

Rural Element Comment Sheet

Courthouse Meeting, March 5, 2009

Participants were asked to mark their responses to the following proposed ideas for land use policy in Whatcom County's rural areas. Not all respondents replied to every question.

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	5
Somewhat Agree	7
Neutral	0
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- If we encourage the correct and needed services, such as community centers, schools, church/worth place, food store, coffee/chocolate service, fire and emergency services, and government services, especially east county.
- As long as current platted lots are included in the LAMIRD boundary!!!
- In the Kendall area, my property is the only property that you can have a rural center. However, if there is no fireflow, water, or sewer, how does the county expect us to develop small businesses there? If the school (Kendall Elementary) extends fireflow to us, we can do it!
- Providing that areas outside the LAMIRD's that are nonconforming and were created after 1990 get special consideration as nonconforming.
- Keep the boundaries tight. We must preserve agricultural land. We don't buy food; we grow food!

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	6
Somewhat Agree	4
Neutral	0
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- Yes! Work with the residents, property owners, business owners. Take the time to address the present and future needs of residents.
- I appreciate the “grass roots” approach that you are using to incorporate public sentiment. Hopefully, the outcome will bring meaningful and workable compromise.
- Too ambiguous for developers and property owners. Who is to define these rural centers fairly?
- I agree with the proviso that I don’t believe each subarea should be able to do whatever it wants, as enshrined in this language.
- As long as Columbia Valley UGA is rescinded and replaced by a LAMIRD as requested by the Planning Commission.

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	8
Somewhat Agree	0
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- The Balfour Village proposed development should either be included in the Columbia Valley LAMIRD R4 designation OR, if excluded from the LAMIRD, should revert to one house per five acres.
- I keep hearing the needed services are not available. This includes sheriff and emergency personnel. Water and sewer, future services are not being done or even planned for. The needs of government services are not in place.
- It is important to include future needs—i.e., schools, medical facilities, and other public service needs—that will develop with a population increase.
- Must have utilities already available and capable of use.
- Lake Samish doesn’t need to be any denser, and they really only need a couple of grocery stores, in my opinion. They are more a suburban enclave than a rural area, in my opinion. I would support more restrictive zoning in Samish.
- Really think this is smart! GOOD IDEA.

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	5
Somewhat Agree	4
Neutral	1
Somewhat Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- As long as AG zones do not become converted to rural residential zoning. We MUST preserve our agricultural land!
- Why five acres? Need more flexibility there.
- It seems logical that there may be areas in the county that would be best suited for less than five-acre lots. I see this as a vehicle to allow for flexibility as future population growth occurs.
- We may need to call these lots/uses as “pre-existing uses” rather than nonconforming uses.
- I definitely support at LEAST five acres; however, I don’t support grandfathering in everybody under the sun in patchwork fashion.
- I’m not in favor of smaller lots. We need to keep the current zoning for now. I agree the zoning classification’s wording is not clear; in fact, it’s dated. But, I am concerned we are not thinking or planning correctly. Do we really know where we’re going? No, we don’t.
- See this as essential. Without this provision, urban sprawl would be too tempting. Government would be bombarded repeatedly with requests for services, forcing urban expansion.

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	1
Somewhat Agree	7
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- Sounds like sprawl. We need to protect our AG land first and foremost.
- Encourage different LAMIRD types closer than 1-2 miles—i.e., corridor of Mt. Balen Highway—to have to apply for conditional use permits for all would be a huge money maker and empire builder for whatever city planning.
- Need to be flexible.
- Subject also to demand for services, environmental impact, noise, and other pollutants which would affect rural quality.
- “Recognizing” means continue current zoning?

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	3
Somewhat Agree	3
Neutral	2
Somewhat Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	2

Other Comments:

- Current non-approved/pending building applications must conform to new zoning designations. Ex: Balfour Village—this level of proposed growth/density is NOT in keeping with public comment to preserve rural character.
- Again, I see this as a rigid baseline that would not support the creation of future “LAMIRDS” if need develops, and I suspect that it will. I think this can be a consideration and still preserve the rural character as needed.
- Businesses should not be penalized for past actions that were legal.

