban areas. However, more remote rural areas may experience similar problems on a smaller scale, particularly adjacent to rural towns or recreational development. The rural issues section, especially the discussion viable economic alternatives, and the section on rural infrastructure, are particularly relevant for the more remote rural areas.

Although counties are responsible for preparing the rural element, many of Washington's cities and towns are surrounded by and serve rural areas. These communities have a large stake in how surrounding rural areas develop and function. They should actively work with counties on the rural element preparation. Because rural areas cannot be neatly separated from their supporting cities and towns, this guidebook includes many suggestions for how rural-serving centers might develop.

Planning for rural areas is particularly important because:

- Rural lands located adjacent to the urban fringe are susceptible to sprawl development which can quickly overwhelm the existing community character, budgets and way of life.

- Urban and resource areas are dependent upon each other, but tend to be uneasy neighbors. Rural areas can buffer urban and resource or natural areas from each other, so that each area can function without interference from the other.

- Rural towns and villages provide commercial services and supplies needed to support nearby resource operations. They also provide residential areas for resource industry workers.

- Rural areas, although not designated for long-term commercially significant resource use, are also appropriate areas for resource operations.

- Small-scale farm operations can thrive in rural areas near urban centers. Locally-grown fruits and vegetables, for instance, are likely to be fresher, and less costly, when grown within convenient trucking distance of nearby urban markets.

- Rural areas can provide economic opportunities in resource-based industries, home-based businesses, tourism and other businesses compatible with rural character.

- The designation of urban and rural areas allows the efficient provision of public services and facilities when most growth is directed to compact centers.

- Rural areas have also traditionally offered a retreat from the bustle of urban life for urban visitors. The existence of rural resource lands, open spaces, scenery, and natural areas adds an important dimension to the Northwest quality of life. Rural areas offer additional choices of living environments and lifestyles for Washington residents.

- Rural areas are a significant part of our national heritage as an independent, agrarian nation. The rigors of rural life have done much to shape our values and define our national character.

- Those rural areas which border cities can provide for the logical, planned future expansion of urban areas.

... Rural counties bordering urban areas are growing faster than any type area.

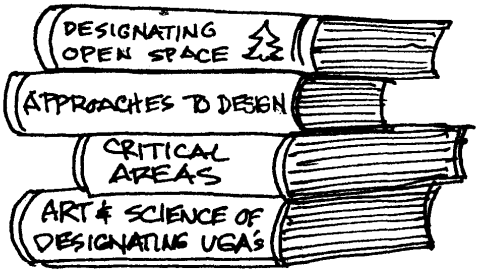
Rural lands are important then, but they also appear endangered if current growth patterns persist. In fact, rural counties bordering urban areas are growing faster than any other type area. It is on these lands that most of our growth management battles will be fought. The development patterns currently taking shape in our rural areas threaten the continued viability and integrity of our resource lands and natural systems. Gary Pivo warns, "A new rural sprawl is consuming large amounts of land, splitting wide open spaces into fragments that are useless for agriculture, wildlife habitat, or other rural open space purposes...When rural subdivisions move into agricultural districts, rising land values and nuisance complaints often discourage the continuation of farming or forestry" (1990). The GMA seeks to reduce the haphazard conversion of undeveloped lands in sprawling low-density development which is neither urban nor rural.

... The GMA seeks to reduce the haphazard conversion of undeveloped lands into sprawling low-density development which is neither urban or rural.

Other rural areas in Washington suffer seemingly opposite problems. As traditional resources are depleted, these communities may be losing population as residents seek employment in more vital centers. Meeting rural public service needs may also be more difficult as federal assistance declines. For these communities, successful growth management will mean planning and providing for attractive communities and supporting infrastructure to stimulate appropriate growth and economic development.

Several related guidebooks published by the Washington Department of Community Development (DCD) provide information helpful in planning rural areas. *The Art and Science of Designating Urban Growth Areas - Part II - Some Suggestions for Criteria and Densities* suggests criteria for designating rural, resource and urban areas. It also makes recommendations about densities which match rural service levels and help maintain rural areas for rural uses. Appendix A of that guidebook also contains references that contain guidelines for maintaining rural character. The DCD guidebook,

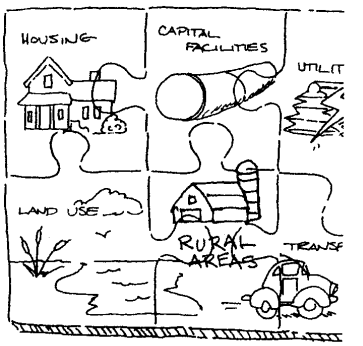
Approaches to Designating Critical Areas, similarly provides criteria and methods for designating environmentally sensitive areas. The DCD guidebook, *Designating Your Community's Open Space: A Parks, Recreation and Open Space Planning Guide*, contains a number of suggestions for providing an integrated system of open space.



Basic Steps for Preparing a Rural Element

This section outlines basic steps for successfully developing the rural element. The suggested process is essentially the traditional planning process used for any planning effort. The section will emphasize those steps in the process which are especially critical to rural area planning. Perhaps the most important steps you will take are the initial steps. They will set the tone and direction for all further efforts.

1) Consider the Growth Management Act Direction and Overall Planning Framework. The GMA establishes some important goals, purposes and direction for rural areas for Washington counties. This direction is summarized in the introductory section of this guide. The GMA includes requirements which must be covered in local comprehensive plans. County-wide planning policies, developed cooperatively by counties and member cities, also set the stage for rural planning. A useful starting point, then, is to become familiar with the GMA direction and county-wide policy, particularly for the rural element, critical areas and resource protection and open space planning.



Although counties are primarily responsible for preparing the rural element, cities and towns located in the midst of rural areas have a large stake in rural area planning. They should be actively involved in the planning process. The rural element should be closely integrated with other plan elements and planning efforts. Rural area planning will probably not be successful if adequate provisions are not made elsewhere in the plan for urban growth. Provisions for critical area and resource land protection and the open space system will likely play a major role in shaping the rural element. Rural capital facility and transportation needs must be incorporated into the capital facilities and transportation elements. Such integration is needed to assure that planning policies are implemented and that all plan elements work in concert toward achieving a community vision. Recognize also that rural issues do not stop at county lines. The GMA requires that your comprehensive plan (including your rural element) be "coordinated with and consistent with" the plans of adjacent jurisdictions. Even if consistency were not required, it should be clear that your rural land planning will be undermined if incompatible uses are planned on lands in adjacent counties.

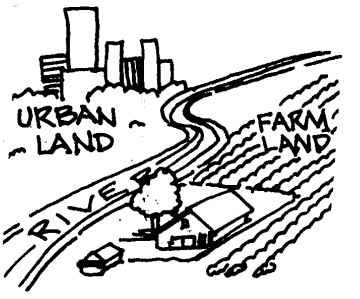
2) Initiate Community Visioning and Ongoing Citizen Participation. The importance of this step to overall program success cannot be underestimated. Citizen participation is necessary if the rural

element is to address real community needs. The best source of information about rural community needs is the citizens who live and work in rural communities. Involve citizens representing diverse community interests in all stages from goal setting to program and project design. Such involvement will produce a system which is more responsive to the community's diverse needs.

Your community's rural planning will also be more effective and focused when developed around a clear vision of the future. In other words, the citizens of your community need to define what they want and the purposes to be served by your community's rural areas. They also need to reach consensus about what qualities are most important to preserve and which should change. That vision needs to be a part of the community's overall vision of community growth and development. The section on "Resistance to Rural Regulation" describes several citizen participation approaches which have worked well in rural areas. In addition, two DCD guidebooks offer suggestions for a successful participation effort—*Towards Managing Growth in Washington: A Guide to Community Visioning* and *A Bottom up Primer: A Guide to Citizen Participation*. A publication from the Institute for Participatory Management, *Citizen Participation Handbook for Public Officials and other Professionals Serving the Public*, provides extremely useful information in greater detail on a variety of citizen participation techniques.

3) Inventory Existing Conditions, Trends and Resources. As with any planning effort, knowledge about existing conditions, trends, problems and opportunities is fundamental to a successful outcome. This information is in fact, the foundation on which future decisions will be made. Much of the information collected as a part of your land use inventory, capital facilities inventory and critical/resource lands inventories will be important in assessing alternatives for rural area land uses, patterns and services. Land use patterns, existing densities, the availability of various facilities, environmental constraints or hazards, wildlife habitats, vegetative cover, natural features, resources, roads and other infrastructure will affect the choices you make for the future of your rural areas. Information about soils and their ability to support resource uses will be important information in rural area planning. An inventory of historic and cultural resources and rural character will be particularly important in defining the future nature of your rural areas. Other socioeconomic information about the rural area population the plan element serves will also be helpful. The DCD guidebooks, *DCD's Land Use Inventory, Land Use Element,*

Designating Your Community's Open Space, and Historic Preservation guidebooks, all contain more detailed information on methods for inventorying existing conditions.

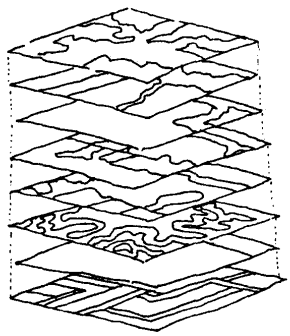


4) Define Rural Area Boundaries. The DCD guidebook, *The Art and Science of Designating Urban Growth Areas: Some Suggestions for Criteria and Densities*, includes a section on criteria which can help you define the extent of your rural areas. For those who designated resource lands on an interim basis, this is the time to reconsider the boundary between rural and resource uses.

5) Take Full Advantage of a Variety of Resources to Help You Do the Job. The section on rural resources contains suggestions for marshalling the resources you will need to get the job done.

6) Identify and Analyze Existing Problems and Opportunities. You may wish to use the base information you have assembled to prepare a problems and opportunities map. If you use a community group meeting process, it will give you a head start on such a map. Map the existing conditions and note any features which might constrain or enhance resource, residential, open space or other uses on these lands. For instance, lack of infrastructure and road access, presence of incompatible uses (such as heavy industrial) or hazards (such as abandoned mines) might severely constrain more intensive residential or convenience commercial uses. Prime soils should perhaps be set aside for agricultural operations whether large operations or smaller intensive specialty farming. Shoreline access, a unique natural feature, or an exceptional view (such as Mount Rainier or the Columbia River) may provide an exceptional park or open space opportunity. An area's potential for residential use may be enhanced if located next to supporting facilities (such as a school), or near an activity center. Areas adjacent to urban growth areas may be candidates for future urban area expansion.

It is particularly important, in rural area planning, to identify those uses, areas, features and characteristics you wish to preserve into the future. In considering location and land area to be set aside for various rural uses, Chapin and Kaiser recommend beginning with land uses which will be most difficult to site or fit in after a pattern is set. They recommend providing first for open space uses because our market system typically will not allocate space for open space uses including critical areas protection, parks and recreation use (1979). Resource lands require considerable land area. They are also very dependent on suitable soil and topographic conditions and can not be provided for as an afterthought. Similarly, existing rural



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character can be very quickly overwhelmed by new development. Decisions and provisions for theses resources need to be made early in the process if they are to continue as viable uses into the future.

A very efficient analysis technique is to overlay maps of your base information. The maps will need to be at the same scale to overlay them onto the existing land use map. You may wish to develop composite maps of the critical areas constraints maps for the ease of handling fewer maps. This technique will make it easier to consider all information together. For example, the critical areas overlays will show you which vacant lands are better able to handle intensive development. The transportation network/utilities/capital facilities maps will show you where adequate support facilities can best be provided. Your analysis will be most effective if it is carried out in concert with the overall land use analysis. You will need to balance and consider interrelationships between different types of land use needs within and outside of the rural area.

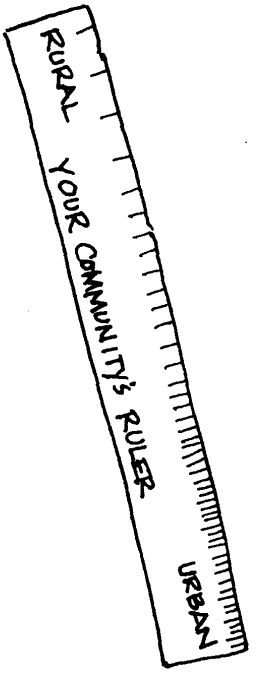
7) Develop Rural Area Goals and Policies to Guide Rural Area Development. Goals, policies and objectives form the heart of the rural element. In order for plans to be effective, they need to contain clear statements about what the community seeks to achieve for the future of its rural areas. They also must contain clear statements about how the community intends to move toward its desired future. Goals are statements about the community's desired future. They are ideals which are difficult to obtain, but they state the direction the community desires to head. Objectives are statements about realistic, achievable and measurable steps toward reaching goals. "Policies are specific statements guiding actions and implying clear commitment" to these actions (Solnit, 1987). They become the basis on which decisions will be made.

In order for plans to be effective, they need to contain clear statements about what the community seeks to achieve for the future of its rural areas.

Although citizens can express values and goals at public meetings, through attitude surveys and by other means, these expressions need to be captured into a set of clear statements which are specific enough to provide guidance. Each community will need to decide on the degree of specific direction which will be necessary to get the desired results while maintaining flexible choices. See the policy development section of the DCD *Land Use Element Guidebook* for more helpful tips on policy development.

8) Prepare a Set of Mapped Alternatives. The plan element development process is basically a creative synthesis of the many options you have identified. The goal should be to find the

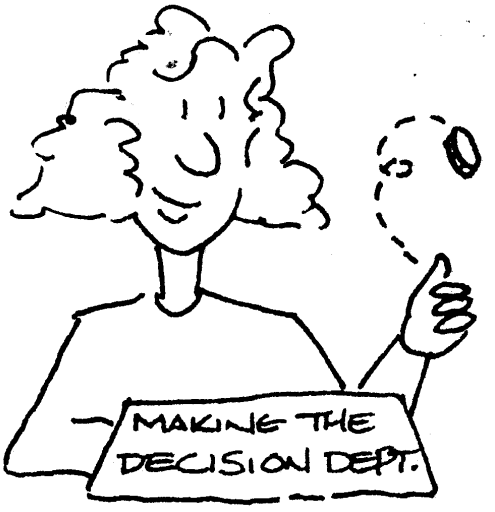
combination which best meets local needs. Throughout the plan development process, use your plan policies to guide choices. To prepare the plan element, it is helpful to prepare a set of alternative plans for consideration by professional staff, decision-makers and the public. These are probably best prepared as a part of your overall land use alternatives. A major effort should be made to help the public and decision-makers visualize the outcome of different courses of action. Each alternative should be technically sound, based on your analysis results. The development of each plan alternative should be guided by your community's draft goals, objectives, policies, criteria and standards. Overall county-wide policies, developed under the GMA, should be addressed. In addition to a map, your alternatives should include strategies for implementing the alternative. Recommendations for land acquisition and facilities must be implemented into the capital facilities plan element if they are to become a reality. The "Optimal Patterns for Rural Development" section describes a number of different development patterns you may wish to incorporate into your alternatives. See the plan formulation section of DCD's *Land Use Element Guidebook* for more information on plan alternative development. The alternatives that you prepare should be able to double for State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) alternatives, if you determine an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary. Your evaluation of alternatives in the next step can also be integrated with the SEPA process. The DCD guidebook, *SEPA/GMA Workbook* offers useful suggestions for coordinating the SEPA process with your plan preparation process.



