

# MEMORANDUM

## Community Development



City of Bothell

DATE: August 28, 2019

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Bruce Blackburn, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: **Briefing on Minimum Density Plan and Code amendments**

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### Objective

Provide a briefing to the Planning Commission regarding the Minimum Density Plan and Code amendments

### Action

No action is requested this evening. Staff is asking for input and comments from the Planning Commission.

### Summary

The R-AC zone is applied to five activity centers and is an important component to meeting the City's assigned growth targets. Historically, R-AC developments have achieved 50 to 80 dwelling units per acre (DU/AC). However, recently, developers have been proposing townhomes developments within the R-AC zone and are achieving less than 20 dwelling units per acre which may effect upon the City's future buildable lands growth projections.

The Council initiated Plan and Code amendments to establish minimum residential and commercial densities within the R-AC zone. Staff is currently investigating the minimum residential densities shown below:

*Table 1 – Draft Proposal - Minimum density by Subarea*

Subarea	Dwelling units per acre <i>minimums</i>
Canyon Park	30 to 45
North Creek /NE 195 ST	30 to 40
Thrasher's Corner / Redhawk	60 to 80
Country Village / Bothell-Everett Hwy	20 to 30

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Dwelling units per acre <i>minimums</i></b>
Brickyard / Queensgate	20 to 30

This amendment may involve the creation of a new to Bothell bulk, scale and dimensional mechanism known as a floor area ratio (FAR) that would be applied to or in conjunction with non-residential developments. How FAR works is illustrated on Page10 and 11. FARs are widely used within the Puget Sound Region because they establish a ratio building area to site area. For example, an FAR minimum of 1.0 requires that the building be 100% as large as the property upon which the building is constructed (e.g. 10,000 sq. ft. lot would have a 10.000 sq. ft. building).

Staff is evaluating the appropriateness of the following potential minimum non-residential (commercial use) FARs. It should be noted that additional analysis needs to be completed.

*Table 2 –Draft Proposal - Minimum FARs by Subarea*

<b>Subarea</b>	<b>FAR <i>minimums</i></b>
Canyon Park	0.4 to 0.75
North Creek /NE 195 ST	0.4 to 0.75
Thrasher’s Corner / Redhawk	1.0 to 1.5
Country Village / Bothell-Everett Hwy	0.25 to 0.50
Brickyard / Queensgate	0.25 to 0.50

## **Policy Considerations**

There are a number of policy considerations for the Planning Commission to consider:

1. What should be the minimum level of development (i.e., density or activity units) required in R-AC and/or R-AC, OP or LI zoned lands?
2. Should different minimums be applied to different subareas? For example, should a higher minimum density be applied within the Canyon Park Regional Growth Center?
3. Should the City establish a new bulk, area and dimension standard known as Floor Area Ratio or FAR?
4. What should the minimum FAR be for each activity center?
5. Should the City apply a ranging FAR based upon the proposed use of a new building? An ‘office’ building, for example, can achieve a higher employee count per square foot than a manufacturing building.

