

# Roger Almskaar

Land Use Consultant

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May 21, 2013

Whatcom County Council  
311 Grand Ave  
Bellingham WA 98225

Re: Proposed Partial Downzoning, North Bellingham "Rural Neighborhood"

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of Karen Heggem, who owns and lives on a 8.5 acre parcel in this area, I'm submitting this letter with one exhibit for your May 21 2013 hearing record. She is aware of the current ban on new plat applications due to the state Growth Management Hearing Board's various Invalidity Orders. However, she had already submitted a short plat "pre-application" prior to the first Order (January 9 2012), and intends to submit the complete app when and if the Hearing Board Invalidity Order on such matters is lifted.

We support the proposed retention of Rural Residential-2 Acre Density (RR-2A) zoning for this parcel, per the Planning Commission's Recommendation Map for North Bellingham, p 2, Exhibit C. I'm attaching a marked copy, our Exhibit A, on which the site is marked with an asterisk. Its located at 1300 W Axton Road, on the north side, about 0.5 miles west of Northwest Road, and about 0.4 miles east of the Ferndale City Limits. Its parcel number is 390221-500027.

This parcel should not be further downzoned for two reasons (it was downzoned in May 2012 from RR-1). First, all of the lots within 500 ft are already well below 5 acres, with one exception; most are one acre or less, all have houses on them. The exception is a 25 acre parcel across Ten Mile Creek, zoned Agriculture. Thus although the site is on the North Bellingham Rural Neighborhood's western boundary, the abutting zone is AG.

Second, it does not abut any R 5-A zoned land, and about half the 9 acres is a floodplain wetland along the creek. For these reasons, we believe that retaining the RR-2A zoning is the only reasonable and fair solution for this lot.

In conclusion, the major reduction proposed in the entire Rural Neighborhood, in both potential home site yields and gross area, is probably the only solution acceptable to the board. But, to downzone a tract like this one to RR-5A, sandwiched between an AG zone and much smaller developed parcels zoned RR-2A, would be what some would call an illegal "spot zone". However, unlike the usual spot "upzone", the financial outcome in this instance would be extremely negative for the owner.

Thanks for your consideration of this testimony. Please contact me if there are questions or comments.

Sincerely,

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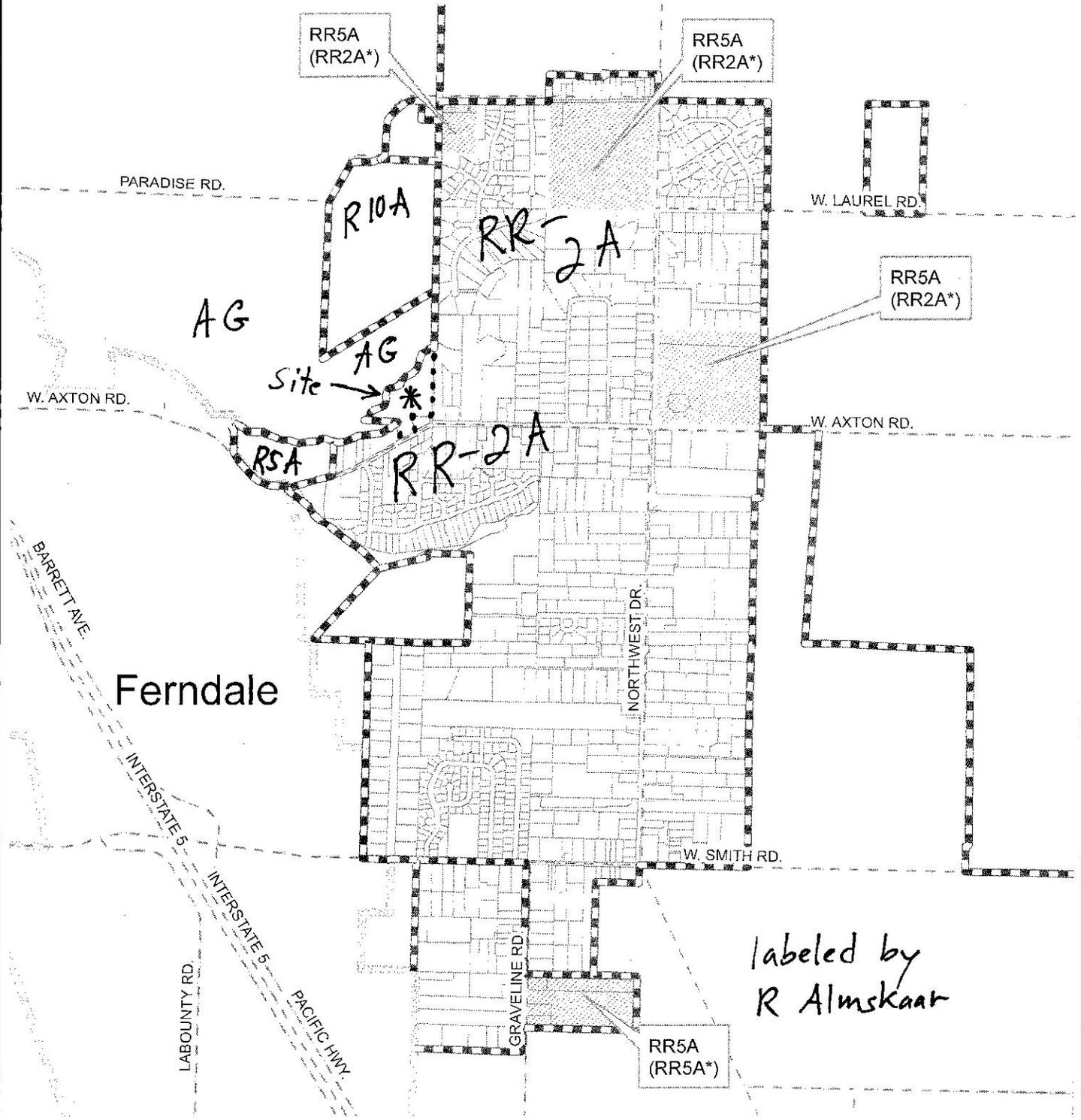
Roger Almskaar, Land Use Consultant

**Exhibits:** A. Planning Commission's Proposed Rezoning Map, dated 4/16/13; 8.5x11"

cc: client, Plannig Department

Exhibit C: PC Recommendation

# North Bellingham



File #: PLN2012-00012

## Proposed Rezoning (PC Recommendation)

- Existing Zoning Boundary
- Proposed Zoning Boundary
- Proposed Rezone Area

\* Rural Residential Density Overlay  
 Proposed Zoning - RR5A (not in parentheses)  
 Existing Zoning - (RR2)

Map of WHATCOM COUNTY showing the location of the site and the following information:

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