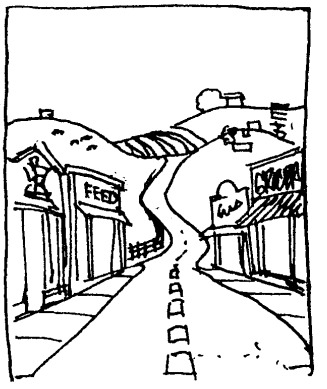
9) Evaluate Rural Area Alternatives. This step involves comparing the benefits and drawbacks of your rural area alternatives. Your goals, policies and rural area criteria provide yardsticks for measuring the relative merits of each alternative. Your rural area alternatives need to be considered in the broader context of your overall land use and comprehensive plan alternatives. They should also be considered in light of the planning efforts of adjacent (and beyond) communities. Your preferred alternative may end up being a hybrid of the features of several alternatives. Again, the *Land Use Element Guidebook* provides more suggestions for evaluating plan alternatives.

10) Select the Preferred Alternative. After public review and comment of the alternatives, refine the preferred rural area policy and strategy. Again, it should include an implementation strategy which incorporates and addresses comments and concerns expressed at public meetings. The preferred plan should again be presented for public review and comment, and

finally, adopted as a part of your overall comprehensive plan, by your community's governing body.



Optional Patterns for Rural Area Development



Traditional rural patterns consist of concentrations of population or centers surrounded by working or natural open spaces. Towns, villages, hamlets and crossroad settlements emerged, interspersed with expanses of farm or forest land. Homes clustered together in hamlets to save the best land for farm or forest production and to be near access routes. Randall Arendt describes the rural pattern as "a patchwork of open agricultural fields punctuated by an occasional farmstead or village grouping" (Arendt, 1990). Residential development typically clustered around a village green or a main street at the heart of the settlement. Small villages and towns with very basic commercial services occurred with surprising frequency relative to the population of rural areas. This was true because they served the farm (or timber industry) community. Such families could not afford to spend time away from their operations to travel to more distant markets to meet their needs. After the advent of the automobile, development began to spread out in the sprawl patterns described below. More recent development practices are dividing up the landscape into more uniform residential lots at densities in between traditional urban and rural densities. Although each individual lot contains some private open area, there are no significant open spaces between development. The demarcation between the centers and countryside has begun to blur.

The traditional center/open space pattern and the uniform pattern represent two basic forms which may be used to accommodate new growth in rural areas. This section will describe some variations on these basic patterns. To summarize these variations, new growth may occur in the uniform residential development pattern at lot sizes which this guidebook defines as sprawl. Uniform development can also occur in the form of parcels sized for resource use - typically multiples of 40 acres (as a result of historic homestead patterns).

Alternately, new growth can cluster in centers. It can expand the size of existing centers or it can take the form of entirely new centers. This section will describe a hierarchy of centers. Major rural centers provide a range of goods and services to rural residents as well as supplies needed by resource operations. They also provide employment opportunities for rural residents, particularly in resource-related services. Although they may be surrounded by rural area, they are often incorporated and have an urban growth area designation. Variations on this type of center include existing towns, new fully contained communities (contemporary design and layout), neotraditional towns (new towns which look traditional), or master planned resorts. The next level of center offers basic day-to-day commercial needs but is not an employment center. This is the traditional village. A modern

variation might be a planned unit development. The smallest center, the hamlet, is a clustering of housing without commercial uses. Hamlets traditionally developed at strategic crossroads. The more contemporary variation is the cluster subdivision.

This section will also briefly describe two variations on open spaces: 1) working landscapes (in resource use), especially farms and woodlands, and 2) undeveloped non-resource open spaces and critical areas.

The following subsections will 1) define each type of pattern, 2) describe the benefits and limitations of each, and 3) provide suggestions for successful application of each pattern type.

The No-Action Alternative? - Low-Density Sprawl

Many Americans idealize country life. In fact, one recent survey found that two-thirds of the prospective homebuyers in the U.S. would prefer to buy a home in a small town or in the rural countryside (Pivo, 1990). An even more overwhelming response to a survey published in the August 1990 issue of *Builder* confirmed a preference for detached single family homes - 87 percent (Knack, 1991). For many, the freestanding single family home surrounded by a patch of land in the country has long been the "American Dream." In fact, one rural researcher notes that "Americans have never become urbanized in the way Europeans are" (Hebers, 1987). When rural areas became more accessible, many formerly urban residents followed their dream of country living.

With the advent of the automobile, freeways, and more recently, the telecommunications age, rural areas have become less isolated. These developments brought rural home locations within striking distance of urban jobs. They also began to shape new patterns in the countryside. Scattered pockets of low-density conventional suburban subdivisions began to intermingle with farmsteads. Commercial development began to spring up in a linear or "strip" pattern along the highways to serve the new residential developments and pass-through traffic. These developments are typically low-density developments, spread out over a large area, relying on septic tanks for waste disposal. The low-density development pattern, by definition, consumes significantly more land per residential unit than housing developments in urban areas. For a time, these developments did seem to fulfill the "American Dream," providing affordable housing in pastoral surroundings. The new home owners, when bordered by large acreages of working farms, could maintain the illusion that they were living rural lifestyles. As more and more people followed suit, however, the dream began to evaporate. "The view from the picture

The low-density development pattern, by definition, consumes significantly more land per residential unit than housing developments in urban areas.

window (became) the other man's picture window" (Williams, 1991). Housing prices also rose and the commute to work became congested. People spent more time on the road, leaving less time for family and interaction with neighbors.

For the long-term rural resident, traffic, dogs and neighbors with low tolerance for farm odors and noisy forestry operations made continued farming and forestry difficult. Sprawling residential development began to displace resource uses. Residents of rural towns found themselves locking once open doors when they no longer knew their neighbors.

A recent Southeast Michigan Council of Governments report describes some potential effects which sprawl in outlying areas can have on urban centers (SEMCOG, 1991). SEMCOG notes that "the challenge, it would seem, is making certain that the realization of the American dream by some does not become a nightmare for many others." The report observes that sprawl from another perspective is "a nightmare of vanishing open space...zooming infrastructure costs...duplicative services, both public and private...a profligate waste of resources both natural and fiscal." The report goes on to note that we have effectively subsidized sprawl growth on the urban fringe by means of public subsidies for roads, sewers and waterlines and mortgage and tax breaks which facilitate homeownership and commuting by automobile. While we have subsidized new growth, many older urbanized communities have been left with existing infrastructure which is "severely underutilized" (SEMCOG, 1991).

Arendt argues that unless we change the way we currently manage (or fail to manage) growth, only vestiges of the traditional rural landscape will remain. He is concerned that "This expansion now threatens to overwhelm the sense of place and visual qualities that have evolved for over 300 years. For many area residents, the image and the reality of the (Connecticut River) Valley have begun to conflict" (Arendt, 1990). Others similarly warn "These historic lines of demarcation between what is village and what is countryside are slowly becoming blurred and replaced by an homogenous, suburbanized landscape without such distinctions" (Lacey, 1990). Recall Gary Pivo's similar warning (in the guidebook introduction) about the costs of sprawl in our own state.

Large Lot Zoning

In its worst form, large lot zoning is the legalized sprawl development discussed at the beginning of this section. Local government's initial response to managing the onslaught of new growth in rural areas was to adopt zoning with large minimum lot sizes.

Under such ordinances, a house may be built only if located on a lot which meets a specified minimum size. These lot sizes tend to be larger (and thus less dense) than those typically found in urban areas or small towns and villages. However, they are far smaller than those needed for most resource production operations. The large lot sizes, if large enough, addressed some of the more obvious environmental ills such as well contamination. They did not necessarily produce development consistent with the existing rural character.

As Arendt observes "Most rural residents probably consider their towns to be fairly well 'protected' if they have adopted zoning regulations. Few of them realize that conventional zoning is essentially a blueprint for development and development alone...Conventional zoning assigns a development designation to every acre of land in one's town, generally residential, commercial or industrial. The only lands not designated for development under conventional zoning are wetlands and floodplains...Nothing is left over to become open space in this land consumptive process" (Arendt, 1990). When the potential of many rural zoning ordinances is realized, the result is "wall-to-wall subdivisions." A five or even one acre parcel allows a family a bit of private open space to enjoy. Area for gardening or even horses reinforces the sense of rural living. But when the prevailing pattern becomes one-half or one or five acre lots, each separate turf marked off by a rustic, or not so rustic fence, the sense of openness quickly disappears. The cumulative effects of such development in many cases, adds up to greater environmental harm because of the greater area disturbed.

The courts have frequently ruled against large-lot ordinances as "exclusionary." Larger lot sizes are generally more expensive and tend to prevent low- and middle-income families from purchasing such homes. Courts have tended to look with disfavor on large-lot zoning for the purposes of preserving rural character when not clearly related to health, safety and welfare objectives. They have looked more favorably on lot sizes based on environmental concerns which can be supported with scientific evidence. The courts have also upheld large minimum lot sizes in agricultural zones when prepared pursuant to a comprehensive plan which seeks to protect important farmlands. For instance, the Illinois courts have upheld 160-acre agricultural zone minimums in McHenry County (Stokes, 1989).

From the standpoint of efficient use of land, environmental concerns, legal concerns and public service costs, large minimum lot sizes unrelated to resource needs have often proven counterproductive to achieving local objectives. However, the American Dream persists and there is a substantial demand for this form of residential development. When used selectively, large lot zoning can meet some

of these market demands for rural residential lifestyles and housing choice, without destroying rural character.

Large lot zoning may also be useful to temporarily hold land in reserve until adequate facilities are available to support urban development. This may be particularly appropriate on lands in the rural area which border villages, towns or other urban areas. Beyond the time frame of the current planning efforts, these lands may be candidate areas for future urban expansion. However, lot sizes must be large enough to ensure that patterns don't develop which limit future urban development options. Even a five to ten acre lot pattern will be difficult to convert to urban patterns at a later date. Additional provisions, such as master plans and right-of-way easements, may be necessary to assure that facilities can be provided when needed for future urban development.

Large lot zoning may also be useful to temporarily hold land in reserve until adequate facilities are available to support urban development. . . lot sizes must be large enough to ensure that patterns don't develop which limit future urban development options.

Suggestions for Appropriate Use of This Development Pattern:

1) determine first which lands should be planned as a part of the open space network or avoided because of environmental sensitivity.

2) limit large residential lot zoning to lands less productive for resource uses.

3) confine the overall area committed to this pattern to selected zones rather than spreading such development across wide areas.

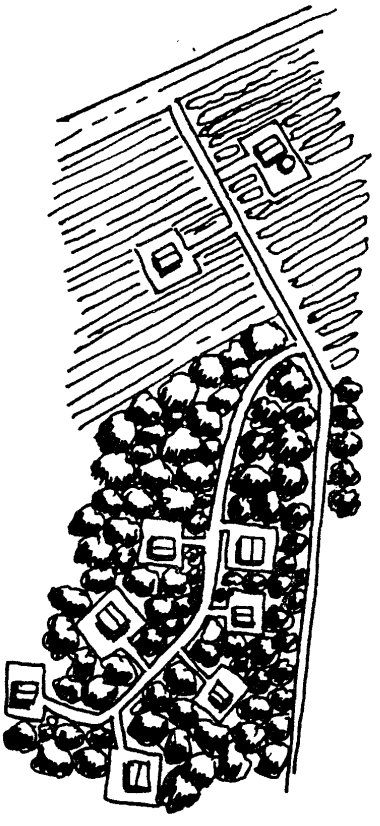
4) relate lot sizes to justifiable health/safety/public service concerns (to strengthen legal position).

5) use to buffer resource operations from development.

6) consider mandatory clustering, clustering incentives or minimum densities in other rural residential zones to assure that large lot subdivisions do not predominate where clustered development is desired.

7) use lot sizes of 10-20 acres or larger if this method is selected to reserve land for future urban expansion. Master plans and right-of way easements will also facilitate future urban development.

Cluster Development



Several other development patterns may better fit rural areas. The Act encourages local communities to consider innovative techniques including cluster housing. The cluster development concept recognizes that not all areas are equal in terms of development potential. Rather than subdividing land into uniform lots, cluster developments provide the flexibility to plan around distinctive site features or constraints. In cluster development, houses (or other development) are grouped on a limited portion of the site. The lots they occupy are smaller than those in a conventional subdivision. As a result, part of the site can remain undeveloped while retaining the same overall number of units. The housing units in a cluster development can be detached or attached single-family dwellings or in multifamily buildings. Cluster developments, like traditional hamlets, are primarily residential. The clustered development concept is also central to village and new community development types which will be discussed in following sections. Cluster developments tend to capitalize on a more flexible layout of streets and building lots. The regular street "grid," common to urban areas, is generally absent from these developments. Instead, curvilinear streets and irregular-shaped lots which bend with the topography, streams and other natural forms are typical.

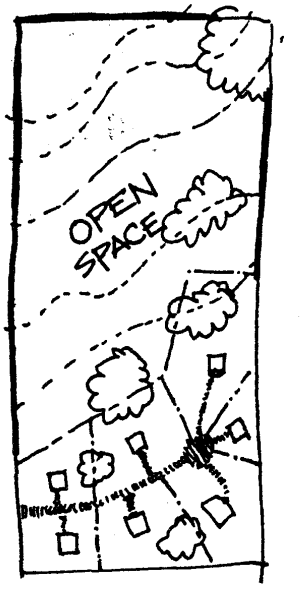
Clustering can be particularly effective in siting development to protect critical areas and natural processes. They can more readily be laid out to reserve land for recreational purposes including trails or greenbelt segments which tie into regional systems. Clustering can also lower the costs of providing public services, as well as private improvements, by decreasing the length of roads and utility lines needed to serve the development. Similarly, clustered development can decrease the distance that sheriffs must travel to patrol, that buses must travel to collect school children and, in general, that decrease the time required to provide many services.

Clustering development also may be used to allow limited development to occur in urban reserve areas without eliminating future urban development options. A community wastewater treatment system may be desirable to allow high enough densities to fit future urban patterns and service needs. Such clusters should also be planned and related to an overall master plan for the reserve areas to assure that infrastructure extension is not blocked.

Clustering may permit short-term agricultural operations and be compatible with small, intensive agricultural operations such as berry farms or nurseries. Such developments may still pose compatibility problems for larger commercial resource operations, unless buffered. Simply providing a cluster option probably won't in itself preserve large areas in open space or resource use.

