



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties, Skagit County Planning Commission
From: Kirk Johnson, AICP, Senior Planner
Mark Personius, AICP, Growth Management Consultant
Date: May 22, 2008
Re: Revised Hamilton Urban Growth Area Proposal

This report contains a revised urban growth area (UGA) expansion proposal for the Town of Hamilton. The revised proposal would expand the UGA boundary by approximately 107 acres over the existing incorporated town limits – approximately 59 acres for the Janicki Industries property south of SR 20, and approximately 48 acres north of SR 20 intended for commercial and residential purposes (an area generally known as the Lawson property). An additional 157 acres originally proposed for inclusion within the UGA (generally known as the Hughes property) would not be added to the UGA at this time but would instead be designated Hamilton Urban Reserve identifying it as a long-term expansion area for the UGA.

Background

The Planning and Development Services Department (“Department”) released the first Hamilton UGA expansion proposal for public review and comment on December 27, 2007. Following a public review and comment period, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on March 4, 2008. At that hearing, some members of the public and some members of the Planning Commission expressed support for reducing the size of the proposed UGA, while identifying an area adjacent to the proposed UGA as “urban reserve” for future UGA expansion. This concept was consistent with comments made publicly by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) at the time, based on discussions with community members and federal government representatives. In consultation with the Planning Commission and town representatives, the Department decided it was sensible to consider a smaller UGA expansion and that a specific proposal should be released for additional public review and comment prior to Planning Commission action.

At the same time, the Town of Hamilton is considering revisions to the Hamilton Comprehensive Subarea Plan to be consistent with the revised, downsized UGA proposal. Town planner Margaret Fleek discussed the proposed UGA and subarea plan revisions with the Town Council on May 13, and anticipates the council will take positive action on the subarea plan revisions on June 9th. A representative of the Town is expected to submit these adopted revisions to the Skagit County Planning Commission at its June 10 public hearing.

Revised UGA Proposal

The revised proposal would reduce the size of the proposed Hamilton UGA expansion from 262 acres to approximately 107 acres, while implementing a phased UGA expansion process. The smaller UGA expansion would include the proposed 59 acre Janicki property, intended for industrial development, and the approximately 45 acre Lawson property, plus approximately 3 acres of property at the intersection of Hamilton Cemetery Road and Walders Road with no ownership shown in the Assessor's records. (The entire 48 acres will be referred to in this report as the Lawson property for simplicity sake). See the maps included as Attachment 1. The revised UGA would not include the approximately 157 acre Hughes property as originally proposed. This property would instead be designated on the Skagit County Comprehensive Land Use/Zoning map as Hamilton Urban Reserve (H-URv) indicating the need for additional UGA residential capacity at some point in the future. The Urban Reserve designation on the Hughes property would allow many of the same types of activities currently allowed under its current Rural Resource-NRL designation.

The 48 acre "Lawson" property is proposed as the site of a new town center commercial area and residential development. This smaller residential area would be the focus of the Town's initial efforts to relocate residents out of the floodway. Reducing the size of the UGA expansion helps to focus infrastructure and capital facility planning and minimize those costs to keep the Town's housing relocation program affordable to its low- and moderate-income residents. As development occurs in the town center and the residential capacity begins to "fill-up" in the initial UGA, phased planning can begin for the eventual UGA expansion into the Hughes property, including provision of adequate public facilities, as demand warrants. The phased UGA approach should help the Town and the Hamilton Public Development Authority acquire funding to plan for and construct the needed capital facility improvements such as a sanitary sewer system and new street network.

UGA Sizing Analysis

The revised "phased UGA" proposal would still be able to accommodate all of the Town's forecast 20-year industrial land need and population growth allocated by the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), as well as existing residents who choose to relocate to the new UGA. However, that growth would be accommodated in two approximately 10-year phases. The first 10-year phase would include the smaller UGA (Janicki and Lawson properties) with adequate capacity to accommodate the new "downtown" commercial core as well as initial capacity to accommodate existing residents who choose to relocate out of the floodway. The second phase of UGA development (Hughes property) would be planned to accommodate the remaining 20-year forecast growth. Overall, the total UGA capacity at buildout (including Phase I and Phase II UGAs) provides for approximately 200 residential units as identified in the original plan. Each phase of the proposed UGA could accommodate approximately 100 housing units. It is important to note that each phase of the UGA is still needed to accommodate the entire forecast 20-year population growth for the Town (approximately 150 persons). There would be some potential based on increasing residential densities beyond four homes per acre to accommodate additional residents from the floodway in unincorporated Skagit County, consistent with the Hamilton PDA's long-term goals.

Phase I UGA (Years 1-10 of the 20-year Planning Period)

Janicki Property/Punkin Center, LLC—approximately 59 acres which meets the 60 acre industrial land need allocated to Hamilton in the CPPs.

Lawson and Adjacent Property—approximately 48 acres. Approximately ten acres of this would be reserved for commercial development as part of the Town’s “new” downtown commercial core. A portion of the eastern edge of the site would be zoned for open space to preserve sensitive habitat. The remaining area could accommodate up to 100 new units based on the concept plan illustrated in the Hamilton UGA Subarea Plan comprising a mix of single family detached and attached units as well as multi-family units located within the town center.

