

Chapter #: Rural and Resource Lands Element

September 2, 2025 Draft

VISION AND CHARACTER

Rural Vision

Kitsap County's vision is the protection of rural areas and natural resource lands, including preservation of places of natural beauty, working agriculture and timber lands, community identity, and rural character.

Rural Character

The following definition of rural character acknowledges the Growth Management Act (GMA)'s "rural character" definition while acknowledging input from the Kitsap County community.

Rural Character Definition: In Kitsap County, rural character is defined by open spaces, working farms and forests, and views of water and landscapes that remain dominant over the built environment. Traditional rural lifestyles, such as farming, forestry, and rural recreation, are supported, while peace, privacy, and the natural rhythms of rural life are safeguarded. Communities maintain historic gathering spaces and social connections. Wildlife habitats, critical areas, and healthy ecosystems are protected to ensure resilience and coexistence with nature. Growth is carefully managed to prevent sprawl and urban encroachment, with development patterns and services aligned to rural needs. Water quality is safeguarded, and the agricultural economy is sustained through responsible stewardship and long-term preservation of working lands (KCC.110.666).

- Preserve open space, natural landscapes, farmland, and vegetation so they predominate over the built environment, maintaining visual access to water, forests, and territorial views.
- Support traditional rural lifestyles and rural-based economies, including farming, horseback riding, and forestry, while protecting community identity and shared traditions.
- Foster quiet surroundings, low traffic volumes, dark skies free of light pollution, and the natural sounds of rural life, while ensuring privacy and tranquility.

- Provide opportunities for community gathering spaces, encourage social connection, and sustain a shared sense of rural lifestyle, while respecting individual independence.
- Protect wildlife corridors, fish and wildlife habitat and other critical areas, and ensure coexistence with wildlife, while supporting fire resilience and healthy ecosystems.
- Reduce the conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development and manage urban encroachment (including LAMIRDs), ensuring growth is consistent with rural character and values.
- Maintain rural development patterns that do not require urban governmental services, while addressing safety and resilience needs such as fire protection and emergency access.
- Safeguard natural surface water flows, groundwater recharge, and discharge areas, ensuring clean water systems and resilient hydrology.
- Protect and sustain Kitsap's working lands as vital to rural identity, economic resilience, and environmental health by emphasizing sustainable practices, responsible management, and long-term land preservation.

INTENT

The intent of the Rural and Resource Lands Element is to guide land uses that preserve the distinct character, function, and value of Kitsap County's unincorporated lands, including lands that are intended for agriculture, forestry, mineral resources, open space/critical area protection, and rural residential housing. This element supports the County's commitment to protecting forests, farms, open space, and natural systems while sustaining rural communities and local economies. It also supports the preservation of rural character, provides the policy foundation to maintain low-density development, prevents the spread of urban infrastructure into rural areas, and protects rural lands from incompatible uses.

This element is also intended to ensure compliance with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) by identifying appropriate rural uses, promoting conservation, and preventing the conversion of resource lands. It serves as a tool to balance growth, preserve rural lifestyles, and ensure that future development aligns with long-term community values.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT AND REGIONAL COORDINATION

GMA sets forth planning goals to guide the development of comprehensive plans. While all GMA goals apply in the rural areas, the following GMA planning goals directly addresses rural and resource lands:

Goal 8, Natural Resource Industries: *“Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.”* RCW 36.70A.020(8)

Goal 9, Open space and recreation. *“Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.”* RCW 36.70A.020(9)

In support of these planning goals, GMA requires that a county’s comprehensive plan have a rural element. The rural element is required to include provisions for the following protections:

- Permit rural development, forestry, and agriculture in rural areas.
- Provide for a variety of rural densities and uses that are not characterized by urban growth.
- Include measures that apply to rural development and protect the rural character of the area by:
 - Containing or otherwise controlling rural development.
 - Assuring visual compatibility of rural development with the surrounding rural area.
 - Reducing the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development in the rural area.
 - Protecting critical areas, as provided in RCW 36.70A.060, and surface water and groundwater resources.
 - Protecting against conflicts with the use of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands designated under RCW 36.70A.170.

The GMA also provides for Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD) in rural areas. Kitsap County has designated Type I and Type III LAMIRDs according to the standards of WAC 365-196-425(6). Type I LAMIRDs are isolated areas of existing more intense development within a rural area, and they may include a mix of uses including commercial, industrial and residential. Within these LAMIRDs, infill, redevelopment, or new development may be allowed provided it is consistent with the LAMIRD’s existing character and scale. Type III LAMIRDs are isolated small-scale businesses and cottage industries. Type II (recreational) LAMIRDs have not been designated in Kitsap County.

As with the Comprehensive Plan as a whole, the goals and policies in the Rural and Resource Lands Element must reflect the requirements of the GMA as outlined above, be consistent with the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC) VISION 2050 plan and its Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs), and conform to the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) adopted by the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (KRCC).

VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) emphasizes accommodating growth primarily within urban areas, focusing on designated centers and expanded transit options. This approach aims to ensure rural and resource lands continue to be vital parts of the region, retaining important cultural, rural, and rural lifestyle opportunities over the long term.

