Chapter 3: RURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE ELEMENT

Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035 as Adopted	Proposed Amendments	
Chapter 3 Rural and Natural Resource Element		
Goals and Policies		
3.0 Countywide Planning Policies		
3.0.1 The county shall recognize existing development and provide lands, which allow rural development in areas, which are developed or committed to development of a rural character.	No change.	
3.0.2 The county and each municipality shall cooperate to ensure the preservation and protection of natural resources, critical areas, open space and recreational lands within and near the urban area through adequate and compatible policies and regulations.	No change.	
County 20-Year Plan Policies		
Rural Areas – General		
GOAL: Compatible with maintaining rural character and rural (levels of service) (services), ensure that lands outside of urban growth areas are viable places to live and work.	No change.	
3.1 Policies		
 3.1.1 Clark County shall maintain and protect the character of rural lands defined as those lands outside of urban growth areas by promoting: Large lot residential development compatible with adjacent farming, forestry and mining and not needing urban facilities and services; Non-residential development in Rural Centers; Economic development activities consistent with the preservation of rural character; Agriculture, forestry and mining activities; Regional parks, trails and open space; Environmental quality, particularly as evidenced by the health of wildlife and fisheries (especially salmon and trout), aquifers used 	 3.1.1 Clark County shall maintain and protect the character of rural lands defined as those lands outside of urban growth areas by promoting: Large lot residential development compatible with adjacent farming, forestry and mining and not needing urban facilities and services; Non-residential development in Rural Centers; Economic development activities consistent with the preservation of rural character; Agriculture, forestry and mining activities; Regional parks, trails and open space; Environmental quality, particularly as evidenced by the health of wildlife and fisheries (especially salmon and trout), aquifers used for potable water, surface water bodies and natural drainage systems; and Historic character and resources including archaeological and cultural sites important to the local community. [RES] 	

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•	for potable water, surface water bodies and natural drainage systems; and Historic character and resources including archaeological and cultural sites important to the local community.	Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.	
3.1.2	Land use designations shown on the Clark County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map include areas that are rural in character and meet one or more of the following criteria: Generally characterized by a larger lot size; Do not require urban levels of public services; Opportunities exist for farming and mineral activities; The area is contiguous with other rural lands or can serve as a buffer between large-lot residential development and resource activities or urban areas; The area is not needed to provide capacity for population or employment growth in the 20-year forecast; and, The area has outstanding scenic, historic, environmental, resource or aesthetic values.	 3.1.2 Land use designations shown on the Clark County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map include areas that are rural in character and meet one or more of the following criteria: Generally characterized by a larger lot size; Do not require urban levels of public services; Opportunities exist for farming and mineral activities; The area is contiguous with other rural lands or can serve as a buffer between large-lot residential development and resource activities or urban areas; The area is not needed to provide capacity for population or employment growth in the 20-year forecast; and, The area has outstanding scenic, historic, environmental, resource or aesthetic values. [RES] Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.	
3.1.3	Clark County's Rural Area is considered to be permanent and shall not be redesignated to an Urban Growth Area until reviewed pursuant to the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.130(3) and Countywide Planning Policy 3.0.	3.1.3 Clark County's Rural Area is considered to be permanent and shall not be redesignated to an Urban Growth Area until reviewed pursuant to the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.130(3) and Countywide Planning Policy 3.0. [RES] Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.	
3.1.4	Master Planned Resorts may be approved in an area outside of established Urban Growth Boundaries consistent with the requirements for plan amendments in the Clark County Code.	No change.	
3.1.5	Encourage cooperative resource management among farmland and timberland owners, farm foresters, rural residents, environmental groups and local, state and federal resource agencies for managing private and public farm and forestlands and public resources.	3.1.5 Encourage cooperative resource management among farmland and timberland owners, farm foresters, rural residents, environmental groups and local, state and federal resource agencies for managing private and public farm and forestlands and public resources. [RES]	