Recommendations to Strengthen Cluster Pattern Effectiveness in Preserving Open Space:

1) Specify open space requirements or criteria. Many communities have experience with traditional forms of cluster development (which are primarily residential) or with planned unit developments (which may also incorporate some neighborhood services and commercial uses). These developments often place priority on clustering dwellings around common areas to lower infrastructure costs. The clustering of units results in open space, but it is often only a secondary consideration. The open space may take the form of ribbons or smaller areas of open space scattered throughout the development. When laid out in this fashion, the open space may meet some recreation and critical area protection needs but might not contribute to the sense of openness characteristic of rural areas. Cluster developments can be designed to give much greater emphasis to open space and rural character, however. For instance, the open space zoning cluster ordinances promoted by Randall Arendt make the protection of open space the primary site development consideration in open space zoning clusters. These developments preserve a large portion of the site in open space. Over 50 percent is not uncommon. The development is arranged to maximize the quantity and quality of open space on the site. Consider requirements or guidelines to locate open spaces adjacent to open spaces on neighboring developments. This will create a larger block of open space and the opportunity for agreements for joint recreational use or even resource use of the open space.

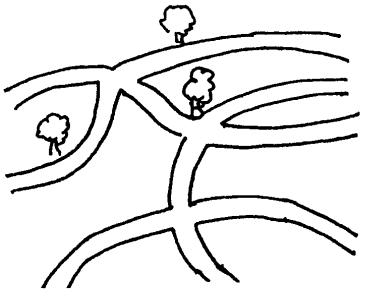


2) Consider incentives for open space. Some communities are also experimenting with incentive or conservation point systems. These incentive approaches apply a point system to reward developers with density bonuses. Greater bonuses are available for providing the type of land and open space amenities which the community most values, as expressed in community goals. They can also be awarded to reward development which meets guidelines for preserving rural character. An example of such a point system is described in Appendix G of *Designating Your Community's Open Space*.

3) Adopt design guidelines to assure community fit. Although development is clustered to maintain more openness and to avoid sensitive areas, clustering in itself does not assure development which is compatible with rural character. Many earlier cluster subdivisions and planned unit developments were notably incompatible with rural character. In fact, "the legacy of cluster development in many townships involves higher overall

densities, open space consisting of entirely unbuildable land and incongruous townhouses or condominiums amid single family neighborhoods" (Arendt). The visual character and fit of the development in rural areas is also a primary concern. Site design techniques can minimize the visual impact of development, especially from public viewpoints such as roadways. Guidelines and regulations can also be used to promote siting and building design which respects and fits rural environments.

4) Locate cluster development areas carefully. Careful location of rural cluster developments will be critical to assuring a good fit within rural areas. If clustered developments are scattered randomly throughout rural areas, they may result in a checkerboard pattern which disrupts rather than reinforces rural character.



5) Provide a complete hierarchy of streets. Cluster developments also pose problems for planning good circulation. Cluster developments (and conventional suburban subdivisions) tend to utilize curvilinear streets with an abundance of cul-de-sacs. While these streets provide privacy, they can contribute to congestion if not well-related to the surrounding road system. A complete hierarchy of streets should be planned with some streets providing local access and others providing through circulation. Preferably, every street should connect through to another street. Streets can still curve and employ design to limit outside traffic and maintain a residential character.

6) Consider mandatory clustering. A number of communities, particularly in New England, have adopted mandatory clustering requirements. As Randall Arendt notes, if it's important enough to you, don't leave it to chance. Experience shows that if you do no more than make clustering or open space zoning legal, you'll be lucky if 10 or 15 percent of the developers decide to opt for this approach (Arendt, 1993). Mandatory clustering may be particularly desirable in portions of the rural area where extensive critical areas exist. It may also be desirable where you have high quality resource lands which you weren't able to designate as resource lands.

Fit with rural character will be discussed further in a following section on rural issues. Appendix A contains a list of resources that include general guidelines for rural development to assure that development is designed to fit its rural context and guidelines recommended by the Center for Rural Massachusetts (*Technical Memo*, July 1990). Appendix C lists resources that includes a set of very useful guidelines for cluster development location and design prepared

by Gary Pivo, Director of the Growth Management and Research Clearinghouse, University of Washington, Robert Small, and Charles R. Wolfe. It also includes a cluster development ordinance which emphasizes retention of open space. These materials are available from DCD's Growth Management Division.

The cluster form of development is described in greater detail in the DCD guidebook, *Innovative Techniques - Part II - "Clustering"*. See also the related guidebook, *Innovative Techniques - Part I - "Transfer of Development Rights"*.

Rural Villages

Villages are predominantly residential centers, supported with limited commercial and community services near their centers.

Cluster development is one form of directing, organizing and concentrating growth into selected areas while avoiding development in other inappropriate areas. Cluster developments which are primarily residential are a more recent phenomenon in rural areas. A more traditional type of rural development pattern can also serve as a model for future growth in rural areas.

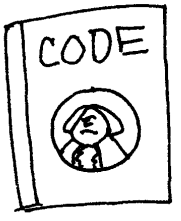
Villages are predominantly residential centers, supported with limited commercial and community services near their centers. The different uses typically are not clearly separated from each other as is typical in urban areas. They consist of compact development which is readily distinguishable from surrounding undeveloped lands. Their distinct edge is a key part of the village definition. As one source notes, the village "vanishes" when the edge is lost to development (Houston). They often form at a crossroads and develop around some focal point which may be a general store which may include groceries, sundries and feed supplies or similar resource-oriented goods. Other typical uses include a post office, church, elementary school, restaurant, tavern, gas station or other small shops catering to very local needs and supporting adjacent resource uses. Buildings and distance are human-scale. The physical size of a village tends to be set by what is a comfortable walking range (approximately 1/2 mile radius).

Traditional rural villages evolved in rural areas and seem a natural part of rural areas. Unlike cluster developments, they incorporate basic commercial uses and community services which meet some of the day-to-day needs of rural residents. As a result, village residents may be less dependent on driving somewhere to meet basic needs. Traffic congestion and commutes can be minimized, particularly when village residents are employed in businesses which support nearby resource uses. Villages offer the same advantages of cluster development,

leaving efficient blocks of resource lands. They have grown up where the need existed. They may better provide gathering places, attract activity and provide a sense of community.

However, existing villages and hamlets can only absorb so much new growth and still retain their village qualities. Unlike cluster developments or new communities, new growth must fit into an existing situation. It is especially important that new development be designed to blend with existing village development. At the same time, existing villages may need to be retrofitted to meet contemporary needs and present day realities such as the automobile. This exercise should be accomplished while still designing for the pedestrian and retaining the village's rural character.

Recommendations to Help Assure that Rural Villages Continue to Fit Rural Surroundings:



1) Revise zoning ordinance. A number of village advocates have pointed out that most communities will need to begin by creating zoning ordinances which would allow their existing villages to be built today. Typical zoning ordinances today better accommodate conventional suburban subdivision.

2) Adopt village design guidelines. New and existing villages alike will benefit from design guidelines which assure that buildings and development patterns which blend in with their rural settings. Villages can exhibit an eclectic collection of architectural styles, particularly when the villages have developed over a long period. Generally, however, there are a number of unifying elements which can be found in common among village structures. Common height and scale, pitched roofs adapting to local inclement weather, and use of local construction materials are examples of features which may tie local architecture together. In addition, many western towns have grown up over a shorter time period and may exhibit a more consistent architectural style. Again, rural character will be discussed further in the rural issues section.

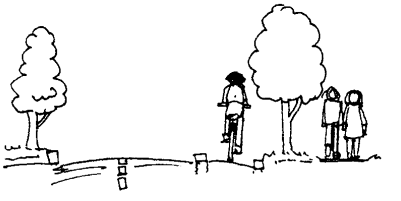
3) Control development at the village edge. Because the village loses its identity apart from its rural surroundings, controlling development at the village edge will be critical. Providing a sharp break between village development and countryside runs counter to standard zoning principles. Typical zoning ordinances provide for a gradual transition of densities to improve compatibility. Instead, development controls should be crafted to encourage efficient, concentrated development within the village using landscaping, natural features and other methods

rather than extensive, in-between densities to buffer adjacent resource lands.

4) Protect adjoining resource lands. The Bucks County Planning Commission, which prepared the classic *Village Planning*, advocates establishing and restricting development within a viewshed which includes the area which can be viewed from the village (1989).

5) Enhance image at village entrances. The entrance to the village at its edge is also a key element in establishing the village's image. The entrance provides the first impression of the village for visitors.

6) Provide for pedestrians and reduce automobile dominance. Handling the automobile will be another key issue in maintaining village character. If a village is to function as a neighborhood service center, a good sidewalk/walkway system will be essential. Streets cannot safely accommodate pedestrians and cars as traffic increases. Sidewalks must lead to where people want to go if they are to function well. Often, the highway, which gave birth to a village, can later become a threat to its character as an area grows and traffic increases. Road widening can solve traffic problems but ruin a village's streetscape, wiping out front lawns and trees, pedestrian area and the more intimate feel of rural roads. Rather than sacrifice village character, a better solution may be to route through traffic or at least truck traffic around the village. Although merchants may fear business loss when traffic is rerouted, businesses may suffer greater losses if main street loses its appeal and is overwhelmed by through traffic. Automobiles can dominate the streetscape and detract from village character when front yard parking is permitted. Parking should be directed behind buildings or on side streets. Otherwise, they should be screened or landscaped to soften their impact. Shared community parking lots may also be part of the answer.



Existing Cities and Towns

Existing, incorporated cities and towns, although they may be surrounded by rural areas, have major concentrations of residences, shopping and employment. They have grown beyond the definition of villages described above and are equivalent to the new fully contained communities described in the next section. They differ from villages primarily in the variety of commercial uses and in the presence of some employment (or industrial) uses. The industrial uses are often related to resource production. The GMA directs that incorporated cities and

Some unincorporated centers may merit urban growth area designation. This is particularly true when they exhibit urban densities and are served by urban services such as sewer.

towns be designated as urban growth areas, although they may be freestanding centers. Some unincorporated centers may merit urban growth area designation. This is particularly true when they exhibit urban densities and are served by urban services such as sewer. Criteria such as those suggested in DCD's guidebook, *The Art and Science of Designating Urban Growth Areas - Part II - Some Suggestions for Criteria and Densities*, can help you determine whether urban growth area designation is appropriate for some existing rural-serving centers. It can also be used to evaluate which areas are appropriate for expansion of existing cities and towns.

Recommendations for New Development in Existing Towns. The suggestions for dealing with new development in villages are equally applicable to existing cities and towns within rural areas. The principles for people-friendly development in neotraditional towns, modelled after traditional towns, also apply.

New Fully Contained Communities

GMA provisions. The GMA provides another option for focusing growth into compact centers in rural areas within counties. A county may earmark a portion of its 20-year population projection for allocation to "new fully contained communities" outside of urban growth areas, which meet certain GMA criteria. The area within urban growth areas would then be adjusted downward to offset for the area reserved for these new communities. The procedural criteria prepared by DCD generally define a new fully contained community as "a development proposed for location outside of the initially designated urban growth areas which is characterized by urban densities, uses and services and meets the criteria of RCW 36.70A.350" [WAC 365-195-210 (15)]. The GMA provides the following criteria which must be met before a county approves such a development:

- New infrastructure is provided for and impact fees are established consistent with the requirements of RCW 82.02.050;
- Transit-oriented site planning and traffic demand management programs are implemented;
- Buffers are provided between the new fully contained communities and adjacent urban development;
- A mix of uses is provided to offer jobs, housing and services to the residents of the community;
- Affordable housing is provided within the new community for a broad range of income levels;

- Environmental protection has been addressed and provided for;
- Development regulations are established to ensure urban growth will not occur in adjacent non-urban areas;
- Provision is made to mitigate impacts on designated agricultural lands, forest lands and mineral resource lands; and
- The plan for the new fully contained community is consistent with the development regulations established for the protection of critical areas by the county pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170.

A county may set aside a "community reserve area" within rural areas for such communities only once every five years as a part of its required urban growth area review. Once established, the community reserve area is to be allocated on a project-by-project basis. It can be allocated only after the county has adopted specific project review and approval procedures for these projects.

New communities in practice. As discussed earlier, rural villages represent a traditional rural development pattern type which focus growth into centers. They are relatively small scale and provide limited commercial services, but very little employment. In contrast, new fully contained communities can follow either contemporary or traditional design models (often called neotraditional when new development is modelled after traditional town patterns). They are much larger in scale than are the villages. They are the equivalent of existing towns except that they are entirely new. As the name implies, they strive to be complete communities meeting the residents' commercial and public service needs and providing employment opportunities. Reid Ewing, author of *Developing Successful New Communities*, characterizes new communities as development projects that are:

New fully contained communities strive to be complete communities meeting the residents' commercial and public service needs and providing employment opportunities.

- large scale (he suggests a threshold of at least 2000 acres);
- programmed to contain a balanced mix of land uses, including employment centers and a variety of housing types;
- master planned, early in the development process; and
- controlled by a master developer.

He also notes that new communities, also called new towns, are typically located 10-30 miles from major cities, although they may be up to 150 miles away. Their success may depend, in part, on a location in regions which are experiencing significant growth.

Although the GMA does not require that the above characteristics be present, they may contribute to the success of these communities. Much of the following material on new communities is drawn from Reid Ewing's comprehensive handbook (Ewing, 1991).

In their best form, new communities today can offer an alternative which avoids many of the problems of sprawling suburban development. Because of their clustered development pattern and urban densities, they are less consumptive of open space and less disruptive of natural systems. New communities strive to offer a sense of community typically absent in conventional suburban developments. Centrally located town centers give the community a heart and soul. In addition to commercial services serving the community, the center is home to government, civic, and cultural facilities and activities. These activities and gathering places tend to bring community residents together. Smaller villages or neighborhood centers, serving neighborhoods within the new community, also provide gathering places and meet local convenience needs. Clearly-defined community edges reinforce the sense of community and reduce impacts on surrounding rural and resource uses.

New communities of the 1990s increasingly are designed to reduce dependence on the automobile. A hierarchy of master planned streets will better mesh with the regional road system preserving safety and privacy for local streets while providing efficient arterial circulation. These communities are commercial and employment centers; some residents can live, shop and work in the community. As a result, traffic congestion and air pollution can be reduced. Transportation demand management and transit planning can further these goals. New communities typically provide pedestrian and bicycle pathways which serve both transportation and recreation needs.

The clustered pattern offers advantages for cost-efficient provision of public facilities and services. Communities controlled by a master developer frequently can provide facilities faster than can be accomplished by local government serving piecemeal development. This is particularly true when local government relies on a cumbersome process of accumulating fees before a community facility can be fully funded.

