

# Land Use

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## Studies and Coordination

Information regarding current land uses in the project area is based on site visits conducted in the summer of 2007, review of development applications submitted to Snohomish County's Planning and Development Services Department, and review of the following documents:

- *2005 10-Year Update to the Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan, 1995; General Policy Plan, Transportation Element, Population Element, County Profile, Selected Maps.* Snohomish County, Department of Planning and Development Services, Planning Division
- *Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area Plan, 2001, and amended January, 2003.* Snohomish County, Department of Planning and Community Development, Planning Division.

To view the 10-Year Update to the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, access the County's website: [http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR\\_Planning/Projects\\_Programs/Comprehensive\\_Plan](http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/PDS/Divisions/LR_Planning/Projects_Programs/Comprehensive_Plan)

## Affected Environment

### Project Area

Snohomish County covers an area of 2,098 square miles, of which 1,900 square miles is devoted to rural uses. Approximately 8 percent of county land has been designated as urban growth areas by the Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan). The proposed project is located within the unincorporated area of the Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area (UGA).

The 20th Street SE and US 2 road corridor is one of only two roadway links across the Snohomish County floodplain between the Lake Stevens area, Everett and the I-5 corridor. The second link is SR 204, which runs roughly parallel to and north of 20th Street SE, and which also connects with US 2 just east of Ebey Slough. The lack of adequate east-west corridors reduces mobility and exacerbates traffic congestion, especially for residents who commute by single occupancy vehicles (SOVs) to access employment and retail centers in the Everett area, or access I-5 to other employment and commercial areas. Approximately 80% of commuters in Snohomish County travel to work in SOVs.

While the trend toward more urbanized development has been focused primarily on Frontier Village to the north of the project area, much of the traffic that passes along the urban minor arterial of 20th Street SE comes from the City of Lake Stevens, areas west and east of the lake, and areas in the southeast section of the UGA. While regionally important, the 20th Street SE road system has changed little since the 1970s. An expansion of 20th Street SE is planned under a different project by Snohomish County between 400 feet west of 91st Avenue SE and South

Lake Stevens Road, and SR 9 will also be expanded to provide additional lanes. Improvements have occurred primarily at intersections. Signalization improvements at SR 9 have improved traffic flow. The intersections of 79th and 83rd Avenues SE, within the project area, have also been signalized as part of other developments such as the new mid-high school on 24th Street SE that is accessed via 83rd Avenue SE. These intersections and others in the project corridor link collector and local access streets to 20th Street SE. Individual households along the roadway have direct access to this busy arterial, however, at peak congestion times, the lack of traffic signals and turn lanes makes turning movements difficult for residents.