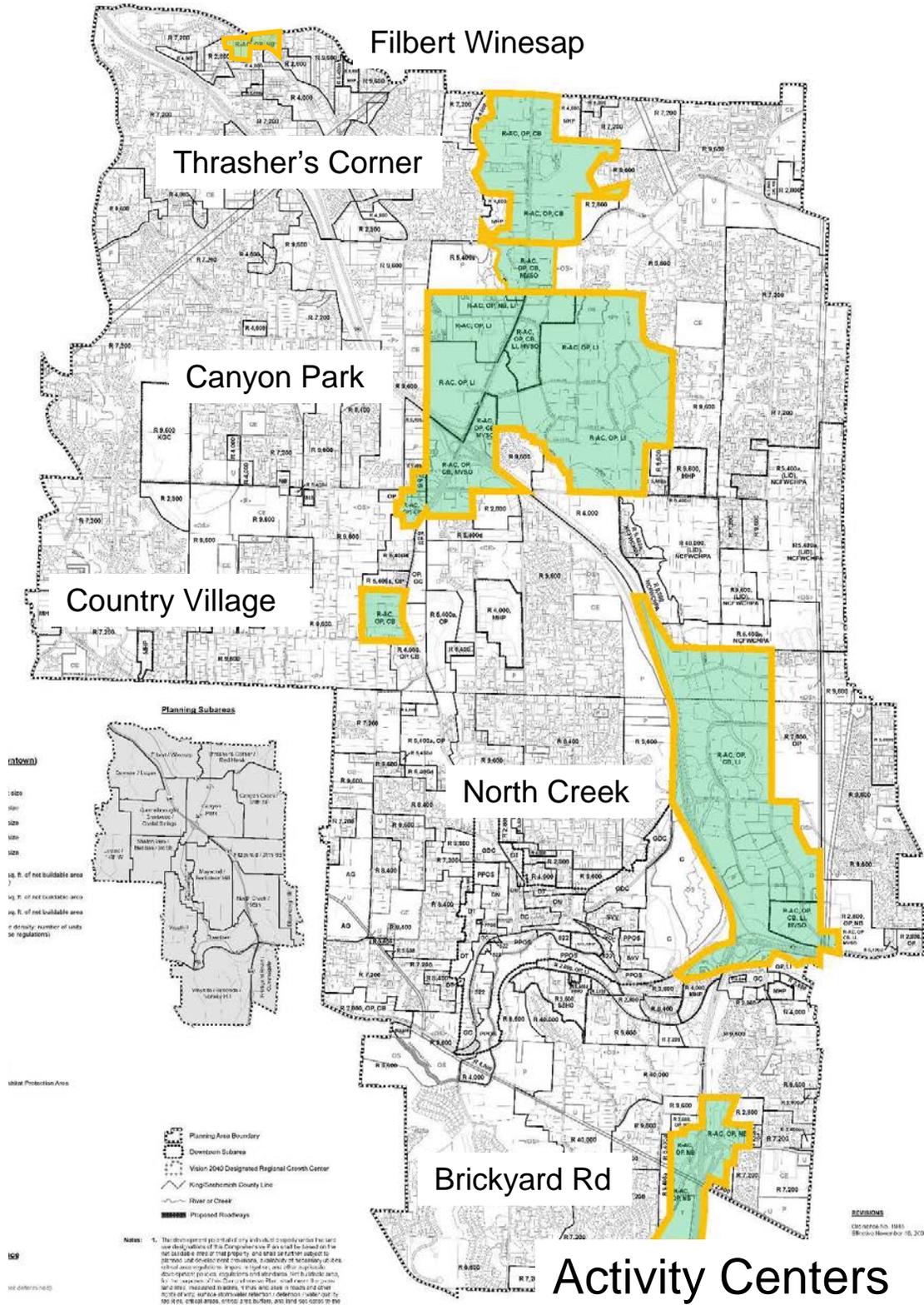
## **Background**

The City of Bothell created the R-AC zone in 2002 (Ordinance 1876) as a means of focusing growth toward the City’s activity centers where transportation, utility, transit,

available services, and employment were capable of accommodating higher levels of population growth. R-AC zones are in close proximity to the City's major transportation and transit corridors of I-405, SR-522, SR-523, and SR-527. R-AC zoning was applied to portions of five of the City's 17 subareas and covers approximately 1,540 acres.

The five subareas that contain the R-AC zone are:

- Canyon Park
- North Creek / NE 195 ST
- Thrasher's Corner / Redhawk
- Country Village / Lake Pleasant / Bothell-Everett Highway
- Brickyard Road / Queensgate



The R-AC zone accommodates large amounts of population growth and is one strategy protecting the City's established residential neighborhoods as supported by Comprehensive Plan Policy LU-P6, which states:

“Preserve the character of established neighborhoods and protect such neighborhoods from intrusion by incompatible uses.”

R-AC is *always* applied as a combination zone which allows for a single use or a mixture of land uses. For example, an R-AC, OP, CB zoned parcel permits any combination of residential, office professional or retail use or an applicant may choose any use consistent with any of the zoning classifications. Further, combination zones allow an applicant to select the most permissive standard of each individual zone. See 12.06.020(F).

There are seven R-AC zoning combinations:

- R-AC, OP, LI
- R-AC, OP, NB
- R-AC, OP, NB, LI
- R-AC, OP, CB
- R-AC, OP, CB, LI
- R-AC, OP, CB, MVSO
- R-AC, OP, CB, LI, MVSO

The R-AC is described in Land Use Element Policy LU-P4 as:

“Residential – Activity Center

This designation shall provide for multi-family residential development in designated activity centers, and is intended to promote a variety of housing types in sufficient numbers to support a range of shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities within those centers. *No specific density is prescribed*: the number of units which may be constructed on an individual property or within the center shall be controlled by site and building regulations concerning height, parking, landscaping, setbacks and other aspects of development.” (*Emphasis added*)

Of the seven zoning combinations, one zone *always* appears with R-AC. Office Professional (OP) which is described as:

“Office-Professional (OP).