General Comments:

- Our county is not in compliance; therefore, our funding is disapproved. We have got to update our Comprehensive Plan. We need to have a good, much better, relationship between the county, city, and state governments. Until I see us working together, communicating better, solving funding issues, creating a professional planning department that has a staff of knowledgeable personnel who know the history of our community, we’re just not going to succeed. We need to develop a community that has a clear understanding of where we’re going. There are already some great ideas and successful examples of what works, such as our stream restoring efforts, our parks, some great and good-looking homes, neighborhoods, and commercial areas. We have some great farmers, builders, designers, and residents. Let’s put ourselves to work and success.
- Re LAMIRD areas, I strongly concur with letters of public comment by L. Braklee and Mr. Libbyquist on file. While well researched and articulate, it appears that the letter by Mr. Tull “cherry-picks” phrases and definitions to meet specific needs of a client for personal gain of one private developer rather than addressing the actual criteria, letter, and spirit of the law.
- Planning should protect people’s property rights, not take them away. LAMIRDS do both: they protect some land use rights but downgrade others in a LAMIRD. In question general commercial planning as ability to downgrade those uses because the property owner has not developed his property yet! The Growth Management Act is not working in favor of people’s property rights. Zoning in traffic corridors should have more intense growth, less emphasis on the Rural Element.
- More clearly define criteria for UGA boundaries. Use more current density info for designation of rural centers. Incorporate “buffer” or “transition” zones to more accurately reflect “rural” and “urban” areas. Each has specific characteristics, as do the areas between the two. More clearly define the zoning criteria for agricultural rural vs. residential rural. Consider acreage limitations for buffer areas that are between the rural and urban areas; e.g., ≤ 1 acre = urban; > 1 ≤ 5 acres = buffer; > 5 ≤ 40 acres = residential rural; >40 acres = agricultural rural.
- It was difficult to schedule time to attend one of the public workshops. It would be helpful to have this information and subsequent developments available through the Public Access television channel.
- For starters, I am glad that Whatcom County is considering complying with the Growth Management Act. We need to acknowledge that state law is superior, rather than spend countless years and money litigating issues. I also would hope that permitting and zoning practices will further the goals

- The Chuckanut suburban enclave should be subjected to more restrictive zoning and permitting practices. The Governor's Pointe RR3 and other R2 areas above Chuckanut Drive should be changed to rural densities—one house per five acres. The Governor's Pointe intensive development should be stopped in its tracks—not allowed to develop at higher densities regardless of what type of legal loopholes or rural tourist/recreation status it seeks. I don't think that we need marinas there, but rather an emphasis on environmental policies that protect the ecological functions of the area. Steep slopes are a fact of life along the Chuckanut hills, and planning should reflect the potential for landslide damage to Chuckanut Drive and lower elevation landowners. A recent landslide from Cleator Road down to the Interurban Trail demonstrates how quickly the landscape can change. Slopes below that landslide were also like molten lava consistency during recent rain storms. Severe restrictions are required or we will face even worse problems in the future. In my opinion, development needs to be restricted in the Chuckanut enclave because the shoreline is of statewide significance and siltation flow would severely affect fish and shellfish resources and degrade the quality of the marine waters for other uses as well. We also don't need two docks per family on the marine shoreline, nor do we need to continue intensive infilling in the Chuckanut region. The County has failed to protect the natural world in the suburban enclave of Chuckanut and needs to change its approach to the area.
- Very informative. Some prickly issues seem to have been glossed over but were exposed during question time. I believe it is VERY important that businesses and residences that will become nonconforming because of LAMIRD boundaries created by 1990 sizes should NOT be penalized by the nonconforming use process. It is not the legal landowners' fault that these codes are changing. They should be grandfathered, not penalized.

Rural Element Comment Sheet

Rome Grange Meeting, March 5, 2009

Participants were asked to mark their responses to the following proposed ideas for land use policy in Whatcom County's rural areas. Not all respondents replied to every question.

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	5
Somewhat Agree	6
Neutral	1
Somewhat Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- Laurel boundary north to Pole Road. Cluster houses rather than one house on five acres. Create green belts for agriculture only with houses on smaller lots. Preserve more usable land; 4.5 acres is not as usable as ten 4.5's all together.
- What other choice is possible?
- What can you do now? They're already existing.
- Is okay if you allow property owners to keep current zoning and the ability to build.