New communities will not be appropriate in all locations. Because of their typically large scale, they may overwhelm an isolated rural area. They will attract new traffic and activity to an area and will require careful planning to minimize impacts. If the project design is insensitive to local character, it can quickly overwhelm that character. To attract the industry which is key to their growth and success, they will generally require a location in a growing region. With their urban densities, uses, and public services, they are more urban than rural in

nature. Counties will need to make a policy decision about whether it is better in their particular situation to concentrate all urban growth near existing urban growth areas or decentralize some urban growth to new satellite centers.

Reid Ewing observes these desirable trends in new community development. These trends, founded on lessons learned from earlier experiments, may be key to assuring a good fit and a high quality living environments for community residents.

Recommendations for New Communities to Assure Good Fit and Quality Living Environments.

1) Mixed use - Providing a full range of uses is key to assuring a "fully contained community." Town centers should contain the full range of uses while smaller village/neighborhood centers should contain at least a mix of housing types and meet the convenience needs of neighborhoods. Commercial uses should occur in compact centers rather than as highway strips, although they may be (and according to Ewing should be) oriented toward a highway access to increase business potential.

2) Open space - Conventional subdivisions typically provide five to ten percent open space. Recent new communities are placing an increased emphasis on maintaining greater open space through clustering. Percentages ranging from 20 to 70 percent are typical.

   The plan for Sterling Forest, a particularly well-thought out new community in New York, has maintained 75 percent of its site in mainly natural open space (Sterling Forest Comprehensive Plan, 1992).

3) Pedestrian orientation - Most successful developments are providing networks of sidewalks and pathways. Ewing suggests a combination of 1) sidewalks within view of streets and public places to increase security and 2) meandering walkways and bike paths oriented toward recreation or providing direct, purposeful access to schools or other activity centers.

4) Streets - The street system should provide for privacy and safety in neighborhoods as well as through circulation. Cul-de-sacs are popular, but curvilinear streets can discourage through traffic while providing a greater number of alternative routes. In any event, a hierarchy of streets will be needed to provide for both local access and through circulation. Plans for new communities such as the proposed community of Sterling Forest have focused development along transit corridors and stations to facilitate transit service.

5) Design - Because of the size of these developments, it is not unusual that multiple developers will purchase and develop blocks of land. Design guidelines and design review committees can help assure harmonious compatible development (both within the development and relative to surrounding development). Controlling sign clutter and liberal use of landscaping, especially along roads, can improve blending with the rural surroundings. Using landscaping, building siting and other techniques to buffer these developments from surrounding rural and resource uses will be critical. Rural character and design is discussed further in the issues section. Appendix A lists resources for further information on these subjects.

Neotraditional Neighborhoods and Towns

New fully-contained communities can be contemporary or neotraditional in design. Neotraditional-designed communities have drawn considerable attention in recent years. Neotraditionalists advocate a return to traditional small town design principles in designing new communities. Rural villages, modelled after traditional villages, incorporate many neotraditional principles. New communities, as they have evolved in recent years, share many of the same design objectives. Perhaps the overriding theme of neotraditional design is to create livable, people-friendly communities. Human-scale, safety, comfort, convenience and opportunity to meet and interact with one's neighbors and belong to a community are defining features. Similar to villages and new communities, these objectives translate into efforts to reduce the dominance of the automobile. Streets serve pedestrians and automobiles equitably. Communities include a mix of uses. Everything is within walking and biking distance. Communities are planned to facilitate transit service.

Perhaps the main difference in form is that neotraditional communities tend to project a more formal, traditional, urban image. Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, among the most visible proponents of neotraditionalism, advocate use of "grid" streets and service alleys. The streets are continuous, generally straight and occur at regular intervals around standard blocks. Sidewalks are more likely to parallel streets than to meander. Building architecture generally mimics more traditional forms. Open spaces also tend to be more formal and purposeful. Town squares or greens which are semi-enclosed function as "public rooms" or gathering places. Other open spaces serve recreation needs. Civic buildings are given prominence. In general, neotraditional towns "celebrate the public environment" while cluster development and new communities may seek to build in more privacy. Neotraditional design may better lend itself to higher

densities. The differing design approaches cater to different needs and tastes. There appears to be a market for both. Counties should consider which provides the best match for their situation and consider providing the flexibility for both types of new communities.
Harold S. Williams, President of the Rensselaerville Institute and onetime member of the Small Towns Institute Board, offers the following general principles for people-friendly settlements modelled on traditional small town environments (1991).

Recommendations for People-Friendly Neotraditional Towns:

1) Define public spaces clearly and with purpose. Rather than treating public spaces as the residual areas remaining after street and lot formation, think of them as an essential part of the settlement pattern. Anticipate uses (civic, social, recreational, etc.) so that public spaces become the focus of the community. Also recognize the need for the same kind of clear boundaries for public as for private spaces.

2) Focus on the core rather than the boundary. While subdivisions work to define a perimeter, small towns develop centers of gravity. Internal areas to which homes and people orient include greens, ponds, gardens and places for small-scale commerce and other public use.

3) Use order rather than repetition. Small towns tend to have straight streets, rows of trees, neat picket fences and other features which connote order of elements imposed on a setting rather than repetition softened by artifice.

4) Use human proportions rather than those measures defined by materials or convention. Finland's new town of Tapiola uses as its yardstick "Perambulator Distance." The concept is that a parent should push a baby carriage no more than 250 yards for neighboring and for access to all community services. In Seaside, Florida, porches are all 16 feet from the sidewalk. That is to encourage conversation with pedestrians without residents needing to raise their voices.

5) Encourage walking rather than driving. Paths, sidewalks and greenways, such as the one winding through Stowe, Vermont, enable neighboring by walking, jogging and cycling. It is ironic that so many leaders who pride themselves on "management by walking around" at work ignore the value of personal contact at home. Cars do as much to isolate neighbors as closed doors accomplish in isolating workers.

6) Use a low-rise, high density approach. While subdivisions tend to consume all available land in private lots, the higher small town density found along village streets both reduces walking time and creates substantial open space. Within a typical subdivision of 100-foot house frontage, a visit to a friend just 20 houses away means crossing a distance of 2,000 feet. Especially in those many subdivisions with no sidewalks, it is time to use the car. With small town frontages of 40 feet, that distance is reduced to 800 feet — a comfortable walk.

7) Use housing shapes and styles which connote coherent small towns and not the spreading suburb. "Ranch" and "raised ranch" homes which spread over lots clearly do not fit small town traditions.

8) Encourage a range of residents. While subdivisions generally market homes to one income and age range, small towns include more diversity. A range of housing sizes and costs enable seniors who wish to do so to live in proximity of children — perhaps even their own. For any approach seeking to integrate living and working, the presence of housing is essential if the full range of jobs is to be filled from local people.

9) Encourage a mix of activities rather than having just pure residential land use. Population bases of as few as 300 persons (80-100 houses) can support a remarkable range of shared activities, including day-care and community centers, a turf playing field, a small store, a church, etc.

10) Fit within the environment rather than on top of it. Traditional settlements tend to tuck into valleys and hillsides more often than they rise from ridge lines. Providing shelter from the elements and the use of land and its indentations to create defined public spaces were important considerations. Whether intentional or not, traditional small towns tend to be as respectful of the view of the land as the view from the land.

Master Planned Resorts

The GMA provides one other option for development outside of urban growth areas. Master planned resorts are "self-contained and fully integrated planned unit development(s), in a setting of significant natural amenities, with primary focus on destination resort facilities consisting of short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of developed on-site or outdoor recreation facilities." The developments can include other residential development (such as permanent residences or employee housing), but "only if the residential

uses are integrated into and support the on-site recreational nature of the resort" (RCW 36.70A. 360).

Master planned resorts are typically similar in form to fully contained communities. Because they are master planned, they should provide similar advantages over the uncontrolled strips of roadside shops which hawk rubber tomahawks and T-shirts to the travelling tourist. Successful destination resorts tend to place an even greater premium on attractive design and amenities because these are key ingredients in attracting visitors. They also tend to be clustered developments, centered around open space structured for some use such as a golf course, ski resort or national park. The addition of short term visitors often means that a fuller range of urban services, facilities and cultural amenities can be supported within a community. Tourism can provide a shot in the arm to the economies of surrounding communities which provide supplemental accommodations, attractions and services.

They differ from new fully contained communities in that they tend not to be "real communities" where people establish ongoing relationships and ties. Instead, they are oriented around a recreational or natural amenity. Businesses primarily serve people on vacation rather than a community at work. As a result, restaurants, bars, entertainment, recreation and souvenir and similar businesses predominate. The social structure of a community may be affected with a constant or seasonal stream of new people entering a community. The sense of belonging to a community and associated sense of security may be disrupted when residents no longer know all their neighbors. Seasonal employees are also less likely to participate in the community. The political structure and community direction may also change. It is not unusual for visitors and second home owners attracted to a community to eventually become permanent (voting) residents upon or even before retirement.

Frequently, the central recreation amenity is seasonal in nature, such as a ski resort, or area which attracts summer vacationers. As a result, the population of the community and the economy may experience a parallel seasonal fluctuation. This creates a unique set of issues which local communities must resolve including seasonal crunches and pressure on infrastructure, services and businesses alternating with slack periods of underemployment and excess capacity. These pressures often extend beyond the resort to surrounding areas and should be anticipated and planned for in advance.

Short-term rental rates and competition for housing by short-term visitors can contribute to increased housing costs and cost-of-living for local residents in surrounding areas as well as for resort employees. If nearby affordable housing is not provided, commuting employees can contribute to traffic congestion. Lack of affordable housing can also

contribute to high employee turnover. Adequate employee housing is essential to maintain a stable workforce. Alternatives to the automobile, including pedestrian networks and transit, tend to be even more essential in resort communities. Many visitors are without their cars, arriving by plane, train or bus. Service workers, often earning low wages, also benefit from public transit. Resort communities often locate in sensitive environments such as fragile mountain environments or shorelines. Because these sensitive areas are the main attraction for visitors, it is particularly important to safeguard sensitive areas.

In summary, master planned resorts can provide benefits to the local economy and provide (and even protect) amenities enjoyed by county residents and visitors alike. County residents will need to consider whether the benefits outweigh the potential impacts and consider how successfully these issues can be addressed to assure the resort development is a net asset to the community.

Summary of Recommendations for Provisions Which Can Help Assure That Master Planned Resorts Are a Net Benefit to Rural Counties:

1) The criteria listed above for new fully contained communities may be very appropriate for resort community approval as well.

2) Infrastructure will need to be carefully planned to handle peak loads and slack periods within and outside of the resort.

3) Transit and pedestrian facilities and services and affordable employee housing will be critical to the success of resorts.

4) Buffering of adjacent uses can help control the development's effects on adjoining lands, and critical areas protection can be crucial to assuring a good fit.

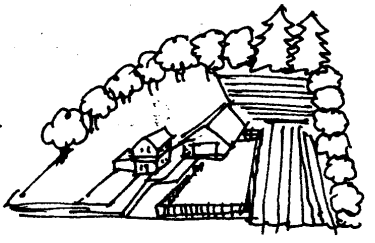
5) Design guidelines and landscaping can help safeguard the attractiveness of the resort.

Farmlands and Woodlands

Our image of rural lands certainly includes the resource uses, which traditionally occupied rural areas. Rural lands, by GMA's definition, do not include designated blocks of resource lands deemed to have long-term commercial significance. They may include existing, viable resource uses which are separated from other resource lands, located adjacent to urban areas, have lesser class soils or for other reasons did not make sense to include in the resource land designation. Resource

uses, especially agricultural uses, are certainly appropriate uses in rural areas and certainly contribute to rural character.

Recommendations for Provisions to Help Bolster the Likelihood That Resource Uses Will Succeed in Rural Areas:



1) Use lot sizes which can support viable resource operations. Large-scale farming operations may do well in rural areas. Large lot sizes, which relate to the land area necessary for viable resource operation, may be appropriate in some or many parts of the rural area to support these uses. This may be especially appropriate adjacent to resource lands to buffer them from residential and other more intensive uses. In these cases, the key is to assure that lot sizes are matched to the land area required to support an economically viable farm or timber operation in a given county. Selecting lot sizes above the threshold likely to attract residential development is also important.

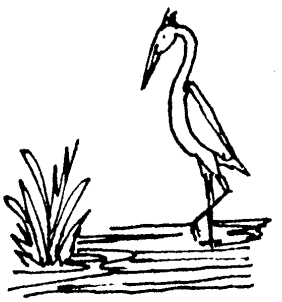
2) Use buffers and other protective measures. To avoid conflicts between resource operations and residential development, they may need to be separated by natural features or other buffers. For instance, farm operations, such as manure spreading, often draw complaints from neighboring residential uses. Similarly, forestry operations, using noise-generating heavy equipment, can be unpopular neighbors. Right-to-farm or right-to-forestry provisions may be appropriate in some rural areas as well as on resource lands. Small-scale berry farms, nurseries/tree farms and woodlots can be more readily operated in close proximity to rural residential areas than can the larger-scale operations. Again, such uses may fit well in rural areas, although rural areas may afford a lesser level of protection than given resource uses in designated resource lands.

3) Consider employee housing needs. Some flexibility should be considered for housing employees as well as immediate family on farms.

4) Provide for intensive specialty farm operations. Consider encouraging diversification from traditional crops such as wheat and livestock such as dairy cows to a variety of intensive "specialty" farm or forestry operations. Examples of these intensive farm operations include berry farms, organic vegetable farms, nurseries or tree farms, specialty lettuce farms and some types of livestock operations specializing in sheep or exotics, such as llamas. These operations can do well on much smaller acreages than dairy or cash crop operations. They also tend to be higher value products per acre utilized. See the section on viable rural employment under the rural issues section for more information on this concept.

5) Accommodate/encourage needed technical services such as those provided by the soil conservation district. Also accommodate the needed commercial support services. Consider creating a rural commercial designation distinct from commercial designation categories used in urban areas. A rural commercial center designation can be designed to allow uses such as supply yards or landscape operations, which typically aren't allowed in urban neighborhood centers.

6) Combine a variety of techniques and programs such as tax incentives, purchase of development rights or cluster provisions. Consider creating a resource use "enterprise zone" offering a variety of incentives and support services to help landowners to continue in resource operations. Incentives could include exemptions from local improvement district charges, sales tax exemptions for farm/forestry equipment purchase, current use tax assessment and others. Appendix C of DCD's *Art and Science of Designating Urban Growth Areas*, provides suggestions for these and other measures protecting and supporting agricultural uses. Appendix F of DCD's *Designating Your Community's Open Space* suggests a number of techniques useful for protecting open spaces or agricultural lands.