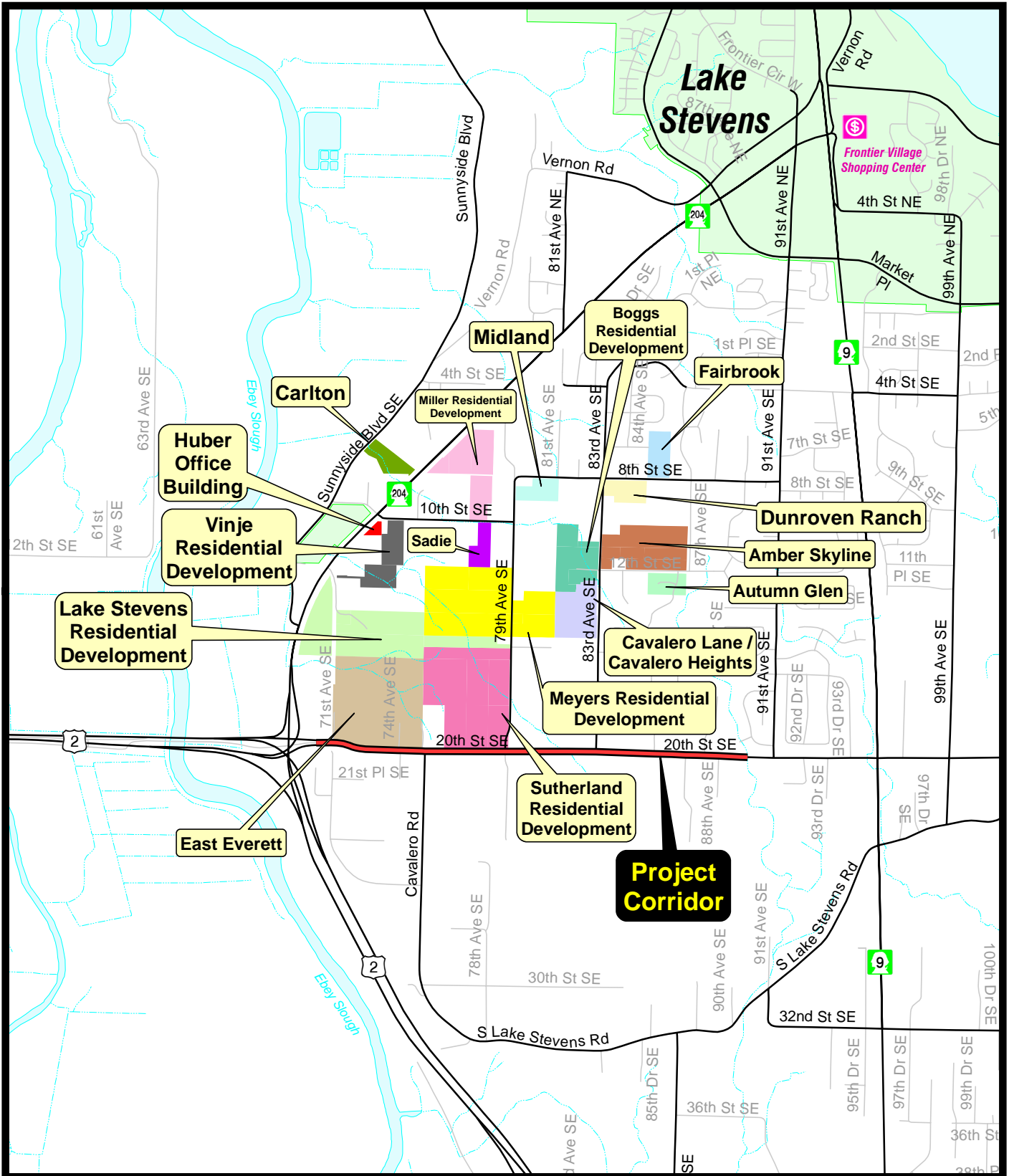
The project corridor and areas adjacent to 20th Street SE are being transformed from the low rural densities of the early 1970s, to urbanizing areas with increasingly denser and more intensive land use patterns. This is concentrating population and employment growth within urban centers and the unincorporated county areas within the city of Lake Stevens' designated urban growth area. The result is a reduction in spillover impacts on agricultural, forest and other resource lands to the eastern part of the county, and a population density that allows for the expansion of services such as sewer, water, utilities, and transit routes.

A number of development applications are currently under consideration or have been approved by the County within half a mile of the project area (Figure 3). Adjacent to the project area at Cavalero Road are the East Everett and Sutherland residential developments. The 67-lot East Everett development is being constructed on the northwest corner of the intersection, and the 210-lot Sutherland development will be constructed on the northeast corner. North of East Everett is the 104-lot Lake Stevens Assembly development, and north of the Sutherland development is the 180-lot Meyers Assemblage development. The 19-lot Autumn Glen development will be located south of 12th Street SE, west of 83rd Avenue SE. There are a number of other developments in various stages of planning and development north of 12th Street SE and east of the eastern project limits.

### **Lake Stevens UGA Plan**

Every county and city that is covered by the 1990 Growth Management Act (GMA) is required to designate an urban growth area in its comprehensive plan. UGAs include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county over the next 20 years. This growth is to be located first in areas characterized by urban development where existing public facilities and service capacity are available. Urban land uses and the development of land at urban densities are prohibited outside UGA boundaries.