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	3
Somewhat Agree	8
Neutral	2
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- People in the area decide, not people in Bellingham.
- It is a property owner's right to develop to his need, not the neighbors' to dictate use on my property.
- Emphasis on providing commercial opportunities within rural centers.
- Lake Samish has sewers, yet the minimum lot size in many areas is five acres. This just does not make any sense! One+ homes per acre makes a lot more sense! After all, this land was formerly

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	5
Somewhat Agree	2
Neutral	4
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- Services should not define LAMIRDs. Rather, the built environment in 1990 should. Relying on sewer may promote too much growth where a good sewer service exists, thus degrading that service.
- Columbia Valley should be a LAMIRD, NOT a UGA!
- Services are there, intense development.
- Columbia Valley needs commercial development, not more homes.

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	3
Somewhat Agree	3
Neutral	4
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	3

Other Comments:

- Land that was purchased as R2A should NOT be changed without compensation to the landowner! Recognizing property rights is important to all of us.
- Prefer 10-acre minimum throughout rural areas, with grandfathering of existing. Also require consolidation of undersized lots when possible.
- Recommend property tax deduction for owners having to pay legal cost to have their lots have legal designation they had before the new zones.
- At LEAST five acres. Should be ten acres, given the problems associated with thousands of five-acre ranchettes.
- (Marked “strongly agree”) I see, however, a non-benefit to this, in that buildable rural lots are only available to the wealthy. I don’t find a checkerboard of trophy homes particularly rural or desirable; need rural options for the “proletariat.”
- Protect property [owners’] rights to use their property as they see fit.

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	2
Somewhat Agree	6
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	2

Other Comments:

- Don't restrict by putting on space requirements. May make sense to be closer than one or two miles in some cases.
- Should also include Agate Bay center (Y Road and Northshore Drive). This area's only community center is the old Texaco/Gramming Café, and the Agate Bay Fire Hall, and also small businesses like mechanic. There is also a recreation area down the Northshore Road by old railroad walking-bike hike.
- JOB centers are more important to allow than RESIDENTIAL clusters. Focus on these small commercial centers.
- People at Rome Grange took offense to the verbiage "non-conforming" as negative. Should say "exception" lot.
- These should be phased out and become legal nonconforming uses. Or maybe I don't understand nonconforming use.

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	3
Somewhat Agree	2
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	5

Other Comments:

- Changing (taking away property rights) is wrong without compensation!
- Zoning should stay and run with property in order to protect his property if he so chooses to use property as grandfathered in.
- Ten-acre minimum lot sizes might be better. Eliminate five-acre throughout rural areas.
- It would be better to make the zoning ten acres, but that's probably not politically feasible.

General Comments:

- (Marked everything “neutral”) This is like nailing jelly to a tree I have very mixed feelings.
- Do not downzone. That’s stealing!
- Recommend changing language from “non-conforming” land use to “exceptional” land use. Your use of the language of “non-conforming” is a negative and pejorative use of language to special properties with long historic boundaries.
- Lake Samish sewer is because of critical watershed so shouldn’t be used as LAMIRD criteria. Point Roberts area was commercial, but isn’t any more; shouldn’t be designated LAMIRD. Non-conforming is a negative term; could impact value/resale.
- As a farmer, five-acre lots eat up far too much farmland. Houses should be clustered on smaller, one-acre or less lots. Please do not take away our property rights without compensation. If we purchased land and paid a lot for it because it was R2A, I don’t feel it is fair to just change it on us!
- I appreciate the effort Planning has put into this. There is, however, a general “fuzziness” to the issues, perhaps because planning has its own professional vocabulary. I see our area as a hodge-podge of “exceptions,” and it is progressively less rural. Agriculture and forestry mainly create what I call a “rural” environment. We can’t continue to approve variances that turn farms into subdivisions, no matter how formal or democratic the processes. We stand an excellent chance of looking like Auburn and Kent in the next 20 to 30 years. Good luck to you! You will need it.
- I own a dental office in Deming but rent my space. We have outgrown that space and have purchased commercial land on Nuggents Corner to build an office. The practice needs to be near the patients, so moving into Bellingham would be a major problem. My concern is that I need to begin construction ASAP, but before I put thousands of dollars into engineer and architect, etc., I want to know if it’s okay to proceed. Will the property remain commercially zoned, and what about future development of the extra space on the property?