Open Space Lands and Critical Areas

By definition, rural areas will contain significant amounts of open space lands and critical areas. Many of the lands within rural areas will be classified as such precisely because they are not suitable for urban intensity development. The GMA emphasizes the importance of critical area protection by requiring their designation and protection as one of the first steps in growth management planning. Some critical areas pose hazards for intensive development. Others perform important ecological functions for the community even beyond rural areas. For instance, wetlands store stormwater and release it slowly into the groundwater. In the process, the wetlands reduce downstream flooding and filter out pollutants before they reach the aquifer from which we draw our drinking water. Rural areas may also contain major aquifer recharge areas which must not be intensively developed if our future public water supply is to be assured. It is in rural and resource areas that most of our remaining wildlife habitat will be found.

The most significant blocks of remaining undeveloped open space are also found in rural areas. Resource lands may provide scenic working landscapes, but their primary purpose is resource production. Open space lands in rural areas provide the best opportunities for major region-serving parks or natural areas. Open space and critical area

protection are of such importance to the Northwest quality of life, that separate DCD materials have been prepared. See the guidebooks, *Designating Your Community's Open Space* and *Approaches to Designating and Protecting Critical Areas* for suggestions about planning for these uses.

RURAL AREA ISSUES

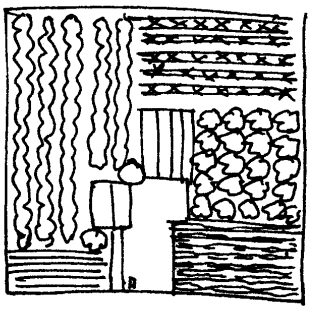
Balancing the Need for Viable and Appropriate Rural Employment

Background. Rural community economies have traditionally been based on natural resources and extractive industries such as agriculture, forestry and mining. Not infrequently, rural towns are largely dependent on a single industry for employment. For instance, a number of Washington communities grew up around the logging, paper and saw mill industries. The economy of Meade, a very small community north of Spokane, is dominated by a large aluminum plant. Others in the state may depend largely on power plants, shipyards, fishing, or coal mining for employment. The markets for many of these products have always been cyclical, particularly as supply fluctuates. Demand for some of these products has declined precipitously in the last several decades in the face of competition from other regions of the world. Wheat farmers and aluminum plant workers are examples of workers who have been particularly affected. In addition in some industries, raw materials, such as harvestable softwoods which feed the mills, are becoming more scarce. Technological innovations and modernization in the timber industries and others have made it possible to maintain a given production level with fewer, larger mills that employ fewer workers. Growing "high tech" and business service sector industries overwhelmingly favor urban locations. Lower wages and land costs can attract some manufacturing to rural areas but, increasingly, foreign sites with lower wages, are winning out. The net result is vastly fewer employment opportunities and reduced incomes in rural areas. The fortunes of supporting businesses in rural communities decline simultaneously (Hibbard and Davis, 1986, and Northwest Policy Center). As traditional employment opportunities disappear, the temptation to abandon nonprofitable resource operations and sell out to residential developers will also increase.

GMA goal No. 5 encourages economic development throughout the state, especially "in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth." The GMA qualifies how economic development should occur by adding that it must be consistent with adopted comprehensive plans (and county-wide policies) and that such growth must be "within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services and public facilities" [RCW 36.70A.020 (5)]. "Urban governmental services" such as storm and sanitary sewer systems and domestic water systems, generally "should not be provided in (designated) rural areas" [RCW 36.70A.110 (3)]. (Note that they may be appropriate in towns serving surrounding rural areas). In addition, the rural element is to "permit land uses that are compatible with the rural character of such lands" [RCW 36.70A.070 (5)]. The procedural criteria further recommend that the rural element should provide "for a variety of densities for

...industrial development consistent with maintenance of the rural character of the area." [WAC 365-195-330 (2)(c)(ii)].

The above restrictions and requirements limit the nature of industrial development which can occur within designated rural areas. Successful growth management will mean finding ways to stimulate appropriate economic development in many rural-serving centers, even as we direct growth away from areas where it should not occur. "The challenge facing small communities is to stimulate opportunities that generate income while preserving, hopefully enhancing, the characteristics that make rural America exceptional" (*Growing Our Own Jobs*, 1988). The experience of numerous communities suggests that economic growth can be achieved in rural areas without sacrificing rural character.

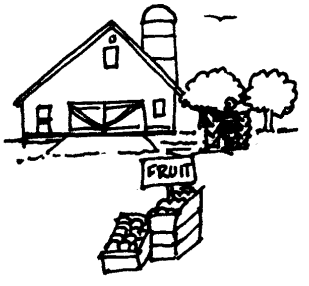


Recommendations for Rural Area Economic Development Options With Potential to Replace Declining Traditional Resource Employment Options:

1) Agricultural/forestry diversification. A number of rural communities have profited by recognizing the potential for non-traditional "specialty crops." By diversifying crops, farmers are finding they are better able to survive the ups and downs of today's market. The market for very fresh foods, organically-grown and/or low-calorie, high nutrition produce is expanding. The demand for freshness makes these alternative crops less susceptible to competition from abroad. This more intensive form of farming can also offer a high return on investment per acre planted. These operations can thrive on much smaller acreages. Dairy or cash crop operations typically require acreages over 40 acres (and may require substantially more acreage) to thrive. Intensive farming can be workable on acreages as small as 20 acres. Some operations can be supported on acreages as small as 10 acres, especially if it is a part-time operation and the operator has a second income source. Berry farms, nurseries, flower bulbs, floral greenery or tree farms and specialty lettuce farms have done well in counties near large urban centers such as King and Snohomish. Other non-traditional crops and products might do well close to large centers or in more remote rural areas. Vineyards have also flourished in some areas of the state which would not support more traditional crops. Other more exotic crops or livestock products such as shiitake mushrooms or beefalo (hybrid of beef and buffalo) have become staples in some Seattle grocery stores. Yew and hemlock trees and others offer potential for pharmaceutical products. Towns County, Georgia, found that a 60 x 96 foot hydroponic greenhouse could have the equivalent production yield of 30 acres of tillable land. Aquaculture (fish) is certainly an option in some parts of this state.

At the same time, variables such as climate and pests could be controlled. Crops also could be better staggered to make efficient use of labor (*Growing Our Own Jobs*, 1988). Appendix B lists resources with ideas agricultural and forestry diversification.

2) Adding value through local processing. Many communities where rural areas predominate, such as in Whitman and Yakima counties, have discovered that they can benefit from processing agricultural or forest products into consumer-ready goods locally. One reporter from the Kansas City (Missouri) Times observed that small towns dependent on resources can resemble Third World situations: "Their resources are extracted, (shipped) and processed elsewhere and returned as finished goods at higher prices, with the major economic benefits going elsewhere" (*Growing Our Own Jobs*, 1988). Instead, a larger percentage of dollars can be captured locally through basic processing such as the canned or dried fruit or fruit juice products produced in Yakima County. More extensive processing examples include producing beef by-products such as beef jerky; or cabinets, doors or furniture in timber-dependent counties. For instance, Darrington has used a grant from the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development to help develop home-based businesses.



3) Directly marketing local produce. Rural counties should consider providing flexibility in their land use regulations for farmer's markets, roadside stands and U-pick operations. Direct markets allow consumers to save on the cost of produce which may be fresher and of higher quality than that sold in city supermarkets. Farmers receive instant cash payment and can set a price which is not controlled or shared by a middleman. Farmers markets and roadside stands can contribute to community identity and often attract tourists. Seattle's year-round Pike Street Market enjoys an international reputation. Olympia supports the largest farmer's market for locally-grown produce in Washington. Smaller communities such as Port Orchard, Colville and Moses Lake have also benefitted from their own farmers' markets. Appendix B suggests a resource for setting up a farmers' market.

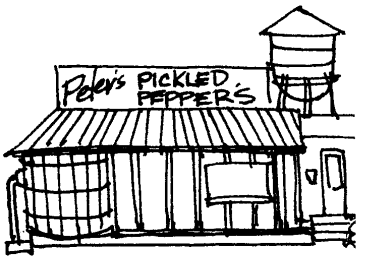
4) Retiree income. Some communities, such as Sequim, have found that attracting retired people as seasonal visitors or permanent residents can significantly boost the local economy. Today's retirees are healthier, more affluent and live longer than those of a generation ago. Their incomes come from such sources as social security, pensions, retirement programs and securities investments. As a result, they are not tied to living in a specific community and may relocate anywhere without affecting their benefits. Their incomes are less subject to fluctuations in the economy at large. They bring considerable purchasing power with them when they

settle in a community, spending locally on items such as groceries, clothing, restaurants, homes, and personal and health care services. When their money has been earned outside of the community, they provide the equivalent of a basic industry for some small communities. Retirees tend to favor nonmetropolitan locations. Features which attract retirees include: high scenic beauty; comfortable climate; recreational, social and cultural activities and opportunities; low cost of living; available health care; and minimal crime, traffic and pollution problems. As one source notes "pursuing retirees is, then, an attractive alternative to chasing smokestacks" to promote economic development (*A Northwest Reader: Options for Rural Communities*). Appendix B lists a resource that summarizes the potential benefits and issues for retirement-based economic development.

5) Promoting tourism and recreation. Tourism development has turned around the economies of a number of Washington communities experiencing economic decline. For instance, Winthrop, Mazama and Twisp have capitalized on their location in the highly scenic North Cascades Park vicinity by offering tourist services and supplemental recreational attractions such as white water rafting. These communities also cooperated in developing a first-class cross-country ski trail system, interconnecting the towns. The trail system has succeeding in attracting recreationalists to the communities even when highway access from the west is shut off in the winter. La Conner has capitalized on its coastal location and agricultural surroundings. Its historic residential buildings have contributed to a thriving bed and breakfast business. Such uses, when conducted in residential buildings, help retain much of the traditional character of the community.

Many other rural Washington communities possess scenic qualities and recreational potential which could attract a significant tourist trade. Others enjoy a thriving tourism business seasonally, but have the infrastructure and potential to extend their season as the Okanagon communities have done. Many of the same types of features which attract retirees will be attractive to tourists in general. However, recognize that retirees and young tourists have distinctly different recreation interests and service needs. Look at your community's particular attractions, target your efforts and plan services and amenities accordingly. Both groups place a premium on scenics, community appearance and recreational opportunities. Winthrop has adopted a western design theme which has contributed to its success in attracting visitors. Other communities have enhanced their appeal with less rigid design guidelines and measures to protect community character.

areas but have an urban designation, and planned communities may be appropriate locations for some employment-generating uses. Some of the resource-based and processing uses characteristic of rural areas mentioned above could be appropriate in these centers. Communities may wish to consider flexibility for other uses, particularly those which can be conducted with little outward sign of the activity within. Employment uses considered for these areas should be at an intensity and a scale well-matched with surrounding road and utility capacity and other rural services. In particular, transportation management programs and other approaches should be used to avoid commuting volumes and patterns disruptive of surrounding rural and resource uses. Such uses should not overwhelm or detract from the rural character of surrounding lands and sensitive areas. Structures should blend with and incorporate some of the characteristics of local architecture, such as pitched roofs. Landscaping, signage and lighting control and other techniques should be used to soften the appearance of paved parking lots and other features characteristic of urbanization.



Employment uses considered for planned community are rural activity center employment should be at an intensity and scale well-matched with surrounding road and utility capacity and other rural records.

8) Explore opportunities for marketing products abroad. An agricultural showcase was recently held in Yakima to show off diverse local resource products. The event attracted over 100 foreign buyers and many sales contracts (worth over $100,000) were signed. DCD has also worked with a number of rural counties in southeastern Washington to help them break into the export business. These counties have been successful in marketing used agricultural machinery abroad, among other products. Darrington is also marketing its hand-crafted wood products in Japan. It is also attracting interest among Japanese tourists in Darrington vacation trips as a result of the relationship (Eileen Ackerman, 1993).

Economic Development Tips. Although not the primary subject of this guidebook, several basic strategies can bolster economic development efforts:

1) Take time to develop a shared vision about what must be preserved and how you want to grow. Once you achieve that shared vision, incorporate it into your comprehensive plan to assure that land use, transportation and capital facility planning support your economic vision. Including an economic element in your plan can raise the visibility of your economic objectives. Then seek to ignite a can-do, positive attitude to achieve that vision.

2) Rural communities can benefit from pooling resources and cooperating with other communities. For instance, several

cooperating towns may amass the resources needed to hire an economic development planner, establish revolving loan funds or carry out a successful marketing program.

3) The local educational system and school socialization process should prepare students for the opportunities of the future, not those of disappearing occupations. For instance, one study of Oakridge, Oregon, a lumber mill town, reported that the local school prepared its students for the wage earner work situation. It emphasized the ability to "go to work each day and, be on time," although the recent mill closure means that fewer such jobs will be available. Instead, Oakridge students may be better prepared by focusing on teaching ideas, critical thinking and flexibility necessary for many of the jobs of the future (Hibbard and Davis, 1986).

4) Don't underestimate the importance of quality of life in business location decisions. As Karen Merrick, the Mayor of Guttenberg, Iowa, wisely noted, "to attract anyone here — be it tourists, industry or good teachers - the community must be presentable" (Schwab, 1986).

5) Focus on supporting small business starts. As one source notes, "big bang solutions are infrequent." Rather than focus efforts on attracting a manufacturing plant or corporate headquarters, recognize that the cumulative gains of several smaller business starts can add up to economic success.

6) DCD's quidebook, Economic Development Through Growth Management: Making the Vision Real and Forward Washington's "Preparing For Economic Vitality", offers information on developing economic strategies.

7) DCD's Community Protection and Development Division has programs related to economic development and infrastructure for economic development.

8) Appendix B contains seven solid strategies for rural economic development success.

Rural Character

Many Washington communities are struggling to resolve divergent viewpoints on what exactly rural character is in their communities. Fred Heyer observed in his recent report on preserving rural character that "rural character is a bit like pornography - it's very difficult to define, but you know it when you see it" (Heyer, 1990).

There has always been considerable diversity in rural areas. Texans and Montanans may envision extensive ranch land when "rural" is mentioned. A midwesterner may see dairy or croplands. A New Englander may picture a quaint village on a square. Closer to home, some Washingtonians will think first of apple orchards, others of wheatfields or forest lands. Clusterings of human settlements are also part of the picture. As noted in the Introduction, "rural" has traditionally been defined more by what it is not rather than what it is. As a result, "rural character" has always varied from community to community depending on which resource uses predominated. Yet most people would recognize each of these scenes as exhibiting rural character. Rural character in all these cases encompasses expanses of open land occupied by farms or other resource uses (including natural resources) with small towns and villages scattered between. Most people would agree that the concept of rural character also suggests people in fewer numbers, but holding traditional values, allowing residents to know, trust and interact with one's neighbors.

The rural areas of today are different from the rural areas of yesteryear. Rural areas are undergoing rapid change as they become less isolated and more quickly accessible. Farm operations have become more like corporate enterprises. Horse power has long given way to sophisticated machinery. Forestry and mining operations have also become highly mechanized. Highways and computers bring urban areas and services closer to the country. They also bring increasing numbers of former urban residents who are taking up residence in the country.