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		Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.	
fa	ural development shall not be allowed unless appropriate acilities and services (water, storm drainage, roads and pproved sanitary treatment) are in place or planned.	No change.	
in tro	ural lands generally shall be served by septic tanks and advividual wells (when public water is not available). Wastewater reatment shall be provided by individual on-site treatment systems or approved alternative sewage treatment technologies	No change.	
cc ur al:	ewer lines shall not be extended into rural areas except to orrect existing health hazards. Sewer lines shall not be extended ntil other means for treatment, such as state approved lternative technologies, have been assessed and determined ot to be feasible due to environmental constraints.	3.1.8 Sewer lines shall not be extended into rural areas except to correct existing health hazards, provide public sewer to regional parks, or to serve a school pursuant to RCW 36.70A.213. Sewer lines shall not be extended until other means for treatment, such as state approved alternative technologies, have been assessed and determined not to be feasible due to environmental constraints. Rationale: Add text for exceptions for parks and schools to align with Capital Facilities Policy 6.3.8 and RCW 36.70A.213.	
Go of re th	ural and Resource land designations within the Columbia River forge National Scenic Area are consistent with the requirements of the National Scenic Area legislation. The minimum lot size equirements and uses shall only be authorized to the extent nat they are consistent with the National Scenic Area legislation stablished to implement the requirement of the scenic area.	No change.	
СС	ctivities in rural areas shall be conducted in a manner onsistent with the Clark County Shoreline Master Program, if in horeline jurisdiction.	No change.	
GOAL: Compatible with maintaining rural character and rural (levels of service) (services), provide for lands outside of urban growth areas that are predominately for residential uses.		No change.	
3.2 Po	olicies		
M ac	ural lands as designated on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are generally for rural residential development, for ccessory uses such as home businesses and for small-scale esource uses.	No change.	

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3.2.2	Land designated as Rural are characterized by a range of lot sizes and generally are not characterized by high-quality soils.	No change.	
3.2.3	Those areas with a Rural Comprehensive Plan designation of Rural 5, Rural 10, and Rural 20 shall have residential densities of one dwelling unit per 5, 10 and 20 acres (R-5, R-10 and R-20), respectively.	No change.	
3.2.4	Clustering of parcels is allowed consistent with platting and zoning requirements and the Clark County Code.	No change.	
3.2.5	If schools and related facilities need to be sited in rural areas, preference shall be to locate first in Rural Centers and then, as a last resort, in areas designated as Rural.	No change.	
	.: Maintain the character of the designated Rural Centers n the surrounding rural area.	No change.	
3.3	Policies		
3.3.1	Rural Centers as designated on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are distinct areas that: provide a focus for the surrounding rural area that is appropriate in character and scale in the rural environment; provide appropriate commercial developments to serve adjoining rural areas; provide services to tourists and other visitors recreating in the area; and, provide an opportunity to develop facilities that can function as a community center in those areas where an incorporated town no longer serves that role for the surrounding area.	 3.3.1 Rural Centers as designated on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are distinct areas that: provide a focus for the surrounding rural area that is appropriate in character and scale in the rural environment; provide appropriate commercial developments to serve adjoining rural areas; provide services to tourists and other visitors recreating in the area; and, provide an opportunity to develop facilities that can function as a community center in those areas where an incorporated town no longer serves that role for the surrounding area. [RES] Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.	
3.3.2 • •	Rural Centers: are generally characterized by smaller lot patterns; have residential development and small-scale business that provides convenience shopping and services to nearby residents; have access to arterial roadways; and, are surrounded by rural landscapes of generally open land used for agriculture, forestry, large lot residential, recreational and environmental protection purposes.	No change.	

