

**UDC UPDATE PROJECT
RURAL CLUSTER SUBDIVISIONS CODE REVISIONS SUBPROJECT
FACILITATED DISCUSSION WITH CITIES, UTILITIES, TRIBES
AND SERVICE PROVIDERS**

AS DISCUSSED ON JULY 19, 2007

In attendance:

The Highland Water District, Startup Water District, Cross Valley Water, Three Lakes Water Association, The Tulalip Tribes, Snohomish Health District, City of Stanwood, City of Arlington, City of Lake Stevens, City of Darrington, City of Mill Creek, City of Marysville and the Snohomish County Department of Public Works were represented.

<u>Comments</u>
*Comments listed do not include PDS Staff commentary
Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments are an alternative to urban development and provide an economic solution for developers; Development regulations for density in the urban districts make Rural Cluster Subdivision developments appealing.
Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments in the Rural Urban Transition Area should be subject to special restrictions and existing infrastructure should be required.
Roads/Utilities are substandard in the Rural Urban Transition Area and are extremely expensive to retrofit.
Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments should be prohibited in potential annexation areas (Fire Districts share this concern).
The volume of proposed Rural Cluster lots is alarming.
Vesting provisions are a concern; the code will take a long time to change and vested projects will not be affected. We do not want a repeat of the LDMR experience.
Cities are concerned about the large amount of Rural Cluster Subdivision applications in the pipeline; How might non-conforming uses pose a problem in the future?
Vesting should only happen after verification that water is available. The County should take administrative action now to address this problem.
Cities sewer/water process is comprehensive (including Interlocal Agreements and Master Plans) and gives more consideration to road impacts, while Service Provider requirements addressing rural development are addressed in a piecemeal fashion.
Capacity concerns
Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments versus Subdivisions add density and demands
Cities have more influence over infrastructure in the Urban Growth Area and essentially no control over infrastructure in the rural area.
Design is the main problem with Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments; appearance looks suburban, orientation is urban, fencing is inefficient as buffer.

Cities and Service providers alike need to look at future connections to the urban area when determining where infrastructure will be needed the most.
Clusters are all residential, one next to the other, with no commercial nearby
Six-inch water lines are dated 40 to 50 years and do not serve Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments. Newer water lines cost three times as much as they did.
Water Providers can't refuse service, due to Federal Contracts and USDA loans. Water providers are not aware of RCSDs in the planning phases, and must adjust their service projections after the fact. The financial consequence to increase capacity ahead of projections raises the rates for all served abruptly and new development bears no proportionate cost of the improvements.
Some Water Service Providers reached their 2020 projections in 2006.
Increased water availability stimulates more Rural cluster subdivisions in the south county.
The County contradicts itself when comparing the General Policy Plan goals to actual Rural Cluster developments. The goal of Rural Cluster Subdivisions is not being met in terms of rural character preservation.
The County should join efforts with Service Providers to plan for continuation of rural development. The growth in rural areas requires urban services.
Look at North Snohomish County Coordinated Water System Plan (SCCWSP) provisions; recognizing that the health of the aquifer is being impacted by 1-acre private wells; 1-acre private wells exacerbate strain on the existing water system.
Highland water district expressed interest in having a moratorium on Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments.
Sequencing of Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments is a concern (daisy-chaining).
2.3 du/ac lots with variety in housing types and setbacks, along with the opportunity for rural uses have more rural character than current Rural Cluster Subdivision developments.
The ability of developments that are calculated to use less than 5,000 gallons water per day (12-lot Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments) to drill private (exempt) wells causes major problems.
Some Service Providers exercise the authority they have in state law (Revised Code of Washington-RCW) more than others (Startup v Highland); service providers have significant authority in the RCW's.
Who will monitor consumption from multiple private wells in Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments to ensure that the 5000 GPD is an accurate figure?
Consider zoning clusters where infrastructure (water) can handle them
Water per lot costs more than in the city.
New residents don't understand that wells and septic systems have limits, and do not