The newcomers and oldtimers frequently have different concepts about what constitutes rural character. The long-time residents have become familiar with some hard realities of rustic, rural life. Farms and timber operations may represent, first and foremost, a business and a living to them. They may also believe that the rural character they knew is gone with the arrival of the exurbanites. Newcomers may hold a romanticized image of tidy, bucolic farm scenes. But they may also be less willing to give up the services and amenities of urban areas. Newcomers may be selective about "which fragments of the rural past they wish to save and which they are willing (sometimes eager) to see disappear" (Dubbink, 1984).

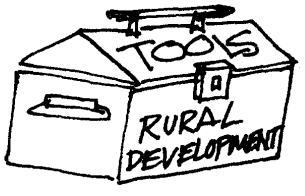
In more remote locations which remain predominantly in resource use, the changes may be less sweeping. Areas adjoining urban areas are being transformed to what have alternatively been called the "land of in-between" and "countrified cities" (Doherty) and "semi-rural" or even "medium rural towns" (Dubbink). The distinctions between urban and rural have begun to blur in these areas and need to be defined anew.

Recommended Steps Counties Can Take to Define and Maintain Rural Character:

1) Inventory local character. Because of this diversity, the first step in defining rural character for a given community is to inventory features of that local character. Typical land use patterns, building architectural features and distinctive natural features should be inventoried. Places which are focuses for human activity and social interaction should also be noted. Appendix A lists an example of a community character inventory which can be obtained from Washington Department of Community Development, Growth Management Division.

2) Define what the community values. A more difficult task is to define specifically which elements of the community's rural character are most valued by the community. To be successful, this will require a community dialogue. The following section describes several processes for reaching consensus on what features give your community its identity and what you want your community to be in the future. Rural counties will need to decide to what extent agriculture or other resource uses should be preserved as viable economic activities in rural areas (as distinct from designated resource lands). In some counties, the emphasis may be on retaining the "appearance or feeling of agriculture" in rural areas (Heyer, 1990).

3) Adopt rural design guidelines. New development will be less disruptive of local rural character to the extent that it is designed to fit the local rural context. Each of the sections on optional rural land use patterns contain suggestions to ensure that new development better fits with its rural surroundings. Design guidelines based on your inventory of local character can guide new development to blend with traditional development and patterns. Features which are of particular importance to the community may require stronger regulation or land purchase to protect them. Some excellent sources for guidelines to protect general rural character and architectural character are listed in Appendix A.



4) Clarify which tools you intend to use. Many tools and techniques, alone and in combination, can be used to keep what your community values. They range from zoning through transfer of development rights, to outright purchase of development rights and fee simple ownership of critical parcels. Clearly laying out your plan for implementing your vision will greatly increase your chances for success.

Resistance to Regulation

Any property owner may resist regulation which limits the owner's options or appears to reduce property value. Clearly, in this country, people have a right to own, use and enjoy property. However, they do not have a right to use it in any way they see fit, especially when that use will harm adjoining owners or the community as a whole. It is not uncommon that property owners will more enthusiastically endorse regulation of their neighbors activities which impact them, than to accept regulation of their own property use. It will always be a difficult challenge to convince individual property owners or developers that they should place "the interests of the community at large," or the "common good" before their own apparent interests. Even though it may be in everyone's long-term interest to coordinate and plan community development, the potential short-term profits are probably more tangible and persuasive to the developer or individual property owner (Stokes, 1989). As a result, any attempt at regulation will probably encounter some resistance by individual property owners. To overcome the resistance, community residents will need to see that there is a clear need for the community as a whole which outweighs the lose of flexibility an individual experiences. Regulations are more likely to be accepted if their purpose is clear and there are fair criteria for when individual properties should be restricted. Balancing regulatory measures with non-regulatory options and incentives will also increase acceptance.

Regulations are more likely to be accepted if their purpose is clear and there are fair criteria for which individual properties should be restricted. Balancing regulatory measures with non-regulatory options and incentives also increase acceptance.

Rural residents may be particularly inclined to resist regulations which restrict what an individual can do with his or her property. Rural areas have traditionally been populated with self-reliant, independent people. These were necessary qualities for surviving the rigors of an isolated rural life. The concept of regulation advocated by newcomers to protect rural features and character is new to long-time rural residents. David Dubbink observes that rural areas and villages rely on informal controls and traditions, while cities use regulations. He quotes a rural resident who emphatically exclaims, "In no way is a rural atmosphere created by control - where you tell people what flowers to put in the front yard! A rural atmosphere is where you give everybody credit for having enough sense to come in out of the rain" (Dubbink, 1984). Rural residents have traditionally relied on more subtle forms of policing or influencing community members who get out of line.

Newcomers have often experienced radical, and in their view, undesirable change in other areas. They may have little faith in the ability of informal controls to stand up to big city developers unfamiliar with local character. They may recognize more clearly that outside developers may be more likely to challenge and get around informal controls and procedures. Newcomers may also come from larger,

more impersonal cities, where it was more difficult to know neighbors or resolve conflicts on a personal basis. In addition, newcomers may have a different agenda for rural areas which long-time residents do not share. New residents may give priority to aesthetics or privacy while long-time residents may be more inclined to support measures which strengthen the local economy.

These divergent approaches can stymie action while rural qualities, some of which both groups value, are lost. It is important to adopt approaches and regulatory styles which are effective, but are flexible and fit the way villages and rural areas work.

Recommendations for Planning and Regulatory Approaches Which Have Succeeded in Rural Communities:

1) Use consensus-building participation methods to develop a shared vision for future community development. Too often, plans and regulations for rural areas are developed with the involvement of only a small portion of community officials and residents. Because permanent staff is typically small in rural areas, these plans and controls are often developed by consultants residing outside the community. Local officials and planners may consider that "citizen participation is, at best, a necessary evil" (Oberdorfer, 1987).

In fact, a number of rural communities have experienced positive results. Local residents are intimately familiar with their community, its unique qualities, its problems, and can supply creative ideas for improving their community. In the course of participating in the process, they tend to gain an understanding of the values and perspectives of other community groups, the complexity of many issues and the many factors which need to be considered. As they participate and contribute, they tend to take on "ownership" of the plans/controls which emerge. When this happens, they are more likely to support the end result.

For instance, the town of Felton, California, held a series of five community workshops to develop a master plan. Participants at the workshop worked in small groups to develop consensus on issues and goals, then the concept plan itself, then design guidelines and implementation approaches. The small groups produced a rich assortment of ideas. They then reassembled with the full group of participants to discuss, compare and explain rationales. Positive, constructive discussion and comments were emphasized. Other exercises and surveys of the larger community were brought into the workshop process including a survey where residents were asked to identify favorite places and experiences essential to their enjoyment of the town (Oberdorfer, 1987).

Design professionals have successfully employed a second approach to assist rural communities with plan and program development. The process is called a "charrette," which is "an intense, highly organized, short (two to three day) public workshop that takes place in a community and provides an initial response to a locally generated set of issues, problems and potentials" (Costello, 1987). The American Institute of Architects has assembled Rural/Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT) to help communities such as Teton County, Wyoming, and Olympia, Washington, address issues and develop action plans. Ball State University, in Muncie, Indiana, has developed a similar community assistance program for Indiana small towns. Shelton, Washington, has just completed a highly successful workshop/charrette demonstration project. A guidebook and video describing the process are available from the American Institute of Architects, Washington Council.

A local steering committee is established to make arrangements and handle logistics for the workshops. They also assemble background information, maps, aerial photos, documents and insights on local history and area attributes. The committee invites key people representing a full range of interests — local officials and planning commission members, newspaper publishers, bank and chamber representatives, leading merchants, developers, agricultural extension agents, school officials, historical society and regional planning representatives. The design team arrives, meets with the steering committee, reviews materials, begins assembling a community profile, takes walking tours, take pictures and sketches of what they see and generally assimilates information about the community.

A key part of the process is an intensive series of back-to-back meetings with public and private sector groups to understand the range of concerns and perspectives in the community. At a public forum the team presents their initial impressions as visitors to the community. They summarize the assets, liabilities and potentials which they have observed or which emerged from the group meetings. Community members are invited to discuss or comment on ideas presented, raise new ideas and discuss priorities for suggested actions. They will then conduct a public presentation of their findings, recommendations and suggested program of action. Their findings and recommendations synthesize what the neutral team learns from its many group meetings, public forum and the personal observations of the team members. The resulting recommendations represent the combined ideas of community members and have often produced consensus on a program of action and a shared vision for the community's future.

A third approach has been used by a number of Washington counties and cities, including Snohomish County, North Bend, Burlington, and Olympia utililizes a community preference survey

similar to one developed by Anton Nelessen. The survey presents various community scenes and asks residents to rate them based on personal preferences. The ratings are then used to help county residents develop a shared vision for the future of their rural areas or communities (Knack, 1991).

2) Clearly demonstrate the consequences of continuing with the status quo approach to permitting development. New regulations, in general, do not just happen. They arise only when it becomes clear that continuing without regulation is not working. The realization that things aren't working may come too late to avoid the loss of something which was important to the community. The trick is to clearly demonstrate the need for a regulation (or other action) to the community before important community qualities are lost. Randall Arendt has successfully convinced a number of rural villages to reconsider their approach to controlling (or not controlling) development by demonstrating what those regulations will render. Arendt advocates preparing a "buildout" map showing what the community will look like if it "builds out" to the capacity permitted by current regulations. It illustrates in a very graphic and understandable way a future which more often than not does not match the vision local residents have for their community's future. Arendt uses red dots to show house locations, assuming a standard development pattern which can appear to be a bad case of the measles (Arendt, 1993). Artistic renderings, such as those used by the American Institute of Architects team in Shelton, Washington can also help community members visualize the consequences of various actions and non-actions. A clearer, visual understanding of consequences can be a great motivator for taking action.

3) Use more flexible performance-based regulatory techniques to match rural needs. Hardin County, Kentucky, has received national recognition for its innovative program for guiding development. Their planning commission set out to "devise a set of land use controls appropriate for a rural community, where the development pace is relatively modest, the developers are mostly from the community, and values and goals are distinctly different from those in urban areas" (Phillips, 1987). The resulting system is more palatable for rural residents than a more rigid zoning system. Because it is well matched to the community's needs, it has helped to build a supportive constituency for planning. The system appears more equitable to property owners because there is essentially only one zone (the planned growth zone) with few uses allowed by right and few prohibited uses. In theory, any property owner can develop if they meet certain criteria. There is a crystal clear connection between the evaluation criteria/standards used to evaluate development proposals and the community's goals and purposes.

There are three steps in Hardin County's development review procedure:

a) Development suitability evaluation. Staff rates the development suitability of a proposal based on 1) the productivity of the site's soil for resource use and 2) 13 other site characteristics related to developability. Taken together, these criteria seek to retain the sites with the most productive soils in agriculture and encourage more compact development patterns to minimize the fiscal and environmental impacts of growth. Points are assigned depending on how completely the criteria are met. Criteria include distance to water, sewer, fire stations, schools and other public facilities; percent of surrounding development on adjacent lands and within one square mile; type and condition of access road; size of site (does it match the size necessary for viable agricultural operation?); and others.

b) Compatibility evaluation. If the proposal receives enough points based on these criteria, it can be approved by staff. If not, it goes through further steps. The county arranges an informal but open meeting where the developer presents the proposal to the community. The staff merely facilitates the meeting. The object is for the developer and neighboring residents to reach consensus on how the development can be planned and designed to minimize impacts on public services, traffic, neighborhood character and so forth. Although there could be legal issues with this step, there have been very few cases where consensus was not reached. The proposal is sent on to a formal hearing if consensus isn't reached. It is here that any decision to reject a use is actually made.

c) Site plan review/subdivision approval. After the use is approved as above, the site plan is reviewed for conformance to basic development standards for street design, drainage and so forth. The use approval typically takes five to six weeks. Final plan, building and electrical permit approval can take several additional months.

Appropriate Densities for Rural Areas

Higher densities, in clustered forms of development, and densities low enough to avoid the problems associated with sprawl (less than one unit per ten or 20 acres) should predominate in rural areas. This section will discuss 1) how to reconcile the demand for low-density residential estate development with the concern for rural character, 2) provide criteria for setting rural densities, and 3) some ideas for achieving density goals in rural areas.

Reconciling the demand for residential development. Development trends in recent years suggest that there is a strong demand for rural residential development. Much of this demand is being met through conventional subdivision lots in the two units per acre to one unit per ten-acre range. As mentioned earlier, there are a variety of problems associated with development patterns characterized by these lot sizes. Recreation homes can be a particular problem because of their tendency to locate near sensitive features such as lakes, rivers and sensitive mountain environments.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs closely scrutinizes community plans for signs of sprawl development which the state defines as densities between two units per acre and one unit per ten acres. The department cautions that among other problems, sprawling low-density, single-dimensional development "promotes an inefficient and unattractive use of developable land and frequently destroys significant environmental and natural resources" (1987). This level of development is generally too dense to be supported by the traditionally rural level of services yet not dense enough to justify costly sewer, transportation and other services.

The *Urban Growth Management Study: Case Studies Report*, prepared for Oregon's Department of Land Conservation and Development, noted the need to establish a floor minimum lot size in rural areas and is recommending eliminating zoning under a 5-10 acre per unit density (1991). A study of density-related public costs by the American Farmland Trust found that a one unit per five acre development may be even more expensive to serve than developments at densities between one unit per acre and one unit per five acre densities in the Louden County, Virginia, area (1986).

How can local communities resolve the conflict between these demands and other community objectives to reduce sprawl, retain resource lands and open space and reduce service costs? GMA Goal No. 4 calls for "encouraging the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promoting a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourag(ing) preservation of existing housing stock." The "variety of residential

densities" language may suggest providing for estate-type development as well as other types. However, many counties, particularly those near metropolitan areas, have large inventories of subdivided, but undeveloped lots, in this density range. This inventory may be able to meet a significant portion of the realistic 20-year demand for this type of residence. Almost certainly, they have been provided to a much greater extent than have the more affordable housing types. GMA Goal No. 2 also calls for reducing "the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling low-density development." Local governments will need to evaluate whether additional new lots in this range are justified.

Recommendations for Setting Rural Densities:

1) Limit area provided for residential large lot development. If additional large residential lot development is provided for, it should not be encouraged to occur in a haphazard way, interspersed with resource uses. Limiting the overall amount of area designated for these uses and planning how and where these developments occur to improve compatibility may be almost as important as actual density levels.

2) Choose densities which can be supported by a rural level of services. If a community wastewater treatment system is not available, densities should be low enough to be supportable by a rural level of services. The most limiting individual service consideration for density is whether septic tank rather than sewer is used. State regulations impose some limitations on lot size for development served by septic tanks. Lots must be, at a minimum under ideal soil conditions, 12,500 square feet [248.96 WAC]. In reality, these conditions are the exception rather than the rule. Enhanced, but more expensive treatment systems, may also be able to support this level of density. In King County, for new lots where a well is used, a minimum lot size of five acres is required. The five acre minimum was established primarily to protect the wells and aquifer (Hendrickson, 1991). Towns and fully contained communities utilizing some form of community wastewater treatment facility should be planned for higher densities. Hamlets or crossroad developments may be able to utilize some sort of community system. More commonly, individual on-site sewage disposal systems are used in small hamlets. Where such systems are used, lot size will be constrained by the area and well separation requirements of the system under local conditions.