Rural Element Comment Sheet

Birch Bay Meeting, March 5, 2009

Participants were asked to mark their responses to the following proposed ideas for land use policy in Whatcom County's rural areas. Not all respondents replied to every question.

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	3
Somewhat Agree	4
Neutral	2
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- Yes. Point Roberts needs all the help it can get from the County to encourage commerce and services. We are highly handicapped by the U.S. border, and this will increase in June 2009.

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	7
Somewhat Agree	0
Neutral	0
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- “Residents” should be those living in the affected area.
- Need to listen to local owners and about development. Point Roberts is not a typical or average “rural” area, by our or any definition.

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	1
Somewhat Agree	3
Neutral	2
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- None.

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	1
Somewhat Agree	2
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- Point Roberts is not as “rural” as other areas in the County. One unit/acre or one unit/quarter acre is “spacious” relative to our neighbors in Delta and the lower mainland next door.

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	6
Somewhat Agree	0
Neutral	1
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- None.

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	0
Somewhat Agree	3
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	2

Other Comments:

- May disallow necessary services outside the LAMIRD as, for example, the PR Marina.

General Comments:

- I am concerned that more population would contribute to a lower level of service in our UGA. We do not have the benefit of a city, and our services are still for a rural area. Please consider trails, parks, and open space as part of our 2031 plan. Over the last few decades, this UGA has had incredible growth but has not had impact fees or other ways of making sure that trails, parks, and open spaces were created. This affects the quality of life for all current residents and our future generations.

Rural Element Comment Sheet

Meridian High School Meeting, March 4, 2009

Participants were asked to mark their responses to the following proposed ideas for land use policy in Whatcom County's rural areas. Not all respondents replied to every question.

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	7
Somewhat Agree	16
Neutral	1
Somewhat Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	3

Other Comments:

- What negative restrictions will happen in rural centers’ ability to change zoning?
- The Growth Management Act requires buffers between cities. Ferndale and Bellingham are too close and east of Ferndale, the North Bellingham area should stay RURAL.
- These areas should not be less than 60 to 80 NET acres for commercial and high-density, 100+ acres for residential SFR.
- This would serve to slow growth down. Major roads where needed to help the community and owners.
- Work with property owners and be very sensitive to land use history and any zoning changes.
- Legal issue exists on whether LAMIRD can be located adjacent to UGA. (C-TED indicates they can.) North Bellingham area is example of old suburban enclave used to buffer two urban areas. Should be allowed to be a LAMIRD (adjacent to Ferndale UGA).
- What about North Bellingham? The area dates back to the 1800s. Why such a “cluster area”—Deming, Glacier, etc.?
- These areas need to be large, like 80 acres.
- Emphasis on “center.” The necessary complement to this is to strongly discourage (i.e., prohibit) development along transportation corridors between centers. In other words, keep highways as highways, not strip malls. The concept of “center” should also extend away from the roads to keep the rest of the land rural. By that I don’t mean houses scattered on five-acre lots. That’s just distributed urban.
- As long as agricultural land is not used for this! Urban growth areas should NOT be expanded.

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	5
Somewhat Agree	13
Neutral	0
Somewhat Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	5

Other Comments:

- By giving choices to neighbors, can adversely affect a landowners' ability to protect his investment and dreams for his property.
- The centers should support commercial development that will provide work opportunities and services to promote local use and jobs that would limit travel.
- Centers should be focused on commercial businesses and jobs—a plus for local use so people don't have to travel so far to services.
- Yes to the first sentence. I'd rather allow new thinking and planning to meet current and anticipated goals than just rely on recent planning.

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	2
Somewhat Agree	10
Neutral	8
Somewhat Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	5

Other Comments:

- There is property rights to grow in areas make it a UGA. [I *think* he means: “There are property rights. To make/let an area grow, make it a UGA.”]
- Columbia Valley is a sprawling trailer park and low-income housing, sucking down the water table for those in the surrounding areas.
- A new business could necessitate a different and better character.
- Not certain. What would happen if these weren't in the LAMIRD?
- It seems areas with existing services would be most likely advantageous to all.
- To support the commercial centers, home and lot density has to be increased.
- People with septic [tanks] should not be forced to hook up to sewer just because sewer is nearby.
- Relies on zoning allowing adequate densities, 8 per acre for SFR, 1 unit per 1,500 square feet for multi-family minimum. Limited by utilities availability.

