



Dear Neighbor:

The Crescent Valley Alliance in partnership with the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance has submitted an application for a Pierce County Comprehensive Area-Wide Map Amendment to the Pierce County Executive's Office. **The intent of this amendment is to maintain the rural character of Crescent Valley and protect Crescent Creek, the aquifer, and fish and wildlife habitat.** If you are receiving this letter, you are a property owner and/or resident who may be affected by this proposal. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our request for a Pierce County Comprehensive Area-Wide Map Amendment.

General Description of Proposed Amendment:

Revise the Gig Harbor Peninsula Zoning and Land Use Designations to apply the Rural Sensitive Resource (RSR) classification to tax parcels located within the new Crescent Valley Biodiversity Management Area boundary with the exception of parcels zoned Agricultural Resource Lands (ARL) or located in the City of Gig Harbor Urban Growth Boundary. This proposal would rezone/redesignate 305 parcels currently zoned Rural 10 (R10) and 272 parcels currently zoned Reserve 5 (Rsv 5) to the Rural Sensitive Resource classification. This revision would only apply to the expanded Crescent Valley Biodiversity Management Area boundary. The parcels located in the original Biodiversity Management Area have already been designated Rural Sensitive Resource.

Background:

In 2004 Pierce County adopted biodiversity network areas that are rich in natural qualities as part of the open space network. The Crescent Valley Biodiversity Management Area (BMA) is a specific area within the Countywide network. Residents from the local community worked with the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance to develop a Stewardship Plan to retain the area's biological richness. The Stewardship Plan includes the development of implementation measures to conserve biodiversity.

One of these measures was to amend the boundary of the Crescent Valley BMA to include more of the watershed. The parcels included in the expanded Crescent Valley BMA be redesignated as Rural Sensitive Resource (RSR) zoning classification with the exception of parcels zoned Agricultural Resource Lands (ARL) or located in the City of Gig Harbor Urban Growth Boundary. Applying the Rural Sensitive Resource (RSR) classification to parcels located in the Crescent Valley BMA recognizes these environmentally sensitive areas. This classification will help maintain the rural character of Crescent Valley and the Crescent Creek watershed and protect surface waters, aquifers, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Here is a description of the Rural 10 and Reserve 5 zones that are currently in place and the Rural Sensitive Resource zone for comparison:

Rural-10 (R-10) This designation primarily accommodates low-density single-family residential, agricultural, forestry, and recreational uses. Rural-10 designation authorizes land development activities if the operations do not negatively impact the character of the rural community or the environment.

Although many small parcels exist within this area, the base density for new land subdivisions is one unit per ten acres. Up to 2 units per 10 acres may be reached if 50% of gross acreage is set aside as open space. Existing parcels that are less than 10 acres and are zoned R-10 can be built upon as long as the other criteria such as septic, water, critical areas, and other county requirements are met.

Reserve-5 (Rsv5) This designation is an area with low density residential land uses that requires clustering of new residential lots so that the land may be more intensively utilized in the future, when the Urban Growth Area is expanded. The designation is intended to provide usable lands for potential inclusion into the Urban Growth Area for the City of Gig Harbor when the need for additional land is identified and an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan is adopted.

The principal permitted use in the Rsv5 designation is detached single-family dwelling units. Civic and recreational uses may be permitted, but are generally limited to a maximum size of 5,000 square feet. The maximum density in the Rsv5 designation is one dwelling unit per five acres, with a maximum lot size of 12,500 square feet. The Rsv5 designation surrounds the City of Gig Harbor's Urban Growth Area, with the exception of the Crescent Creek, McCormick Creek, Wollochet Creek, Murphy Creek, and Sullivan Gulch Creek drainages. The Rural Reserve 5 (Rsv 5) zoning classification implements this plan designation.

Rural Sensitive Resource (RSR) This designation is intended to protect the surface waters, aquifers, and fish and wildlife habitat of Crescent Valley from degradation. New development within the RSR designation shall utilize low impact development techniques such as vegetation and tree preservation. The base density is one dwelling unit per 10 acres although density may be increased to 2 dwelling units per 10 acres when at least 50% of the gross acreage is dedicated to open space.

The properties within the RSR designation are considered a high priority for community open space preservation and acquisition efforts. The RSR designation is intended to conserve the rural nature and natural values of Crescent Valley and the Crescent Creek watershed.

We encourage residents/property owners with questions to contact John McMillan at 253.858.1985 with the Crescent Valley Alliance or John Garner or Lucinda Wingard whose phone numbers are listed below. You can learn more about the Crescent Valley Alliance by visiting: www.crescentvalleyalliance.org. Information about the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance website is located at: http://depts.washington.edu/natmap/projects/bma/gig_harbor/.

Additional information on the 2009 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan is available at Pierce County Planning and Land Services, Advance Planning Division, (253) 798-3736 or email to Tiffany Odell, Associate Planner, at todell@co.pierce.wa.us

Sincerely,

John Garner
Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance
253.591.6439

Lucinda Wingard
Crescent Valley Alliance
253.858.3647