function the same way that urban services do.
Part of the rural character includes lots that are surrounded by preservation tracts for livestock (chickens) or for horses.
What does the Buildable Lands Report (BLR) say about our existing rural plats and what development on those would do to the population estimate?
Rural lots are diverse in size, location and lifestyle.
Do not allow density bonuses.
Should density calculations be different, and be based on buildable areas? Critical areas can be left out of the equation.
County needs to meet obligations under GMA prior to providing density bonuses.
The social fabric of rural residents is different than that of urban residents.
Traffic; rural clusters do not provide connectivity, important in RUTA
Service Providers are hampered in predicting or plan for future development since they are not consulted or advised in the RCSD permitting process.
Entrances look like estates and structures look like mansions; good for marketing, but not rural in character.
Attempts by city fire districts have been made to assure safety in Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments.
The County Fire Marshal has fire flow and access concerns in Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments.
Residents moving into these types of developments expect rural services to be the same as urban services.
Gated communities can be challenging to access for fire protection.
In rural cities, such as Darrington, funding for proper fire equipment is a problem.
Both cities and service providers feel that there is a lack of comprehensive planning for infrastructure, roads and sewer.
County needs to address the inefficiency of drainfields.
The odor problems and potential failure associated with septic systems needs to be addressed. Grease disposal can make septic systems fail in about 10 years.
The annexation leap-frogging issue is exacerbated by sewer/septic and the high cost of extending sewer lines.
The Department of Health thinks that the County's Letter of Availability should have an expiration date.
Service Providers are hesitant to sign off on the County's Letter of Availability because of concerns related to flow, potability, etc.
Traffic on Hwy-530 is congested.

Darrington city clerk's office is receiving complaints from residents and lacks funds to provide water lines.
Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments make more sense closer to the Urban Growth Area.
65% of the portion of Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments is unbuildable to begin with. Bonuses serve as a reward/incentive for more of the same type of development.
The Lake Goodwin development is not protecting the critical area pattern, it would be cost-prohibitive for the developer to do so.
5- acre lots could be cost-prohibitive
Bonus density calculations.
What was the intent of the Hearing Examiner decision in allowing the bonus density in the R-5 zone?
Through-traffic on Bothell-Everett Highway is at LOS F.
Cities have concerns that traffic resulting from Rural Cluster Subdivision developments may divert funding from existing projects; new road improvements in Rural Cluster Subdivision developments will be expecting urban LOS, thereby limiting funding for completion of important projects already in the pipeline.
Increase the size of county and state patrols in rural areas
Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments will require new schools to be built.
Allow cities and service providers more input on the location of Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments.
Service providers and the County make conflicting decisions when determining whether to provide water to the development; it would be easier for providers if they were able to make their own decisions.
The County should contact service providers when application is received and request feedback regarding water availability.
Service providers need more information about the County's zoning code prior to drafting their Comprehensive Plans.
Cities are concerned about water quality; Does the County have a qualified hydrologist?
How does the County provide fire flow in R-5 zone when requirements are not enforced?
Service providers can pass additional costs onto the developer but cannot force developers to plan in advance for water availability.
There are many Rural Cluster Subdivision developers that are not subject to the requirements of the North Snohomish County Coordinated Water System Plan (CWSP).
Developers are contacting Service Providers after Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments are in place, asking about water availability.

Exempt wells may pollute our aquifer; quantity of exempt wells increases the potential pollution problems; County should look at the sequencing of exempt wells more holistically.
Rural Cluster Subdivision residents are urban people who lack knowledge of how to maintain a 5-acre rural tract; 1-acre lots are maintainable in comparison.
Frontage improvements are isolated.
Limit the areas where Rural Cluster Subdivisions are allowed so as to provide predictability for Service Providers to plan for infrastructure; make sure that these areas have good access.
The County should explore installing a Cluster overlay or specific zone dependent on water availability.
What is the difference between what is allowed in R-5 and R-5 Basic? The uses are ambiguous and confusing for planners at municipalities and even more for the general public or other "outsiders".
Improve language of R-5 uses/criteria.
Plan for incompatible uses where Ag-10 uses might be incompatible with uses in Rural Cluster Subdivision developments.
Buffers attempt to address rural character issues but do nothing to address the lack of services or noise issues.
Issues that are indirectly exacerbated by Rural Cluster Subdivision developers: Pollution related to pesticides/herbicides, fertilizers, motorized uses, critical areas and dumping. All of this happening in a concentrated area.
Explore Rural Cluster Subdivision developments as small-scale rural-villages; look at Sylvana; is it a good model?
The County needs to be radical in addressing this problem: either eliminate Rural Cluster Subdivision developments altogether or design Rural Cluster Subdivision developments to be communities that don't grow together and blanket the rural district with suburban sprawl. Possibly provide common space, some commercial uses for convenience of residents.
Limit the amount of houses/residents allowed to live within Rural Cluster Subdivision developments to 200, not 1000.
Areas that are designated by service providers as good locations to absorb future growth are limited by the zoning. Areas that are less ideal locations for future services are being built up.
Impacts to groundwater are magnified by concentrations of growth on small lots.
Detention ponds are becoming polluted and drain into nearby streams causing negative effects to fish habitat.
What is the overarching purpose of Rural Cluster Subdivision Developments? Clusters

are tools that work. Where and how do they work? As a tool, what are they intended to do?