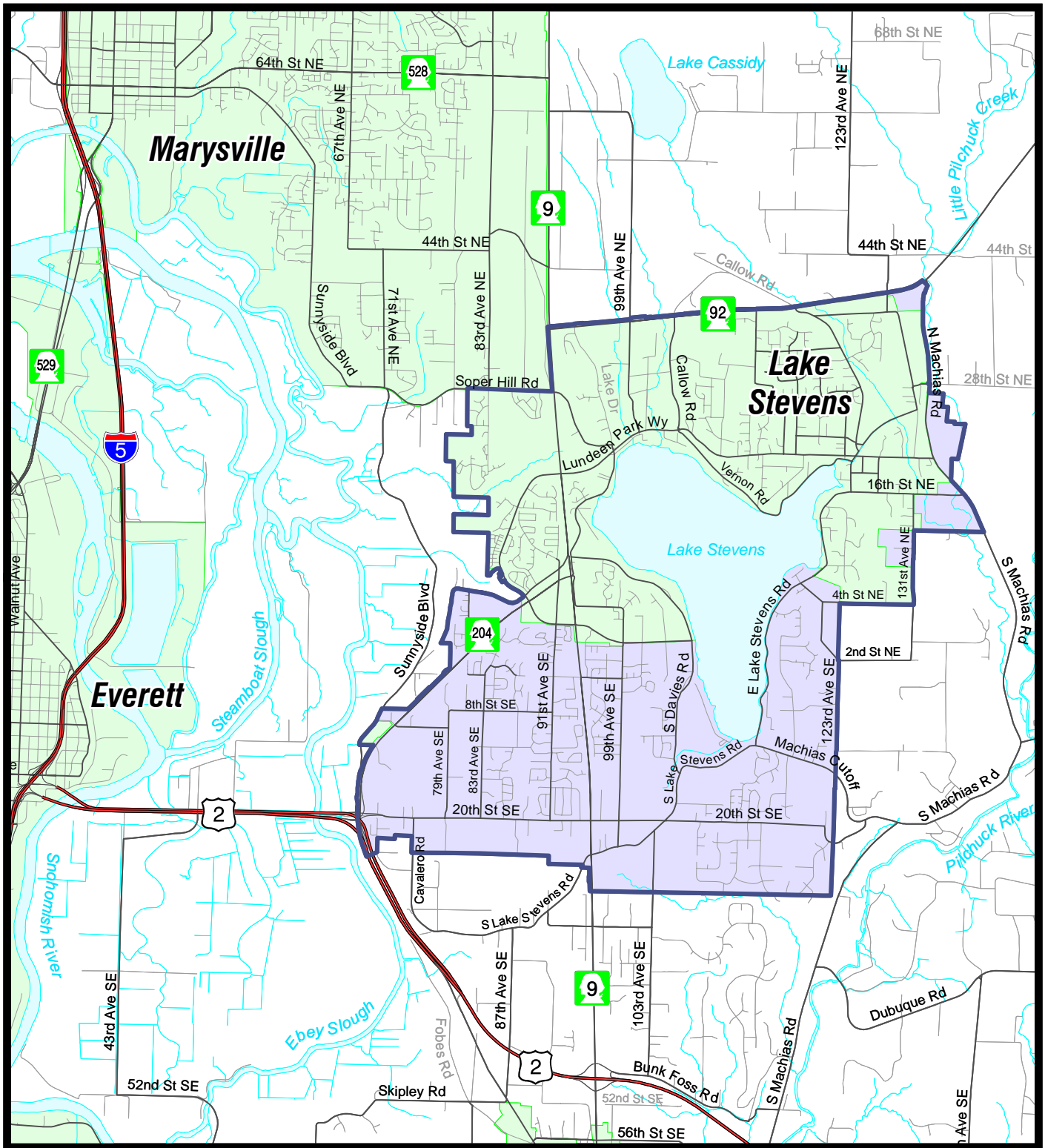
The project corridor is located within the Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area (Figure 4). The Lake Stevens UGA Plan was adopted by Snohomish County in December 2001 (and amended in January, 2003) to guide future planning decisions within the unincorporated portion of the Lake Stevens UGA. The UGA is an approximately 10.5 square mile area centered around the 1.6 square mile Lake Stevens. The boundaries of the UGA include SR 92 and Soper Hill Road to the north; 24th Street SE and 28th Street SE to the south; Machias Road and 123rd Avenue SE to the east; and 83rd Avenue NE south of the "Black Rock Hills" subdivision, and SR 204 and Vernon



**Note:** This map displays only the location of active applications, and does not represent official approval of these applications by Snohomish County. For additional information about specific applications, please contact the Snohomish County Department of Planning and Development Services. Applications shown were current as of Fall 2007.



**Figure 3: Active Land Use Development Applications in Project Vicinity**



**Key to Features:**

	Unincorporated Urban Growth Area		Urban Growth Area Boundary
	Freeways		Arterial Roads
	Local Roads		Streams
	Waterbodies		Cities

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**Figure 4: Lake Stevens Urban Growth Area**

Road on the west. The City of Lake Stevens is the only city within the UGA, and the unincorporated area covers 8.5 square miles.

