

# Whatcom County Rural Element Update

## First Phase Public Participation Summary

*Draft February 17, 2009*

Prepared for:  
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services

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architecture • planning • urban design

*Rural Element*

**WHATCOM 2031**

*Preliminary Draft*

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*Preliminary Draft*

# Whatcom County Rural Element Update Public Participation Summary

*Draft February 17, 2009*

MAKERS architecture, planning, and urban design was hired by Whatcom County in June 2008 to assist in the update to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan Rural Element update. In particular, MAKERS was hired to assist the County in engaging the public in the update process. The public participation process consists of two key phases. The first phase focused on stakeholder and citizen outreach and getting feedback on the vision for the rural areas of the County. The second phase will focus on getting feedback on recommended goals and policies for the rural areas of the County.

## First Phase Public Participation

The first phase of public participation focused on getting feedback from County resident's on their vision for the rural areas of the county. Participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- What is rural?
- What is rural character?
- What is a rural density?
- What kind of land uses are appropriate in rural areas?
- What should the County's role be in preserving rural areas?
- What should be allowed in Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development (LAMIRD)?

This first phase of public participation consisted of three public meetings, 6 stakeholder meetings, a number targeted stakeholder interviews, as well as a questionnaire. Appendix A contains a list of all the people who participated in this first phase, either by attending public meetings or by being involved in stakeholder meetings or interviews. Appendix B contains detailed results of mapping exercise and Appendix C contains detailed results from the questionnaire.

## Targeted Stakeholder Meetings and Interviews

County staff and MAKERS staff compiled a list of key stakeholders for the rural areas of the County that should be contacted as part of this project. Stakeholders were defined as people that could represent a larger community group or as people that serve a portion of the County. The initial stakeholder list consisted of people in the following stakeholder groups:

- Agricultural community groups
- Builders and real estate groups
- City governments
- Community groups
- Education institutions
- Environmental groups
- Water utilities
- Fire districts
- Tribal community

MAKERS contacted stakeholders on this list and added to the list when new contacts were made. The County and MAKERS held a number of stakeholder meetings in late September and mid-November. For people that could not attend the meetings, MAKERS conducted a number of stakeholder interviews. These stakeholder meetings and interviews were a good way to get feedback from the public as well as an effective way to educate stakeholders about the Rural Element update process so that they could then spread the word to their group members. The stakeholder meetings and interviews are summarized below.

### **Agricultural/Environmental Stakeholder Meeting Summary**

September 24, 2008

- General concerns about preventing sprawl and protecting farmland and the environment.
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) aren't working very well – need to be reworked
  - TDRs should be required for any upzone and for LAMIRDs – free upzones should never be given
  - Because so much land was zoned R-5, it makes PDRs very expensive
- Rural is the area between urban areas and resource areas (farmland and forests). The rural areas act as a transition between the two
- The current cluster ordinance isn't effectively preserving farmland - houses are often clustered on the best farmland and conflicts often arise between residential and agricultural uses.
- LAMIRDs should cluster services and serve rural areas with law enforcement, fire, ambulance, water, sewer, and basic commercial services such as grocery, restaurant, and gas.

### **Community Group Stakeholder Meeting Summary**

September 24, 2008

- Concern about how the county is going to deal with all the development that has occurred since 1990 – how is the county going to handle downzones?
- Ensure that all existing subarea plans are used in Comp Plan update – a lot of work has gone into these plans
- People move to rural areas for affordable housing, but rural areas are harder to serve, so how can we make it work? How can we provide affordable housing and services?
- Services –
  - need to make sure public safety and fire protection is provided to rural areas – fire protection is an issue
  - Need to cluster services to serve people where they are now – not where they were in 1990
  - Kendall – needs to serve 4000 people with retail (grocery store), parks

## **Cities Stakeholder Meeting Summary**

September 24, 2008

- The County needs to clarify the exemptions for subdivisions
- Ferndale should expand east and NOT west
- Rural is larger acreage (5 or more acres): agricultural uses, ranches, and horse farms. Rural is NOT urban subdivisions
- The County should require purchase/transfer of development rights in order to expand the Urban Growth Area
- The County should require cluster development in unincorporated UGA so that when it is incorporated it can achieve urban densities
- LAMIRD:
  - Allow development at major intersections to allow for services
  - People in LAMIRDS want urban services – is this appropriate?

## **Building Industry Association Stakeholder Meeting Summary**

September 24, 2008

- Homebuilders are not going to be hugely impacted by any changes to zoning or land use designations – amount of land affected is not great
- Make sure there is land available to home builders
- Can density be increased in LAMIRDS?
- Concern about impacts to property owners, housing affordability
- Identified several key contacts

## **Whatcom County Association of Realtors Stakeholder Interview Summary**

October 1, 2008

- Quality of life issues:
  - Balance homes, jobs, and community
  - Provide homes/affordability where there is infrastructure
- Rural is large acreage (low density – more than 40 acres)
- Would like to see farms and resource lands preserved
- Sudden and Peaceful Valley developments are a problem – too dense, too far away, and too few services and amenities.
- LAMIRDS should provide for services for adjacent rural areas – such as groceries

## **Water Utility Stakeholder Meeting Summary**

November 13, 2008

- Water providers should not be enforcers of land use decisions. There needs to be more coordination with the County's land use planning and the Coordinated Water System Plan.
- Need to update Coordinated Water System Plan
  - Water rights are an issue
  - Can we provide services to areas we plan for?
  - County has NEVER coordinated this
  - Land use designations and zoning need to be coordinated with water rights!
- Providing for commercial development requires more water – so these areas need to be planned and coordinated to ensure that there is enough water for commercial while still providing for residential.
- There is a problem with areas where water rights have been paid for, which is required before developers can apply for a legal plat, but it is not platted yet, and therefore not 'legally' vested. The water utilities in many cases have already invested this money to provide connections (particularly along the Guide Meridian). Thus, property owners that have paid for water rights prior will have significant financial impacts if downzones are implemented (particularly if the property is intended for commercial uses).
- Cluster development can cost more since clustering homes requires a larger diameter line than traditional rural subdivisions.

