

Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Report

Whatcom County Agricultural Land Program

December 31, 2008



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Funded by: *Whatcom County Planning & Development Services*

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1. Background

Total farmland acreage in Whatcom County has been shrinking for many years. A minimum threshold target of farmland had been set by Whatcom County Council at 100,000 acres with the rationale of maintaining a critical mass of land to preserve the local agricultural industry. While the methods for designating farm acreage have varied, the overall numbers have been falling from 200,000 acres in 1949 to 148,027 in 2002¹². For the past three years (2006 – 2008), the total farmland under the designated Open Space Ag zone has stabilized at 106,000 acres. While other properties are farmed in Whatcom County, the highest protection of farmland is provided within the Ag zone designation.

In 2006, Whatcom County Council established the Agricultural Land Work Program (ALWP) with the following purpose and objectives:

PURPOSE: Preserve the County’s agricultural, forestry and natural resource land base while recognizing land values and property rights.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Provide the greatest farmland protection possible
- b. Balance the impact on current landowners, future farmers, and cost to the community
- c. Develop a functioning Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program
- d. Develop consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Public involvement was recognized as a critical component to a successful Work Program. As such, in December 2007 Whatcom County contracted with Whatcom Farm Friends (WFF) to develop and implement a Public Involvement Plan (PIP). This report is the culmination of this contract as performed over the past year. The reader will find the report rich with information based on statistically significant survey data gathered and compiled, a series of four public forums conducted around the county, and the results of the work of the Technical Review Committee.

2. PIP Plan and Process

A Public Involvement Plan was written by WFF in January, 2008. The PIP was designed to provide a structured process for public involvement in advancing the County’s Agricultural Land Work Program (ALWP).

The PIP objectives were to:

- a. Inform the target audiences about the issues prompting the ALWP
- b. Identify and address target audiences’ concerns regarding the development of the ALWP

¹ Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan, May 1997, 8-5.

² USDA Census of Agriculture, 2002.

- c. Provide the public with opportunities to increase awareness and knowledge of the implications of farmland conversion and continued residential, commercial, and industrial development in rural areas³
- d. Solicit and integrate public input in the development of ALWP proposals that seek to limit land conversion in rural areas prior to submittal to the Whatcom County Council.

The Plan included the following components: (a) a mail survey to designated target audiences in the County to assess their understanding of the local agricultural industry and level of interest in preserving it, (b) a series of public forums to solicit the public's understanding of contributions and threats to agriculture and to obtain feedback on suggested Ag land preservation tools, (c) facilitation of a Technical Review Committee assigned the task of developing a set of recommended preservation tools, (d) associated publicity and web postings to keep the public informed of the project as it progressed, and (e) periodic briefings with designated committees and County Administration. The duration of the Plan was the calendar year of 2008. This report represents the final deliverable from Whatcom Farm Friends under this Plan.

3. PIP Survey

A mail survey was selected as the method to measure the baseline knowledge of Whatcom County's agricultural industry, the interest level in preserving agricultural land, and regulations to assist in such preservation. The survey was designed by Whatcom Farm Friends in collaboration with the Whatcom County Planning & Development Services staff, the Technical Review Committee, and several local public involvement specialists.



In April, 2008 2,614 surveys were mailed to six designated audiences throughout the County. These audiences were:

1. Farmers
2. Land Owners
3. Community-at-large
4. Developers
5. Native Tribes
6. Municipalities

A database maintained by Whatcom Farm Friends was used to mail to the farmers. Random sampling was used to derive the necessary sample sizes and contacts for Land Owners and Community-at-large. Available data bases were used to derive sufficient samples for the smaller audiences. For purposes of this survey, Landowners were defined as property owners in the Ag area with over 20 acres.

³ For the purpose of this program, Rural Areas were defined as Ag Zone, R5 and R10.

Surveys were returned over the period of April and May. Response rates for the three largest audiences, shown below, produced a margin of error of +/- 6% with a confidence level of 95%. As such this response data can be considered representative of these respective audiences. The other three smaller audiences (Developers, Native Tribes, Municipalities) did not generate sufficient response levels and are not included in this report.