The plan uses planning horizons for population, employment and development extending to the year 2012. Due to unexpectedly higher levels of growth in the 1990s, the population forecast for this period for the UGA was revised to 30,882, with 22,111 being in the unincorporated area. New households in this area are estimated to be 2,646, and additional jobs are estimated at 2,073.

The plan addresses a number of elements including future growth, projected needs for population, housing and employment, locations of proposed land use, and transportation. The closest commercial/retail center to the project area is Frontier Village in the vicinity of the intersection of SR 204 and SR 9.

The 2,646 new households projected for the unincorporated areas by 2012 will be located in areas designated for Urban Low Density (4-6 DU/acre), Medium Density (6-12 DU/acre), and High Density (12-24 DU/acre) development. New high density residential is located primarily in commercial and retail areas or along major transportation corridors, while low and medium density is generally located outside these areas.

To ensure that transportation facilities and services are improved concurrently with the planned land development, the UGA plan proposes new roads, safety and capacity increases, and upgrades to a number of existing roads within the UGA area. The section of 20th Street SE between US 2 to 91st Avenue SE is listed as an improvement project.

### **2006-2011 Annexation Plan**

The city of Lake Stevens has issued a 2006-2011 Annexation Plan for the communities within its UGA boundaries. The city's 2005 population of 7,350 residents rose to over 14,200 in 2006 through its annexations of the 855-acre North Lake area, the 708-acre Frontier Village area, and the 292-acre Soper Hill area. Community information meetings have also been scheduled by the City with five additional neighborhoods: Chapel Hill, Hill Crest, Cavalero Hill, Southlake, and Eastlake, to assess annexation possibilities with these areas. Over 20,000 people live in the remaining UGA. By 2025, the total population of the UGA is expected to exceed 46,000 residents.

### **Population within County and UGA**

Snohomish County is the third most populous county in Washington, after King and Pierce counties. During the 1990s, Snohomish County was the fastest growing county in the state. Between 1990 and 2000, the county's population grew from 465,628 to 606,024, an increase of 140,000 residents and a 30 percent increase over ten years. More recently, the county's population increased to 671,800 in 2006, and is estimated to reach 929,314 by 2025, the new planning horizon for the 10-Year Update to the Comprehensive Plan. In absolute growth, Snohomish County is second only to King County. More than half of the population growth is attributed to in-migration (people moving to Snohomish County), and a key reason is housing prices are generally lower in Snohomish County compared to King County.

The project corridor lies within an area of Snohomish County that is experiencing significant growth. Proximity to major employment areas in southwest Snohomish County is via access to major transportation routes such as the US 2 Trestle across the Snohomish River flood plain, I-5,

and SR 9. The access provided by these roadways to larger population and employment areas has led to the development of bedroom communities and intensified residential growth areas. Due to an unexpectedly high rate of population growth in the 1990s, the 2006 population of the Lake Stevens UGA was 29,174, and the 2025 population target has been estimated at 46,125. This amounts to 6.4% of the total growth in the County. These estimates exceed the figures provided in the 2001 South Lake Stevens UGA Plan.

## **GMA Comprehensive Planning**

In 1990, largely in response to uncoordinated and unplanned rates of growth in King and Snohomish counties that occurred during the late 1980s, the Washington State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA). The GMA is intended to assist cities and counties in managing growth by insuring that citizens, local governments, and the private sector cooperate in land use planning. The GMA requires that cities and counties with substantial growth rates prepare Comprehensive Plans. These plans must provide measures for critical resource protection, define urban growth boundaries, and adopt zoning and capital improvement programs. The plans must provide adequate roads and services for projected populations for the 20-year planning period.

## **Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan**

Prior to 1990, the Snohomish County comprehensive plan consisted of several components, including thirteen subarea comprehensive plans which provided the overall comprehensive development guide for the county. In June 1995, Snohomish County adopted its first Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan). The Comprehensive Plan addressed land use, housing, capital facilities, rural uses, utilities and transportation, and provided a guide for growth in the county over a 20-year period. Policies addressing these topics were found in the General Policy Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. Beginning in 1995, the county initiated and adopted detailed “urban growth area” plans with several cities and the unincorporated portions with adjacent UGAs to provide information on land uses, infrastructure and policy direction. The resulting plans included the Lake Stevens UGA Plan.