OTHER APPLICABLE STATE LAWS

In addition to the GMA, other state laws and rules apply to rural and resource lands, including but not limited to:

- RCW 7.48.300-.320: Right to Farm provisions, which protect existing agricultural activities and forest practices from being subjected to “nuisance” lawsuits.
- RCW 80.50: Energy facility site locations, which addresses the siting of facilities such as power plants, transmission lines, alternative energy facilities (e.g., wind, solar), and energy storage (battery) facilities.
- RCW 84.33-34: Classification and taxation for farm/agricultural, open space, and timber lands, to encourage their preservation and maintenance of their current uses.
- [SHB 1261](#): Beginning September 1, 2025, the additional tax penalty amount for open space farm and agricultural land classification removal or withdrawal is reduced to four years of back taxes.
- WAC 365-190-050: Requirements for analysis and designation of agricultural resource lands.
- WAC 365-190-060: Requirements for analysis and designation of forest resource lands.
- WAC 365-190-070: Requirements for analysis and designation of mineral resource lands.
- [SB 5471](#): Authorizing middle housing in unincorporated urban growth areas and certain limited areas of more intensive rural development
- [SB 5184](#): Concerning minimum parking requirements.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS

The goals and policies of the Land Use element serve as the basis for this element, which is also supported by other elements such as Environment, Economic Development, and Housing. For example, the Land Use element ensures an adequate amount of land is appropriately zoned to accommodate allowed rural uses such as agriculture, rural economies, and rural housing.

BACKGROUND OF CHAPTER

HISTORY

The Rural and Resource Lands chapter originally stood independently following the “Year of the Rural” initiative in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. In the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, this chapter was blended into the Land Use chapter and remained so during the 2024 update. Through a renewed effort focused on research, analysis, and community outreach, the chapter will once again stand independently, providing dedicated guidance for the management and preservation of rural and resource lands into the future.

2025 REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

In addition to drawing on the information and analysis prepared for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, specific rural-related data was created and reviewed for this chapter. These study areas included: updated inventories of lands in agriculture, mineral resource, and forestry uses; classification of agricultural, mineral resource, and timber lands; rural population and development trends; uses and development in LAMIRDs and rural villages; development of legacy lots; and the use of clustering and transfer of development rights in rural areas. Additionally, existing plan review included “Kitsap County Farmland Preservation – Analysis and Recommendations, 2023,” “WRIA 15 – Kitsap Watershed Plan, 2024,” “Great Peninsula Conservancy – Conservation Plan, 2021-2025,” and “East Kitsap Watershed Salmon Recovery Chapter Update, 2025.”

2025 OUTREACH AND COORDINATION

As part of the Rural and Resource Lands Chapter update, Kitsap County conducted a comprehensive outreach program to gather public input and insights. This included two rural surveys—Survey 1.0 in February/March and Survey 2.0 in June/July—designed to capture community priorities and concerns. In addition, staff engaged stakeholders through presentations, interviews, and meetings with a broad range of groups, including the Agriculture Working Group, Kitsap County Child Care Task Force, Kingston Rotary, Tribal representatives, Kitsap Rural Business Coalition, Great Peninsula Conservancy, Washington Department of Natural Resources and a gravel pit owner, and County staff from Parks, Emergency Management, and Department of Community Development divisions (Current Planning, Building & Fire Safety, Environmental Programs). The County also hosted workshops, Community Advisory Council presentations, an open house, and public testimony sessions to ensure multiple opportunities for public participation and comment. This multi-faceted approach allowed for a thorough review and summary of community perspectives to inform rural and resource land planning.

Rural Survey 1.0 received responses from 1,026 participants who indicated near-unanimous support for preservation of rural character as central to the county’s identity and quality of life. Respondents emphasized protecting open space, natural landscapes, and green buffers, while supporting sustainable rural economies rooted in farming and small-scale agriculture. Key concerns included unchecked development, suburban sprawl, and forestry practices such as clearcutting, with calls for stronger regulations to safeguard visual beauty, water resources, wildlife habitat, and historic traditions. Overall, the community envisions a future that balances environmental stewardship with resilient, locally based rural livelihoods.

Rural Survey 2.0 followed up with 104 respondents, who expressed strong support for preserving Kitsap County’s rural character, open space, and ecological functions. Most respondents identified themselves as rural land stewards and prioritized long-term environmental protection. While conservation tools such as tax incentives and easements were generally supported, many desired stricter enforcements and improved permitting processes. Views on rural development were mixed, with cautious interest in cluster development, transfer of development rights (TDRs), and middle housing in LAMIRDs. This interest was tempered by concerns over potential impacts to infrastructure, traffic, and habitat areas. Respondents also highlighted barriers to rural business opportunities, the need for improved transportation connectivity and rural services, and a desire for more consistent and transparent implementation of rural development policies.

KEY TERMS

(EXISTING DEFINITIONS, POTENTIALLY TO BE REVISED)

- **AGRICULTURE USES** Uses and practices, primarily commercial in nature, which are in support of agricultural activities, agricultural products, agricultural equipment and facilities, and agricultural land, as defined in WAC 173-26-020(3). This excludes activities typically associated with single-family residences, such as gardening activities primarily for on-site consumption.
- **AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES** The normal actions associated with the production of crops such as plowing, cultivating, minor drainage, and harvesting; and/or raising or keeping of livestock (as defined in Title [17](#), Zoning), including operation and maintenance, and repair of farm and stock ponds, drainage ditches, irrigation systems, and normal operation, maintenance, and repair of existing serviceable agricultural structures, facilities, or improved areas. The term “agricultural activities” as used within this title does not include the practice of aquaculture. Forest practices regulated under Chapter [76.09](#) RCW and Title [222](#) WAC are not included in this definition.
- **AGRICULTURAL USE, ACCESSORY OR AGRITOURISM** A use that directly supports, promotes and is incidental to a permitted primary agricultural use or

agricultural activity on a farm. Such accessory and agritourism uses shall include, but are not limited to, temporary mobile slaughtering units or other activities which add value to a farm product such as processing or a commercial kitchen, warehousing of farm products, cold storage, farm stands or farm markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), u-pick self harvest activities and sales, educational how-to-farm workshops, farm tours, recreational hayrides and corn mazes, equine riding lessons and training clinics, seasonal harvest and holiday activities and other similar uses and activities.