## **Fire District Stakeholder Meeting Summary**

November 13, 2008

- Concurrency issues:
  - What is historic level of service?
  - District resources and thus level of services are continuing to decline due to a decrease in volunteerism and funding sources aren't keeping pace with growth
  - Fire districts don't have impact fee authority, so some districts are trying interim concurrency fees
  - Developers assume the Fire District's "letter to serve" mean that there is concurrency – but this is different than "level of service." "Letter to serve" means that the district will serve the area, but does not guarantee a certain level of service. There needs to be a County-wide analysis of current level of service and then the County should create a level of service standard that must be met.
- Coordination issues:

- Fire Districts have never been included in comprehensive plan updates or other land use decisions because not considered an “essential public facility”
- Piggy-back short plats are difficult to serve and private roads cannot be mapped, making it difficult to serve

### **Education Stakeholder Interviews Summary**

November – December, 2008

- Access to transportation to bring kids to school is key issue
  - Need to make sure roads can support buses and need to get in under bad weather. Private roads can be challenging because they often aren’t mappable.
  - The more concentration of growth the better for the district – can serve the students better. More efficient land use leads to more efficient busing. So LAMIRDs work well for school districts.
- Funding
  - The less housing density, the fewer the homes, the smaller the tax base
  - Land for new schools and new construction is most costly to district
- The County should coordinate with School Districts more
  - Districts need a clear plan of what growth will occur so can plan accordingly
  - Growth projections, development potential, areas of district that are already platted within district – all of this information would really help school districts plan for the future

### **Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Stakeholder Interview Summary**

December 5, 2008

- WSDOT is not a land use agency – thus WSDOT is not planning or regulating land uses along the Guide.
- WSDOT conducting managed access along the Guide:
  - Existing properties are allowed to retain existing driveways
  - Safety and mobility are critical
  - WSDOT may require access off of side road rather than the Guide

## **Public Meetings**

The public meetings for the first phase of the public participation process were held on November 12 and 13, 2008. The first meeting was held at Mt Baker High School at 6:00pm on November 12, 2008. The second meeting was held at the Bellingham Public Library at 9:00am on November 13, 2008. The third meeting was held at Meridian High School at 6:00pm on November 13, 2008.

There were three main objectives for these public meetings:

- Educate the public on the Comprehensive plan update, the Rural Element, and LAMIRDs
- Solicit feedback on the public's vision for the rural areas of the County
- Begin a discussion about the areas of the County that are out of compliance with the Growth Management Act and the LAMIRD areas

Each public meeting began with a power point presentation lead by County and MAKERS staff. The presentation gave participants background information on the Comprehensive Plan update, the Rural Element update, and the Growth Management Hearings Board case as well as an overview of the visioning map exercise.

### **Visioning Map Exercise**

Participants broke up into groups to work on the visioning map exercise. Each group had a base map that was a theoretical area of the County, showing rural areas, a city, a small rural town, resource lands, a freeway interchange at the intersection of an interstate highway and a state route, and a crossroads at the intersection of a state route and a county road. With the map, each group was given land use pieces to place on the map. Each group had to consider where different land uses were appropriate and where they were inappropriate. Using a hypothetical area of the County allowed people to think about the overall vision for rural areas. The base map and land use pieces can be seen in Appendix B. Each group filled out a worksheet as pieces were placed on the map. Individuals were also invited to fill out worksheets.

### **Visioning Map Exercise Group Results Summary**

Each group worked on a different visioning map, which can be seen in Appendix B. The general themes that the groups had consensus on are summarized in the map below.



*Figure 1. Participants in the three public meetings work on a mapping exercise.*

