



Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment Narrative

Applicant: GVD Commercial Properties, Inc.

Representative: Whiskey Rock Planning + Consulting

Subject Parcels: RP58N01W317802A (+/-52 acres) and RP58N01W318200A (+/-21.5 acres)

Current FLUM Designation: Agriculture/Forest 10-20 Acre

Proposed FLUM Designation: Rural Residential

Current Zoning: Agriculture/Forest 10 (A/F-10)

Proposed Zoning (subsequent application): Rural Residential 5

Location: North of the City of Kootenai, Idaho, east of Porath Road

Introduction and Purpose of Request

This application is submitted in accordance with BCRC Title 12, Chapter 6, which establishes the procedures and standards for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The applicant, GVD Commercial Properties, Inc., seeks to amend the FLUM designation for the above-referenced parcels from Agriculture/Forest 10-20 Acre to Rural Residential. The purpose of this amendment is to better align the property's future land use designation with surrounding development patterns, environmental conditions, and the future availability of urban services. The proposed change represents a logical transition between suburban and agricultural areas and is consistent with the goals and policies of the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan and BCRC Title 12.

Existing Conditions

The subject properties together encompass approximately 73.5 acres of gently rolling terrain with a mix of open meadows and secondary-growth forest. Roughly 40 acres of the site are forested, with the balance consisting of open meadow and grassland areas. The property's topography is varied, featuring several roche moutonnée landforms rising from the valley floor. Approximately 19% (less than 1/5th) of the property contains slopes greater than 30%, creating opportunities for natural lot layout that preserves topographic character and open space.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), approximately 18 acres are identified as potential Freshwater Emergent Wetlands. As is standard with the NWI, these mapped features represent generalized estimates; the precise presence or extent of wetlands can only be determined through an on-site delineation during future development review.

The NRCS soil survey identifies multiple soil classifications within the site, none of which are designated Prime Farmland unless drained. The property lies within the Northside Fire District and outside the current service boundary of the Kootenai–Ponderay Sewer District (KPSD). However, the site is located in close proximity to KPSD’s lagoon system, making extension of district service technically feasible as the district continues its system upgrades. Oden Water Association infrastructure is also located nearby, and potential future expansion of the water system could reasonably serve this area as growth continues outward from the City of Kootenai.

Relationship to Surrounding Land Uses

The subject parcels are approximately 4,000 feet north of the City of Kootenai limits, in an area where the existing pattern of development changes abruptly at Porath Road. Lands to the south are designated Urban 0–2.5 Acre on the County’s FLUM and zoned Suburban (SUB) under BCRC Title 12. Lands to the north retain an Agriculture/Forest 10–20 Acre designation and zoning making this an ideal area for transition to a more rural pattern.

Several adjacent parcels to the south and east range from 2.25 to 4.36 acres in size, demonstrating a more rural-residential pattern of development than the larger 10- and 20-acre parcels farther north. Additionally, property to the southeast already carries Rural Residential 5-Acre (R-5) zoning, establishing a compatible and contextual transition for the proposed amendment. The proposed Rural Residential 5–10 Acre designation provides an appropriate step-down in density between the established suburban area south of Porath Road and the larger agricultural/forested lands to the north and west.

Justification and Findings

The requested Comprehensive Plan Map amendment is appropriate given the clear pattern of growth and urbanization occurring north of the City of Kootenai and along the Highway 200 corridor. The subject parcels are located approximately 4,000 feet from the Kootenai city limits and immediately north of lands designated **Urban 0–2.5 Acre** on the County’s Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. This adjacency to an established urban designation makes the subject property a logical location for a transitional land use designation such as Rural Residential.

Over the past decade, Bonner County and the Kootenai–Ponderay area have experienced steady population growth and an increase in residential development demand near existing service areas. The City of Kootenai, the Kootenai–Ponderay Sewer District, and the Oden Water Association are all actively improving infrastructure to accommodate that growth. Allowing a modest transition in density in this location supports orderly, contiguous, and efficient expansion of residential development rather than forcing scattered rural subdivisions farther from service networks. Absent of any change would likely result in an inefficient land use with approximately 7 new parcels where greater efficiency could be achieved at the Rural residential designation.

The Rural Residential designation provides an appropriate balance between urban-level densities to the south and the larger agricultural and forest lands to the north. It reflects a natural gradation from urban to rural land use, consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan goals to direct growth toward areas proximate to municipal boundaries, minimize sprawl, and promote efficient use of existing public services.