<u>Target Audience</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Mailings</u>	<u>Unit Resp.</u>	<u>% Resp.</u>
1. Farmers	507	490	127	25.9%
2. Land Owners	1,966	758	201	26.5%
3. Community-at-large	185,953	1,343	274	20.4%
TOTALS	188,426	2,591	602	23.2%

The responses from the audience groups were compiled separately to allow the reader to discern areas of common ground and differences. The results of this survey were fed into the public forum discussions which were conducted in the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2008.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The profile of the three audiences surveyed revealed that Farmers and Landowners are long time residents of the County. The Community group is more evenly distributed by time in the county.

Residency in Whatcom	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Less than 5 years	2%	2%	17%
6 – 10 years	2%	5%	12%
11 - 20 years	10%	10%	21%
21 – 40 years	23%	26%	28%
More than 40 years	63%	57%	22%

Of the Farmers and Landowners groups, 90% live outside city limits while the Community is split between inside city limits and outside city limits.

In regards to the “Very Important” reasons for living in Whatcom County, the table below reflects the percentage responses by the groups. Quality of Life is on the top of the list for all three groups.

Living in Whatcom County

Reason	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Quality of life	82%	78%	81%
Family lives here	76%	68%	53%
Business/Job opportunities	71%	51%	38%
Open spaces	69%	55%	64%
Recreational opportunities	41%	35%	51%

MANAGING GROWTH

Managing growth involves making tradeoffs since there are never enough financial resources to do it all. The respondents were asked for their priorities in managing growth within our Whatcom community. For each factor, the ratings were: “Very Important”, “Somewhat Important” and “Not Important”. The percentages below reflect the frequency of “Very Important” ratings for each group.

Priorities for Managing Growth

Factor	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Quality food supply	75%	65%	70%
Open spaces	73%	66%	78%
Natural resources	69%	51%	74%
Family wage jobs	68%	66%	72%
Affordable housing	50%	42%	56%

ABOUT AGRICULTURE

To gauge the respondents’ level of understanding and impressions of agriculture in Whatcom County, a series of questions were posed.

All groups identified the top three agricultural products, by value, as dairy, berry and potatoes. (The top three segments by value are in fact, dairy, berry and nursery.)

Regarding the question of agriculture’s importance to Whatcom County’s economy, the majority of the respondents within each group felt agriculture was either the “Most Important” or “One of the Most Important” contributors.

Importance of Agriculture

Rating	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Most Important	38%	28%	18%
One of the most important	46%	51%	59%
One of many	15%	20%	23%

As to how agriculture contributes to Whatcom County, the responses below reflect the percentages in the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” categories. The majority of the respondents felt agriculture is a big contributor to the four factors listed.

Contributions of Agriculture

Factor	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Diversifies our economy	96%	94%	88%
Protects our open spaces	88%	81%	85%
Provides living wage jobs	71%	59%	55%
Preserves wildlife habitat	64%	67%	68%

Regarding the direction of Whatcom County’s agricultural economy, all groups felt it was decreasing: Farmers 82%, Landowners 73%, Community 77%. In fact, Whatcom County’s agricultural economy has been growing year over year when measured by total farm gate revenues. Perhaps the impressions that agriculture is declining can be understood by the responses to the threats to this sector. The percentages below reflect the “High” and “Medium” responses for the groups.