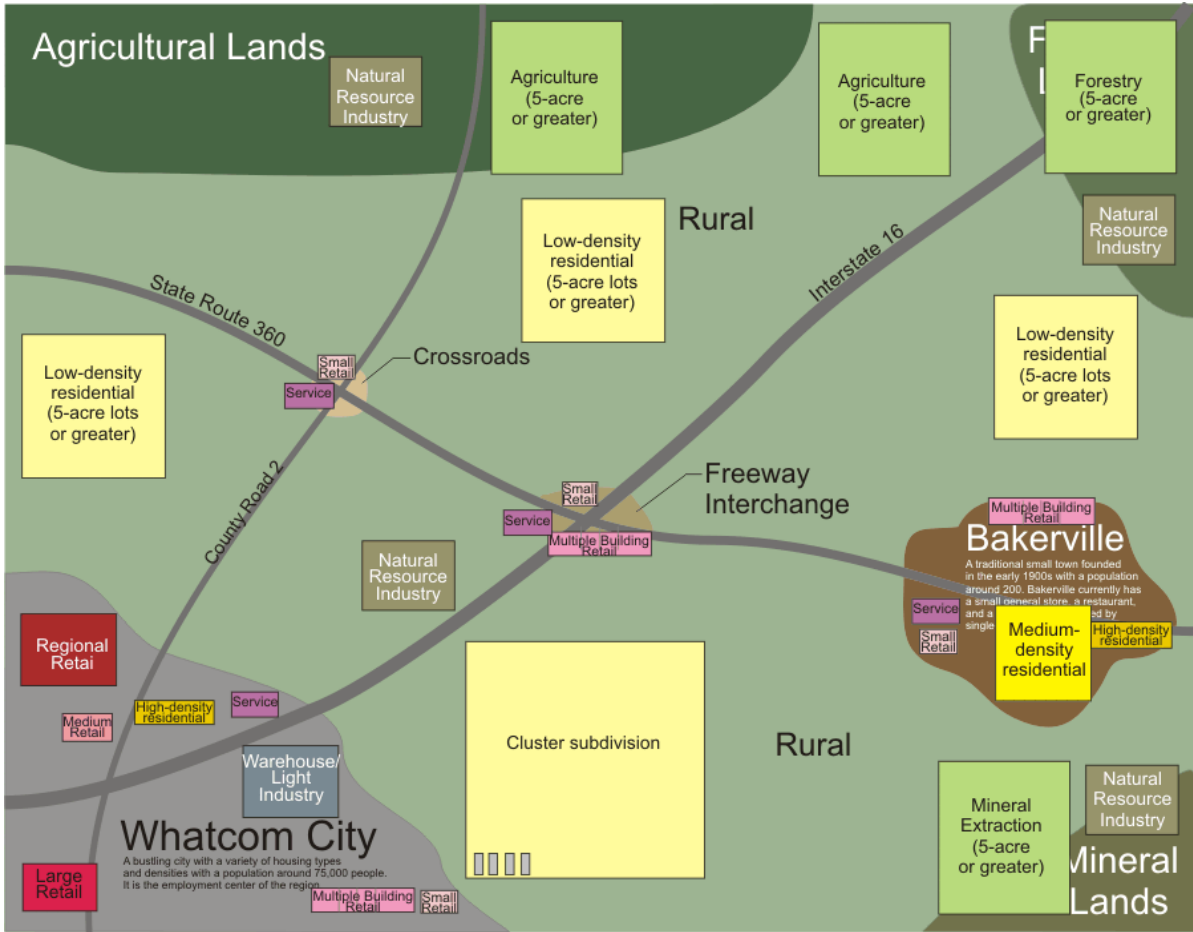


Figure 2. A summary map of the results from the mapping exercise.

Each group filled out a worksheet, which is summarized below. Individuals were also welcome to fill out a worksheet. These individual worksheet results can be found in Appendix B.

**Whatcom 2031 - Rural Element Update Mapping Exercise Work Sheet Results—GROUPS**

Mark whether each type of land use is appropriate in each area by marking 'Y' for 'Yes it is appropriate' or 'N' for 'No it is not appropriate'

	Urban	Small Town	Highway Interchange	Crossroads	Rural	Resource Lands	Other comments
<b>Commercial</b>							
Service	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 6 N 0 None 0	Y 6 N 0 None 0	Y 5 N 1 None 0	Y 1 N 5 None 0	Y 0 N 5 None 1	• Service includes health services, community centers.
Small retail	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 6 N 0 None 0	Y 6 N 0 None 0	Y 6 N 0 None 0	Y 0 N 6 None 0	Y 0 N 6 None 0	• Bar or restaurant.
Multiple small retail	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 5 N 1 None 0	Y 4 N 1 None 1	Y 2 N 4 None 1	Y 0 N 6 None 0	Y 0 N 5 None 1	
Medium retail	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 2 N 3 None 1	Y 2 N 3 None 1	Y 1 N 5 None 0	Y 0 N 6 None 0	Y 0 N 5 None 1	• Private sector should decide.
Large retail	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 0 N 6 None 0	Y 1 N 4 None 1	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 0 N 6 None 0	Y 0 N 5 None 1	
Regional retail	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 0 N 6 None 0	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 0 N 6 None 0	Y 0 N 5 None 1	
<b>Industrial</b>							
Warehouse/ Light Industry	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 3 N 2 None 1	Y 2 N 3 None 1	Y 1 N 4 None 1	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 0 N 5 None 1	• On edge of city??
Natural Resource Industry	Y 2 N 3 None 1	Y 1 N 3 None 2	Y 1 N 5 None 1	Y 2 N 3 None 1	Y 4 N 2 None 0	Y 4 N 2 None 0	• Depends on the industry.
<b>Resource</b>							
Agriculture, Forestry, Mineral	Y 1 N 4 None 1	Y 1 N 3 None 2	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 6 N 0 None 0	Y 6 N 0 None 0	• In rural, if prime farmland.
<b>Residential</b>							
Low-density	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 0 N 4 None 2	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 1 N 5 None 0	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 1 N 3 None 2	• But 5-acre, 20-unit makes no sense.
Medium-density	Y 3 N 2 None 1	Y 6 N 0 None 0	Y 2 N 3 None 1	Y 2 N 4 None 0	Y 1 N 4 None 1	Y 0 N 4 None 2	• Accessory housing.
High-density	Y 5 N 0 None 1	Y 4 N 1 None 1	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 1 N 5 None 0	Y 0 N 5 None 1	Y 0 N 5 None 1	
Cluster subdivision	Y 2 N 2 None 2	Y 1 N 2 None 3	Y 0 N 4 None 2	Y 0 N 4 None 2	Y 3 N 1 None 2	Y 1 N 3 None 2	• Depends on the small town. • We like cluster w/right to farm. • Disagreement over whether they work. Needs restructuring.

Figure 3. Group results from the mapping exercise work sheet.

## **Public Meeting Summary**

Because the overall turnout was low at this first phase of public meetings, the results from these meetings should not be interpreted to represent public opinion. The mapping exercise, however, was successful at educating participants on rural land use policy issues and produced results consistent with the questionnaire (discussed below).

It is clear from the results of both the individual and group map exercise questionnaires that participants thought low-density residential and resource uses were acceptable uses for the rural areas. The groups thought natural resource industry and cluster subdivisions were also acceptable in the rural areas. The overall preference was for medium retail, large retail, and regional retail to only be allowed in urban areas. Service and small retail were acceptable uses in small towns, highway interchanges, and crossroads. Multiple small retail was found to be an acceptable use in small towns and highway interchanges, but not in crossroads. The industrial uses got mixed results from the participants. Medium and high-density residential was found to be an acceptable use for small towns. Residential uses in crossroads and highway interchanges received mixed results.

## **Whatcom County Rural Element Questionnaire**

MAKERS and the County put together a questionnaire that was distributed at stakeholder meetings and public meetings. It was also emailed out to all of the rural element update contacts as well as posted on the County's website using Survey Monkey technology. The questionnaire focused on getting feedback on the vision for the rural areas of the County, how to define rural character, and how people feel about the amount of growth in the rural areas.

Over 240 people completed the questionnaire. A complete summary of the results of the Questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. In general, a majority of the people who filled out the survey thought that there has been too much development in the rural areas of the county in the last 10 years. In terms of what people valued about the rural areas of the county, more than 50% of the people valued clean water and air, the natural environment, forested lands, and small-scale agriculture, and parks, trails, and open space. People also felt that there were a number of things that threatened the rural values of the county, including: residential development, commercial development, environmental degradation, and traffic. There were some mixed results about what lot size people considered to be "rural", but the largest number of people said 5 acres or greater would be considered rural. In terms of what should be allowed in a LAMIRD, 71% said public services should be allowed and 65% said small stores should be allowed. People who filled out the questionnaire were also able to comment on the County's current vision statement.