Phase II UGA (Years 11-20 of the 20-year Planning Period)

Hughes Property—approximately 157 acres. Much of the Phase II UGA area (now proposed for an Urban Reserve designation) is characterized by forested slopes and drainages which are identified as proposed open space areas in the concept plan illustrated in the Hamilton Subarea Plan and included here as Attachment 2. Land suitable for greenbelts and open space are allowed and required to be located within urban growth areas under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.110 and 160). The remaining areas identified for residential development on the town concept plan could accommodate another approximately 100 single family units or more, depending on the urban density assigned at the time the Urban Reserve designation is amended and the property included within the UGA.

Urban Reserve (Hughes Property)

The revised proposal would apply a new Hamilton Urban Reserve land use designation to the Phase II UGA or the Hughes property. See Attachment 3 for proposed Comprehensive Plan text and policy amendments. The Urban Reserve designation would specifically recognize the future use of the property as an urban growth area. However, the Urban Reserve designation and zone would allow many of the same activities now allowed under the RRC-NRL, with the exception of those uses that might be inconsistent or incompatible with the long-term use of the land for urban residential development. When the level of new development in the Phase I UGA reaches at least 50% of its original development capacity, the Town can request an expansion into the Urban Reserve, consistent with the UGA Modification Criteria, triggering the Phase II UGA implementation. This step will require an amendment to the Town’s Comprehensive Land Use Map and review and approval by Skagit County.

Consistency

This revised “phased UGA” proposal remains consistent with all other aspects of the Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Plan as well as the Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies and the UGA Modification Criteria. The Town is currently amending its Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Subarea Plan to reflect and be consistent with these proposed changes.

The revised “phased UGA” plan will require adoption of three different Skagit County implementing zones for each phase of the UGA:

- **Phase I (Janicki Property/Punkin Center, LLC)**—the approximately 59 acre property is proposed for *Hamilton Industrial* zoning under proposed SCC 14.16.175. See Attachment 4 for this code language. This zone would permit manufacturing operations consistent with the near-term expansion needs of Janicki Industries until time of annexation. It is similar to the County’s Natural Resource Industrial zone. There are no substantive changes to this proposed code language from the version released with the original UGA proposal on December 27, 2007.
- **Phase I (Lawson and adjacent Property)**—the approximately 48 acre property is proposed for *Hamilton Residential* zoning under proposed SCC 14.16.380 to permit transition to urban residential development for the site consistent with the Town of Hamilton 2007 Comprehensive Subarea Plan. See Attachment 5 for this code language. It is based on the County’s Rural Resource-NRL zone in terms of permitted residential density (1 residential dwelling unit per 40 acres, or 1 per 10 through a Conservation and Reserve (CARD) Development), although various natural resource-related uses have been removed that could preclude or conflict with urban development. An underline/strikethrough version of the code is provided to show changes that have been made from the original proposal released December 27, 2007.
- **Phase II (Hughes Property)**—the approximately 157 acre property is proposed for a *Hamilton Urban Reserve* land use designation under the Comprehensive Plan and proposed SCC 14.16.385 to indicate the long-term future plan for the property to be included in the Hamilton UGA. See Attachment 6 for the proposed code language; and Attachment 3 for related Comprehensive Plan policy and text amendments. Again, this zoning language is based on the County’s Rural Resource-NRL zone in terms of permitted residential density (1 residential dwelling unit per 40 acres, or 1 per 10 through a Conservation and Reserve (CARD) Development). Certain more intensive natural resource-related uses have been removed that could preclude or conflict with adjacent urban development. An underline/strikethrough version of the code is provided to show changes that have been made from the original proposal released December 27, 2007.

When the Town is prepared to amend its Comprehensive Plan to include the Hughes property within the UGA—based on the need for additional capacity to accommodate the forecast population growth—the property can be re-designated to *Hamilton Residential* (see above) to permit transition to urban residential development for the site consistent with the Town of Hamilton 2007 Comprehensive Subarea Plan (as amended).

Additionally, certain modifications are required to Skagit County Code 14.18.300, .310, and .330, Land Divisions, to allow these zones to be eligible for density bonuses and other features of the CaRD ordinance. Additional changes to these sections are included to address a recent change in to incorporate the Bayview Ridge Urban Reserve area into the Bayview Ridge UGA. Finally, changes are proposed to the landscape requirements under SCC 14.16.830 to include reference to the Hamilton Industrial zone. See Attachment 7 for the above code amendments.

Upon adoption, the Skagit County land use designations and/or zoning discussed above will remain in place until such time as the individual properties within the UGA are annexed to the Town of Hamilton. At that point, the properties will be rezoned to the appropriate Town designations indicated in the Town of Hamilton Comprehensive Subarea Plan.

Response to Comments

The Department's responses to spoken and written comments received during the public comment period that ran from December 27, 2007 through March 10, 2008, are included in Attachment 8. These comments were considered and factored into the revised proposal being put forward at this time.