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	7
Somewhat Agree	8
Neutral	1
Somewhat Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	9

Other Comments:

- Landowners need to be compensated for land that they can't use or that decreases in value due to zoning changes. Right.
- Don't allow development on the lots less than five acres!
- Just leave us alone. These lots are our retirement plan.
- With 20% requirement for infrastructure and the state (40%) of Whatcom County lost to wetlands/critical areas, the ultimate density is somewhat self-regulating and self-defeating.
- I'd go with a minimum of five acres only if land is useless for agriculture. For agricultural lands, prohibit subdivision and withdraw approval to subdivide farms or agricultural land. Rethink cluster housing to keep land USE, not occupancy, possible for as much land as possible. Allow development only if and when infrastructure, such as roads with pedestrian accommodation.
- Or existing zoning.
- This won't work if you want the commercial areas to survive—not enough density and people to use them.
- Allow one split per parcel of 1 acre. Five acres chews up or uses too much agricultural land.
- This affects a landowner's investment.

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	3
Somewhat Agree	12
Neutral	6
Somewhat Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	4

Other Comments:

- Restricting to 1-2 miles apart is too restrictive.

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	8
Somewhat Agree	4
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	11

Other Comments:

- Zone the Guide UGA.
- This question makes no sense. First you ask in rural areas, then you address commercial use outside.
- I'd favor allowing commercial development if its impact would be less than caused by the one mansion per five acres.
- Leave commercial and conforming.
- I may not understand this, but this concerns me because, if something happens to the business—like fire—they can rebuild, but they can't get financing to do so.
- We have too much commercial outside of city limits now.
- Zone Guide Urban Growth.
- What happens when “nonconforming” becomes non-compliant? This happens . . . see Ferndale; I believe they have many examples of this.
- (Marked “strongly disagree”) Non-conforming equals no financing. Your consultants haven't helped you. There is more talent available in the community.

General Comments:

- You state in your handout, “There is very limited ability to make changes to the overall character as stated by state law.” Still, you have public hearings and request our help. How much “power” do we, as the general public, really have? It feels like none, unless you have monies to change the zoning. P.S. I hope you heard the frustration in the room.
- It is critical that existing lots that are out there are not consolidated to meet the new requirements. Five-acre lots pose problems. Sometimes it makes sense to make the lots smaller.
- Do not agree with keeping residential zoning on the Guide Meridian. The LAMIRD zoning does nothing to fix prior poor zoning issues. Slater Road, east/west of I-5, should not have a major arterial be a zoning line. The residential zoning on the north side of Slater has just as much traffic as the south side. Zoning changes should not use roads to designate boundaries.
- Ferndale's UGA should NOT be moved east at all. Ferndale has more land in its UGA already than is needed for its population. This area has lost its school and one of its two corner markets. There are three spawning streams (10 Mile, Deer, and Silver Creeks) with wide, flooding critical areas. This area east of I-5 outside the UGA is virtually all built out to its current zoning of RR1 and RR5 (some was built before there was any zoning), so density cannot be easily added. There is small-scale agriculture happening in this area, and a State Supreme Court decision recognized this area as a Suburban Enclave (the former title for a LAMIRD). We want to be rural, not a part of Ferndale. This is a historic area, with a Grange and former North Bellingham school. Ferndale must keep its UGA on the west side. People have been counting on it, and the school district built an elementary here and has land for the next high school.

- The cafeteria at Meridian High School was too crowded. Using the high school auditorium would have been more comfortable and a place for additional seating.
- It is unfortunate that the Comprehensive Plan was running amuck and now must come into compliance. There needs to be less urban sprawl. I am concerned that my area is going to be swallowed up by Ferndale. I bought in an area I thought would remain rural, with one-acre parcels. I like the idea of five-acre parcels limiting the density of population in outer lying areas. We need to maintain watersheds and reduce the paving over of lands and forests that help to absorb the runoff and keep our air quality. Need to slow down urban development and commercialism. Being able to speak personally with planners helped me understand what the plan means specifically to me and my property. I like being RURAL, and I hope my property will remain that way. Thank you.