This designation shall include personal and professional service businesses which commonly locate in office buildings, such as banks, medical and dental clinics, accounting, law, real estate, insurance, travel agencies and similar businesses.”

The other two zoning classifications that are most commonly associated with R-AC include Light Industrial (LI) and Community Business (CB) described as:

**Community Business (CB).**

This designation comprises most retail, dining, entertainment and similar businesses which are conducted primarily indoors. Such uses include but are not limited to grocery stores, drug stores, furniture stores, clothing stores, book stores, music stores, restaurants, movie theaters, and bowling alleys.

**“Light Industrial (LI).**

This designation comprises non-polluting manufacturing and processing, wholesaling, warehousing and distribution and other similar activities. Such uses tend to require large buildings and to generate more large truck traffic than do other types of land uses.”

**Discussion**

**Residential Density**

The City of Bothell has a range of residential densities ranging from the R 40,000 zone of 1 lot per acre (R 40,000) to the R-AC zone which has no maximum and allows density to be controlled by site and building standards such as building height, parking, setbacks, etc.

*Table 3 - Existing Residential Densities City of Bothell*

<b>Zoning Classification</b>	<b>Square footage per unit<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Maximum Units per acre equivalent<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Minimum units per acre<sup>3</sup></b>
R 40,000	40,000	1.09	0.72
R 9,600	9,600	4.53	3.02
R 8,400	8,400	5.18	3.45
R 7,200	7,200	6.05	4.03
R 5,400	5,400	8.07	5.38
R 4,000	4,000	10.89	7.26
R 2,800	2,800	15.55	10.33
R-AC	None	None	N/A

1. The City uses square footage to determine density
2. This figure is shown as units per acre for ease of numbering
3. The City controls minimum density by capping lot area to no greater than 150% of the minimum lot or unit area.

The Commission will observe there is a large ‘gap’ between the R 2,800 zone which allows approximately 15 units per acre and the R-AC zone which does not have a specific maximum.

Staff believes the solution to establishing a minimum density within the R-AC zone is fairly straightforward because the City currently applies minimum residential densities to all other residential zones. BMC 12.14.030(B)(2)(c) and 3(b) establish minimum densities equal to no fewer than 1.5 times the underlying lot area or dwelling unit per acre maximums.

The table illustrates developments occurring in the R-AC zone since 2016.

*Table 4 - Completed and Proposed R-AC developments:*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Land area</b>	<b>Units per acre</b>
Emerald Crest	2017	53	0.61 ac	87
Beardslee Village	2016	372	5.61 ac	63
Urbane Village <sup>1</sup>	2018	212	11.6 ac	18
Tract 18 & 19 townhomes (approved)	2018	118	6.93 ac	17
Tract 24 townhomes (in review)	2018	231	12.43 ac	19
Preston North	2019	94	5.0 ac	19
Preston South	2019	59	7.2 ac	8
Canyon Park apartments (pre-application only) <sup>2</sup>	2018	531	9.8	54
Quadrant /Seattle Times <sup>2</sup>	2019	880	23.75	37

1. 35 foot maximum height in Country Village Subarea

2. Pre-application conference only, held 2018 and 2019

The table clearly shows that, while townhomes are a desirable housing product, they are not achieving the potential capacity of the R-AC zone. As demonstrated within the 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report, the R-AC has a capacity of 3,286 dwelling units (+6,210 residents) within 55 vacant or re-developable R-AC lands. This equates to 60 dwelling units per acre.

Should this trend continue, the City will not be achieving its calculated housing capacity which is cause for concern because the City is heavily reliant on the R-AC zone to accommodate a substantial amount of the City’s 2035 population growth target as well as the City’s overall growth strategy.

### **Concepts to be investigated**

### Canyon Park Subarea

Portions of Canyon Park are designated a regional growth center (RGC) and must meet the Puget Sound Regional Council's framework criteria for minimum levels of existing (18) and planned (45) activity units (AU). An AU is either one resident or one employee.

To put this into land use planning terms, activity units will be converted to dwelling units per acre. This is done by applying a persons per household (PPH) figure to the activity unit criteria and then establishing densities which achieve the AU levels. PPH figures are derived from three sources: The Office of Financial Management (OFM), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and King and Snohomish County Buildable lands. For example, PPH for multi-family is 1.54 and PPH for single family is 2.89.