As required by GMA, the County issued a 10-year update (the Update) to the Comprehensive Plan in early 2006. The Update extends the planning horizon to 2025, and affects all of the major components of the Comprehensive Plan: the Transportation element, Capital Facilities Plan, Comprehensive Parks Plan, and the General Policy Plan. New sections have been added to the chapters of the GPP, others have been modified, and various sections of the County Code, and the zoning and land use maps have been amended to accommodate a population target of 929,314 by 2025.

The Update also recommended future land use amendments to UGAs, including the addition of infill areas and the size of UGA areas. The majority of the proposed area-wide rezones were a product of future land use map re-designations within the infill and UGA expansion areas, and generally involved a change from a lower density to a higher density residential designation.

## **Transportation Element**

Within the framework of GMA planning, the relationship of land use and transportation is particularly important. The purpose of the Transportation Element is to provide a plan for the transportation facilities needed to support the County's future land use map. It recommends specific arterial roadway projects for the unincorporated county in order to meet roadway safety and capacity needs. However, it also recommends various implementation strategies to guide the County in its participation in regional transportation planning. These strategies affect issues such as land-use transportation concurrency, arterial and highway level of service, access management, and non-motorized transportation.

The desired result is that the Comprehensive Plan determines the location, type, design and timing of transportation facilities and services. GMA mandates that there be consistency between the multiple elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and that development of public facilities and services will be phased according to the regional vision developed through multi-county policies. The ultimate goal is to develop a transportation system that emphasizes accessibility, including a variety of mobility options, which facilitates an efficient movement of people, goods and freight. The Transportation element categorizes the 20th Street SE road corridor as an urban minor arterial, and designates the US 2 to 91st Avenue SE section as a roadway improvement project to provide increased capacity that can support its future land use designation.

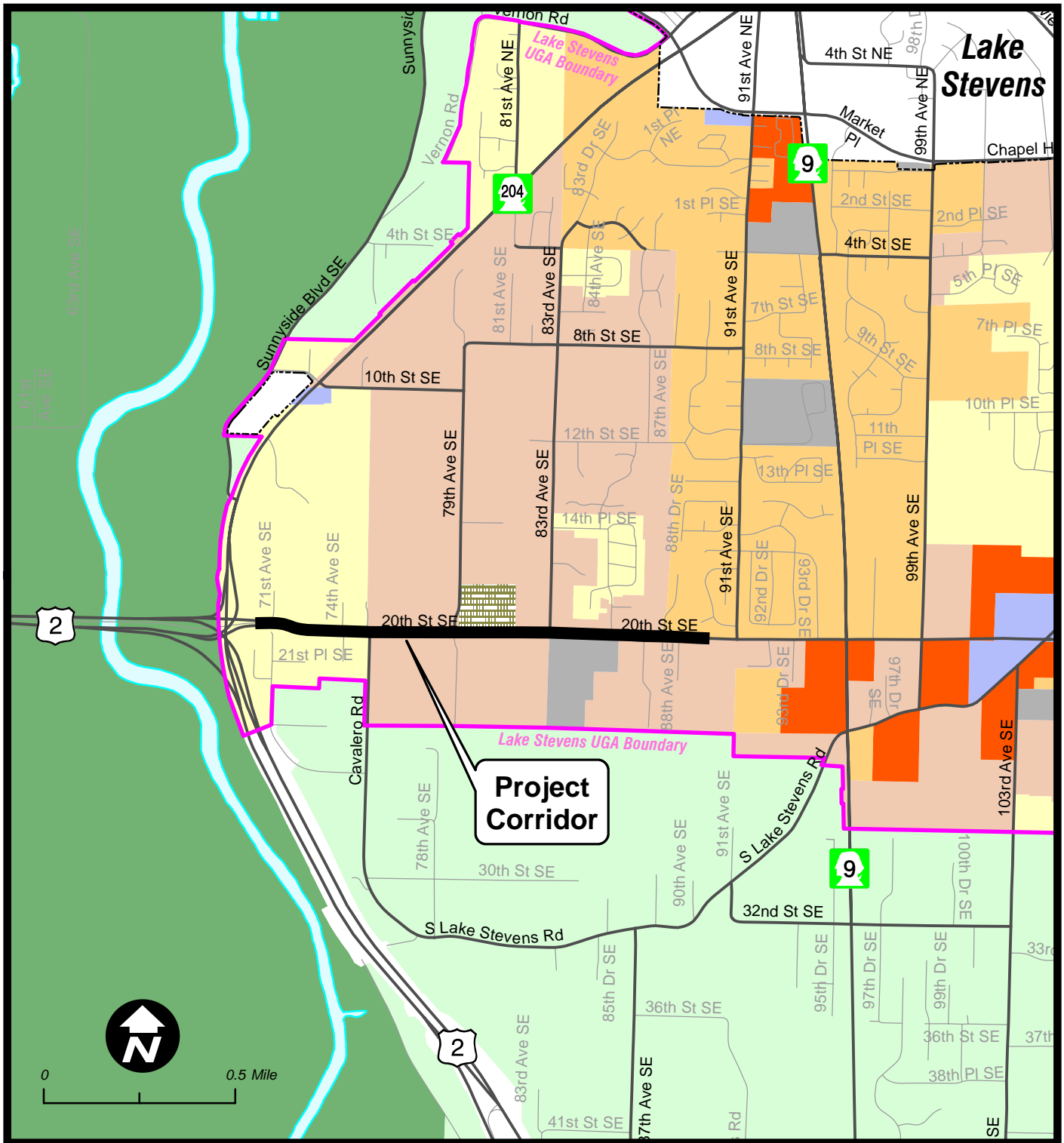
### **Concurrency in the Project Area**

GMA requires that new development occur only where adequate public services and infrastructure can be provided, such as within areas designated as UGAs. The adequacy of roads is determined through an adopted level of service standard. This policy is commonly referred to as concurrency. Consistent with the concurrency provisions of state law, Snohomish County has adopted ordinances which prohibit development that causes level of service on county arterials to fall below the adopted standards, unless there is a financial commitment in place for improvements or strategies that will remediate the level of service deficiency within six years.










### **Snohomish County Land Use Designations**

In urbanizing areas of the county, and areas which are becoming increasingly urbanized, average net residential densities will be a minimum of four dwelling units (DU) per acre which takes into account environmental constraints such as wetlands, streams and steep slopes. Higher density, mixed-use developments are planned to occur throughout the urban growth areas.

The project area features a range of land use designations (Figure 5). The area between the US 2 Trestle and Cavalero Road is designated Urban Low Density Residential (4 DU/Acre), while the rest of the project area is designated primarily Urban Low Density Residential (6 DU/Acre). Three small areas have other designations: Urban Village at the northeast corner of 79th Avenue SE, Public/Institutional Use at the southeast corner of 83rd Avenue SE, and Urban Medium Density Residential (6-12 DU/Acre) on the north side of 20th Street SE between 88th Drive SE and 91st Avenue SE.



**Key to Features:**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  Public / Institutional Use             |  Urban Commercial                          |  Urban Low Density Residential (6 DU/Acre)     |
|  Rural Residential (1 DU/5 Acres Basic) |  Urban Village                             |  Urban Medium Density Residential (6-12 DU/Ac) |
|  Riverway Commercial Farmland           |  Urban Low Density Residential (4 DU/Acre) |  Urban High Density Residential (12-24 DU/Ac)  |

*The future land use designations depicted on this map were derived from the original Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan adopted June 28, 1995 and effective on July 10, 1995. This information was last updated January 28, 2007.*

**Figure 5: Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan  
Future Land Use Designations**

## **Snohomish County Zoning**

Zoning implements the Comprehensive Plan by applying the broad guidelines established by the comprehensive planning process and developing them into more specific regulations. Various zones are established where allowed uses are specified, and bulk requirements such as lot size, height of structures and density are identified for legally defined and described parcels. Current zoning for residential uses is categorized by minimum lot sizes (based on square footage) for single family housing and number of dwelling units per acre allowed for multiple family housing.

The project vicinity is zoned for a variety of allowed uses (Figure 6). The residential zoning category which predominates is Residential Lot Size 7,200 SF, and it occurs both north and south of 20th Street SE from Cavalero Road to the east end of the project area, except for the northeast corner of 79th Avenue SE which is zoned Neighborhood Business. The area between US 2 and Cavalero Road is zoned Residential Lot Size 9,600 SF.