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Rural	Centers identified on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are: Amboy, Brush Prairie, Chelatchie Prairie, Dollars Corner, Fargher Lake, Hockinson and Meadow Glade.		
3.3.3	Rural Centers shall have a residential density of between one unit per acre and one unit per five acres (RC-1, RC-2.5 and R-5) based on the historical pattern in the area. In no case shall density exceed one unit per acre.	No change.	
•	Rural commercial development should support the needs of rural residents and natural resources activities rather than urban area uses. Appropriate uses for Rural Centers include: resource-based industrial development consistent with rural character and levels of service; commercial uses supporting resource uses, such as packing, first state processing and processing which provides value added to the resource products may occur in resource areas; and, post offices, veterinary clinics, day care, small medical practices and schools that provide employment, shopping services and housing opportunities within Rural Centers. The scale should be compatible with surrounding roads and utilities, which reinforce the rural character and distinct sense of community.	 3.3.4 Rural commercial development should support the needs of rural residents and natural resources activities rather than urban area uses. Appropriate uses for Rural Centers include: resource-based industrial development consistent with rural character and levels of service; commercial uses supporting resource uses, such as packing, first state processing and processing which provides value added to the resource products may occur in resource areas; and, post offices, veterinary clinics, day care, small medical practices and schools that provide employment, shopping services and housing opportunities within Rural Centers. The scale should be compatible with surrounding roads and utilities, which reinforce the rural character and distinct sense of community. [RES] Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience. 	
3.3.5	If schools and related facilities need to be sited in rural areas, preference shall be to locate first in Rural Centers and then, as a last resort, in areas designated as Rural.	No change.	
3.3.6	Rural Center designation criteria are as follows: an area proposed as a Rural Center had to have existed as of July 1, 1990, identifiable by pre-existing small lot development patterns, natural features as boundaries and access to arterials; proponents of a new Rural Center shall submit to the county a petition signed by at least 60 percent of the property owners of the land within the boundaries of the proposed new Rural Center; an expansion of an existing Rural Center shall be considered and evaluated by the county through the annual review process under CCC40.560 and pursuant to RCW36.70A.070(5)(d).	No change.	

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•	a new Rural Center shall be considered and evaluated by the county through the docket process under CCC40.560 and pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d).	
forest	: To maintain and enhance the conservation of productive clands and discourage incompatible uses associated with cry activities.	No change.
3.4 F	Policies	
3.4.1	Forest lands as designated in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map shall be managed primarily for the conservation of long-term commercial significant forest lands for productive economic use.	No change.
3.4.2	Primary land use activities on forest lands are commercial forest management, agriculture, mineral extraction, public recreation uses and other non-forest related economic activities relying on forest lands.	No change.
3.4.3	Those areas with Forest Tier I and Forest Tier II Comprehensive Plan designations shall have a residential density of one dwelling unit per 80 and 40 acres (FR-80 and FR-40 respectively).	No change.
3.4.4	Clustering of parcels is allowed consistent with platting and zoning requirements and the Clark County Code.	No change.
3.4.5	Forest activities shall be encouraged by: supporting land trades that result in consolidated forest ownership; working with forest landowners and managers to identify and develop other incentives for continued forestry; and, taking into consideration in capital improvements plans maintaining public roads adequate to accommodate the transport of forest commodities.	No change.
3.4.6	Land use activities within or adjacent to forestland shall be located and designed to minimize conflicts with forest management and other activities on forestland to include the following: residential development on lands adjacent to designated forestland shall be located away from the forestland and should provide for a buffer between residential and forest activity;	No change.

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•	special development standards for access, lot size and configuration, fire protection, water supply and dwelling unit location shall be adopted for dwellings within or adjacent to designated forest lands; and notification shall be placed on all plats and binding site plans that the adjacent land is in resource use and subject to a variety of activities that may not be compatible with residential development.		
3.4.7	Special purpose districts and local improvement districts in lands designated in the 20-Year Plan for forest use will only be used when the services or facilities provided by the special purpose district or local improvement district through taxes, assessments, rates or charges directly benefit those forest lands.	No change.	
3.4.8	Resource activities on forest lands performed in accordance with county, state and federal laws should not be considered public nuisances nor be subject to legal action as public nuisances.	No change.	
3.4.9	In identifying and designating commercial forest land, the following factors shall be taken into consideration: operational factors, growing capacity, site productivity and soil composition, surrounding land use, parcel size, economic viability, tax status and public service levels that are conductive to long-term continuance in forest management.	No change.	
	: To maintain and enhance productive agriculture lands and nize incompatibilities with adjacent uses.	No change.	
3.5 F	Policies		
3.5.1	Agriculture lands as designated in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map shall be managed primarily for the conservation of long-term commercial significant agriculture lands for productive economic use.	3.5.1 Agriculture lands as designated in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map shall be managed primarily for the conservation of long-term commercial significant agriculture lands for productive economic use. [RES]	
		Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.	
3.5.2	Primary land use activities on agriculture lands are commercial agriculture management, agriculture-related uses, temporary worker facilities, forest activities and other non-agriculture related economic activities relying on agriculture lands.	3.5.2 Primary land use activities on agriculture lands are commercial agriculture management, agriculture-related uses, temporary worker facilities, forest activities and other non-agriculture related economic activities relying on agriculture lands. [RES]	

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		Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.
3.5.3	Those areas with Agriculture Comprehensive Plan designations shall have a residential density of one dwelling unit per 20 acres (AG-20).	No change.
3.5.4	Clustering of parcels is allowed consistent with platting and zoning requirements and the Clark County Code.	No change.
3.5.5	Those areas with Agriculture/Wildlife Comprehensive Plan designations shall have a residential density of one dwelling unit per 160 acres (AG/WL).	No change.
3.5.6	Agriculture activities shall be encouraged by: limiting residential development in or near agricultural areas; limiting public services and facilities which lead to the conversion of agricultural lands to non-resource uses; maintaining public roads in capital improvement plans to accommodate the transport of agricultural commodities; cooperative resource management among agricultural land owners, environmental groups, state and federal resource agencies and federally recognized Native American tribes for managing the county's public and private agricultural lands;	 3.5.6 Agriculture activities shall be encouraged by: limiting residential development in or near agricultural areas; limiting public services and facilities which lead to the conversion of agricultural lands to non-resource uses; maintaining public roads in capital improvement plans to accommodate the transport of agricultural commodities; cooperative resource management among agricultural land owners, environmental groups, state and federal resource agencies and federally recognized Native American tribes for managing the county's public and private agricultural lands; supporting land trades that result in consolidated agricultural ownership;
•	supporting land trades that result in consolidated agricultural ownership; encouraging the maintenance of agricultural lands in current use property tax classifications, including those classifications as	 encouraging the maintenance of agricultural lands in current use property tax classifications, including those classifications as provided for in RCW 84.34 and CCC Chapter 3.08; working with agricultural landowners and managers to identify and develop other incentives for continued farming; and,
•	provided for in RCW 84.34 and CCC Chapter 3.08; working with agricultural landowners and managers to identify and develop other incentives for continued farming; and, encouraging agricultural land use as a clean industry incorporating tax breaks, right to farm, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights and other economic means and develop strategies to support farming practices.	 encouraging agricultural land use as a clean industry incorporating tax breaks, right to farm, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights and other economic means and develop strategies to support farming practices. [RES] Rationale: Edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience.
3.5.7	Minimum parcel size should be adequate to allow reasonable and economic agricultural use.	No change.

