

## **Rural Towns**

### **Purpose and Intent**

Rural Towns are unincorporated towns governed directly by Kittitas County.

The Rural Town designation recognizes established communities that have developed to serve tourist, recreational, full and part-time residential and vacation homes, and agricultural community needs.

The purposes of the Rural Town designations are to recognize existing concentrations of higher recreation and residential densities, and economic activity in Rural Areas. These Rural Towns may include historical rural settlements, re-designation of an urban commercial center, and/or designation of existing, expanding, or developing recreation centers that provide a physical focus for the identity of the rural communities. The Rural Town may allow for modest growth of full time residential use, growth in recreation use, including vacation homes and growth in economic uses within these designations if adequate utilities and other public services are available.

While higher-density development in Rural Towns may require public-type services, applying the full range of urban development standards (e.g. street improvements or landscaping) would not be necessary, and may not be consistent with the character of these communities. Although Rural Towns also may in some circumstances develop at densities similar to those in the Urban Growth Areas they are considered part of the Rural Area for purposes of the GMA and do not provide significant growth capacity for full time residents.

### **Policies**

Kittitas County hereby designates Snoqualmie Pass, Easton, Ronald, Thorp and Vantage as unincorporated Rural Towns. These settlements have continued to grow as they have been designated a urban area for the last ten years. The Rural Towns in unincorporated Kittitas County should provide services and a range of housing choices for Rural Area full and part time residents. The boundaries of the designated Rural Towns are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Adjustments to these boundaries shall only occur through a sub area planning process, and shall not allow significant increases in development potential outside of these designated boundaries . At this time no additional new Rural Towns beyond those listed above are needed to serve the Rural Area.

Within 90 days of the adoption of this land use designation the Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) shall forward recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding zoning categories, allowable uses, development criteria, design standards, and density limitations within each of the Rural Towns. In doing so the LUAC shall consider the following:

- Existing and Historical Use;
- Character of the Rural Town;
- Use of innovative planning techniques including but not limited to Cluster Development, Compact Development, Multi-Use Development, Zero Lot line Development, Low Impact Development and Planned Unit Developments;

- The use of Rural Towns as receiving areas for a Transfer of Development Rights program;
- Availability of public services and their existing service areas including sewer, water, transportation, police and fire.

Commercial and industrial development that provides employment, shopping, community and human services that strengthen the fiscal and economic health of rural communities should locate in Rural Towns if utilities and other services permit.

Rural Towns may contain higher-density housing than permitted in the surrounding Rural Area, and should provide affordable and resource-worker housing if utilities and other services permit. Development density in Rural Towns may approach that are achieved in urban areas..

Rural Towns serve as activity centers for the Rural Area and may be served by a range of utilities and services, and may include several or all of the following land uses, if supported by necessary utilities and other services and if scaled and designed to protect the surrounding lands and their rural character:

- a. Retail, commercial and industrial uses to serve the surrounding Rural Area population and to provide support for resource industries, recreational activities and tourism;
- b. Residential development, including single-family housing on small lots as well as multifamily housing and mixed-use developments;
- c. Other commercial and industrial uses, including commercial recreation and light industry; and
- d. Public facilities and services such as community services, churches, schools, and fire stations.

Rural Towns may already be served by urban levels of utilities including water and sanitary sewer. Established service area boundaries shall be included within the Rural Towns. Where Sanitary Sewer service areas do not currently exist sewers or innovated sewer disposal techniques may be developed in Rural Towns if necessary to address water quality and public health concerns which cannot be addressed by other methods, provided that any extension of sewer mains from urban areas to serve a rural town shall be “tight-lined” systems designed not to serve any intervening lands. All alternatives shall be exhausted before sewers from urban areas are extended to Rural Towns. Rural towns shall not be enlarged to facilitate provision of sewers.

Rural Towns should be compact, promoting pedestrian, public transportation, alternate motorized and non-motorized travel while permitting automobile access to most commercial and industrial uses. New development should be designed to strengthen the desirable characteristics of the town, be supported by necessary public facilities and services, and be compatible with nearby rural resources. New industrial uses should locate where they do not disrupt pedestrian or bicycle traffic in established retail areas of town or conflict with residential uses.

## **Designation Criteria**

- Criterion 1. The Rural Communities of Snoqualmie Pass, Easton, Ronald, Thorp and Vantage shall be designated unincorporated Rural Towns.
- Criterion 2 The former Urban Growth Node Boundary shall be utilized as the outer boundary of the Rural Towns with the following exceptions:
- Snoqualmie Pass – Only the area currently within the service area boundary of Snoqualmie Pass Utility District (SPUD)
  - Easton – Only those areas located within the existing service area boundary of the water utility
  - Ronald – The former UGN boundary and areas served by established water utilities.

## **Density**

Rural Towns may contain higher-density housing than permitted in the surrounding Rural Area, and should provide affordable and resource-worker housing if utilities and other services permit. Development density in Rural Towns may approach that achieved in urban areas .

Density should reflect the existing development patterns and may provide for increased density associated with recreational uses and recognize the population served may be of a temporary, part time, recreation or vacation use that is not captured through the normal population projections of the Growth Management Act.

Density should reflect the availability of services to be provided.

Until such time action is taken by the Board of County Commissioners regarding the LUAC recommendations required above, the underlying zoning designation of the rural towns shall be rural residential except those areas already zoned Commercial, Industrial, Planned Unit Development or were designated with a higher density prior to the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan.