

Public Workshops:
Phase 2
March 4 & 5

Rural Element

WHATCOM 2031

Workshop Agenda

Brief Open House	20 minutes
Intro & Overview Presentation	40 minutes
Question & Answer	30 minutes
Open House w/Stations	60 minutes
Adjourn	

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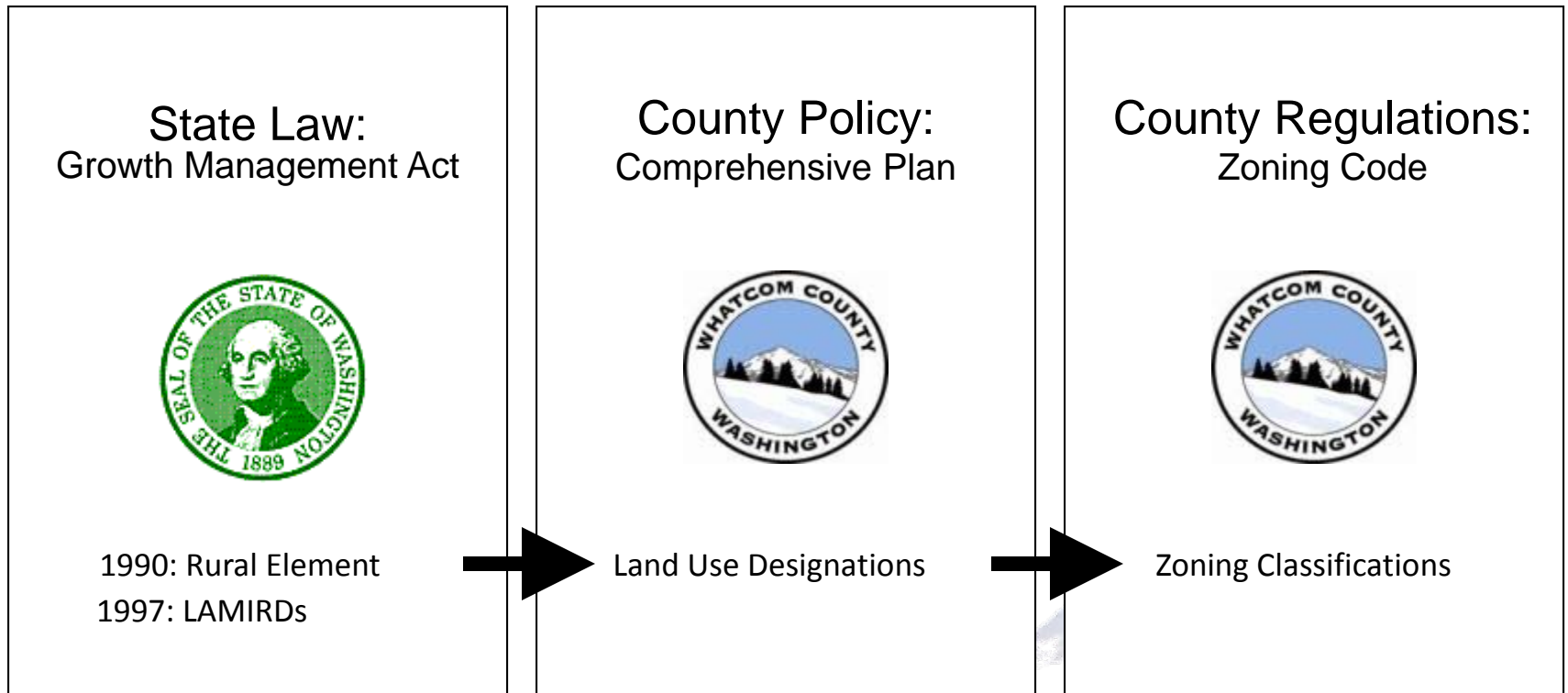
What is Whatcom 2031?