Rural Element Comment Sheet

Mail-Ins

Participants were asked to mark their responses to the following proposed ideas for land use policy in Whatcom County's rural areas. Not all respondents replied to every question.

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	3
Somewhat Agree	2
Neutral	1
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- Maple Beach in Point Roberts has no real retail or commercial areas any longer. You might want to look into this.
- As long as you make the Guide and Pole a LAMIRD, all properties that are commercial need to remain commercial. Even go further: Make that area a LAMIRD half-mile each way north and south Guide.

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	4
Somewhat Agree	2
Neutral	0
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- Could you possibly schedule a Point Roberts public meeting?
- (Marked “strongly agree.”) Especially agricultural, regardless of size. Provide tax relief for voluntary native plantings in boundaries or other. Provide tax relief for increased air and water qualities created by planting “green.”
- Do not take our commercial zoning away: 6920 Guide, 6811 Guide.

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	2
Somewhat Agree	1
Neutral	3
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- Public safety issues should be recognized and supported by residential needs and investment: fire, schools, transportation.
- Don't downzone!

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	3
Somewhat Agree	0
Neutral	2
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	2

Other Comments:

- Would impose growth and sprawl limitations. Ensure retainment of rural culture.
- I don't think you should downzone.
- What happened to local control? The County should have sued the Growth Management Hearing Board and still should! Leave rural zoning the way it is. In this dismal economic climate, no one knows what the future holds. The County may need the revenue that existing zoning could produce.
- Five acres is a lot of land to maintain. What do you do with five acres? Perhaps clustering could also be allowed.

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	2
Somewhat Agree	2
Neutral	2
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Other Comments:

- Local business investment to enhance the local economy.
- We need to protect the commercial property on the Guide. It is a BUSINESS hub.

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	2
Somewhat Agree	1
Neutral	2
Somewhat Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	1

Other Comments:

- In light of transportation issues, some public transportation unavailable to aging populations. Environmental/green considerations could be emphasized.
- This will hurt property owners and the future of Whatcom County. Leave the Guide alone. Make it all commercial. It would be easy.

General Comments:

- I agree with the plans so far. We must protect what we have or we will have a Guide Meridian that looks like I-5 north of Seattle. Natural resources MUST be protected. Those “useless” wetlands protect us from ourselves. Never does water come up for discussion, never does flooding, increased taxes as we develop in the rural area. If they are worried about taxes now, wait till we have to provide more infrastructure as they turn their lot into a “higher” use. Thank you for doing the best protection the law allows. Keep up the good work.
- We purchased these properties based on the broad Gateway Industrial zone, and the value it adds to our land is not insignificant. Is there a plan to maintain the “all uses” that are now allowed for existing projects? The vagueness of the plan (especially related to zoning matters and use) is very concerning. It is hard to comment on something that has no details. In short, we have multiple concerns and most likely additional concerns when details are provided. Before any action is taken,