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The total cumulative cost of serving development in spread out, isolated areas relative to more concentrated development can be significant.

The total cumulative cost of serving development in spread out, isolated areas relative to more concentrated development can be significant. Increased distances between residences translate into increased cost associated with greater length of roads and utility lines per household served. Also adding to costs are the greater distance which school buses, police and fire vehicles and other service providers must travel. A number of studies suggest that spread out development is much more costly to serve (Frank, 1989).

3) Encourage minimum lot sizes which relate to viable farm size in rural areas where commercial farms, specialty farms or woodlots predominate. These uses may be especially appropriate as a transition to designated resource lands or critical areas.

4) Perhaps the best yardstick for appropriate densities for these types of rural development is to consider the traditional densities within small towns within your county. In general, these traditional densities are considerably higher than the average densities occurring in conventional subdivisions around the towns in the past 30 years. Some densities higher than traditional town densities may be appropriate to meet other community goals such as affordable housing. By clustering and carefully siting development, pockets of higher density development can be accommodated while leaving greater areas in open space. In these situations, guidelines and safeguards to protect existing rural character will be key.

5) Consider two-tier density provisions. One particularly promising approach to combating sprawling development patterns while providing housing options, is to establish a two-tier density program. Under such a program, a county would set an underlying maximum density but allow that density to be exceeded if certain guidelines are met. A base density, perhaps 10 or 20 acres per dwelling unit, could be available to any landowner. Landowners could build at higher densities where development is clustered, programs to minimize traffic generation are in place or other criteria are met (*Technical Memo*, July 1990).

6) Address pre-existing substandard lots. Efforts to establish densities compatible with rural character are hampered in many counties which have a large inventory of pre-existing, subdivided but undeveloped lots. The *Urban Growth Management Case Studies Report* suggests several alternatives to allowing every substandard, nonconforming lot to have a residence located on it:

a) Allow only one house when a number of non-conforming lots are contiguous and under common ownership. For example, if one person owned five contiguous one-acre lots and the minimum lot size is ten acres, then one house (not five) would be allowed.

b) Allow for transferable development rights for pre-existing nonconforming lots in rural residential areas in proportion to the size of the lot. If the minimum lot size is ten acres, then each one-acre lot would be assigned a transferable development right of 0.1 units. A residence could be built on a parcel regardless of the parcel's size, but only if the owner accumulated the rights to 1.0 units. Overall, the net impact of this policy would be an average of 10 acres per dwelling unit.

c) Some areas have had success with a more ambitious approach of purchasing and assembling nonconforming lots into larger conforming parcels. The parcels, which then conform to current standards, are resold into private (but conforming) uses. The California Coastal Commission has aggressively used this approach to protect shoreline lands. One interesting project in Oregon involved purchase and replatting of subdivision lots into a cluster formation, leaving more than 80 percent of the property in forest cover. Limited harvesting of timber generated funds for subdivision improvements under a carefully constructed forest management and harvest plan (Yeager, 1993).

7) Keep average rural area densities low. Remember, however, that the primary purpose of rural areas is not to accommodate growth. This is the function of urban areas. Average densities in rural areas should be kept low to provide a transition to resource areas, to avoid problems of sprawl patterns and to assure that rural service provision remains cost effective. Residential development can be clustered at higher densities in villages and planned communities to provide a diversity of housing choice in rural areas while retaining open spaces and traditional rural character. *The Art and Science of Designating Urban Growth Areas - Part II - Some Suggestions for Criteria and Densities* provides a more in depth discussion about considerations in establishing both rural and urban densities.

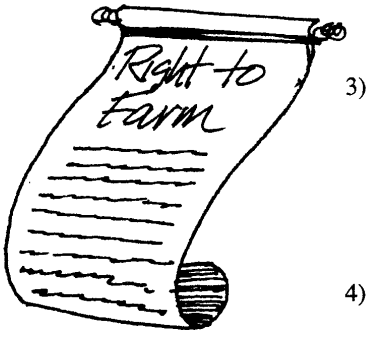
Remember however, that the primary purpose of rural areas is not to accommodate growth. This is the function of urban areas.

Compatibility with Adjacent Resource Lands and Urban Areas

Rural areas will typically border both urban growth areas and resource lands. They will frequently be in a position of providing a transition between these two vastly different types of areas. Rural areas may include small-scale farming and forestry uses (or even larger-scale operations) and large blocks of critical areas which are

often incompatible with urban uses. Rural areas may also include a variety of rural residential development and clustered development types which can create conflicts with resource land operations. As a result, special attention should be given to the management of land uses and development at the interface between rural areas and other types of areas. The following suggestions may help to reduce potential conflicts between rural areas and resource lands:

1) Limit the total amount of interface between rural and resource lands by designating large enough blocks to be sustainable. Avoid ribbons and islands of rural areas which wind around and between resource lands (or urban areas) increasing the number of potential conflict points. The blocks of resource areas also need to be large enough to assure that support services such as farming equipment and feed supply stores do not pull out.



2) Take advantage of natural features and open spaces including water bodies, changes in topography and parks to provide a buffer between different designations.

3) Consider a transition of uses and densities adjacent to resource areas. This may be a particularly appropriate area to encourage small-scale, intensive specialty farming or woodlot operations (or larger-scale farming operations). Minimum lot sizes in the 20 acre range could reinforce the likelihood that small-scale farming will predominate over residential development in these transition areas.

4) Rural residential development requires careful siting to avoid conflicts with resource lands. Avoid siting which requires that roads and utilities servicing residential developments cross expanses of resource land. Exclude resource uses from assessments for improvements and services needed to support residential development.

5) Adopt supplementary programs and provisions. Agricultural operations and forest practices typically create dust, noise, smoke, odors and chemical sprays which can draw complaints from nearby residential areas. Supplement zoning provisions in resource districts and in small-scale specialty farm areas with right-to-farm or forestry ordinances. Roads used by resource operations can be posted with warning about slow-moving vehicles. These ordinances can help protect resource industries from nuisance complaints related to reasonable operations. Farming and other resource operations can suffer from vandalism, trespass and other loss and damage as the area around them develops. Consider special provisions in transition areas adjacent to resource lands such as fencing requirements, restrictions on free-running dogs and so forth.

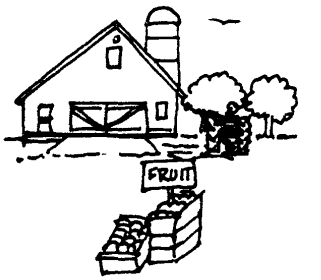
6) Consider measures to support roadside farmstands or farmer's markets which help farmers who wish to directly market products to nearby residential areas.

7) Cluster development and adopt design review guidelines to promote rural compatibility, as mentioned above.

8) Consider limiting more developed uses which might be incompatible with on-going farming or forest practices rather than imposing restrictions on the resource production activities. In many instances, the "burden of buffering" should be carried out by new development, especially when there is an intent to conserve resource-based land uses.

Resource operations in rural areas, adjacent to urban areas can result in similar conflicts. An additional issue is future urban expansion into rural areas. Urban growth areas are planned to accommodate 20 years' projected growth. At some time in the future, when and if that supply is exhausted, additional land area may be needed to accommodate future urban growth. Resource lands are intended to remain in resource use for the long term. Any future addition of lands to urban growth areas will come most logically from rural areas or from increased densities and or redevelopment within urban areas.

Recommendations for Measures to Address Concerns at the Urban/Rural Boundary:



1) Review points 1, 2 and 3 above concerning buffers, transitions and sustainable blocks which apply equally at the rural/urban boundary.

2) Analyze whether there are areas within rural areas which could support future urban development once facilities and services draw nearer.

3) Assure that development patterns allowed will not close off future options, if you determine that lands within rural areas may be candidates for long-range growth needs. The recent *Urban Growth Management Study: Case Studies Report*, prepared for Oregon's Department of Land Conservation and Development, concluded that low densities in the one to five-acre range presented major problems for future extension of urban services and, in general, conversion to urban patterns. Development which occurs in advance of urban services will generally not be dense enough to support transit or efficient urban service provision. The Oregon report recommends a minimum lot size of at least 10-20 acres in areas which may be candidates for future urban expansion.

4) Consider clustered development that can be sited and planned to fit in with potential future urban development patterns. Master plans for cluster development or fully contained communities can provide easements and lot design which will accommodate future road and utility extension and lot division. However, if clustered development occurs on septic tanks, densities may remain lower than desirable for efficient urban service provision. Interim community treatment facilities may allow higher densities in development clusters.

Defining Appropriate Rural Governmental Services

According to the GMA, "urban services" should generally not be provided in rural areas [RCW 36.70.110 (3)]. The GMA defines "urban governmental services" to include "those governmental services historically and typically delivered by cities, and include storm and sanitary sewer systems, domestic water systems, street cleaning services, fire and police protection services, public transit services, and other public utilities associated with urban areas and normally not associated with nonurban areas." In general, the GMA suggests that the full range of facilities and services needed to support urban densities should be available in urban growth areas. Growth should be encouraged to locate in urban growth areas to make efficient use of existing facilities or to minimize the cost of extending facilities and services.

According to the GMA, "urban services" should generally not be provided in rural areas (RCW 36.70.110[3])

The GMA does not specifically define rural governmental services. Instead, the procedural criteria suggest that each county will need to determine its own definition [WAC 365-195-330 (2)(c)(iii)]. Rural services, in contrast with urban area services, should only be provided at the level required to support and sustain planned rural uses. They shouldn't occur at a level which will promote growth or sprawl. Rural residents need many of the same types of services that urban residents need. They do need safe drinking water and protection from pollution or crime, for instance. However, these services and facilities will generally be provided at a more rudimentary level.

Some distinctions may need to be made within rural areas. For instance, existing towns surrounded by rural areas often have higher densities served by sewer and other urban level services. Particularly when these towns are incorporated, they may justify recognition as urban growth areas, as has been done in King County. Planning for utilities such as sewer often requires longer planning lead time than the GMA 20-year schedule. As a result, some counties, such as Yakima, are considering treating areas with potential as future urban areas differently from those which are not suitable as urban. The potential urban areas may have additional provisions, such as for utility

easements or actual utility lines, which would facilitate future extension of utilities when redesignated (Rich Faith, 1993).

The following paragraphs summarize a number of provisions local counties and other areas have considered for different types of services in rural areas.

Sewer. Many Washington counties, which distinguish between urban and rural areas, restrict sewer in rural areas. One reason is that sewer is costly to provide to scattered low-density development. Much has also been written about the tendency for sewer lines to stimulate rapid growth which is inappropriate in rural areas (*The Growth Shapers*, 1976).

Many Washington counties, which distinguish between urban and rural areas, restrict sewer in rural areas. (The Growth Shapers, 1976)

Below are examples of provisions for waste disposal in rural areas:

- A number of counties, such as Thurston, King and Spokane, don't allow sewer in rural areas except when failing existing on-site systems pose a threat to public health, as determined by health authorities. In such counties, on-site disposal systems are considered the permanent solution to sewage disposal. King County requires a reserve area on every site which is 100 percent of the initial area required for septic tank and drainfield (Hendrickson, 1993). Mason County is considering mandatory septic tank management programs to reduce the likelihood of failing systems. New, enhanced systems using mounds, sandfilters or pressure distribution systems can be more expensive but may address problems with older, failing systems on lots with little room to spare.

- Some counties, such as Spokane, allow "transmission only" lines (also called tightlines) to specific areas with failing systems. Such tightlines do not allow any other connection for new development within the rural areas through which they pass. Generally, these lines are sized only to serve a particular problem area or facility (*Spokane County Generalized Comprehensive Plan*, 1990).

- Counties also allow tightline extension to necessary public facilities such as schools. Because of the large acreage requirements, school districts often seek to buy land away from urban centers if it is cheaper. However, when the cost of extending a sewer line which serves a single use is considered, it may be more cost effective to locate in activity centers already served by sewer (Grant, 1993). Some places, such as Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (*Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan*, 1991) have policies which encourage or require public and institutional facilities such as schools to locate in towns and activity centers.

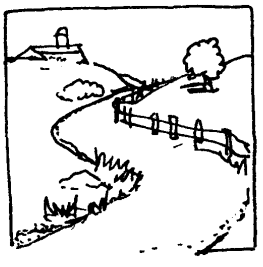
- Cluster developments will likely require alternatives to conventional on-lot disposal systems. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania has policies which encourage the use of innovative and alternative wastewater systems in rural areas outside of defined service areas. Cluster developments may be able to design/utilize community drainfields within dedicated open space areas, for instance. Bucks County's *Village Planning Handbook* describes some non-sewer options where village wide solutions to sewage disposal problems are needed. (See Appendix E).

- Some communities, such as Lancaster, Pennsylvania, seek to discourage package treatment plants because of concerns about long-term maintenance and operation of these facilities.

Many counties use a lesser level of road facilities for rural roads.

Roads. Roads in rural areas serve different purposes and intensity of use than do those in urban areas. They may be used more for transporting resource products, access to regional parks and recreation areas and access to low-density rural residential development. As a result, many counties have adopted different policies and standards for rural road design.

Examples of rural road provisions:



- Whitman County has long had policies to assure that road designs and alignments minimize loss of productive agricultural land and interference with agricultural operations (*Whitman County Comprehensive Plan*, 1978).

- Counties such as Whatcom seek to minimize impervious surface (and cost) and use more "natural" engineering design methods such as grassed swales instead of curb and gutters. The county also chooses surfacing options such as porous asphalt or cinder chips which reduce runoff. County policies strive to retain mature trees and other elements of the environment when constructing roads (*Lynden-Nooksack Valley Subareas Comprehensive Plan*, 1986).

- Many counties such as Spokane, King, Yakima and Whatcom use a lesser level of road facilities for rural roads. For instance, Spokane doesn't generally require parking lanes, curbs, sidewalks, lighting and other facilities required on urban streets in their agricultural or rural districts (*Spokane County Generalized Comprehensive Plan*, 1990 printing).

- Thurston County policies allow a lower level of service (LOS) in urban areas (level D) than rural areas (level C). In other words, urban streets can experience more congestion than rural roads before they are considered inadequate (*Thurston County*

Comprehensive Plan). King County is exploring an innovative concept which measures the overall transportation adequacy of an area. This concept recognizes that particularly in urban areas, transit, bicycle, pedestrian or other transportation modes (or types) can serve transportation mobility needs in addition to the automobile. This is true because jobs and shopping are usually closer to where people live in urban areas. By looking at the combined LOS of an area, King County believes it can allow a lower LOS standard for urban streets relative to rural streets because transit or other modes can substitute for vehicle travel. Even though streets may not operate as efficiently in urban areas, overall mobility may be comparable if alternate travel modes are chosen (Lauderdale, 1993).