- Plan for the next 20 years:
 - Guide growth in urban areas
 - Protect rural character
 - Protect resource lands
 - Protect the environment
 - Encourage multiple modes of transportation
 - Encourage a variety of housing types
 - Promote economic development
 - Recognize property rights
 - Retain and enhance parks & open space
 - Ensure adequate public facilities and services
 - Foster citizen participation

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Planning Framework



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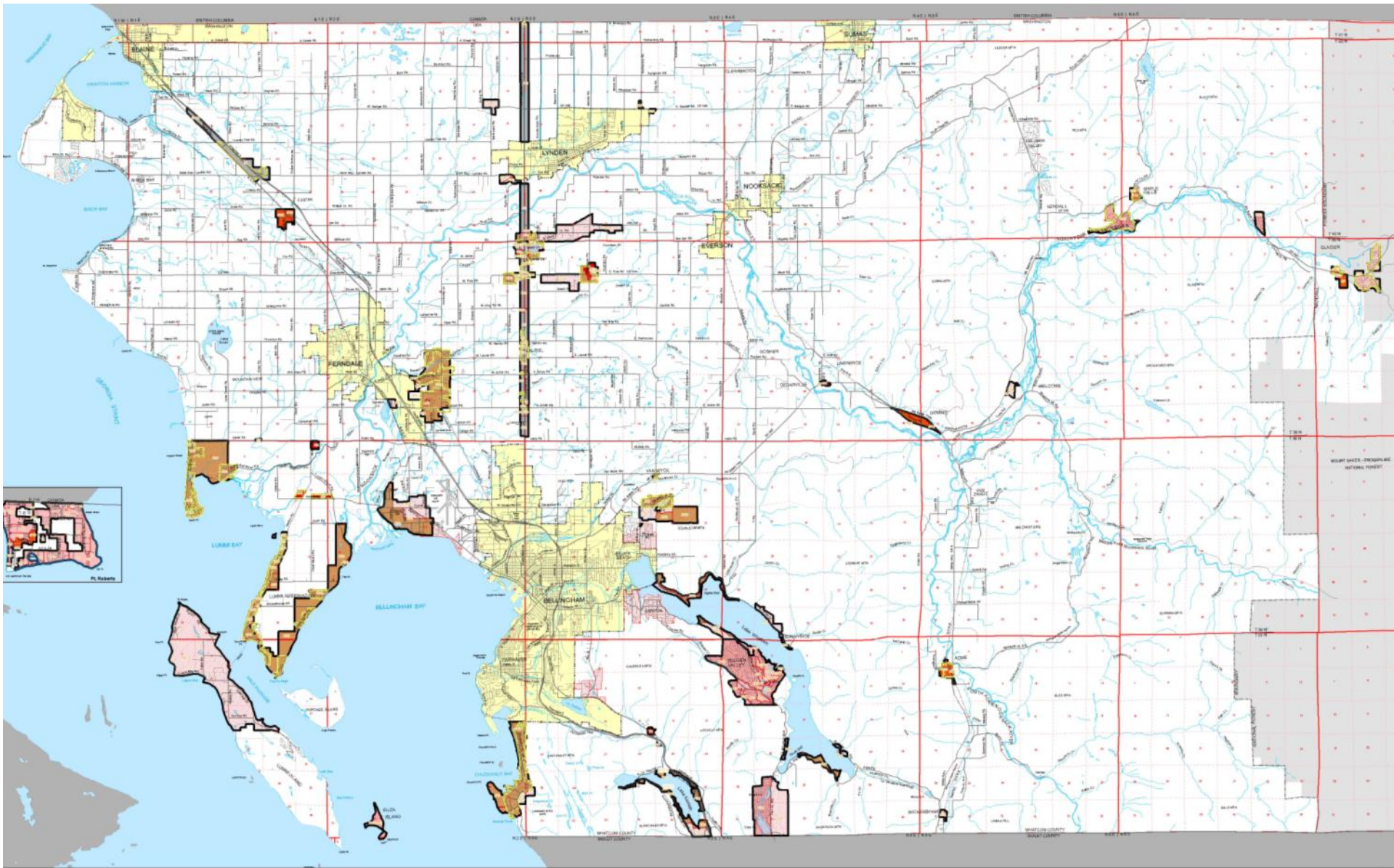
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- 2005 Growth Management Hearings Board Decision:
 - Out of compliance:
 - Comprehensive Plan Designations: Small Towns, Crossroads Commercial, Resort and Recreational Subdivisions, Suburban Enclaves, and Gateway Industrial
 - Zoning Classifications: RR1, RR2, RR3, E1, R2A, and RRI

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WILSON PARK - PROPOSED
NATIONAL FOREST

What is a LAMIRD?

- Limited Areas of More Intensive Rural Development
 - Minimize and contain areas that were developed prior to 1990
 - *“Rural development consisting of the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas, whether characterized as shoreline developments, villages, hamlets, rural activity centers, or crossroads developments.”*

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Phase 1 Public Participation

- Intent:
 - Envision the rural areas over the next 20 years:
 - What uses are appropriate where?
 - What uses are inappropriate?
- Stakeholder Group Meetings
- Public Meetings



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Stakeholder Group Meetings

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

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Public Meetings Nov. 12 & 13

- Inform the public on the Comprehensive plan update, the Rural Element, and LAMIRDs
- Solicit the public's vision for the rural areas of the County
- Discuss the areas of the County that are out of compliance with the GMA and the potential LAMIRD areas

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Mapping Exercise Results



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Commercial

Service

- Gas stations
- Auto repair



Service

Small Retail

- General store
- Small restaurant
- Retail
- Bar and grill
- Less than 4000ft²



Small Retail

Multiple Small Retail

- Small-scale commercial buildings with multiple retail tenants



Multiple Building Retail

Medium Retail

- Medium grocery
- Drugstore
- 10,000-60,000 ft²



Medium Retail

Large Retail

- Large grocery
- 10,000-60,000 ft²



Large Retail
(10,000-60,000ft²)

Regional Retail

- Clothing and grocery superstores
- Home improvement
- Over 60,000 ft²



Regional Retail
(Over 60,000ft²)

Agricultural Lands

Forestry Lands

Natural Resource Industry

Agriculture (5-acre or greater)

Agriculture (5-acre or greater)

Forestry (5-acre or greater)

Natural Resource Industry

Rural

Low-density residential (5-acre lots or greater)

Low-density residential (5-acre lots or greater)

State Route 360

Interstate 16

County Road 2

Crossroads

Freeway Interchange

Low-density residential (5-acre lots or greater)

Small Retail
Service

Small Retail
Service
Multiple Building Retail

Natural Resource Industry

Bakerville

A traditional small town in the early 1900s with a population around 200. Bakerville currently has a small general store, a restaurant, and a small gas station.

Multiple Building Retail
High-density residential
Medium-density residential
Small Retail
Service

Regional Retail

Medium Retail

High-density residential

Service

Cluster subdivision

Rural

Mineral Extraction (5-acre or greater)

Natural Resource Industry

Mineral Lands

Warehouse/Light Industry

Multiple Building Retail

Whatcom City

A bustling city with a variety of housing types and densities with a population around 75,000 people. It is the employment center of the region.

Large Retail

Small Retail

Questionnaire Results

- 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

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Questionnaire Results

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

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Questionnaire Results

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

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Phase 1 Summary

- Difficult to define rural
- Common rural values:
 - Natural environment
 - Agriculture
 - Quality of life
- LAMIRDs should serve rural areas
 - Small stores
 - Public Services

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Phase 2 Public Participation

- March 4 & 5 public meetings
- Objectives:
 - Discuss proposed rural policy ideas
 - Discuss LAMIRD boundary criteria

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Open House

- Affected areas, potential Rural Centers
 - 4 stations
- Handouts:
 - Rural Policies
 - LAMIRD criteria
- Comment Forms
 - Policy comment sheet (yellow)
 - Parcel status inquiry (blue)

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Policy

- Continue to recognize and improve upon the **quality of life** in the county's rural areas, valuing features such as open space, agriculture, & the natural environment.
- **Limit residential and commercial development**, traffic, and environmental degradation, which threaten rural areas.
- Preserve rural areas as **an important transition** between urban areas and resource lands.
- **Recognize property rights** by retaining existing land uses in residential areas, and continuing to allow for legal nonconforming use.