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3.5.8	Special purpose taxing districts and local improvement districts in lands designated in the 20-Year Plan for agricultural use will only be used when the services or facilities provided by the special purpose district or local improvement district through taxes, assessments, rates or charges, directly benefit those agricultural lands.	No change.	
3.5.9 •	Land use activities within or adjacent to agricultural land shall be located and designed to minimize conflicts with agricultural management and other activities on agricultural land, to include the following: residential development adjacent to agricultural land shall be approximately buffered from agricultural activities; public services and utilities within and adjacent to designated agricultural areas should be designed to prevent negative impacts on agriculture and allow for continued resource activity; notification shall be placed on all plats and binding site plans that the adjacent land is in resource use and subject to a variety of activities that may not be compatible with residential development.	 3.5.9 Land use activities within or adjacent to agricultural land shall be located and designed to minimize conflicts with agricultural management and other activities on agricultural land, to include the following: residential development adjacent to agricultural land shall be approximately appropriately buffered from agricultural activities; public services and utilities within and adjacent to designated agricultural areas should be designed to prevent negative impacts on agriculture and allow for continued resource activity; notification shall be placed on all plats and binding site plans that the adjacent land is in resource use and subject to a variety of activities that may not be compatible with residential development. [RES] Rationale: Replace "approximately" with "appropriately" for phrase clarity. [RES] rationale: edit to support integration with climate element. Policy identified to support climate resilience. 	
3.5.10	Agricultural activities performed in accordance with county, state and federal laws should not be considered public nuisances nor be subject to legal action as public nuisances.	No change.	
resou	: To protect and ensure appropriate use of gravel and mineral arces of the county and minimize conflict between surfaceing and surrounding land uses.	No change.	
3.6 F	Policies	Rationale: All proposed amendments to Section 3.6 Mineral Lands Policies shown here are to correct a scrivener's error that did not incorporate Resolution 2014-12-08 into the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. The highlighted and underlined area is the same as included in the adopted 2014 resolution.	
3.6.1	Support the conservation of mineral lands for productive economic use by identifying and designating lands that have long-term commercial significance for mineral extraction and that are not already characterized by urban growth.	No change.	

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	3.6.2 Designate mineral resource lands based on the following: a. Geological, environmental, and economic factors, including, without limitation, consideration of the evidence of the quality, quantity and characteristics of the resource deposits in the area of interest; proximity to unstable slopes, riparian and wetland areas, habitat for endangered or threatened species, flood hazard areas, parks, public preserves, or other sensitive lands; and economic impacts of mining and other uses of the area;	
3.6.2 Designate mineral resource lands based on the following: geological, environmental and economic factors;	b. Surrounding land uses, zoning, and parcel size, including, without limitation, consideration of proximity to and impacts on residentially zoned areas with existing densities of predominantly one dwelling unit per five acres or higher, and proximity to and impacts on agricultural and forest lands; and	
 surrounding land uses, zoning and parcel size; and, the suitability of public access roads to be used as haul roads. 	c. Suitability and safety of the existing transportation system to bear the traffic associated with mining, including, without limitation, the suitability of public access roads to be used as haul roads, the distance to market, the need to route truck traffic through residential areas, and adequacy of intersections to handle mining traffic plus other traffic. Consideration of future improvements to the transportation system may be considered only of the specific improvements are identified and funded as part of the county's transportation plan.	
	d. The surface mining overlay shall not be designated on parcels zoned Rural (R).	
	e. Consideration that reclamation of mineral resource lands occurs after mining and that such lands may be re-purposed consistent with the comprehensive plan.	
3.6.3 Ensure that mineral extraction and processing operations minimize and mitigate any significant adverse impacts on water, fish, wildlife and nearby land uses.	3.6.3 Ensure that mining-related activities on mineral resource lands follow best management practices.	
3.6.4 Ensure that the use of adjacent lands will not interfere with the continued use of designated Mineral Resources lands for the extraction of minerals in the accustomed manner and in accordance with best management practices.	3.6.4 Ensure that mineral extraction and processing operations minimize and mitigate any significant adverse impacts on water, fish, wildlife, and nearby land uses.	