## **Impacts – Land Use**

### **During Construction**

#### **Preferred Alternative**

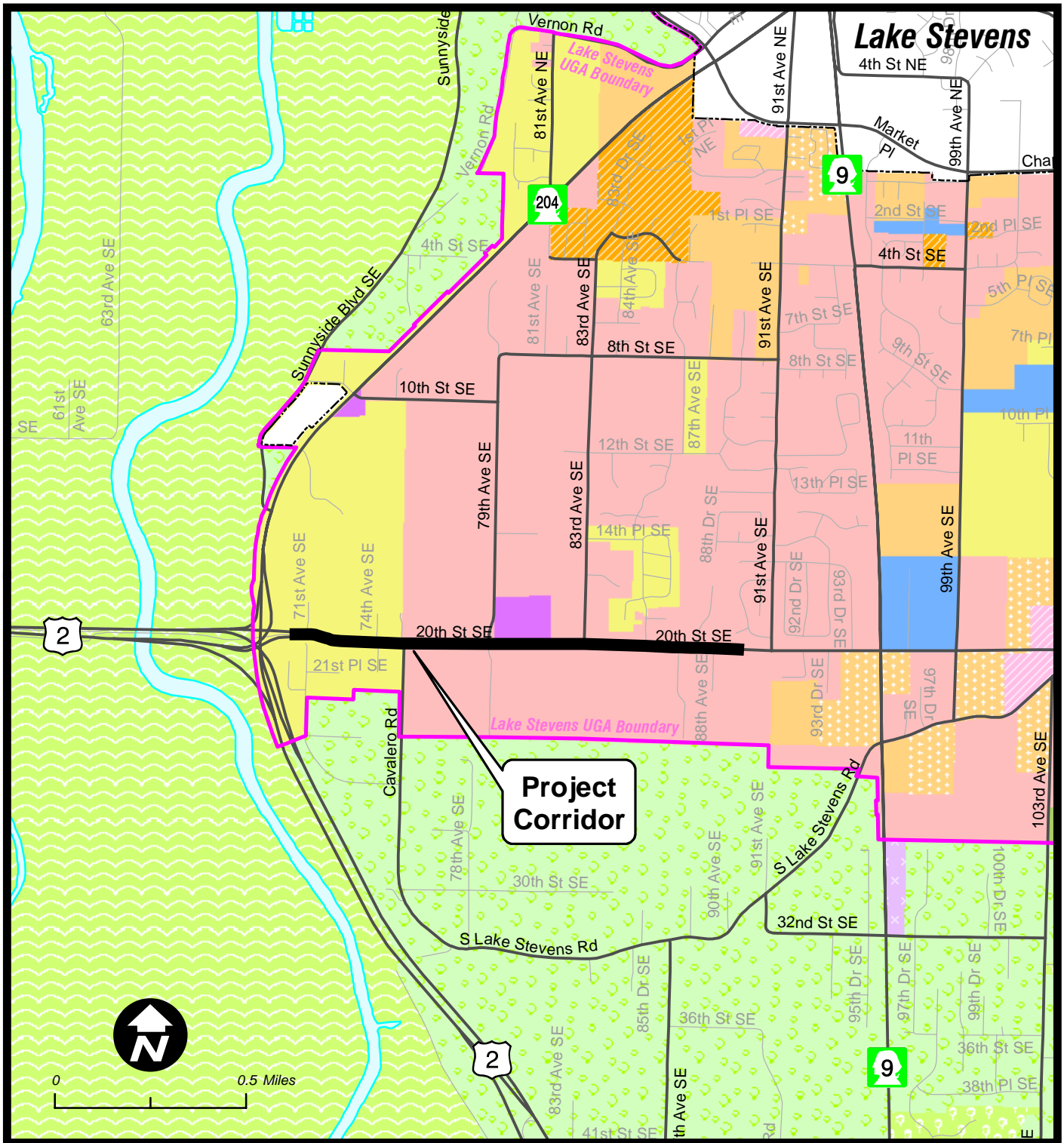
Under the Preferred Alternative, the existing land uses within the project vicinity would temporarily experience increased traffic congestion and residents would have difficulty accessing their properties. Commute delays caused by lane closures will be inconvenient for both local residents and employers who rely on the existing road network.

Because many people use the 20th Street SE road corridor as a link to the city of Everett to the west and destinations primarily to the south, the local road network system may experience redistribution of traffic flows. While this is ordinarily viewed as a transportation system impact, such redistribution is also a land use impact. Local streets are designed primarily to provide access to individual households, however, they often function as informal play areas for neighborhood children and pedestrian paths for residents where sidewalks do not exist. Increased traffic can make local streets less safe due to poor sight lines.