## **Overall First Phase Public Participation Summary**

The first phase of public participation engaged a varied group of people and accomplished the County's goals of:

- Educating the public on the Comprehensive plan update, the Rural Element, and LAMIRDs
- Soliciting feedback on the public's vision for the rural areas of the County
- Beginning a discussion about the areas of the County that are out of compliance with the Growth Management Act and the LAMIRD areas

The combined results of the stakeholder meetings and interviews, the public workshops, and the questionnaire, summarized below, provide the County with good direction to begin drafting goals and policies for the Rural Element Update.

### **What is rural?**

Most participants agreed that it is difficult to define rural because it can mean different things to different people. Some people imagined rural development as greater than 40 acre lots, while others thought 5 acre lots represented rural. Most people agreed, however, that the rural areas provide an important transition between urban areas and resource areas. It was easier for people to come to consensus on what they valued about rural Whatcom County, which included the natural environmental, agriculture and the quality of life in the rural areas. Most people agreed that preserving rural character by preventing suburban sprawl was important. People were concerned, however, about how to deal with areas that are already developed at higher densities but that don't currently have services.

### **LAMIRDs**

There was general consensus among participants that LAMIRDs provided a good opportunity to cluster services needed for the surrounding rural areas. Most people agreed LAMIRDs should allow varying degrees of commercial development depending on their location. At a minimum, participants were in agreement that different LAMIRD designations were needed for rural crossroads, highway interchanges, and small towns. Participants were split about some of uses that might be allowed in these different LAMIRD areas, including medium retail, light industry, and medium density housing.

### **Other Feedback**

Throughout this public participation process, participants provided a range of feedback on Whatcom County's rural areas. Participants work, live, and recreate in the rural areas and can provide the County with a good perspective on how things are going. Some of the feedback that was received related directly to the County's role in the rural areas. Participants expressed a desire for clear, transparent guidance from the County on land use issues in the rural areas. Service providers want more information on land use decisions so they can plan for the future. People recommended that the County should improve communication and coordination with the service providers who service the rural areas. Many of the land use decisions being made impact the ability of providers to serve the rural areas. In particular, fire protection, emergency services, water providers, and education providers need to be engaged in decisions about where future growth may occur so the providers can ensure services are available.

## Appendix A:

### Whatcom County Rural Element Update

### Public Participants Master List

Name	Organization	Email	Phone Number
Aaron Tapscott	Foothills Gazette	<a href="mailto:aaron@foothillsgazette.com">aaron@foothillsgazette.com</a>	
Amy Mower	Foothill Friends	<a href="mailto:almower@earthlink.net">almower@earthlink.net</a>	(360) 599-3372
Annie Matsumoto	Whatcom County PDS		(360) 676-6907
Barbara Dykes	PDR Oversight Committee		
Bill Coleman	Nooksack Tribe	<a href="mailto:wcoleman@nooksack-nsn.gov">wcoleman@nooksack-nsn.gov</a>	(360) 303-7278
Bill Hunter	Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer District	<a href="mailto:bh.wd10@comcast.net">bh.wd10@comcast.net</a>	(360) 734-9224
Bill Quehrn	Building Industry Association of Whatcom County	<a href="mailto:billq@biawc.com">billq@biawc.com</a>	(360) 671-4247
Bill Vaught	Public		(360) 592-4096
Bob Cecile	City of Ferndale	<a href="mailto:bobcecile@cityofferndale.org">bobcecile@cityofferndale.org</a>	(360) 384-4006
Bob Wiesen	Public	<a href="mailto:anzwiesen@yahoo.com">anzwiesen@yahoo.com</a>	(360) 384-3153
Brady Webb	Glacier resident	<a href="mailto:bradywebb@yahoo.com">bradywebb@yahoo.com</a>	(360) 599-1508
Brenda Gamadie	WD #13; EWSD #19	<a href="mailto:brendag@wsvvc.com">brendag@wsvvc.com</a>	(360) 599-1699
Carol Hitz	4328 Hannagan Road		(360) 671-4972
Carole MacDonald	Mt. Baker Foothills EDA	<a href="mailto:tiamb@earthlink.net">tiamb@earthlink.net</a>	(360) 599-1776
Cathy Lehman	Futurewise Whatcom	<a href="mailto:cathy@futurewise.org">cathy@futurewise.org</a>	(360) 224-8877
Charles Antholt	Whatcom Farm Friends; Whatcom County's Agricultural Advisory Committee	<a href="mailto:carthott@aol.com">carthott@aol.com</a>	(360) 758-2711
Charlie Heggel	Norka		(360) 303-1717
Chris Damitio	WSDOT		
Cynthia Purdy	Public	<a href="mailto:cpurdy@mtbaker.wednet.edu">cpurdy@mtbaker.wednet.edu</a>	(360) 592-2076
Dan Eisses	Birch Bay W&S District	<a href="mailto:dan@bbwsd.com">dan@bbwsd.com</a>	(360) 371-7100
Dannon Traxler	Langabeer & Tull	<a href="mailto:dtraxler@langabeertull.com">dtraxler@langabeertull.com</a>	(360) 671-6460
Dave Olson	Pole Road Water, DWD #7, others	<a href="mailto:cmihome@comcast.net">cmihome@comcast.net</a>	(360) 739-5661
Dave Ralston	WCFD #2, 6, 9, 10	<a href="mailto:dralston@wcf2.org">dralston@wcf2.org</a>	(360) 676-8080
Dean Martin	Whatcom Co PDS		(360) 676-6907
Dean Whitney	Whatcom County Fire #8	<a href="mailto:dwhitney@whatcomfire8.org">dwhitney@whatcomfire8.org</a>	(360) 733-6612
Denise Christensen	WCFD #14	<a href="mailto:denise@wcf14.org">denise@wcf14.org</a>	(360) 599-2823
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Dick Whitmore	Public	<a href="mailto:whitmores@aol.com">whitmores@aol.com</a>	(360) 739-8401
Dominique Zervas	Langabeer & Tull	<a href="mailto:dzervasf@langabeertull.com">dzervasf@langabeertull.com</a>	(360) 671-6460
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Dorm Gibs	Fire District #1		(360) 592-5351
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E. Keith Ahrens, Jr.	Public		(360) 966-2319
Ellen Baker	Glacier Chamber of	<a href="mailto:orion@telcomplus.net">orion@telcomplus.net</a>	(360) 599-2544