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Policy

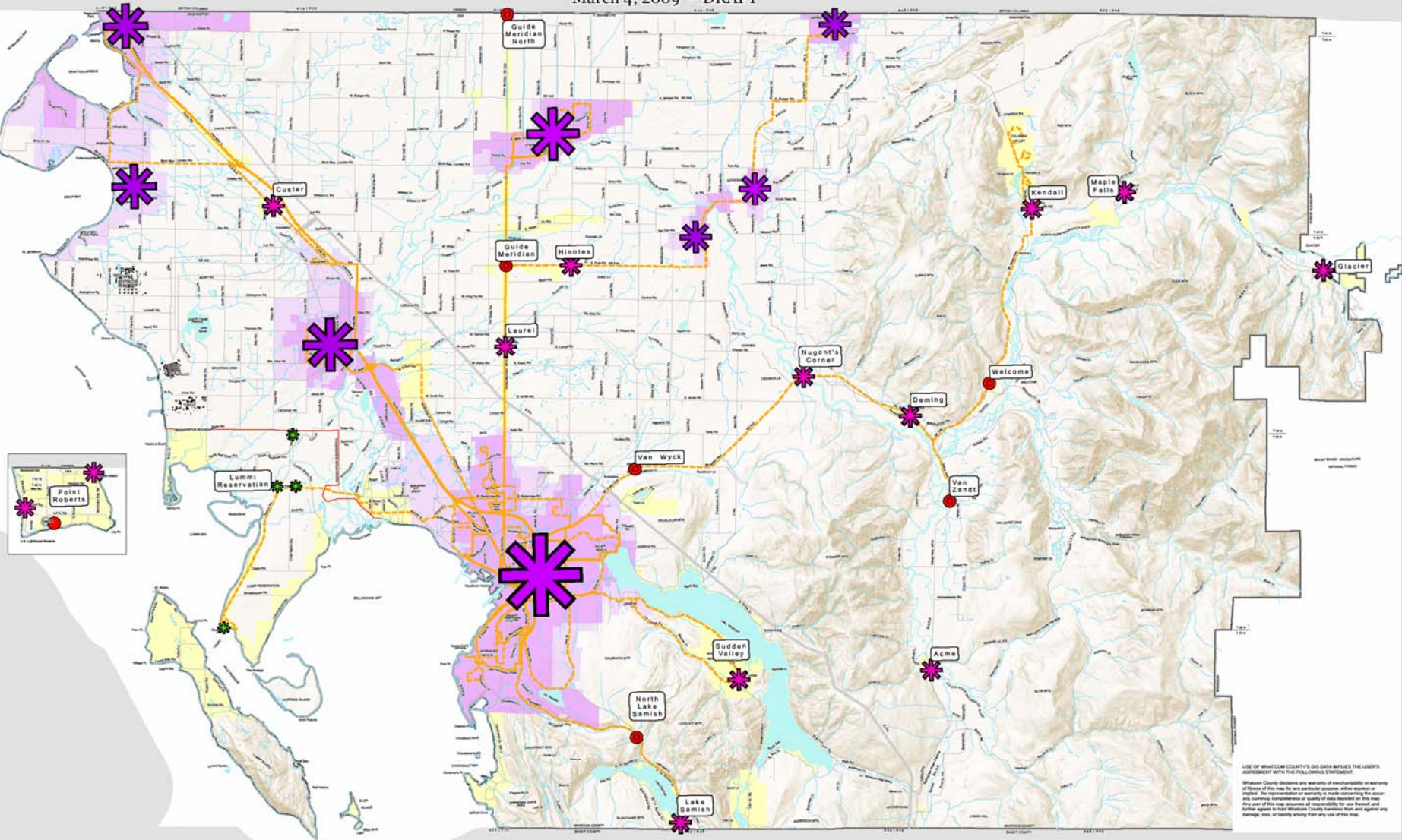
- Ensure all land uses outside urban areas are **rural in nature**, including both residential and commercial uses.
- **Coordinate with public service providers** to ensure rural services keep pace with infill development.
- **Prohibit extension or expansion of urban services** in rural areas except where necessary to protect public health and safety.
- Continue to **allow home-based businesses and cottage industries**.