- **FARM** Any size parcel or parcels owned or leased by the same person or entity, wherein a majority of the net developable acreage is managed for primary agriculture uses. Multiple contiguous parcels in the same ownership or leased may be considered one parcel for the purposes of livestock management calculations. Multiple noncontiguous parcels under the same ownership or leased may be considered a single farm.
- **FOREST RESOURCE LANDS** Lands that have the Forest Resource Lands land use designation on the County's Land Use Map, or that are currently being used for commercial timber production and harvesting.
- **FOREST PRACTICES (COMMERCIAL FORESTRY) Chapter 18.16.030 and Chapter 22.150.330:** Any activity conducted on or directly pertaining to forestland and related to growing, harvesting or processing timber, including, but not limited to: road and trail construction; harvesting, final and intermediate; precommercial thinning; reforestation; fertilization; prevention and suppression of diseases and insects; salvage of trees, and brush control.
- **FORESTRY** The use of land for producing and caring for a forest, including the harvesting of timber.
- **KITSAP NATURAL RESOURCE ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM** (KNRAMP) is an emerging strategy that manages nature as part of everyday infrastructure. Similar to management of built infrastructure, KNRAMP aims to inventory, track, set goals for, prioritize, strategize, and implement actions for natural resource management across the County.
- **MIDDLE HOUSING** For the purposes of GMA, middle housing is defined as a building compatible in scale, form, and character with single-family houses and containing two or more attached, stacked, or clustered homes.
- **MINERAL RESOURCE LANDS** Mineral resources are sand, gravel, and valuable metallic substances (WAC 365-190-070). Sand, gravel, or crushed stone are also known as aggregate resources. Aggregate resources are necessary to manufacture concrete, cement, asphalt, and other similar products, of which our roads, cities, and homes are built. Lands that are designated with the Mineral Resource Overlay on the County's Land Use Map.

- **OPEN SPACE PLAN** ([KCC 18.12.010](#)) The purpose of the Kitsap County open space plan is to follow the legislative declaration of the open space law which states in part: “ ... it is in the best interest of the state to maintain, preserve, conserve and otherwise continue in existence adequate open space lands ... and to assure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of the state and its citizens”
- **OVERLAY** An overlay designation is intended to protect agricultural or mineral resource lands. It is used to ensure the continued or future use of such lands without disrupting or endangering adjacent land uses, while safeguarding life, property, and the public welfare.
- **Performance Based Development** Typically, such a project may include clustering of structures and preservation of open space with a number of flexible and customized design features specific to the natural features of the property and the uses sought to be implemented. Specific lot area, dimension and setback requirements may be reduced or deleted in order to allow flexibility and innovation in building design or placement, to facilitate allowed densities and to increase open space, critical areas protection and similar components of the project.
- **PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR)** Purchase of development rights refers to the acquisition of a governmentally recognized right to develop land, which is then held or further conveyed by the purchaser. In a PDR program, private landowners sell the development rights of their property to a qualified conservation organization or government agency, ensuring that the property remains as open space and is protected from development. The distinction between TDR is that PDR is publicly funded and the development rights are extinguished rather than transferred.
- **RURAL CLUSTER** Residential site development that avoids and preserves critical areas and other ecologically or visually valuable landscape features. Typically, a minimum percentage of a site area is preserved in its existing natural habitat, with individual single-family house lots occupying the remaining acreage.
- **SPRAWL DEVELOPMENT** Sprawl is characterized by low-density, expansive land use patterns that blur the lines between the urban and rural areas.
- **TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR)** TDRs involve a land use planning strategy that allows for the transfer of “development rights” from one area (typically rural or environmentally sensitive) to another area (usually urban or designated for higher-density development). In this program, landowners in the rural “sending area”, where development is restricted or limited, can sell their development rights to developers or landowners in a “receiving area”, where increased development density or intensity is desired.
- **VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION** Value-added production means the process of

enhancing a product with additional qualities that make it worth a higher price than its raw materials (e.g. strawberries to jam or milk to cheese).

- **WATERSHED** Watersheds are land areas that channels rainfall and snowmelt to creeks, streams, and rivers, and eventually to outflow points such as reservoirs, bays, and the ocean. They often are in basins where development can impact the entire watershed basin over time.
- **WILDLIFE CORRIDORS** These corridors are generally strips of natural habitat that connect two or more large habitat areas, enabling wildlife to travel between ecosystems for feeding, breeding, and migration. These corridors can take various forms, including rivers, forests, and human-made structures like overpasses and underpasses designed to facilitate safe animal movement across roads.

RURAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND ZONING

In the rural area, the land use designations and zoning use the same terminology. For example, a property with a Rural Residential land use designation also has Rural Residential zoning.