	Commerce		
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Gary Richardson	Public		(360) 592-5518
George Boggs	Whatcom Conservation District	<a href="mailto:gboggs@whatcomcd.org">gboggs@whatcomcd.org</a>	(360) 354-2035x115
Gordon Rogers	Whatcom Council of Governments	<a href="mailto:Gordon@wcoq.org">Gordon@wcoq.org</a>	360-676-6974
Greg Aucutt	City of Bellingham	<a href="mailto:gaucutt@cob.org">gaucutt@cob.org</a>	(360) 778-8344
Greg Christensen	WCWD #2	<a href="mailto:greg.auminer@gmail.com">greg.auminer@gmail.com</a>	(360) 734-9495
Henry Bierlink	Whatcom Farm Friends	<a href="mailto:hbeirlink@wcfarmfriends.com">hbeirlink@wcfarmfriends.com</a>	(360) 354-1338
Jack Weiss	COB	<a href="mailto:jweiss@cob.org">jweiss@cob.org</a>	
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Jayne Uerling	Nooksack Tribe/individual	<a href="mailto:juerling@nooksack-tribe.org">juerling@nooksack-tribe.org</a>	(360) 592-2320(H)
Jerry Haynes	Old Settlers Water District	<a href="mailto:jlhaynes@nas.com">jlhaynes@nas.com</a>	(360) 366-3432
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John Lesow	Point Roberts	<a href="mailto:jlesow@cascorp.com">jlesow@cascorp.com</a>	(604) 209-0100
John Meron	GMWA	<a href="mailto:johnpmsolutions@aol.com">johnpmsolutions@aol.com</a>	(360) 739-3933
John Michener	BWEDC	<a href="mailto:john@bwedc.org">john@bwedc.org</a>	(360) 676-4255
John Simmons	Glenhaven Lakes Water	<a href="mailto:saratoga24@yahoo.com">saratoga24@yahoo.com</a>	(360) 595-2061
John Soine	Windermere Real Estate	<a href="mailto:jon@jonsoine.com">jon@jonsoine.com</a>	(360) 739-6995
Jon Sitkin	Chmelik Sitkin & Davis for Whatcom Fire Chiefs	<a href="mailto:jsitkin@chmelik.com">jsitkin@chmelik.com</a>	(360) 671-1796
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Lara Anderson	Public		(360) 599-2216
Laurette Rasmussen	WCHD	<a href="mailto:lasmuss@whatcomcounty.us">lasmuss@whatcomcounty.us</a>	(360) 676-6724
Leslie McRoberts	LWWSO	<a href="mailto:lcacr@comcast.net">lcacr@comcast.net</a>	(360) 752-0605
Linda Haynes	Old Settlers Water District	<a href="mailto:jlhaynes@nas.com">jlhaynes@nas.com</a>	(360) 366-3432
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Nancy Biedak	Farm Friends	<a href="mailto:nbiedak@wcfarmfriends.com">nbiedak@wcfarmfriends.com</a>	(360) 354-1337
Nancy Jordan	BWEDC	<a href="mailto:nancy@bwedc.org">nancy@bwedc.org</a>	(360) 676-4255
Nancy Vaught	Public		(360) 592-4096
Nori Zukerman	Foothills Friends	<a href="mailto:itzdapitz@hotmail.com">itzdapitz@hotmail.com</a>	(360) 599-1345
Norma Otto	Water District 19	<a href="mailto:hubcap3@comcast.net">hubcap3@comcast.net</a>	(360) 599-3124
Paul Grey	Whatcom Farm Friends	<a href="mailto:pgrey@wcfarmfriends.com">pgrey@wcfarmfriends.com</a>	(360) 354-1337
Perry Eskridge	Whatcom County Association of Realtors	<a href="mailto:perrye@wcar.net">perrye@wcar.net</a>	360-671-5477

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Richard Banel	EWSD #19	<a href="mailto:rfbanel@aol.com">rfbanel@aol.com</a>	(360) 599-2232
Richard Whitson	WD #13	<a href="mailto:rawdew55@comcast.net">rawdew55@comcast.net</a>	(360) 599-1150
Rick Thompson	Lynden School District	<a href="mailto:thompsonr@lynden.wednet.edu">thompsonr@lynden.wednet.edu</a>	
Rob Roy Graham	WCWD #14	<a href="mailto:graham@nas.com">graham@nas.com</a>	(360) 592-2416
Rod Fadden	City of Sumas	<a href="mailto:rfadden@cityofsumas.com">rfadden@cityofsumas.com</a>	(360) 988-5711
Roger Van Dyken	Legacy Project	<a href="mailto:rogervandyken@comcast.net">rogervandyken@comcast.net</a>	(360) 354-5770
Rollin Harper	Cities of Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas	<a href="mailto:rollinh@sehome.com">rollinh@sehome.com</a>	(360) 733-6033
Ron Nymeyer	Public	<a href="mailto:ron@92.com">ron@92.com</a>	(360) 354-4053
Russ Weston	WA Grange	<a href="mailto:russweston@juno.com">russweston@juno.com</a>	(360) 671-7862
Sean Wilson	Columbia Valley Community Assoc.	<a href="mailto:citizensunite@aol.com">citizensunite@aol.com</a>	(360) 201-1519
Seth Cool	Conservation Northwest	<a href="mailto:scool@conservationnw.org">scool@conservationnw.org</a>	(360) 671-9950x16
Shebern Bannerman	Old Settlers Water Association		(360) 366-5568
Shonie Schlotzhauer	Sustainable Connections	<a href="mailto:shonie@sconnect.org">shonie@sconnect.org</a>	(360) 647-7093x 106
Stephan Jilk	PUD #1	<a href="mailto:stevej@pudwhatcom.org">stevej@pudwhatcom.org</a>	(360) 384-4288x2
Terry Galvin	City of Blaine	<a href="mailto:tgaluin@cityofblaine.com">tgaluin@cityofblaine.com</a>	(360) 332-8311
Thomas Hadd	LWWSD		(360) 734-9224
Tim Yeomans	Meridian School District	<a href="mailto:tyeomans@meridican.wednet.edu">tyeomans@meridican.wednet.edu</a>	
Tom Fields	North Whatcom Fire and Rescue	<a href="mailto:tfields@nwfrs.net">tfields@nwfrs.net</a>	(360) 318-9933
Tom Schoen	Deer Creek Water Association	<a href="mailto:tschoen@deercreekwater.org">tschoen@deercreekwater.org</a>	(360) 354-0836
Warner Webb	Whatcom County PDS Fire Marshal	<a href="mailto:wwebb@co.whatcom.wa.us">wwebb@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>	(360) 676-6907
Wayne Schwandt	Public		(360) 739-0091
Wyburn Bannerman	Old Settlers Water Association		(360) 366-5568



