

Proposed Ordinance 23-051 Creating A Rural Village Housing Demonstration Program

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENTATION TO THE
SNOHOMISH COUNCIL PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MAY 16, 2023

Agenda

- Background
- Definitions
- Typical Development in R-5 Zoning
- An Unusual Pre-Application Request
- Proposed Code Amendments
- Reasoning
- Next Steps

Background

- Demonstration programs are a temporary mechanism to test new types of development in a limited setting
- Three previous demonstration programs:
 - Housing Demonstration Program (1995 to 1997)
 - Reduced Drainage Discharge Program (2000 to 2014)
 - Urban Center Demonstration Program (2001 to 2010)
- Rural Village Housing Demonstration Program would allow buildings with three or four housing units in exchange for preserving a minimum of 85% of the site in rural open space and would apply to limited sites with R-5 zoning
 - ▶ Can buildings with three or four units be compatible with rural character?
 - ▶ If so, does the proposal adequately foster traditional rural lifestyles and rural based economies, provide for rural visual landscapes, and reduce the inappropriate conversion of land into sprawling low-density development?
- Planning Commission held a public hearing, amended the original proposal, and recommends approval to the County Council and County Executive

Definitions

Demonstration Program

A temporary chapter of code that provides options for alternative forms of development

Residential 5-Acre Zoning

R-5 is the most common implementing zones in areas designated for rural residential uses

Resource-Based Activities

Agriculture and forestry are two resource-based activities commonly displaced by new development in the R-5 zone. The Rural Village Housing Demonstration Program seeks to protect these activities

Standard Development in R-5 Zoning

**Lot sizes are based on
200,000 square feet
(4.7 acres)**

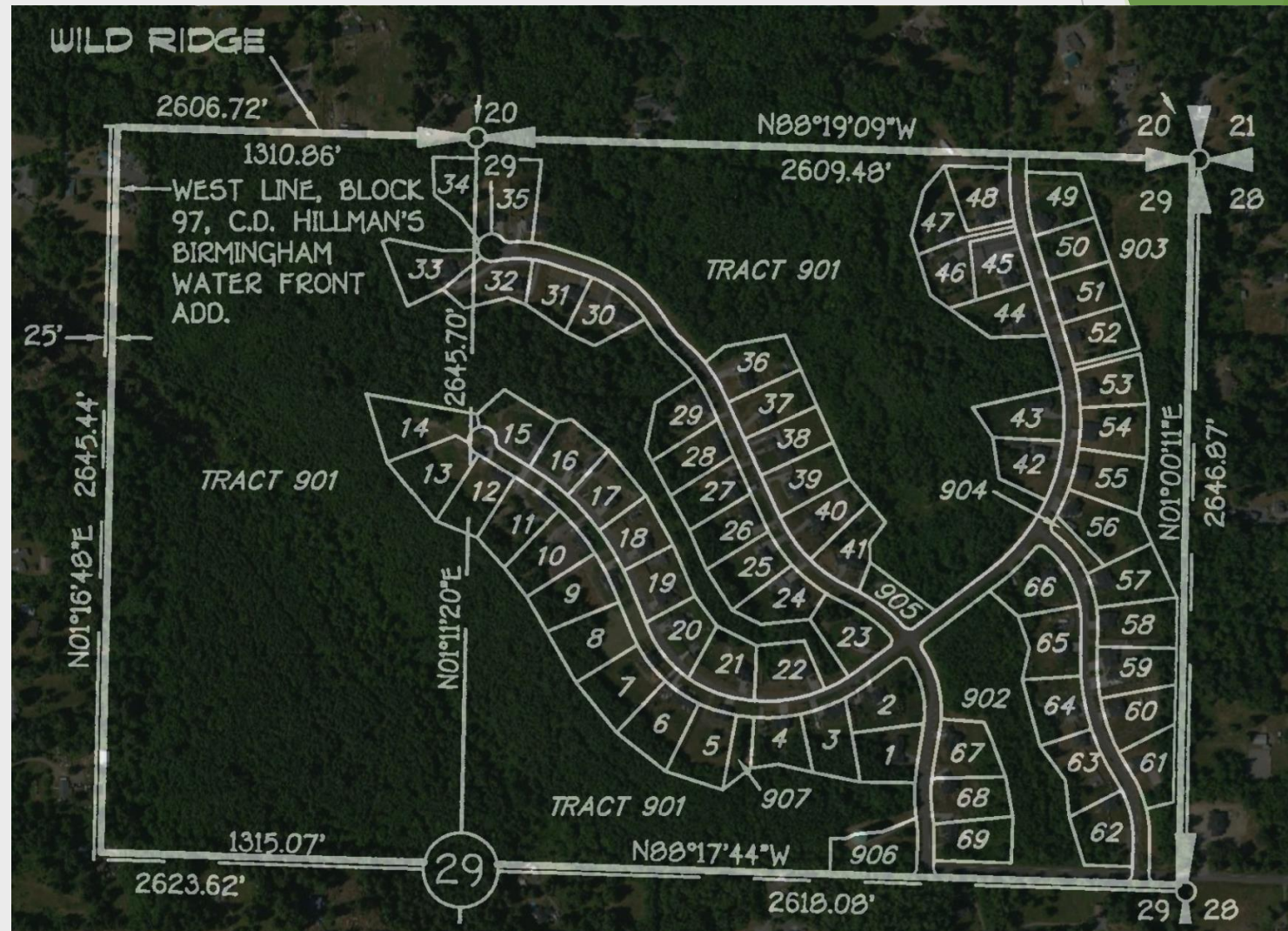
- ▶ Roads bisect wetlands and cross streams
- ▶ Agriculture and forestry uses are converted into low density residential uses
- ▶ Image to right is a 253-acre site with forestry taxation status, being evaluated for development under file 22-119644 PS
- ▶ No viable forestry would remain after development