To be conservative, staff is selecting the multi-family 1.54 PPH figure. To achieve 45 AU/acre means establishing a minimum density of 30 dwelling units per acre ( $45 \div 1.54 = 29.22$ ).

Staff is proposing the Commission consider a minimum density of 40 to 50 dwelling units per acre in Canyon Park to ensure the AU figure of 45 is met and to encourage building sizes and scales that are compatible with the rest of the business park.

### North Creek / NE 195<sup>th</sup> ST Subarea

The North Creek Subarea contains three separate business parks which run together. This subarea does not contain an RGC meaning the City has more options in establishing a minimum density. However, as stated previously, this large subarea is capable of contributing a significant amount of residential population.

As noted above, King County buildable lands assumes a residential density of 50 to 80 units per acre for this subarea. Staff proposes using a similar minimum density of 40 to 50 dwelling units per acre to encourage densities more in line with buildable lands and to again encourage building scales that are compatible with the type of development in these businesses parks.

### Country Village / Lake Pleasant / Bothell-Everett Highway (Country Village) Subarea

The northern portion of the Country Village Subarea contains the Red Barn Village District (33 acres) which was assigned the R-AC in 2015. But, unlike other subareas which allow a building height of 65 feet, R-AC in Country Village is capped at 35 feet to address visual compatibility concerns. This limitation on building height effectively 'halves' the potential number of dwelling units of other R-AC lands.

If it is logical to require 40 to 50 dwelling units per acre for R-AC lands with a 65 foot height, it follows that 20 to 25 dwelling units per acre should be applied to the Country Village Subarea.

Thrasher’s Corner / Redhawk Subarea

This subarea is totally within the City’s MUGA area and is subject to Snohomish County regulations. Snohomish County has designated the area as Urban Center (UC) which allows multi-family residential development 90 feet in height with incentives that allow heights up to 125 feet (e.g. a receiving site accepting Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) credits). The County’s minimum density for all Urban Growth Area (UGA) lands is 4 units per net acre.

The 2012 Snohomish County Buildable lands report assigns a capacity of 41 dwelling units per acre to the Urban Center plan designation. Accordingly, staff is proposing a minimum density of 40 to 50 dwelling units per acre within the Thrasher’s Corner / Redhawk Subarea.

Brickyard Road / Queensgate Subarea

The R-AC-zoned lands within the Brickyard Road / Queensgate Subarea surround the I-405 / NE 160 ST interchange and were annexed to Bothell in 2014. Similar to the other Activity Centers, Brickyard Road also assumes 50 to 80 dwelling units per acre for R-AC. However, most of this area is already developed with housing developments as described below:

*Table 5 – Pre-Existing King County residential developments*

Development	Land area	Units	Achieved density
Verdeau condominiums	4 ac	96	24.0
Willina Apartments	9.4 ac	175	18.6
Sonoma Villero Condominiums	11.0 ac	240	21.8
Cambridge Townhomes	12.4 ac	209	16.8

Staff is proposing the Commission consider a minimum density of 20-30 dwelling units per acre for this subarea to generally match these pre-existing developments.

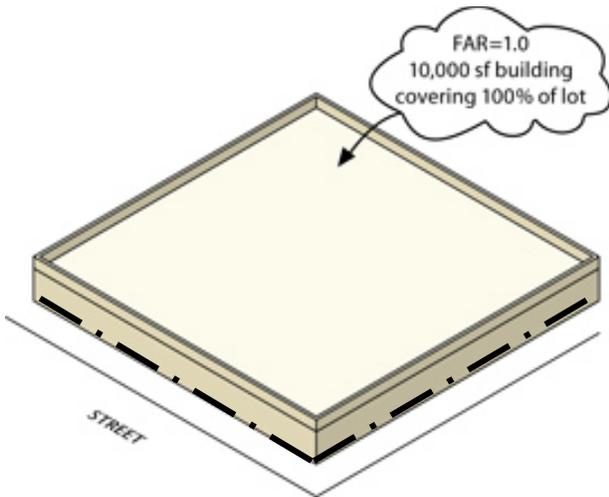
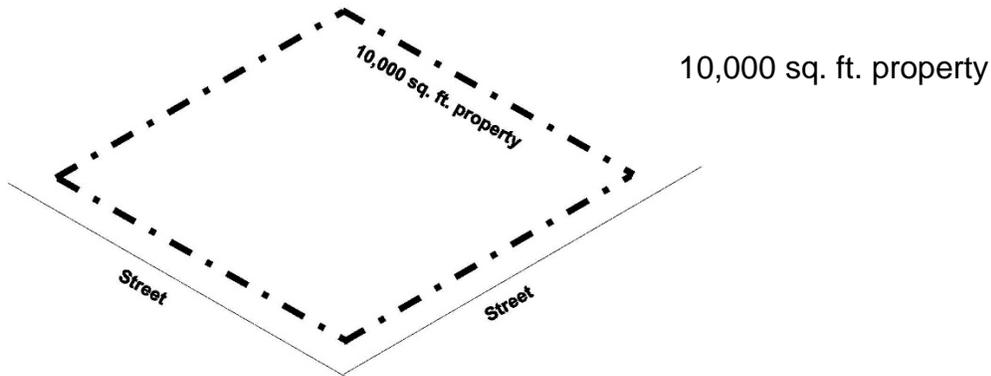
**Employment Density**