## Appendix B:

### Summary of the Mapping Exercise

The following materials were distributed to groups for the mapping exercise in the first phase of public participation for the Rural Element Update. Each group got one large map (24"x36"), a packet of land use 'pieces', and a work sheet.

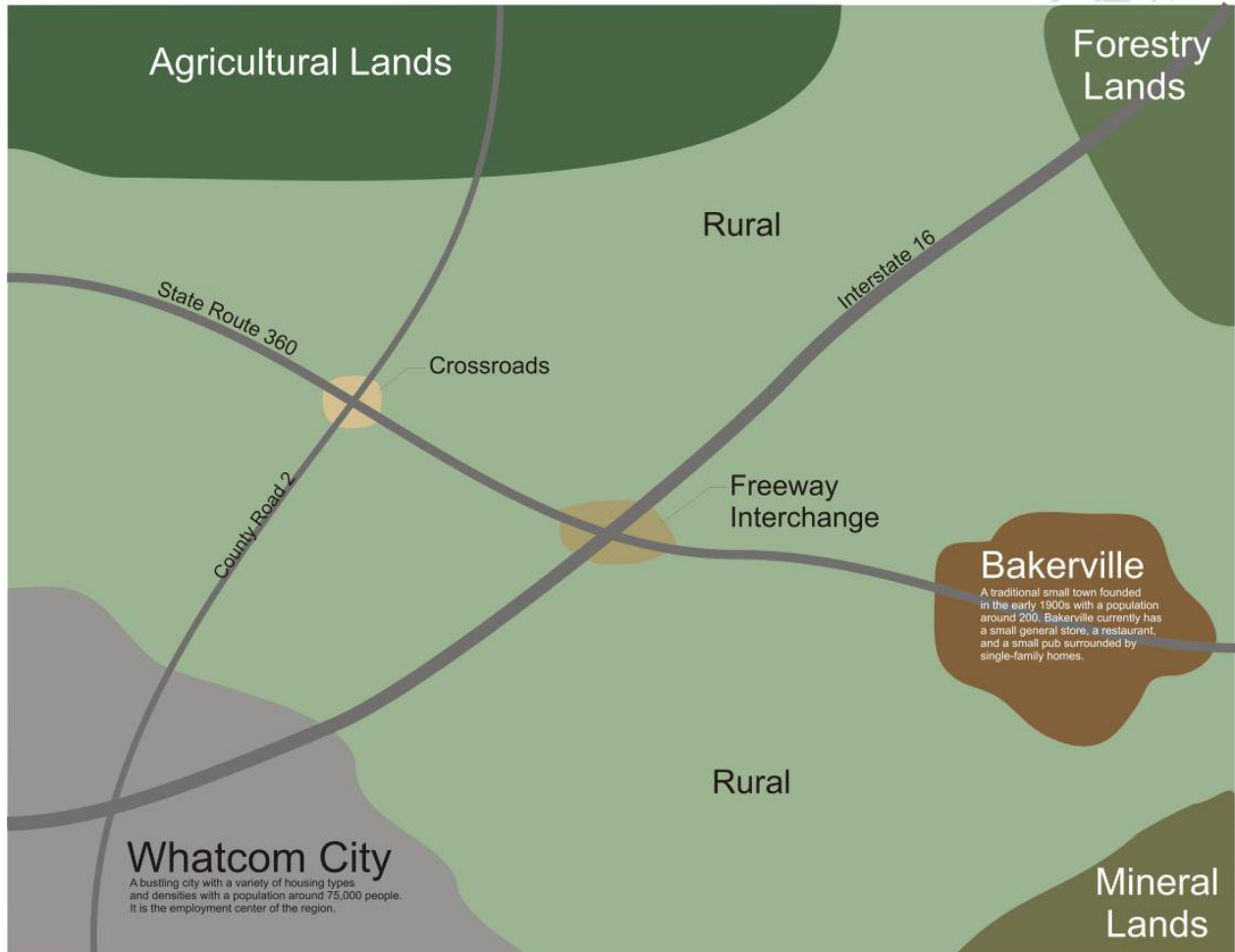


Figure 1. Each group was given one large map of a hypothetical area of the County. The intent was to get participants to visualize the rural areas of the County in general without focusing on specific areas within the County.