Rural Cluster Subdivision in R-5 Zoning

Gross densities up to 1 lot per 3.4 acres

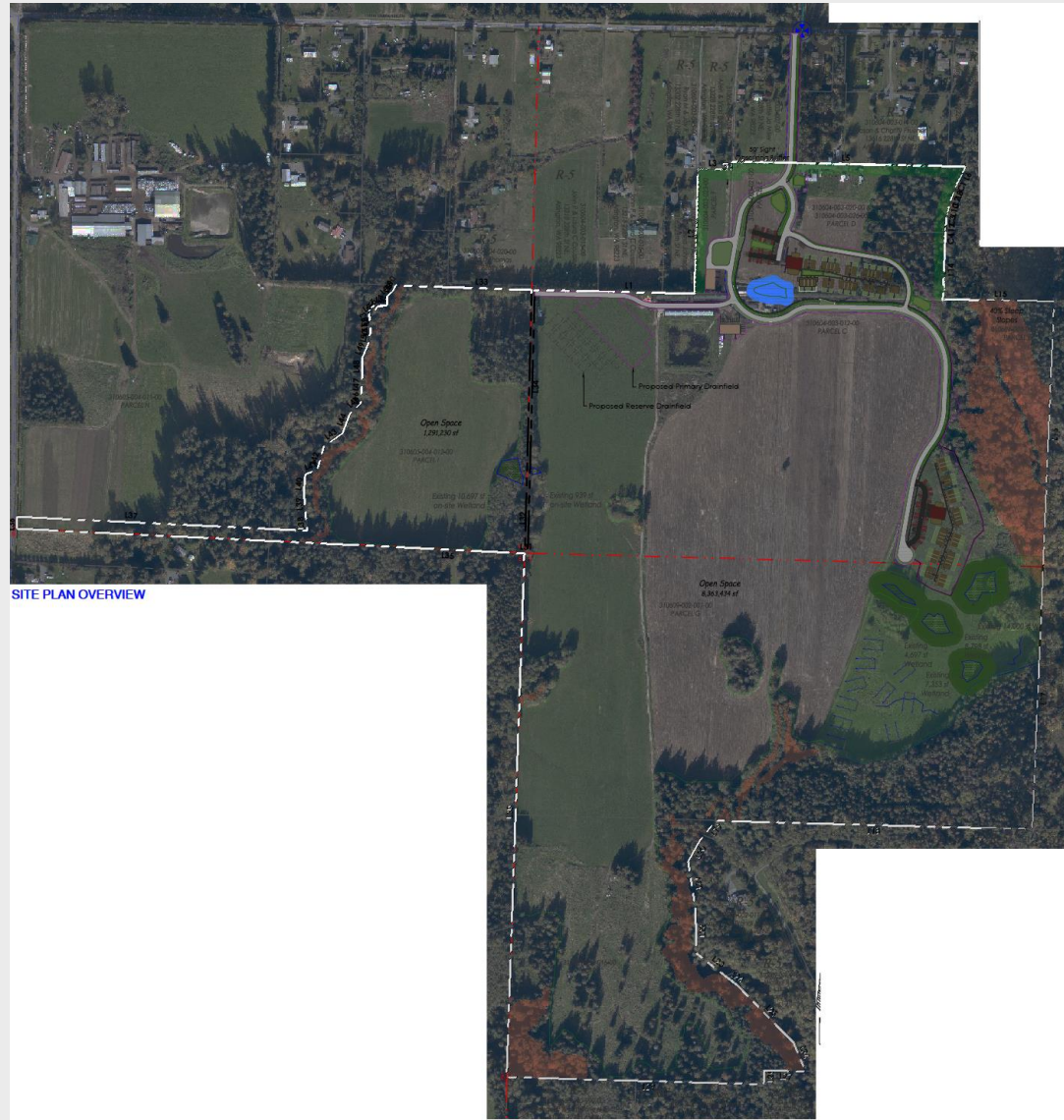
- ▶ Roads sometimes still bisect wetlands and cross streams
- ▶ Agriculture and forestry uses can continue in open space tracts, but generally do not
- ▶ Image to right is a 238-acre site that had forestry taxation status, and is now a 70-lot RCS
- ▶ Covenants for this development (Wild Ridge) do not allow forestry uses