Employment density needs a different approach because a minimum employment density is not currently found within the BMC. This is a somewhat problematic endeavor because the number of employees per acre is dependent upon many outside influences such as

the selected land use, the square footage of the building (which can be controlled) and the availability of tenants or end-users for the building. For example, manufacturing may have one employee per 300 sq. ft. where office may have one employee per 150 square feet. A building can be quite large but still have a low number of employees.

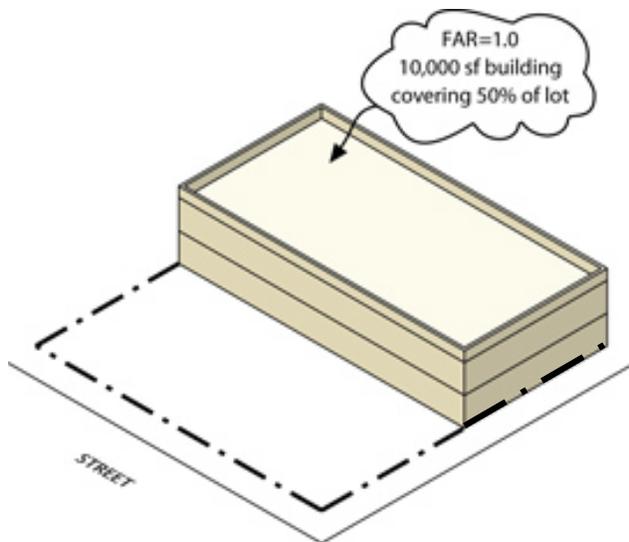
Staff believes the City's the best option is to implement *Floor area ratios (FAR)*. An FAR is a mechanism that ties the size of the building to the size of the lot upon which it is located. For example, an FAR of 0.25 means that the building square footage must be at least 25% of the property square footage or for 10,000 sq. ft. property, any building constructed upon that property must be at least 2,500 sq. ft.

The illustrations below are from the City of Redmond's Zoning regulations:

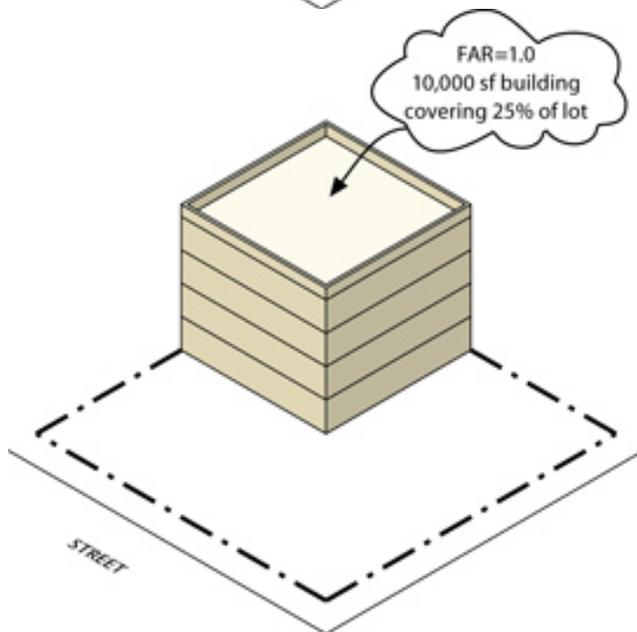


FAR = 1.0 means the 10,000 sq. ft. property must have a 10,000 sq. ft. building.