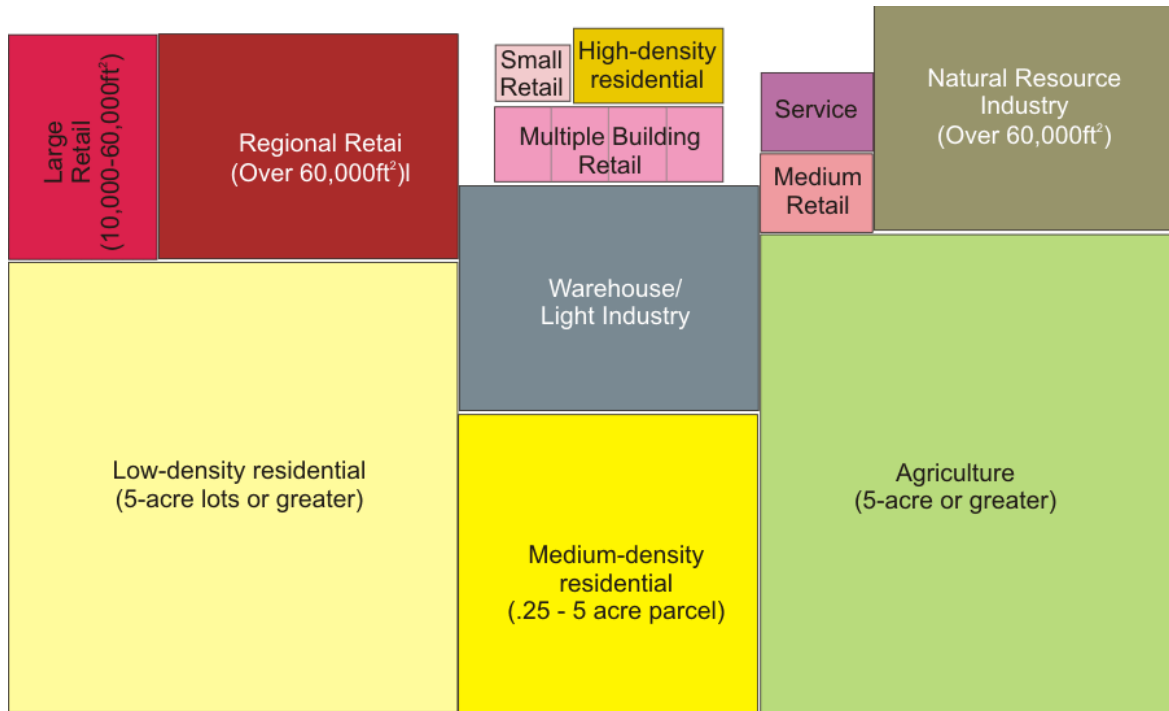


Figure 2. Each group was given a packet of land use pieces to be placed on the map. Participants cut the pieces and glued them on the map in the areas where they thought the use was appropriate.

### Mapping Exercise Work Sheet

Mark whether or not you think each type of land use is appropriate in each area of the county by marking 'Y' for 'Yes it is appropriate' or 'N' for 'No it is not appropriate'

	Urban	Small Town	Highway Interchange	Crossroads	Rural	Resource Lands	Other comments
<b>Commercial</b>							
Service							
Small retail							
Multiple small retail							
Medium retail							
Large retail							
Regional retail							
<b>Industrial</b>							
Warehouse/ Light Industry							
Natural Resource Industry							
<b>Resource</b>							
Agriculture, Forestry, Mineral							
<b>Residential</b>							
Low-density							
Medium-density							
High-density							
Cluster subdivision							

Figure 3. Each group was given one work sheet to fill out as group and therefore had to come to a consensus. Individuals were also welcome to fill out a separate work sheet.

## Results

In the three public workshops, seven different groups participated in the mapping exercise. Each group's finished map is shown below.



Figure 4: Pictures were taken of each group's finished map.

**Whatcom 2031 - Rural Element Update - Mapping Exercise Work Sheet Results - Individual**

Mark whether where you think each type of land use is appropriate by marking 'Y' for 'Yes it is appropriate' or 'N' for 'No it is not appropriate'

	Urban	Small Town	Highway Interchange	Crossroads	Rural	Resource Lands
<b>Commercial</b>						
Service	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 7 N 1 None 0	Y 6 N 1 None 1	Y 1 N 4 None 3	Y 0 N 4 None 4
Small retail	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 4 N 1 None 3	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
Multiple small retail	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 4 N 0 None 4	Y 5 N 1 None 2	Y 2 N 2 None 4	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
Medium retail	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 3 N 2 None 3	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
Large retail	Y 6 N 1 None 1	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 2 N 2 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
Regional retail	Y 6 N 1 None 1	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 2 N 2 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
<b>Industrial</b>						
Warehouse/ Light Industry	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 3 N 3 None 2	Y 4 N 0 None 4	Y 2 N 3 None 3	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
Natural Resource Industry	Y 5 N 2 None 1	Y 2 N 4 None 2	Y 4 N 1 None 3	Y 5 N 0 None 3	Y 2 N 2 None 4	Y 2 N 2 None 4
<b>Resource</b>						
Agriculture, Forestry, Mineral	Y 2 N 3 None 3	Y 5 N 1 None 2	Y 3 N 3 None 2	Y 4 N 1 None 3	Y 7* N 0 None 1	Y 7* N 0 None 1
<b>Residential</b>						
Low-density	Y 3 N 2 None 3	Y 4 N 2 None 2	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 5 N 0 None 3	Y 7 N 0 None 1	Y 2 N 3 None 3
Medium-density	Y 7 N 1 None 0	Y 5 N 1 None 2	Y 2 N 3 None 3	Y 3 N 1 None 4	Y 2 N 2 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
High-density	Y 7 N 1 None 0	Y 2 N 3 None 3	Y 2 N 2 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4
Cluster subdivision	Y 6 N 2 None 0	Y 5 N 1 None 2	Y 2 N 2 None 4	Y 1 N 3 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4	Y 0 N 4 None 4

Figure 5. In addition to the group work sheets, which are summarized on page 9 of the report, individuals were also given the opportunity to fill out a work sheet during the mapping exercise

# Appendix C: Questionnaire

## Questionnaire

November 2008

I. In rural areas of Whatcom County (areas not within urban or agricultural areas), would you say that development in the last 10 years has been (please check one):

- Too little       About right       Too much       Don't know/not sure

Comments? \_\_\_\_\_

II. Rural Values. There are many factors that contribute to the quality of life in rural Whatcom County including some listed below. What factors do you value most?

- Small-scale agriculture       Natural environmental features       Affordable land/housing  
 Forested lands       Parks, trails, and open space       Clean water and air  
 Privacy       Large lot development pattern      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

III. Threats to rural values. Which of the following do you believe has the potential to threaten quality of life in rural Whatcom County?

- More residential development       More commercial development       Heavier traffic  
 Environmental degradation      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Over the next 20 years, identify which rural features are most threatened.