Threats to Agriculture

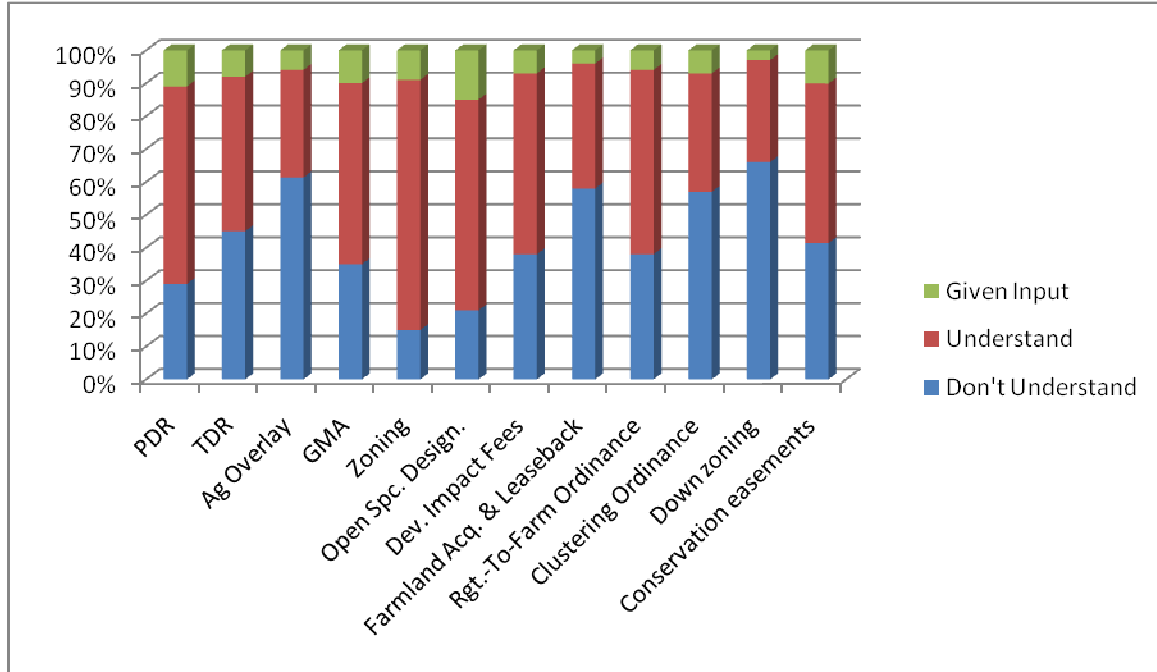
Factor	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Economic viability of farming	96%	93%	88%
Urban encroachment	92%	84%	94%
Access to water for irrigation	88%	78%	90%
Environmental regulations	84%	86%	59%
Five acre parcels w/in ag lands	83%	73%	85%
Access to farm labor	77%	69%	63%

Other common threats that were cited by the respondents included: Developers, Taxes, and Bureaucracy.

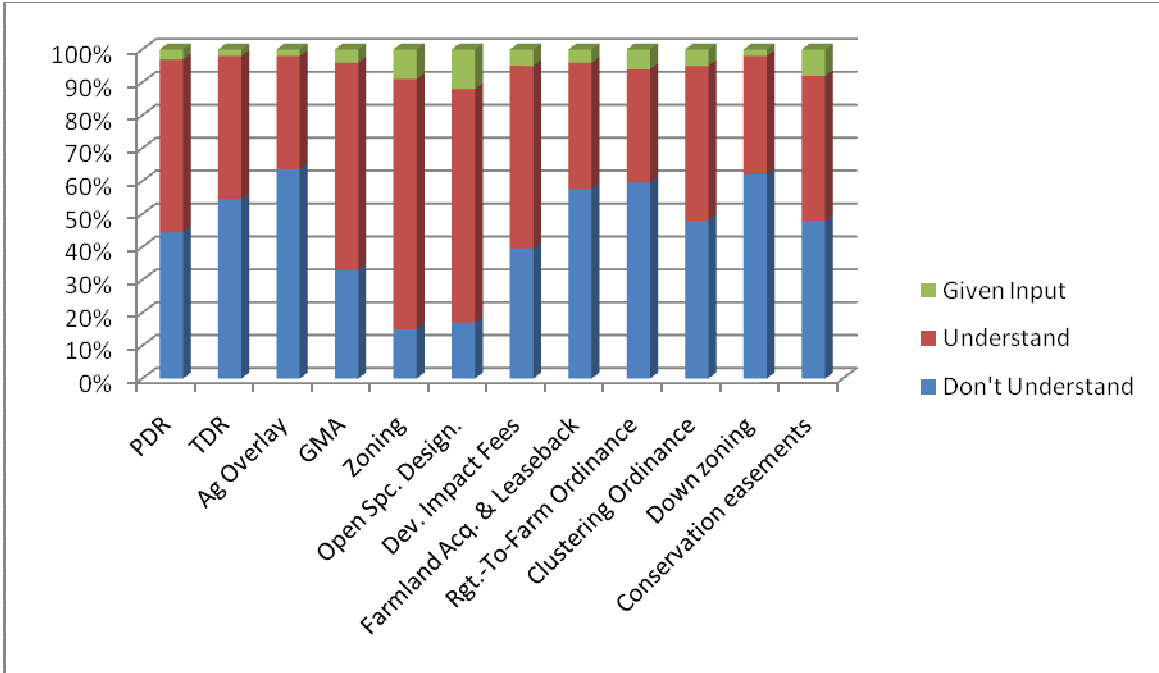
AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