For this example, a single story 10,000 sq. ft. building occupies 100% of the property area



Different building configurations are allowed as long as the FAR = 1.0 Here a two story 10,000 sq. ft. building configuration (5,000 sq., ft. per story) means 50% of the lot is available for parking or other uses



In this example, a 4 story building configuration (2,500 sq. ft. per story) is used to meet the FAR of 1.0 leaving 75% of the lot is available for parking or other uses

Several jurisdictions within the Puget Sound Region employ floor area ratios (FAR) to achieve both minimum and maximum building sizes, bulk and scale.

The City of Redmond has a long experience applying FARs within its zoning code and establishes FARs by individual zoning classifications. For example, within its 'Business Park' zone, a minimum FAR of 0.60, a base FAR of 1.13 and a maximum FAR of 2.0 are applied. Within its manufacturing park zone the base FAR is 0.25 to 0.50, depending upon the land use, and the maximum FAR is 1.00. Through incentives (Transfer of Development Rights, affordable housing, etc.) an applicant may increase the FAR by certain specified amounts.

To determine historic FAR trends, staff analyzed existing buildings within the Canyon Park Business Center and the North Creek Business parks. Ten properties from each area and a range of building sizes and land areas were selected.

*Table 6 - Canyon Park existing building floor area ratios – Ten commercial buildings*

<b>Address</b>	<b>Land area</b>	<b>Building area</b>	<b>Built - FAR</b>
22118 20 Ave SE	675,180	177,300	0.26
1909 214 ST SE	255,697	86,148	0.33
22029 220 ST SE	140,698	50,425	0.36
21919 20 Ave	703,929.	266,002	0.38
2222 229 ST SE	75,794	31,809	0.41
2222 222 ST SE	169,884	74,750	0.44
22116 23 DR SE	40,510	17,995	0.44
22105 23 DR SE	199,940	91,704	0.45
22032 220 ST	42,253	21,749	0.51
21540 30 Ave SE	270,072	184,914	0.68
<b>2300 223 ST SE</b>	<b>195,148</b>	<b>93,404</b>	<b>0.47</b>
<b>2500 2530 223 t se</b>	<b>255.,261</b>	<b>110,700</b>	<b>0.43</b>
<b>Average FAR</b>			<b>0.426</b>
<b>Median FAR</b>			<b>0.425</b>

*Table 7 - North Creek existing building floor area ratios – Ten commercial buildings*

<b>Address</b>	<b>Land area</b>	<b>Building area</b>	<b>Built - FAR</b>
19204 N Crk Pkwy	293,085	95,543	0.32
19201 120 Ave NE	186,745	59,475	0.32
18911 N Crk Pkwy	553,647	200,096	0.36
20021 120 Ave NE	156,794	58,324	0.37
19515 N Crk Pkwy N	95,328	35,275	0.37
19333 N Crk Pkwy	222,196	92,461	0.41
19909 120 Ave NE	161,588	68,129	0.42
19803 N Crk Pkwy N	73,476	31,069	0.42
11714 N Crk Pkwy N	93,186	40,475	0.43
20307 N Crk Pkwy	354,298	156,349	0.44
<b>Average FAR</b>			<b>0.386</b>
<b>Median</b>			<b>0.375</b>

Brickyard Road

<b>Address</b>	<b>Land area</b>	<b>Building area</b>	<b>Built - FAR</b>
11675 ne 160 st	27,878	920	0.03
11700 NE 160 ST	47,474	2,801	0.06
15815 116 Ave NE	29,172	4,984	0.17
16030 Juanita Woodinville Wy	29,021	7,600	0.26
11801 ne 160 st	43,679	12,500	0.29
15812 116 Ave NE	12,469	3,838	0.30

16017 Juanita Woodinville Wy NE	48,323	66,985	1.38
<b>Average FAR</b>			<b>0.37</b>
<b>Median FAR</b>			<b>0.26</b>

To establish employment density, staff sought square foot per employee measurements that would guide the amount of building area necessary to achieve a desired employment density. Most sources agree with the following table.

*Table 8 - building square feet per employee*

<b>Employment type</b>	<b>Square feet per employee</b>
General office	150
Microbiological and immunological	163
Upper management	280
Senior Professional	115
Technical / Professional	90
Precision Manufacturing	300
Senior Clerical	85
Warehousing	5,000

Based upon the information above, it appears that, except for warehousing and manufacturing, even a relatively small building (e.g. 10,000) can accommodate 45 employees per acre.

## **Conclusions**

There remain a number of areas for staff to investigate. Input received from the Planning Commission will assist staff in focusing its efforts.

## **Next Steps**

Public outreach to property owners  
A public hearing will be scheduled in October.