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Proposed Rural Centers

March 4, 2009 - DRAFT

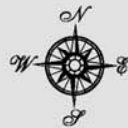


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Legend

Proposed Rural Centers (with Commercial)

-  Urban
-  Rural Center
-  Tribal Jurisdiction
-  Isolated Commercial/Recreational
-  Public Transportation
-  Affected Areas
-  Urban Areas (Cities & UGA)



LAMIRD Criteria – Rural Centers

- Designation (where):
 - In Rural areas (not Urban or Resource areas or adjacent to UGA)
 - Residential
- Boundaries (how big):
 - Contains parcels more intensively developed as of 1990
 - Contains other parcels based on:
 - Neighborhood character
 - Physical features
 - Preventing irregular boundaries
 - Provision of public services
 - Not impacted by critical areas

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LAMIRD Criteria – Other Areas

- Recreation & Tourist LAMIRD
 - Must rely on rural location
 - May serve more than local rural population
- Cottage Industry / Small Business
 - Must be isolated – spacing requirements from other LAMIRDs
 - May serve more than local rural population but must provide job opportunities for rural residents

No outer boundary requirements

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Comment Sheet

Other Existing Commercial Lands in Rural Areas – Change existing commercial zoning on lands outside of “LAMIRD” boundaries to rural zoning with five acre minimum lot sizes. Businesses that already exist in these areas would be allowed to continue as “nonconforming” per the Whatcom County zoning code, which allows reconstruction and limited expansion.

Strongly Agree () Somewhat Agree () Neutral () Somewhat Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Other Comments:

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Comment Sheet

Rural Centers – Designate existing small town and crossroad commercial areas as “Rural Centers,” where existing zoning may remain in place within a “LAMIRD” boundary. These would include Acme, Custer, Deming, Glacier, Hinotes Corner, Kendall, Maple Falls, Nugent’s Corner, Point Roberts (Gulf/Tyee area and Maple Beach), Laurel, and Sudden Valley. These Rural Centers would be located throughout the county and would not be adjacent to designated urban growth areas.

Strongly Agree () Somewhat Agree () Neutral () Somewhat Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Other Comments:

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Comment Sheet

Uses in Rural Centers – Tailor allowed land uses and development standards to emphasize the unique qualities of each Rural Center. Recognize recent subarea planning efforts and work with residents to determine the most appropriate types of development for each, given its function and history.

Strongly Agree () Somewhat Agree () Neutral () Somewhat Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
Other Comments:

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Comment Sheet

Residential Rural Centers – Designate areas with existing public services – particularly sewer – as Rural Centers, where existing zoning may remain within a “LAMIRD” boundary. These would include Lake Samish and Columbia Valley.

Strongly Agree () Somewhat Agree () Neutral () Somewhat Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()
Other Comments:

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Comment Sheet

Residential Lands Outside Rural Centers – Change rural residential zoning classifications to allow minimum lot sizes no less than five acres, but retain the same permitted uses. Legal lots created before the new zoning takes effect would still be developable even if they are smaller than five acres.

Strongly Agree () Somewhat Agree () Neutral () Somewhat Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Other Comments:

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Comment Sheet

Commercial and Tourist LAMIRDS – Recognize existing commercial uses in rural areas, but not located within the Rural Centers that provide job opportunities for rural residents, but do not create pressure for urban development or sprawl. Initially designate only those areas with historic commercial use AND current commercial zoning. These could include isolated parcels in areas such as Van Zandt, Welcome, North Lake Samish, Van Wyck, and the Point Roberts Marina. Also allow future isolated businesses to locate in the rural areas subject to spacing requirements (for example, no closer than one or two miles from the nearest LAMIRD or urban growth area).

Strongly Agree () Somewhat Agree () Neutral () Somewhat Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

Other Comments:


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Map Stations


Legend

 Zoning Boundary


 Parcels That Can Potentially Subdivide

 Affected Areas

 Incorporated City


 Urban Growth Area


LAND USE CATEGORIES

 Residential 1990

 Residential Current

 Vacant

 Commercial 1990 (Professional Services, Manufacturing)

 Commercial Current (Professional Services, Manufacturing)

 Public 1990 (Gov't, Education, Cultural/Assembly)

 Public - Current (Gov't, Education, Cultural/Assembly)

 Ag/Resource/Open Space

 Infrastructure/Utility (Includes Parking Lots)



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General Questions / Answers

- Contact Information:
 - Website: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds
 - Gary Davis or Michelle Stiles, Whatcom County
(360)676-6907, pds@co.whatcom.wa.us

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