- Small-scale agriculture       Natural environmental features       Affordable land/housing  
 Forested lands       Parks, trails, and open space       Clean water and air  
 Privacy       Large lot development pattern      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

V. What lot size would you consider to be "rural?"

- 1 acre or greater       2 acres or greater       5 acres or greater  
 10 acres or greater       20 acres or greater       40 acres or greater

VI. The Growth Management Act allows for limited areas within rural areas where existing commercial uses or smaller-lot residential development is allowed to remain (but not expand). What should be allowed within those areas?

- Manufacturing       Public services (libraries, community centers)  
 Shopping Centers       Automotive services      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**VII. The following is Whatcom County’s current vision statement (portions related to rural areas in bold):**

*“Whatcom County is a place where urban growth is concentrated in urban areas, where there is a **distinct boundary between urban and rural uses, where agricultural use is encouraged, where resource lands and water resources are protected**, and where land use changes are brought about through incentive programs. **Rural areas are peaceful and quiet with less traffic and congestion than in urban areas.** There is low density development with open spaces allowing for privacy. A sense of community is retained and local control is exercised in land use decisions.”*

**What do you like most about the vision statement?**

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**What do you like least about the vision statement?**

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**Is there anything that should be added to the vision statement related to rural areas?**

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire! Please return it to the address below by December 5, 2008.  
For more information, contact: Michelle Stiles, Planner, Whatcom County Planning & Development Services (360)676-6907, [pds@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:pds@co.whatcom.wa.us), [www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/2031](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/2031)

**Fold Here**

Whatcom County  
Planning & Development Services  
5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98226

Place Stamp Here
------------------------

**Whatcom County, Planning & Development Services  
Attention: Michelle Stiles  
5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98226**

## Questionnaire Results - December 2008

The County received over 240 responses, which are summarized below:

**I. In rural areas of Whatcom County (areas not within urban or agricultural areas), would you say that development in the last 10 years has been (please check one):**

7% Too little      28% About right      58% Too much      7% Don't know/not sure

Comments? protect agricultural land, there is too much residential growth – too many McMansions, should infill in cities, need to protect the environment

**II. Rural Values. There are many factors that contribute to the quality of life in rural Whatcom County including some listed below. What factors do you value most?**

53% Small-scale agriculture    71% Natural environmental features    26% Affordable land/housing  
67% Forested lands            50% Parks, trails, and open space    71% Clean water and air  
49% Privacy                      11% Large lot development pattern    Other: 21.3% quiet, dark nights, small towns, large scale agriculture

**III. Threats to rural values. Which of the following do you believe has the potential to threaten quality of life in rural Whatcom County?**

65% More residential development    52% More commercial development    57% Heavier traffic  
54% Environmental degradation      Other: 26% over regulation, pollution, growth, density

**IV. Over the next 20 years, identify which rural features are most threatened.**

52% Small-scale agriculture            59% Natural environmental features    32% Affordable land/housing  
52% Forested lands                      23% Parks, trails, and open space    57% Clean water and air  
37% Privacy                                12% Large lot development pattern    Other: 16% wildlife, dark skies, property rights, infrastructure

**V. What lot size would you consider to be “rural?”**

14% 1 acre or greater                      14% 2 acres or greater                      38% 5 acres or greater  
17% 10 acres or greater                      10% 20 acres or greater                      7% 40 acres or greater

**VI. The Growth Management Act allows for limited areas within rural areas where existing commercial uses or smaller-lot residential development is allowed to remain (but not expand). What should be allowed within those areas?**

29% High-medium density housing    71% Public services (libraries, community centers)  
28% Retail Centers                      18% Industrial (storage, manufacturing)  
25% Automotive services                      65% Small stores      Other: 25% health care, cottage industries, vets, churches, community center

**VII. The following is Whatcom County’s current vision statement (portions related to rural areas in bold):**

*“Whatcom County is a place where urban growth is concentrated in urban areas, where there is a **distinct boundary between urban and rural uses, where agricultural use is encouraged, where resource lands and water resources are protected, and where land use changes are brought about through incentive programs. Rural areas are peaceful and quiet with less traffic and congestion than in urban areas. There is low density development with open spaces allowing for privacy. A sense of community is retained and local control is exercised in land use decisions.**”*

#### **What do you like most about the vision statement?**

Shows what we can wish for; concentrate growth in urban areas; local control; distinct boundary; protect environment; all of it is great; rural areas are peaceful and quiet; don't like anything; doesn't represent reality

#### **What do you like least about the vision statement?**

Agriculture should be protected not just encouraged; doesn't represent reality; don't like idea of incentives – they don't work; vision is too general; bias against growth; too wordy; there is nothing about LAMIRDs; low density development leads to sprawl and environmental degradation

#### **Is there anything that should be added to the vision statement related to rural areas?**

"Where ethics in government is primary, and planning decisions are transparent and without bias or agenda"; local, county, Washington State and Federal environmental protection minimums must all be met when the attempt for local control is exercised; protect property rights; control traffic; promote economic development; sustainability; protect wildlife habitat; recognize existing conditions; promote cottage industries

#### **Other comments or concerns about Whatcom County's rural lands?**

- 75-90% of the private land base in Whatcom County should be designated for rural, agricultural and forestry use
- Whatcom needs to downzone a good portion of its rural lands to prevent sprawl
- If you want to live in a city and have all the resources that come with a city, then go live in an existing city
- Affordability for diverse economic stratas with a focus on environmental factors
- Protect landowner rights!
- Promote green building and green transport opportunities
- Rural protections need to be long term
- There is a bias against growth in this survey
- Water quality and quantity will be huge factor in future
- Housing footprint should be restricted to prevent McMansions
- We need to make developers pay for infrastructure to support building.
- We don't want Whatcom County to go the way of Snohomish and King counties so it looks like California.
- Protect wetlands, natural resources
- The forestry community has been left out of the discussion.
- County codes need to be enforced in a timely manner

## **Appendix D: Other Material**

Attached are other materials that were used in the first phase of the public participation process. The poster and fact sheet were distributed throughout the rural areas of the County and were emailed as an attachment to the entire rural element update email list.