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3.6.5	Establish notification standards whereby developments on lands in the vicinity of designated mineral resource lands are given notice that they are locating in or adjacent to a potential mining area.	3.6.5	Ensure that the use of adjacent lands will not interfere with the continued use of designated mineral resource lands for the extraction of minerals.
3.6.6	The Surface Mining Overlay shall not be designated within Rural (R) zones except to allow the expansion of an existing mining site.	3.6.6	Establish notification standards whereby developments on lands in the vicinity of designated mineral resource lands are given notice that they are locating in or adjacent to a potential mining area.
3.6.7	Surface mining other than Columbia River dredging shall not occur within any 100-year floodplain except for projects with an approved Habitat Conservation Plan.	3.6.7	Surface mining shall not occur within 100-year floodplains.
urban	To identify a limited set of lands outside of but adjacent to growth areas that will be first priority lands for inclusion as ed urbanizable lands in subsequent UGA expansions.	No cha	inge.
3.7 P	olicies		
3.7.1	If designated, Urban Reserve areas shall abut established urban growth areas in all cases.	No cha	inge.
3.7.2	Those areas with an Urban Reserve Comprehensive Plan overlay designation shall have a residential density of one dwelling unit per 10 and 20 acres. The Urban Reserve Overlay is implemented by Urban Reserve-10 (UR-10) for future urban residential development and Urban Reserve-20 for all other types of future urban development. When applied, the underlying zoning will remain.	3.7.2 Ration	Those areas with an Urban Reserve Comprehensive Plan overlay designation shall have a residential density of one dwelling unit per 10 and 20 acres. The Urban Reserve Overlay is implemented by Urban Reserve-10 (UR-10) for future urban residential development and Urban Reserve-20 (UR-20) for all other types of future urban development. When applied, the underlying zoning will remain. ale: Add "UR-20" text for internal consistency and clarity.
3.7.3	Urban reserve areas shall be based on the following:		
•	the efficiency with which the proposed reserve can be provided with urban services in the future;		
•	the unique land needs of specific urban activities assess from a regional perspective;	No change.	
•	the provision of green spaces between communities;		
•	the efficiencies with which the proposed reserve can be urbanized;		
•	the proximity of jobs and housing to each other;		
•	the balance of growth opportunities throughout the region so that costs and benefits can be shared;		
•	the impact on the regional transportation system; and,		

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•	the protection of designated agricultural and forest resource lands from nearby urbanization.	
3.7.4	All divisions of land in the urban reserve area shall be subject to the land division review process and result in parcels of 10 acres or more in size.	No change.
3.7.5	Urban reserve lands shall be the first priority lands for inclusion in urban growth boundaries.	No change.
3.7.6	Prior to the inclusion of the urban reserve area in urban growth areas, the county will:	
•	work with cities to prepare and adopt general transportation, sewer and drainage system plans for the urban reserve area which identify areas with the urban reserve area appropriate for siting of public facilities; and,	No change.
•	work with cities, special districts and school districts to prepare and adopt plans for siting of public facilities and schools.	
Goal: Support freight rail dependent uses where the use is dependent on and makes use of the short line railroad, as defined by the Surface Transportation Board.		No change.
3.8 P	Policies	
3.8.1	Support freight rail dependent uses in rural lands, as well as agriculture, forest and mineral resource lands, where the use is dependent on and makes use of the short line railroad within the county.	No change.
3.8.2	Freight rail dependent uses will be allowed on parcels with a freight rail dependent use overlay, where such uses minimize impacts on adjacent rural and resource uses.	No change.
3.8.3	Freight rail dependent uses means buildings and other infrastructure that are used in the fabrication, processing, storage, and transport of goods where the use is dependent on and makes use of an adjacent short line railroad. Such facilities are both urban and rural development. Clark County may include development of freight rail dependent uses on land adjacent to a short line railroad in the transportation element of this plan. The County may also modify development regulations to include development of freight rail dependent uses that do not require urban governmental services in rural lands.	No change.