- Studies indicate that densities exceeding seven units per acre may be necessary to support regular transit service (Puskarev and Zupan, 1977). As a result, King County does not expect to provide regular transit service in rural areas. It may consider smaller subscription van services to meet the needs of groups who may be dependent on transit service. With this type of service, a smaller van would respond to calls rather than travel on a fixed route and schedule. The more flexible van service can be less expensive to operate in lower density areas with fewer riders. Rural areas typically have a higher percentage of elderly residents than other areas which could benefit from such a service. Some counties such as Chelan and Jefferson have managed successful bus systems with lower average densities. Particularly when the local business community provides financial support, this may still be an option for your community.

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- Private roads are often popular in rural counties especially for smaller developments. While they may fit well with the character of rural areas, counties encounter several common problems with them. Substandard design and construction can create emergency vehicle access problems or problems if the county takes over the road at a future date. Right-of-way easements may be inadequate for utility line easements. Private roads, shared by more than one owner, often lack recorded joint maintenance agreements. This can become a problem for property owners or buyers when other benefitted owners refuse to contribute to road upkeep. Where private roads are allowed, the county may want to adopt provisions to address these and other common problems (Bloom, 1990).

Water. The GMA requires that evidence of an adequate, safe and reliable supply of potable water be provided before new development or subdivision is permitted (RCW 19.27.097 and RCW 58.17.110). Individual wells and small public water systems have traditionally met water needs for many rural residents while public water systems are

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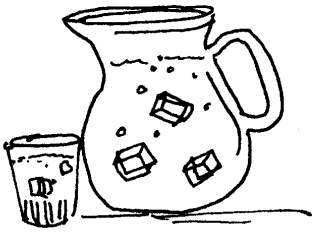

often used in town centers. As rural areas accommodate increasing numbers of residents and as more stringent federal regulations emerge, the water supply issue becomes more complex. Because of these complexities, water service should probably not be relied on as a primary tool for controlling growth.

Examples of how rural communities are addressing water supply and quality issues:

- Many counties are continuing to view on-site wells as a primary or the primary source of water in rural areas. Department of Ecology (DOE) staff view wells as an acceptable solution for rural water supply where lots are sufficiently large to avoid problems of pollution and well proliferation threatening groundwater. They recognize that where large lot sizes are the rule, it may be economically infeasible to provide water systems (McChesney, 1993). Yakima County is moving in the direction of increased reliance on public water systems. The county will allow individual domestic wells in its agricultural zones and for subdivisions in its general rural zones, if all lots are four acres or larger (Yakima County "Interim Potable Water Supply Development Standards," December 1992). Individual and community wells or community water systems will continue to be the primary source of water in King County rural areas, where lots are generally five acres or larger. King County's "County-wide Planning Policies" state that urban water system extensions should not be permitted in rural or resource areas "except to solve immediate health or safety problems threatening existing residents" (June 1992).

- It may not be possible to provide adequate water service to some areas with individual on-site wells. Some existing systems are already failing or a threat to public health. More stringent standards of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act may make it generally more difficult for small water systems to comply. DOE may also be concerned about aquifer depletion, particularly in some confined drainage basins fed by precipitation and where senior water rights are established. For instance, DOE has closed some reaches of the Methow River drainage to any new well drilling. Although the GMA states that urban government services should not be provided in rural areas, the GMA leaves to counties the responsibility to define and distinguish rural governmental services from urban governmental services. It may be possible and desirable, as the Department of Health (DOH) advocates, to allow public water systems in some rural areas. Rural water service may be provided but at a more rudimentary and less costly level than urban water service. For instance, King County and Thurston County generally do not require water for fire protection which

would require larger water lines. If extension or creation of a water system is allowed, the key will be to assure that water systems are designed to accommodate only planned land uses, in DOH's view (Sarver, 1993). For instance, the *Enumclaw Community Plan and Area Zoning* includes policies which state that the "existence of public water service in designated rural areas or resource production districts shall not result in or be justification for higher density than that anticipated by the Enumclaw Community Plan." Water purveyor plans must demonstrate that new facilities are consistent with the plan and won't require increased densities to finance the planned facilities (1990). Whatcom and Spokane Counties have similar policies.

If extension or creation of a water system is allowed, the key will be to assure that water systems are designed to accommodate only planned land uses, in DOH's view.

- Many counties, such as Yakima and Pierce, are exploring the potential of clustered residential development as a way of providing more affordable, efficient-to-serve, less disruptive residential development within rural areas. Cluster development can offer many benefits when properly designed and sited. Cluster development, by definition, involves clustering residences at higher densities on a portion of the site. To support cluster development, counties may need to provide flexibility for community water systems to serve the higher net densities.

- The proliferation of individual wells and small water systems with variable management is a concern for many counties. This proliferation can create difficulties for counties when water system planning is not coordinated with and supportive of land use planning. It can result in direct health and safety threats when small systems are not well managed. Random well construction also complicates water supply planning and can contribute to aquifer depletion. Water rights laws may have the unintended side effect of encouraging well proliferation. Wells which draw up to 5,000 gallons/day do not need to apply to DOE for a water right. This appears to be encouraging use of short plats of property (division of land into generally four lots or fewer) which can be supported by exempt wells. In response to the "Public Water System Coordination Act of 1977," many counties have designated "Critical Water Supply Service Areas" (having potential water supply problems) and have prepared "Coordinated Water System Plans." Many counties, including Clark County, are pursuing the consolidation of water utilities, which may include interties between supply sources. Direct service by an existing purveyor or satellite management by an existing purveyor is preferred over the creation of new public water systems.

- Most of the water systems in this state's rural areas do not provide adequate flows for fire protection. Pumper trucks, sprinkler systems and other less costly approaches provide limited protection in many rural areas. King County has a policy calling for adequate domestic water supply but not generally a water supply adequate for fire protection. Policies direct water purveyors to plan for minimum design standards for rural areas generally not including larger pipe sizes, fire hydrants and storage. King County's code does require minimum fire flows for protection of certain uses, such as schools, within the rural area. If these uses are scattered outside of centers, they will be more difficult to serve.

The above facilities are generally considered to be the facilities most influential in shaping growth. They may also be the type of facility most difficult and expensive to deliver to spread out rural development. This is because they involve a network of road or pipes to deliver the service. Many other services are needed in rural areas but may realistically need to be provided at a lower level of service which can be supported by rural densities. Some counties are prudently including explicit policies which put rural residents on notice that a lower level of service can be expected. Increasingly, communities are recognizing that they can no longer afford to subsidize services to spread out development through average cost pricing. Services and facilities such as libraries and schools can be more efficiently provided if located in rural towns or activity centers. Appendix E lists an example of sample rural infrastructure policies.

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RURAL RESOURCES

Preparing a rural element, together with the many other pieces of your comprehensive plan, can seem a big job. Many Washington communities may feel intimidated at the enormity of the task in the face of limited resources. This is especially true in counties which are sparsely populated and isolated, as in the case of many rural counties. You will probably need to draw on many resources to accomplish the job and reap maximum "bang" for the limited "buck." Communities should look for opportunities to coordinate with other jurisdictions, agencies and organizations to develop complementary programs and to avoid duplicating efforts (Stokes, 1989). Communities can combine and pool their resources to complete growth management work through regional councils and intergovernmental agreements. Look within and outside the community for the staffing, technical assistance and dollar resources it will take to complete the multiple tasks before you.

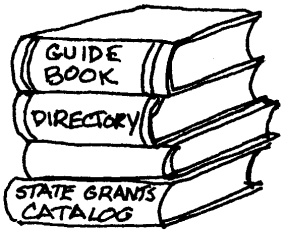
Look Within the Community to Extend Limited Staff Resources

Many rural communities have been very creative in finding students to inventory and computerize background information, such as a prison to do low cost printing and businesses to contribute needed equipment. Community service groups and civic groups, such as Rotary or Lions, or special interest groups and clubs, such as 4-H, may offer a source of labor or other supporting efforts. For instance, Jackson, Wyoming, successfully organized volunteers from a downtown merchants association, a local historic society and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Under the direction of town staff and limited consultant help, the volunteers inventoried commercial buildings and traditional character, prepared descriptions of historic buildings and prepared recommended downtown design guidelines. Citizen advisory committee members have pitched in to help with information collection and other tasks in more than one community. Individuals on committees and within the community may offer specialized expertise applicable to rural issues. Retired persons may represent a pool of people with varied experience and time to volunteer. Successful use of volunteers generally requires that volunteers be highly motivated by shared goals or vision. County staff or a recognized leader will need to do some advance work to provide direction and organization and to assign tasks for the group.

Look within and outside the community for the staffing, technical assistance and dollar resources it will take to complete the multiple tasks before you.

Tap Into Resources Around the State

State agencies and organizations may also contribute information and technical assistance to facilitate a local program. The Department of Community Development can provide a great deal of assistance along the way. Your DCD regional planners can provide technical assistance and help with where to look for information and resources. If you are reading this guidebook, you are already familiar with DCD's guidebooks on a variety of GMA tasks. DCD has prepared a very useful *State Agency Growth Management Directory* which identifies contact persons in a variety of state agencies who can provide information and assistance on a variety of growth management issues. For instance, state agencies such as the Department of Ecology are organizing to make their expertise and funding programs more readily available to local governments undertaking growth management planning. Department staff, who can help you with information on topics which range from forest land conversions to water rights and stormwater management, are listed in the directory.



State agencies also administer grant and loan programs which may help some rural communities in preparing or carrying out growth management measures. For instance, DOE administers grant programs such as the Centennial Clean Water Fund and coastal zone management grants. Over half of the counties in the state are designated timber-impacted areas which are eligible for loans and some grants under the Timber Community Economic Revitalization Board program. This program is administered by the Department of Trade and Economic Development to "support potential industrial or tourism projects and improve economic development and diversification opportunities." The Public Works Trust Fund provides low-interest loans which may help to fill the gap left by the disappearance of federal funding for needed public works projects. The Department of Transportation is administering some new funding programs such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program resulting from the recent federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The department's Scenic Highways Program Design Office also recently initiated a Highway Heritage Program. This program seeks to preserve "Washington's unique scenic character along its roadways" and provide travelers opportunities to appreciate natural, cultural and historic features near the highways.

Local offices of several federal agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service, Small Business Administration and Farmer's Home Administration can provide useful information, technical assistance and some funding. The Association of Washington Cities has published State Agency Grants Assistance Catalog and the Infrastructure Coordinating Council has developed a matrix of agencies who make technical and financial assistance available to local

governments, as well as a hands-on assistance program. Contact numbers for these organizations can be found in the Directory of Planning and Community Development Agencies from DCD's Growth Management Division.

Universities within the state and cooperative extension service offices have offered their services and expertise to communities, at times, free of charge and, often, at low cost. Some communities have benefitted from class projects which study or address local conditions or issues. Student interns can contribute leg work and, oftentimes, creative ideas to the planning process. Many student interns, particularly at the graduate level, have extensive past work experience and skills in addition to their academic knowledge to contribute. Appendix F lists university programs, centers and cooperative extension offices with services for Washington communities.

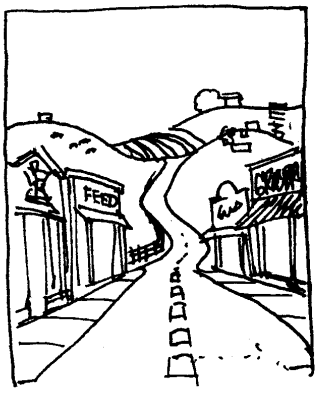
Private or Nonprofit Organizations Offer Services and Resources Useful to Rural Communities

A number of national organizations focus on rural and resources issues and can provide helpful information, ideas and sometimes funding for rural area planning. Examples of such organizations include the Small Town Institute, American Farmland Trust, the Conservation Foundation, the National Association of Towns and Townships, National Association of Counties, Rural America, and Rural Coalition.

Local or national land trusts and conservation organizations often work with local communities to find innovative approaches for preserving resource lands and open spaces. If a preservation project meets the land trust's criteria, they may be able to negotiate a donation of development rights to permanently protect specific properties, while providing significant financial advantages to the owner. Appendix F uses publications that contain addresses and phone numbers for several national organizations. The Land Trust Alliance and the Trust for Public Land (Seattle office) can provide information and contacts for many local land trusts operating in Washington.

CONCLUSION

Careful rural area planning is essential to assure the continued existence of rural areas and towns as we know and love them. It will also be essential to the overall success of your growth management program. Although an important part of the overall growth management scheme, our rural areas are at the crossroads. Many of our rural areas, especially those near our large urban centers, can quickly be overwhelmed by sprawling, suburban growth. Others face decline as traditional resource-based economies employ fewer residents.



The challenges in planning for rural areas are multifold. Washington's rural areas encompass a diversity of uses and circumstances. Some rural counties evolved around an agricultural tradition, others were fueled by timber or mineral extraction economies. Some rural areas are greatly affected by the proximity of large urban centers, others are remote. Because of the considerable variety represented by our rural areas, each county will need to tailor an approach suited to its own unique needs, local character and traditions. The traditional local character and patterns can provide a primary clue for workable future direction.

Rural area planners face the challenge of meeting the service needs which rural residents share with urban residents at a level appropriate and feasible for rural areas. These needs will need to be met in the face of fewer resources.

At the same time, rural areas contain a large share of the natural environment, open space and economic resources important to every county's quality of life, economic and physical well-being. These resources must be protected, while providing economically viable land use options.

Counties will be most successful if community residents first establish a clear understanding of what they most value in their rural areas, of what they want to protect, change or foster for their future. Because rural areas and rural towns are interdependent, counties should work together with those towns to prepare the rural element.

Greater creativity, flexibility and efficiency will be required to assure protection of these resources while balancing with the needs of rural residents.

APPENDIX A: Design Guidelines for Rural Areas

The materials available in this and other appendices are available to counties, cities, and citizens of Washington from the Washington Department of Community Development, Growth Management Division. They can be obtained by calling (206) 753-2222 or SCAN 234-2222. These materials are also available to cities in Washington at the Municipal Research and Services Center and can be obtained on loan by calling 1-800-933-6772.

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Growth Management ---
The Rural Element

The following information has been assembled by the Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to help counties planning under the Growth Management Act put together the required rural element. The materials include the state's guidelines and a recommended process for putting together a rural element, examples of citizen participation and visioning, rural county-wide policies, and actual examples of comprehensive plan policies and regulations. If you want any of the following information, please call CTED, Growth Management Services, at (206) 753-2222 or SCAN 234-2222.

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- "Benton County-wide Survey Report: Benton County Rural Visioning", Benton County Department of Planning and Building, Spring, 1993.
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