

## **Appendix B: Agricultural District Zoning Change Justification**

The areas currently zoned as Agricultural (A) consist of a wide variety of land use and development patterns. However, there's a clear difference between areas largely utilized for residential purposes and areas that remain primarily utilized for productive purposes. The proposed split of the Agricultural District into two new districts—Mixed Use - 20 (MU-20) and Mixed Use - 40 (MU-40)—was driven by the observation that there are distinct areas throughout the county that tend towards one or the other use and that these areas could be logically determined through development patterns. Whereas the productive land use areas tend towards larger contiguous parcels with low dwelling and road density, the residential lands tend towards clusters of smaller parcels and higher dwelling and road densities. The geographic division of the two new districts reveals these areas and was produced by a geospatial statistical analysis (with some minor edits) to back up what intuition suggests.

Given the geographic division of the MU-20 and MU-40 districts, it became possible to produce zoning regulations for those districts that cater to their predominant land use characteristics while working towards established Growth Policy goals and objectives. Since the areas proposed to be zoned MU-20 are largely residential and located along major transportation corridors and amenity areas (eg. rivers, mountains, and forests), the MU-20 district diverged from the current Agricultural district by allowing conventional mixed uses that are currently not allowed. For example, the MU-20 district allows restaurants, micro-breweries, and other commercial uses that provide services to seasonal and year-round tourists as well as the increasing exurban residences whether seasonal or permanent. Additionally, the allowance of these uses under an approved Special Use Permit (SUP) provides an opportunity for the public and adjacent property owners to be heard.

The MU-40 district diverges from the Agricultural district through the removal of uses that are more appropriate for MU-20 along with an increase in permitted principal uses for agricultural uses which were previously allowed only through an approved SUP. For example, tourist homes and bed and breakfast operations are not allowed in MU-40, however, they remain an allowance in MU-20. This preserves the ability for desired amenity areas to cater to temporary tourist occupancy while keeping those operations in closer proximity to service centers and transportation corridors. Additionally, this protects productive land use areas from types of development driven by demand for amenity destinations which have infringed upon ranching and farming areas throughout the county and the state. Some productive land uses allowed through an approved SUP in the Agricultural district are proposed to be permitted principal uses in the MU-40 districts. For example, value-added agricultural commodity processing facilities, wild-game processing facilities, agricultural commodity storage facilities, and other uses are allowed 'by right.' With the Agricultural district divided between the MU-20 and MU-40 geographies there is less of a need for the use of the SUP process since there are fewer potentially impacted residences and those around are likely to be involved in a productive land use.

Staff finds that the following goals are served by the proposed split of the Agricultural district into MU-20 and MU-40: Goal 1, Objective A; Goal 5, Objective A; Goal 9, Objective F; and, Goal 11, Objective A. The MU-20 district opens commercial uses in strategic areas thus

promoting the retention of existing businesses and promoting new business opportunities in the county while the protection of MU-40 areas leaves those areas open to larger-scale productive land uses (Goal 1, Objective A). The commercial allowances in MU-20 and reduction of SUP processes for conventional agricultural uses reduces local government intervention (Goal 5, Objective A). The creation of the MU-20 district out of the current Agricultural district produces an open buffer (minimum 20 acre lot) between many rural community Mixed Use districts and other primarily residential districts and surrounding agricultural lands (Goal 9, Objective F). Finally, the MU-20 and MU-40 division of the Agricultural district—in conjunction with the changes in allowed uses and the increased minimum lot size of 40 acres—promotes cluster development in denser developed areas characterized by the MU-20 geographies while protecting the open spaces of the MU-40 geographies (Goal 11, Objective A).

### Relevant Growth Policy Goals and Objectives

- Goal 1: Sustain and strengthen the economic well-being of Cascade County’s citizens.
  - Objective A: Stimulate the retention and expansion of existing businesses, new businesses, value-added businesses, wholesale and retail businesses, and industries including agriculture, mining, manufacturing/ processing and forest products.
- Goal 5: Preserve and enhance the rural, friendly and independent lifestyle currently enjoyed by Cascade County’s citizens.
  - Objective A: Maintain Cascade County’s citizens independent lifestyle and minimize local governmental intervention, to the extent possible, consistent with the requirements of a continually evolving economy and constantly changing population.
- Goal 9: Foster the heritage of the area in agriculture and forestry in recognition of their economic contribution and the intrinsic natural beauty of grazing areas, farmlands, and forests.
  - Objective F: Encourage open buffers between rural residences and adjoining agricultural lands.
- Goal 11: Protect and maintain Cascade County’s rural character, encourage efficient use of land.
  - Objective A: Preserve the county’s open space setting by encouraging cluster development.