In summary, this amendment acknowledges the ongoing evolution of the Kootenai area, aligns the land use designation with observable development patterns, and establishes a rational, sustainable transition in density consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's intent for managed growth. More specifically:

- Consistency with Comprehensive Plan Goals (BCRC Title 12, Chapter 6)
- Orderly Growth: The property is adjacent to higher-intensity land use designations and near existing urban services, aligning with the County's stated goal of concentrating growth near municipal boundaries and infrastructure.
- Efficient Service Delivery: The proposed designation supports coordination with KPSD and Oden Water, both of which have facilities nearby, reducing the need for isolated or unserviceable rural development.
- Rural Character and Open Space: The proposed 5–10 acre density allows for clustering and design flexibility to preserve slopes, forested areas, and open meadow landscapes, maintaining rural character.
- Environmental Stewardship: The site's wetlands and slopes can be integrated into open space and drainage areas during future subdivision design, consistent with best practices and County policy.

Transition and Compatibility

The proposed designation creates a logical and harmonious transition consistent with good planning principles and the intent of BCRC 12-610: Urban/Suburban (0–2.5 acres) → Rural Residential (5–10 acres) → Ag/Forest (10–20 acres). This progression provides a compatible buffer between higher-density neighborhoods and the rural resource lands beyond, avoiding abrupt shifts in intensity and maintaining visual and spatial continuity.

Prevention of Urban Sprawl

The proposed amendment does not promote sprawl. Instead, it represents an incremental and contiguous expansion of the existing rural-residential pattern near the City of Kootenai, where infrastructure can be extended efficiently. This type of growth aligns with County policies discouraging scattered, unserviceable subdivisions in remote areas.

Public Interest

Adoption of the proposed amendment will:

- Accurately reflect existing and emerging development patterns adjacent to the subject property;
- Encourage coordinated infrastructure planning with nearby service providers;
- Enable responsible, low-density residential development that respects natural features and preserves open space;
- Support efficient land use and a sustainable growth framework consistent with the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan.

Findings and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

- **Property Rights:** The amendment upholds property rights by allowing reasonable residential use consistent with adjacent parcels, without infringing upon neighboring properties.
- **Population:** Supports controlled, incremental growth consistent with Comprehensive Plan population goals and projected demand for rural lots near existing communities.
- **School Facilities & Transportation:** Minimal impact to schools and transportation systems. Future development would utilize N. Kootenai Road and nearby Highway 200 for safe and efficient access.
- **Economic Development:** Encourages efficient growth near the City of Kootenai, supporting construction, services, and local economic activity while maintaining rural appeal.
- **Land Use:** Provides a logical transition between Suburban and Ag/Forest designations, consistent with Comprehensive Plan objectives (LU-1.2, LU-2.1).
- **Natural Resources:** Maintains stewardship of forest and meadow areas. No prime farmland would be affected. Environmental features such as slopes and potential wetlands will be addressed during future development.
- **Hazardous Areas:** Areas exceeding 30% slope will be addressed at the time of development. Potential wetlands will be field-verified prior to any development activity.
- **Public Services:** The site lies within the Northside Fire District and near the Kootenai-Ponderay Sewer District and Oden Water systems, enabling efficient service expansion consistent with County policy (PS-2.1).
- **Transportation:** N. Kootenai Road provides direct access and connectivity to regional routes. Traffic increases from any future development would be minor and manageable under County standards.
- **Recreation:** Future natural open space areas and forested terrain provide opportunities for passive recreation and potential trail integration consistent with rural character policies.

- **Housing:** Adds diversity in rural housing options at a 5–10 acre scale, consistent with Comprehensive Plan housing policies (H-1.1).
- **Community Design:** Supports rural visual character through large-lot design, conservation subdivision potential, and preservation of natural features.
- **Agriculture:** The property's soils are not prime farmland unless drained, and no irrigated agricultural lands will be displaced.

Land Capability Statement:

At this time, **no development is proposed** as part of this Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment. The request is limited to a change in land use designation and does not authorize construction or physical site disturbance. A preliminary review of available soils, slope, and hydrologic data indicates that the property is capable of supporting future low-density rural residential use without risk of substantial harmful consequences related to flooding, drainage, erosion, sedimentation, or slope instability. The site lies outside any mapped flood hazard area and consists primarily of stable secondary-growth forest and meadow soils, with steeper slopes limited to localized areas that can be preserved as open space.

Detailed engineering and drainage analyses will be required and reviewed under Bonner County Revised Code (BCRC) Title 12, including BCRC 12-215(c), at the time of any future subdivision or building permit application. These regulations ensure that all site development occurs in a manner that protects public health, safety, and the environment.

Conclusion

The proposed change from Agriculture/Forest 10–20 Acre to Rural Residential is consistent with the goals and policies of the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan and the standards of BCRC Title 12. It represents a reasonable, well-supported adjustment to the Future Land Use Map that balances growth, infrastructure efficiency, and environmental stewardship. By aligning the property's designation with surrounding land uses and proximity to existing services, the amendment supports orderly, fiscally responsible development while maintaining the rural landscape character that defines Bonner County.

Exhibits

Exhibit A – Legal Description (Parcel RP58N01W317802A, 50.47 acres, GVD)

Exhibit B – Legal Description (Parcel RP58N01W318200A, 20.97 acres, Thomas)