Rural Residential

This designation promotes low-density residential development and agricultural activities that are consistent with rural character. It is applied to areas that are relatively unconstrained by environmentally sensitive areas or other significant landscape features. These areas are provided with limited public services. Maximum density is 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres. The implementing zone is:

Rural Residential (86,082 acres)

Rural Protection

This designation promotes low-density rural development and agricultural activities that are consistent with rural character and protects environmental features such as significant visual, historical, and natural features, wildlife corridors, steep slopes, wetlands, streams, and adjacent critical areas. Maximum density is 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres. The implementing zone is:

Rural Protection (30,903 acres)

Rural Wooded

This designation is intended to encourage the preservation of forest uses and agricultural activities, retain rural character, and conserve natural resources while providing for some rural residential use. This zone is further intended to discourage activities and facilities that can be considered detrimental to the maintenance of timber production. Residents of rural wooded (RW) residential tracts shall recognize that they can be subject to normal and accepted farming and forestry practices on adjacent parcels. Maximum density is 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres. The implementing zone is:

Rural Wooded (43,077 acres)

Rural Commercial

This designation is intended to permit the location of small-scale commercial retail businesses and personal services which serve a limited area of the rural population outside established UGAs.

Appropriate uses are small-scale retail, sales, and services located along county roads on small parcels that serve the nearby rural residential population. This designation may be located at crossroads of county roads, state routes, and major arterials. The implementing zone is:

Rural Commercial (257 acres)

Rural Industrial

This designation provides for small-scale light industrial, light manufacturing, recycling, mineral processing, and resource-based goods production uses that are compatible with rural character and do not require an urban level of utilities and services. The implementing zone is:

Rural Industrial (157 acres)

Insert data tables to include RCO And RI parcels.

LIMITED AREAS OF MORE INTENSIVE RURAL DEVELOPMENT (LAMIRDs)

Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development, or LAMIRDs, are allowed for the purpose of recognizing existing areas of more intense or dense rural development and to contain these areas from sprawling.

- Type 1 LAMIRDs may have a variety of uses, including commercial, residential, and industrial, in an area of more intense development within a rural area.
- Type 2 LAMIRDs are for recreation/tourism purposes only. Kitsap County does not have any Type 2 LAMIRDs.
- Type 3 LAMIRDs contain isolated, small-scale businesses and cottage industries.

Unlike other rural lands, LAMIRDs may be served by public facilities and services that are appropriate and necessary for the amount of development contained within the boundaries.

Type 1: Rural Village, Rural Historical Town, Rural Commercial

This designation is characterized as infill development or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas, whether as shoreline development, villages, hamlets, rural activity centers, or crossroads. Any development or redevelopment within a Type 1 LAMIRD must be principally designed to serve the rural population.

Any new development or redevelopment must be consistent with the pre-existing character of the area with respect to building size, scale, use, or intensity. SB 5471 authorizes

middle housing in certain LAMIRDs. Type 1 LAMIRDs must have been established as more densely developed areas as of July 1990, and they must allow pre-GMA existing development patterns. Type 1 LAMIRDs also must be bounded by a “logical outer boundary” that reflects the limits of the pre- existing development.

Manchester

Manchester is Kitsap County’s largest LAMIRD, encompassing approximately 1,133 acres of land with a clear view across Puget Sound to West Seattle and housing approximately 5,200 residents across 2,310 tax parcels (as of 2022). Manchester was designated a LAMIRD on June 10, 2001. It is in southern Kitsap County east of the City of Port Orchard and consists of a small variety of commercial businesses and services, the Kitsap Regional Library – Manchester Branch, the Manchester Post Office, two public docks, single-family residences, and a handful of multifamily residences. Public water is provided by the Manchester Water District and sewer by the Kitsap County Sewer Utility. However, some lots are still using on-site septic systems.

Suquamish

Suquamish is a rural, historic waterfront community within the Port Madison Indian Reservation located in northern Kitsap County east of the City of Poulsbo along the western shore of Port Madison Bay. The LAMIRD was designated on April 21, 1999. There are approximately 470 acres of land divided into 1242 parcels with a population of about 2,725 (as of 2022). The Suquamish LAMIRD consists primarily of single-family homes, a few small businesses, open space, and parklands. Public water is provided by the Kitsap Public Utility District and sewer by the Kitsap County Sewer Utility.

Keyport

Keyport is a small historic waterfront community that has long supported naval operations in the adjacent Naval Underseas Warfare Center-Keyport located on the small peninsula that extends into Liberty Bay south of Poulsbo. Keyport was designated as a LAMIRD on November 19, 2007. There are 80 acres split into 202 tax parcels with 402 residents (as of 2022), a few small businesses and restaurants, the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, and open space. Public water is provided by Kitsap Public Utility District and sewer service by the Kitsap County Sewer Utility, although a number of small lots are still served by on-site septic systems.

Port Gamble

Port Gamble was founded as a company timber town in 1843, was designated a LAMIRD on July 21, 1999, and remains owned solely by one entity (there are a few private inholdings). Currently, almost all of the buildings are more than 100 years old and include a post office, a few small businesses, and a number of single-family homes. These structures are on about 127 acres split into 18 parcels and house about 80 people (as of 2022).

The former lumber mill site is planned for major redevelopment, approved in 2021 as part of a 15-year development agreement (DA). The DA establishes a master plan for mixed-use

growth that preserves the town's historic character. Up to 226 new homes, a 100-room hotel, commercial buildings, recreational amenities, and supporting infrastructure are included. Kitsap Public Utility District provides water service and oversees sewer treatment. Sewer conveyance is provided by Rayonier, the site owner.

George's Corner

George's Corner is a small commercial center at the crossroads of State Highway 104 and Miller Bay Road/Hansville Road west of Kingston. A number of vehicle-oriented businesses are on the site which includes 25 parcels on about 42 acres served by public water from the Kitsap Public Utilities District and on-site septic systems. George's Corner was designated as a LAMIRD on October 25, 2004.