Planned residential developments and existing properties adjacent to 20th Street SE would be affected by the loss of some property to accommodate the roadway. The acquisition of residential property for new ROW would reduce some lot sizes along the project corridor.

#### **No Action Alternative**

Under this alternative, the project would not be constructed and no direct conversion of existing land uses and impacts would occur except from private developments that are planned.



**Key to Features:**

- |  |                                  |  |                               |  |                             |
|--|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
|  | Agriculture-10 Acre              |  | Planned Residential 8,400 Ft² |  | Rural Business              |
|  | Low Density Multiple Residential |  | Residential 9,600 Ft²         |  | Rural-5 Acre                |
|  | Multiple Residential             |  | Townhouse                     |  | Suburban Agriculture-1 Acre |
|  | Planned Community Business       |  | Neighborhood Business         |  |                             |
|  | Residential Lot Size 7,200 Ft²   |  |                               |  |                             |

This map is not the official zoning map. It is a generalized representation of county-wide zoning as of March 2005. This map is updated periodically each year. Minor discrepancies may exist between the several thematic map layers due to the original compilation scale of 1:24,000.

**Figure 6: Zoning**

## **During Operation**

### **Preferred Alternative**

The Preferred Alternative would require an additional 9.1 acres of right-of way. This would permanently convert existing residential or other land use properties to transportation-related uses such as roadway expansion and associated stormwater facilities. Forty-six parcels will be impacted and 12 structures demolished.

There are two pending land development proposals adjacent to 20th Street SE that may be affected by the proposed roadway improvements. Roadway design may affect site access and the amount of usable space for development.

Overall, land use patterns in the project vicinity would continue to be consistent with the goals of the GMA, the Comprehensive Plan, zoning code, and the Lake Stevens UGA Plan in providing adequate transportation facilities to support new development. The proposal would also help to fulfill the joint goals of the General Policy Plan and the Lake Stevens UGA Plan to provide infrastructure capacity to adequately support urban growth over a 20-year period, and to provide bicycle paths and pedestrian access.

### **No Action Alternative**

This alternative would have no immediate impacts on property, however, long-term impacts would involve available land adjacent to 20th Street SE being developed according to the GMA-directed land use designations and zoning for those areas that support higher densities and infill development of urbanizing areas. Without an upgraded transportation network, the necessary facilities would not be in place to support development and comply with growth management mandates. This would result in an increase in the already severe peak-hour traffic congestion, which would cause a deterioration in levels of service and arterial efficiency, and access and mobility problems for residents. On a regional basis, as the surrounding area's population swells, the traffic congestion would contribute to regional transportation issues, and affect the real estate market and employment opportunities.

## **Mitigation – Land Use**

### **During Construction**

#### **Preferred Alternative**

Impacts associated with construction activity, such as disruption of local traffic patterns and commute times, would be minimized to the extent that is feasible. A traffic control plan would be implemented to ensure safety in the roadway corridor and provide detour routes if necessary.

Construction activity will occur during daylight hours, generally between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. Prior notification of road closures and detour routes, if needed, will be sent to area residents and property owners whenever possible to minimize safety and noise concerns. In addition, information signs will be installed along the roadway, as appropriate.

## **No Action**

No construction would take place under this alternative, so no impacts would occur that require mitigation.

## **During Operation**

### **Preferred Alternative**

The fair market value would be determined for property slated for purchase as additional right-of-way. A purchase agreement would be reached between the county and land owner. Right-of-way purchases and, if necessary, relocation will be done in accordance with the Civil Rights Act Title VI legislation and Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Act of 1970, as amended. Condemnation proceedings may be utilized and property values determined by a court if no agreement is reached.

The addition of sidewalks and bike lanes would change the character of the existing roadway to a more expansive pedestrian, transit and bike friendly corridor. The additional modal mobility provided by bike lanes will increase bike and pedestrian use of the corridor due to increased safety. To some extent, an alternative to SOV use would be encouraged especially for access to local areas.

All roadway design will be coordinated with existing and proposed future land development to ensure that safe access is provided to the roadway.

### **No Action**

The expanded roadway would not be built under this alternative, so no impacts would occur that require mitigation.

## **Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts**

The project will require an additional 9.1 acres of right-of-way, which will permanently reduce some lot sizes along the project corridor and convert existing residential and other land use properties to transportation-related uses. Forty-six parcels will be impacted and 12 structures demolished. Less usable space will be available for residential developments.