- We feel that all of Point Roberts should be one LAMIRD. We already have a clear-cut boundary (Canada and water) and also have development constraints due to water availability and septic requirements. We own property listed as TZ, and we would like to keep this designation. The Lily Point Park land is now out of TZ, eliminating the possibility of developing 100-plus acres, as opposed to our 10. Under the “Commercial and Tourist LAMIRDS” as proposed for the Point Roberts Marina, the one- to two-mile spacing requirement doesn’t work here as the Point only measures two miles by three miles.
- I strongly do not agree with your proposed boundaries in my properties. The area around the Guide and Pole Roads should all be in your (LAMIRD’s) zoning. You cannot downzone this area. It is a great growth area. It will provide business for all of the housing in the area. Also, look at the businesses and commercial property that are there you cannot downzone. The Guide needs to be commercial and industrial. Make the Guide and Pole a LAMIRD; it needs this area. Look at the companies; great employers. Make the Guide and Pole a LAMIRD a half-mile each way. Do look at my 8.5% excise tax dollars I pay monthly.
- It doesn’t appear that there is provision to maintain the Gateway zone with its broad outright uses. It appears that the plan does not take into account our uses at all. Why remove the Gateway zoning at all? We would want to maintain all uses that we purchased based on the County’s Comprehensive Plan. It appears that the only thing that is clear in the plan is that we will lose something. It is not clear at all what we will get. We don’t feel that a plan that includes people’s properties in an “affected” area should be proposed to be “affected” without knowing what the “effects” are. We request a meeting with Pete Kremen, Gary Davis, and David Stalheim before any further action is taken.
- My property is in the heart of the Kendall proposed rural center, zoned small town commercial. Currently it is not part of the proposed LAMIRD boundary. Ideally, I would like to have the County make this a part of the Columbia Valley UGA, but at the least have it included in the LAMIRD boundary so we can work with the County to develop a nice rural center with small businesses. The residents of the Kendall area have asked to have these types of services at this vantage point. It would save us hundreds of thousands of dollars if the Kendall School would extend us fireflow from their tank. We could move forward in working to bring jobs, businesses, and a diverse social center to the community. Re: Glacier: Please keep Glacier’s zoning as it is. There are resort commercial pieces that could potentially be tourist areas that bring income and tax benefits (income) to the area.
- We understand the need for GMA. We have 7.9 acres right in between property that is zoned RR1 and UR3 (? 3 homes per acre), so changing our zoning would have a devastating financial burden. We have been trying to short plat our property, but have been tied up with the railroad trying to get legal access for two years now. What can we do to prevent our property from being changed? Please give us a call. Thank you!
- When zoning changes a property from legal conforming to legal nonconforming, I feel this devalues the property. The word “nonconforming” has a negative connotation. It would be less harmful to a property if the term “grandfathered” is used.

Rural Element Comment Sheet

Comment Summary, March 4-5, 2009

Below is a compilation of responses from all four meetings, with the results shown as percentages of those responding to each question.

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	32%
Somewhat Agree	49%
Neutral	7%
Somewhat Disagree	6%
Strongly Disagree	6%

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rome Grange	36%	43%	7%	7%	7%
Meridian High School	25%	57%	4%	4%	11%
Birch Bay	33%	44%	22%	0%	0%
Courthouse	36%	50%	0%	14%	0%
Mail-Ins	50%	33%	17%	0%	0%

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	37%
Somewhat Agree	40%
Neutral	3%
Somewhat Disagree	10%
Strongly Disagree	10%

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rome Grange	21%	57%	14%	0%	7%
Meridian High School	19%	50%	0%	12%	19%
Birch Bay	78%	0%	0%	22%	0%
Courthouse	46%	31%	0%	15%	8%
Mail-Ins	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%

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 27%
 Somewhat Agree 24%
 Neutral 30%
 Somewhat Disagree 9%
 Strongly Disagree 9%

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rome Grange	36%	14%	29%	14%	7%
Meridian High School	8%	38%	31%	4%	19%
Birch Bay	13%	38%	25%	25%	0%
Courthouse	67%	0%	25%	8%	0%
Mail-Ins	33%	17%	50%	0%	0%

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 26%
 Somewhat Agree 23%
 Neutral 15%
 Somewhat Disagree 15%
 Strongly Disagree 22%

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rome Grange	20%	20%	27%	13%	20%
Meridian High School	24%	28%	3%	14%	31%
Birch Bay	11%	22%	33%	22%	11%
Courthouse	36%	29%	7%	21%	7%
Mail-Ins	43%	0%	29%	0%	29%

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 21%
 Somewhat Agree 40%
 Neutral 22%
 Somewhat Disagree 7%
 Strongly Disagree 10%

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rome Grange	13%	40%	20%	13%	13%
Meridian High School	12%	46%	23%	4%	15%
Birch Bay	75%	0%	13%	0%	13%
Courthouse	8%	54%	23%	15%	0%
Mail-Ins	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%

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 24%
 Somewhat Agree 19%
 Neutral 19%
 Somewhat Disagree 7%
 Strongly Disagree 31%

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rome Grange	20%	13%	20%	13%	33%
Meridian High School	29%	14%	11%	7%	39%
Birch Bay	0%	38%	38%	0%	25%
Courthouse	27%	27%	18%	9%	18%
Mail-Ins	33%	17%	33%	0%	17%