Type 3: Employment Centers

These LAMIRDs are meant for the continuation, intensification, or new development of properties with isolated cottage industries and isolated small-scale businesses. Residential development is prohibited. Type 3 LAMIRDs need not principally serve the rural population but should provide job opportunities for rural residents. Expansion or new development must conform with the rural character of the area. Public services and public facilities must be limited to those that are the minimum necessary to serve the industry or business.

Ecology Road

Ecology Road is the northernmost Type 3 LAMIRD, located on the west side of the intersection of Hansville Road and Ecology Road. There are several contractors, suppliers of firewood, topsoil, and propane, and storage units at this site. This area was designated a LAMIRD on December 15, 2010, and has 18 parcels across about 64 acres. Kitsap Public Utility District provides water service and the site is served by on-site septic systems.

Streibels Corner

Streibels Corner encompasses properties near the intersection of Highways 307 and 104 and bounded by Minder Road on the south. Several autobody shops are located in this LAMIRD, as well as a number of contractors and a business park. Streibels Corner was designated as a LAMIRD on December 15, 2010, and has about 160 acres, 73 parcels, and about 35 businesses (as of 2022). Kitsap Public Utility District provides water service to the site, and it is served by on-site septic systems.

Twelve Trees

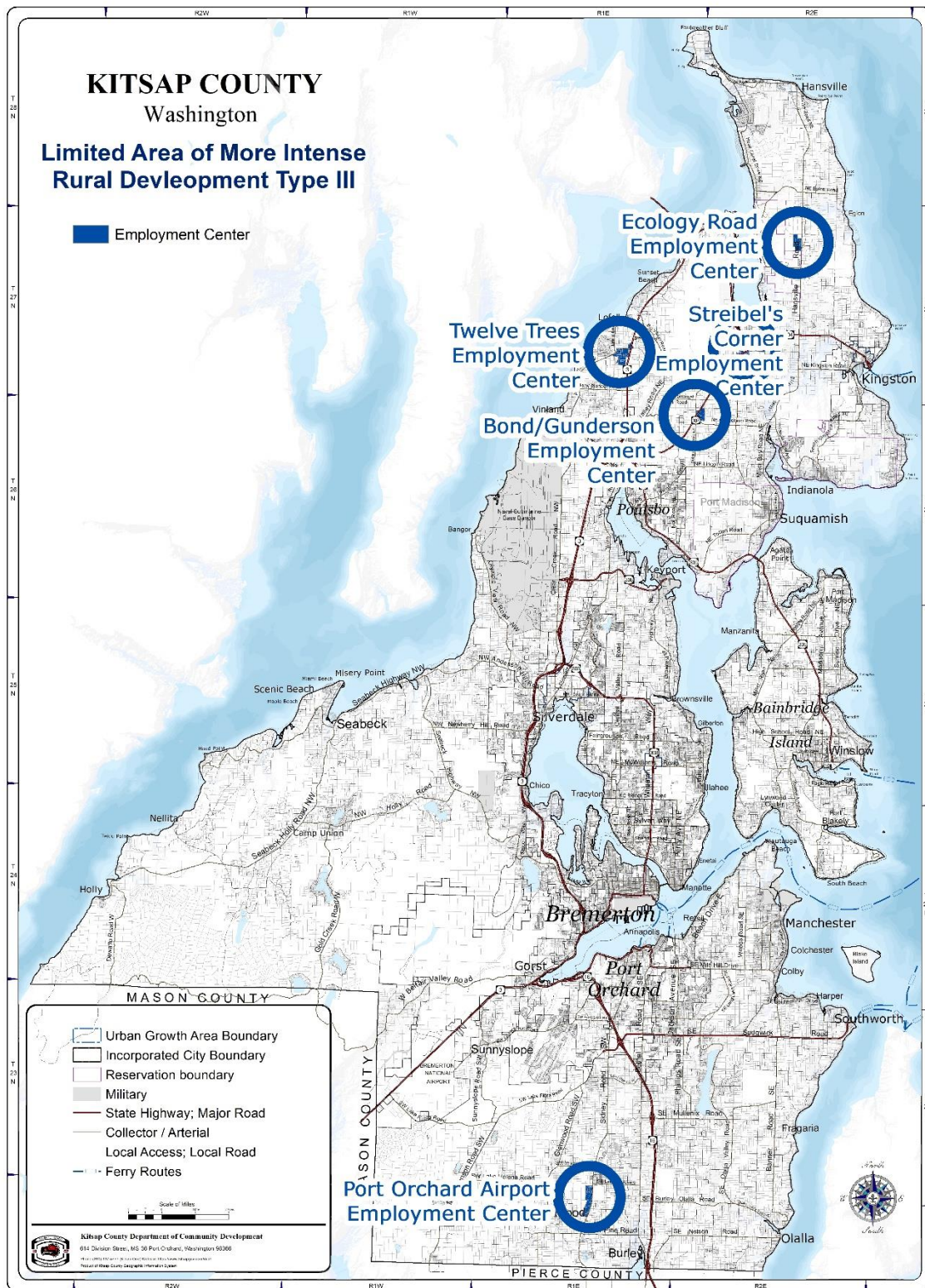
Twelve Trees is located generally southwest of the intersection of Pioneer Way and Highway 3 directly north of Poulsbo. Twelve Trees is an industrial park location including warehouses that house a variety of manufacturing businesses on about 114 acres and 50 parcels. This LAMIRD was designated on December 15, 2010. Kitsap Public Utility District provides water service, and the site is served by on-site septic systems.