RVHDP Pre-App in R-5 Zoning

Gross densities same as rural cluster maximum (1 unit/3.4 ac)

- ▶ Roads can avoid wetlands and streams
- ▶ Agriculture and forestry uses to continue in open space tracts
- ▶ Image to right is a 236-acre dairy with a potential 70-unit demonstration project under 21-108030 PA
- ▶ Proposal would preserve a large majority of site as agriculture in exchange for allowing residential units tightly clustered in buildings with up to four units



Proposed Code Requirements (Part 1)

The Rural Village Housing Demonstration Program would:

- ▶ Apply only to sites with at least 100 acres of R-5 zoning under the same ownership
- ▶ Be prohibited on R-5 zoned properties located within the boundaries of the Tulalip Reservation, designated as Local Commercial Farmland, or designated within the Rural to Urban Transition Area overlay on the Future Land Use Map
- ▶ Have maximum number of homes that is the same as rural cluster subdivision provisions allow
- ▶ Allow attached housing with up to four units per building in exchange for preserving a minimum of 85% of the site in large open space tracts that preserve rural character, working farm, or forest land
- ▶ Staff report **Attachment A** includes details

Proposed Code Requirements (Part 2)

The Rural Village Housing Demonstration Program would:

- ▶ Preserve a minimum of 85% of the site in open space for resource-based activities such as agricultural production and working forest lands or as critical areas and buffers
- ▶ Require housing to be tightly clustered in groups of 10 to 40 homes that are setback from nearby roads, properties, and natural resource lands
- ▶ Require restrictive covenants and a management plan to ensure long-term protection and maintenance open space tracts and the upkeep of landscaping, storm drainage facilities and other private improvements
- ▶ Require connection to connect to a public water supply
- ▶ Allow applicants two years to submit proposals under the program. They would then have four years to receive approval. The program would sunset (expire) after six years
- ▶ Staff report **Attachment A** includes details

Reasoning

Housing Affordability

- ▶ Snohomish County is facing a housing affordability crisis and housing shortage
- ▶ Attached housing is generally more affordable than detached housing. The RVHDP would allow attached housing with up to four units per building in areas where code currently only allows single-family homes, duplexes, and manufactured housing. Staff report **Attachment B** includes details related to affordability

Rural Character

- ▶ The Growth Management Act requires counties to maintain rural character
- ▶ GMA defines rural character in a way that does not exclude three- and four-unit buildings
- ▶ Throughout the rural areas of Snohomish County there are a variety of building types, lot sizes and activities
- ▶ The Rural Village Housing Demonstration Program proposal is clearly consistent with four of the seven parts of the GMA definition for Rural Character. Three parts are subject to interpretation. See staff report **Attachment C** for details on rural character

Can buildings with three or four units be compatible with Rural Character?

Planning
Commission said
“Yes,” subject to
proposed
performance
criteria.

Image Credit:
Caddis
Collaborative



06.07.21
ROOTED NW
PROJECT # 2014
CADDIS PC

Challenge 2

Would the proposed provisions foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas?

Planning Commission said “Yes,” subject to protection of at least 85% of site as open space.

Image Credit:
Caddis Collaborative



Challenge 3

Would the proposed provisions provide for visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities?

Planning Commission said “Yes,” subject to site design and architectural standards.

Image Credit:
Caddis Collaborative



Challenge 4

Would the proposed provisions Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development?

Planning Commission said “Yes,” subject to proposed density and protection of 85% open space.

Image adapted from 21-108030 PA



Next Steps

1. Description of Rooted NW proposal by Dave Boehnlein
2. Public hearing on Ordinance 23-051 to be scheduled
3. Consideration and action by the County Council on Ordinance 23-051 at public hearing



Questions

Any
Questions?

Ryan Countryman
ryan.countryman@snoco.org
425-309-6164