Bond/Gunderson

Bond/Gunderson LAMIRD is located in North Kitsap at the intersection of Bond Road and Gunderson Road. It is about 64 acres on 11 lots with office buildings that house contractors and food production. This is also the site of an in-progress Kitsap County Public Works Service Center. This LAMIRD was designated on December 15, 2010. Kitsap Public Utility District provides water service, and the site is served by on-site septic systems.

Port Orchard Airport

Port Orchard Airport is located on Sidney Road near the Pierce County line. The LAMIRD is composed entirely of the airport site, including hangers and an approximately 2,300-foot-long runway for small aircraft. The LAMIRD is 116 acres in 36 parcels and was designated on June 30, 2016. The site is served by public water.



RESOURCE LANDS AND WORKING LAND

RCW 36.70A.170 requires counties to designate agriculture, forest, or mineral resource lands in their comprehensive plans. Resource lands are required to have long-term commercial significance for the region, including intense capacity and productivity. In Kitsap County, forest and mineral resource lands are designated. These resource-based uses are often intermixed or occur together with residential development within the County's rural areas. This designation of resource lands and activities is intended to help keep these lands available for commercially significant resource production and to help maintain these sectors of the local economy. Resource lands are identified on the Land Use Map with the Forest Resource land use designation, the Agricultural Resource Lands Overlay, or Mineral Resource Overlay. Additional information on resource lands is in the Land Use chapter.

Insert definition of working lands – to distinguish from definition of “resource lands”.

Table xx. Kitsap County's Resource Lands Land Use Designations (*under preparation*)

Forest Resource Lands

This designation focuses on lands that have long-term commercial forestry resources. These lands are typically large parcels, are not near concentrated rural populations, and are in active forestry production or capable of being used for forestry production.

The implementing zone of the same name has the following description: The primary land use allowed in this zone is commercial timber production and harvesting. This zone is further intended to discourage activities and facilities which can be considered detrimental to the production and commercial harvest of timber. Residents located within or adjacent to the Forest Resource Lands zone shall recognize that they can be subject to normal and accepted forestry practices on parcels located within this zone. There are 2,630 acres in Forest Resource Land zoning.

Mineral Resource Lands

This designation primarily focuses on lands where the extraction of minerals occurs or can be anticipated to occur based upon maps provided by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, as well as where accessory uses (e.g., rock crushing, batch plants) may occur.

The description for the Mineral Resource Overlay (additional provisions on top of the underlying zone) reads: The intent of this overlay is to protect and enhance significant sand, gravel and rock deposits as identified mineral resource lands. It is also used to ensure the continued or future use without disrupting or endangering adjacent land uses, while safeguarding life, property, and the public welfare. Provisions of state statutes applicable to Kitsap County pertaining to surface mining are hereby adopted by reference. The Mineral Resource Overlay applies to 2,716 acres.

Agricultural Resource Lands

The Agricultural Resource Lands Overlay is being proposed for consideration in the future, in accordance with RCW 36.70A.170. This overlay applies to lands that support existing agricultural activities and are not already characterized by urban growth. While Kitsap County has determined that it does not contain Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance as defined by RCW 36.70A.030, this overlay provides a tool to recognize and protect the areas where farming and local food production occur at smaller scales.

The Agricultural Resource Lands Overlay works in conjunction with underlying rural zones, adding an additional layer of protection and policy guidance to maintain agricultural uses, encourage local food systems, and preserve rural character.

RURAL LANDS AND RESOURCES: GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

Rural Development

- **Goal: Retain the rural character of the County outside of designated urban growth areas (UGAs).**
 - Policy: Direct housing development and urban-type land uses, facilities, and services into UGAs.
 - Policy: Limit development in the rural area to appropriate rural uses not characterized by urban growth patterns or the need for urban-level services and facilities.
 - Strategy: Review and revise as necessary standards and development regulations for the rural area to preserve rural character.
 - Strategy: Develop and adopt design and development standards for rural areas outside of LAMIRDs and rural villages to help preserve visual and land use compatibility between development and the County's rural areas.
 - Policy: Limit the rural area to low residential densities that can be sustained by minimal infrastructure improvements, cause minimal environmental degradation, and that will not cumulatively create the future necessity or expectation of urban levels of service.
 - Policy: Permit residential uses in rural areas in a variety of rural lot sizes consistent with the designated land use and zoning of the surrounding area. Clustering may be allowed where appropriate.
 - Policy: Use the Buildable Lands Program to help implement the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan by tracking the type, location, amount and rate of growth in the rural area.
 - Strategy: Prepare a Rural Lands Analysis (RLA) which evaluates current status and future projections for the rural area regarding land use and development trends, land capacity, compatibility of neighboring land uses, availability and adequacy of rural infrastructure, urban/rural boundaries, locations of wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity, transfers and purchases of development rights, and other rural issues. The RLA should

- be updated regularly to inform periodic updates to the BLR and Comprehensive Plan.
 - Strategy. Continuously monitor development in the rural area regarding clustering, legacy lots, density transfer, design guidelines, conservation easements and other innovative land use techniques to ensure they are working as intended.
 - Strategy. Create a dashboard for at-a-glance views of rural development patterns and trends.
- Policy. Based on the Rural Lands Analysis, revise comprehensive plan goals, policies and strategies, and associated development regulations, as needed to ensure that land use planning, development, and regulatory requirements adequately address rural lands.
- Policy. Evaluate legacy (pre-GMA) lots to identify opportunities for aggregation, shared use, or other mechanisms that support viable rural and agricultural uses, taking into account the challenges and constraints these lots pose for conventional development, while maintaining rural character and minimizing impacts.
- Policy. Regularly evaluate conservation programs and educational initiatives to protect sensitive or resource lands while allowing development in appropriate locations, using tools such as Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), and performance-based development (PBD) to balance conservation and growth.

Resource Lands and Working Lands

- **Goal. Protect and conserve Kitsap County’s designated resource lands and working lands.**
 - Policy. Recognize and support working lands—such as farms, forests, and other resource-based uses—as contributing to the conservation of open space, protection of natural resources, and preservation of rural character, while sustaining economic viability.
 - Policy. Support the long-term preservation and economic viability of resource lands by implementing and promoting incentive-based tools
 - Strategy. Maintain and enhance the continuation of forestry lands and forestry and agriculture through tax policy, conservation easements, purchase of development rights, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), and clustering incentives.
 - Strategy. Develop, implement, evaluate, and restructure, if necessary, the existing, but unused, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.
 - Strategy. Develop and promote incentives for continued rural and resource uses and preservation.
- **Goal. Conserve and support forest lands to sustain forestry, ensure compatibility with surrounding uses, and strengthen rural resource-based economies.**
 - Policy. Account for the continued use of properties managed for timber production and compatibility of these properties with surrounding lands.
 - Policy. Coordinate with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Tribal governments, community groups, and private forest landowners to promote long-term preservation of forest lands.

- Policy. Allow industrial uses associated with forestry activities in the Forest Resource Land zone.
- Policy. Encourage the use of industry-standard Best Management Practices within designated Forest Resource Lands and the Rural Wooded designation, provided all applicable environmental laws and regulations are followed.
 - **Note – existing KCC 17.160.030 does not address Rural Wooded**
- Policy. Encourage owners of private forestland and designated Forest Resource Lands to keep these properties forested, and continuing timber production.
 - Strategy. Reduce loss of forestland and designated Forest Resource Lands through forest stewardship, education, local and state tax benefits, and incentives for forest landowners and the timber industry to keep forest lands in production.
- Policy. Coordinate with federal, state, and local governments, Tribal governments, community groups, and private forest landowners to promote the long-term preservation and sustainable management of forest resource lands.
 - Strategy. Form a Forestry Advisory Council to inform the forestry community about development of future policies and regulations and act as a resource to landowners and the timber industry regarding incentives, best management practices, and assistance programs.
- **Goal: Conserve and manage mineral resource lands to ensure long-term supply, support extraction, and maintain compatibility with surrounding uses.**
 - Policy. Acknowledge new or updated mineral resource deposit locations in future revisions to zoning and development regulations.
 - Strategy. Review and revise as necessary Mineral Resource designations using new or updated Washington State Department of Natural Resources permit or other data sources.
 - Policy. Account for the continued use of properties for mineral extraction and associated activities and compatibility of these properties with surrounding lands.
 - Strategy. Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to ensure that future reclamation plans are consistent with the comprehensive planning for the site and surrounding area, as well as any permits issued by the Department of Natural Resources.
 - Strategy. Identify future mineral resources needs to ensure adequate supply.
- **Goal. Conserve and enhance agricultural lands to sustain farming, protect rural character and environmental quality, and strengthen Kitsap's agricultural economy.**
 - Policy: Maintain and enhance the viability of agricultural uses and activities in rural areas, including cultivation, animal husbandry, and value-added production while protecting the environment.
 - Strategy. Develop and adopt policies with appropriate local, county, and state agencies to promote viable coordinated water resources for greater accessibility to water rights for agriculture usage.
 - Strategy. Encourage preservation of historic farms through the development of a historic farm designation program.
 - Policy. Coordinate with federal, state, and local governments, community groups, and private landowners to promote long-term preservation of farmlands.

- Strategy. Form an Agriculture Advisory Council to inform the agricultural community about development of future policies and regulations and act as a resource to farmers regarding incentives and other assistance programs.
- Policy. In accordance with RCW 7.48, existing agricultural activities and forest practices established prior to surrounding nonagricultural uses shall not be considered incompatible or nuisance activities, were established prior to surrounding nonagricultural land uses, and do not have a substantial adverse effect on public health and safety.
 - Strategy. Create a sustainable notification system to notify neighboring properties of existing agricultural activities and forest practices.
- Policy. Support farm and agricultural businesses on designated agricultural lands while preserving rural character and natural resources.
 - Strategy. Review Kitsap's agricultural land uses, businesses, and products against the criteria for agricultural resource lands and evaluate future designations.

Rural Business

- **Goal. Foster rural businesses and business opportunities on rural commercial and rural industrial lands while balancing the protection of rural character.**
 - Policy. Allow or conditionally allow home-based cottage-type businesses and industries in the rural areas that do not negatively affect rural level of service or rural character.
 - Strategy. Review and update the zoning code definition and regulations for home businesses to reflect changes and current uses in standard business practices, information technology, and operating requirements.
 - Strategy. Review and amend development regulations to reduce barriers to rural businesses that serve the rural area and protect rural character.
 - Strategy. Explore regulation and incentive programs to improve compatibility between diverse rural uses (e.g. small-scale agriculture, rural businesses, and residences).
- **Goal. Increase the availability of day care facilities to rural residents.**
 - Policy. In accordance with RCW 36.70A.450, family day care provider home facilities shall be allowed in all zones that allow residential or commercial use, including rural zones. "Family day care provider" is defined in RCW 43.216.010 and KCC Title 17 *Zoning*.
 - Policy. Review existing code requirements for child care centers, and propose changes where feasible to clarify code requirements, remove any redundancies with state licensing review, and simplify the permit application process.
 - Policy. Evaluate the applicability and structure of impact fees for child care facilities under RCS 82.02.060 to encourage the development and expansion of rural day care services while ensuring equitable contributions to public infrastructure.
- **Goal. Enable social gatherings and related business opportunities in rural areas that foster community while ensuring event scale and activities remain compatible with rural character and respectful of neighboring properties.**

- Policy. Establish standards or educate on existing standards for noise, lighting, traffic, and hours of operation to minimize impacts on neighboring properties and maintain quality of life.
- Policy. Ensure that social gathering uses are designed and operated to protect rural landscapes, natural resources, and sensitive environmental features.
- Policy. Allow flexibility for temporary or seasonal events that provide community or economic benefit while ensuring they do not result in long-term land use conflicts.

Rural Services and Infrastructure

- **Goal. Maintain appropriate levels of service for public services and facilities in rural areas.**
 - Policy. When considering public spending for facilities and services within the rural area, prioritize the maintenance of existing facilities and services that protect public health and safety and only upgrade facilities and services to provide rural service levels without creating capacity for urban growth.
 - Policy: Prohibit extension of sanitary sewer service in the rural area except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment.
 - Policy: Allow for essential public facilities, other regional infrastructure, and rural governmental services.
 - Strategy: Evaluate public transit services within the rural area to determine how the rural public can be better served by transit options without requiring urban levels of service, and address in future transportation planning.
 - Strategy: Develop comprehensive plan goals, policies and strategies, and associated development regulations, to address the siting, impacts, and standards for development of battery energy storage systems (BESS) and large-scale data centers for artificial intelligence and cloud computing storage.
- **Goal. Sustain the rural character and vitality of Type I LAMIRDs through appropriate infill and redevelopment.**
 - Policy. Encourage business growth in existing Type I LAMIRDs, while limiting business growth outside of these LAMIRDs to uses and intensities allowed in the rural area.
 - Policy: Allow infill and redevelopment within Type I LAMIRD boundaries consistent with the character of the existing LAMIRD in terms of building size, scale, use, and intensity which does not cumulatively create the future necessity or expectation of public facilities and utilities at urban levels of service.
 - Strategy: Allow creation and expansion of essential rural retail services in Type I LAMIRDs according to the size, use, and location requirements of RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d).
 - Policy: Maintain Type I LAMIRDs at residential densities that can be sustained by minimal infrastructure improvements, minimize environmental degradation, and that will not cumulatively create the future necessity or expectation of public facilities and utilities at urban levels of service.

- Strategy: Review development regulations for Type I LAMIRDs, including lot size and density-and update as necessary to allow for appropriate infill.
 - Policy: Consider whether infill middle housing should be allowed in one or more Type I LAMIRDs on parcels with zoning that allows single-family residences and that are served by a sewer utility.
- **Goal. Enhance rural walkability and bikeability by promoting compatible land use patterns, infrastructure improvements, and collaborative planning with Public Works and the Non-Motorized Transportation Committee.**
 - Policy. Encourage development patterns in rural areas that provide safe, accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections between homes, businesses, and community destinations.

Rural Environment

- **Goal. Protect natural ecosystems and resources in the rural area, including ground and surface waters, soils, and forested areas.**
 - Policy. Recognize and value water as a necessary asset for agricultural uses.
 - Policy. On an ongoing basis, assess the effect of agricultural practices on non-point source pollution and groundwater impacts.
 - Policy. Coordinate with Kitsap Natural Resource Asset Management Project to develop watershed plans.
 - Policy. Assess and improve understanding of the management, capacity, and regulatory compliance of rural Group B water systems.
- **Goal. Prevent and control noxious weeds to protect environmental quality, sustain farming and forestry, and maintain the rural character of Kitsap County.**
 - Policy. Promote community awareness and landowner education on noxious weed identification, prevention, and management.
 - Policy. Encourage use of integrated weed management practices that minimize environmental harm and protect natural habitats.
 - Policy. Support monitoring and rapid response programs to prevent the spread of priority invasive species.
- **Goal. Support coexistence with beavers to enhance habitat, water quality & quantity, and ecosystem & community resilience, while managing and mitigating negative impacts on property, infrastructure, and working lands.**
 - Policy. Recognize the ecological benefits of beaver activity, including improved water storage, aquifer recharge, habitat creation, and climate resilience.
 - Policy. Develop strategies to address and mitigate flooding, tree damage, and infrastructure conflicts caused by beaver activity.
 - Policy. Encourage site-specific approaches that balance ecological benefits with protection of property and public safety.
 - Policy. Encourage preservation of areas with high potential for natural beaver recolonization.
- **Goal. Reduce stormwater impacts on salmon and streams in rural areas by using low-impact development, minimizing impervious surfaces, and protecting natural drainage and riparian areas.**
 - Policy. Preserve and restore stream buffers and natural drainage corridors to maintain water quality and salmon habitat.
 - Policy. Encourage use of rain gardens, permeable surfaces, and other low-impact stormwater techniques in rural development and road improvements.

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RECOMMENDED CHANGE TO 2024 CLIMATE CHANGE ELEMENT:

- Policy 7.3. Encourage owners of private forests and designated Forest Resource Lands to keep these properties forested or in continuing in timber production.
- Strategy 7.a. Reduce loss of forestland and designated Forest Resource Lands through forest stewardship, education, and incentives for forest landowners and the timber industry to keep forest lands in production.

RECOMMENDED CODE UPDATES:

- Move forestry definition from SMP to Title 17.

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