Another objective of the survey was to assess the level of understanding of the respondents to the various farmland conversation tools available. This information was useful to the Technical Review Committee as it considered the appropriate use of these tools, and potentially other tools. This data was also helpful in planning for the public forum sessions. As with all data in the survey, it was gathered by audience group. The following charts reflect the responses by group.

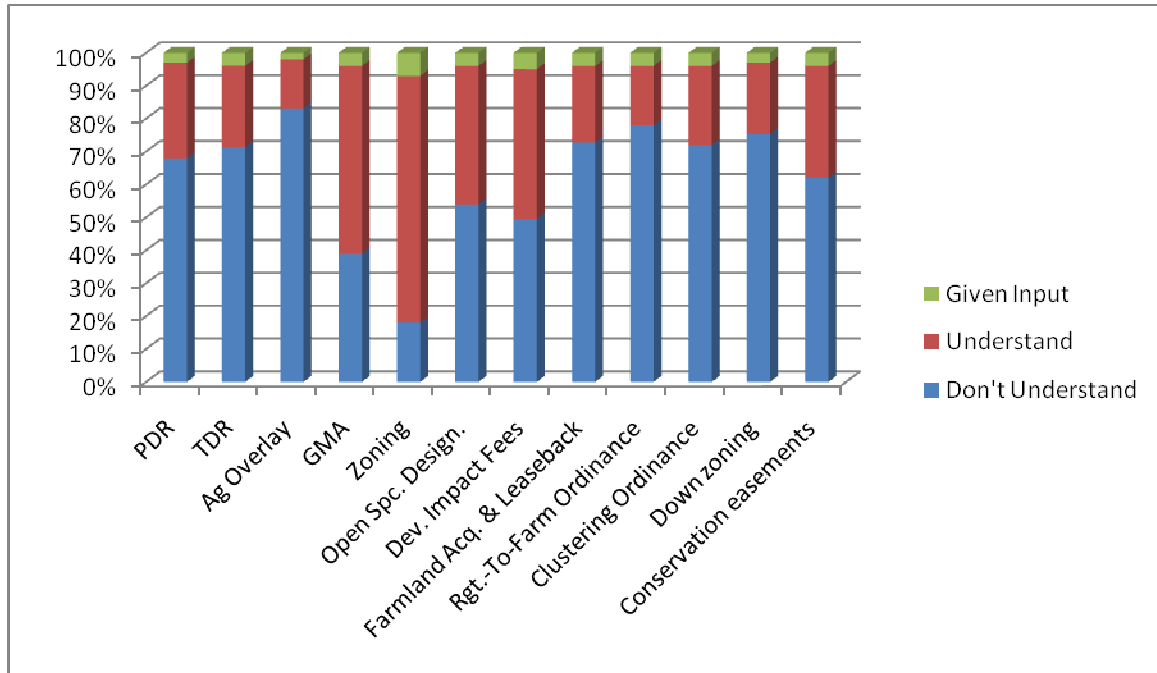
FARMERS – Understanding of Farmland Conservation Tools



LANDOWNERS– Understanding of Farmland Conservation Tools



COMMUNITY– Understanding of Farmland Conservation Tools

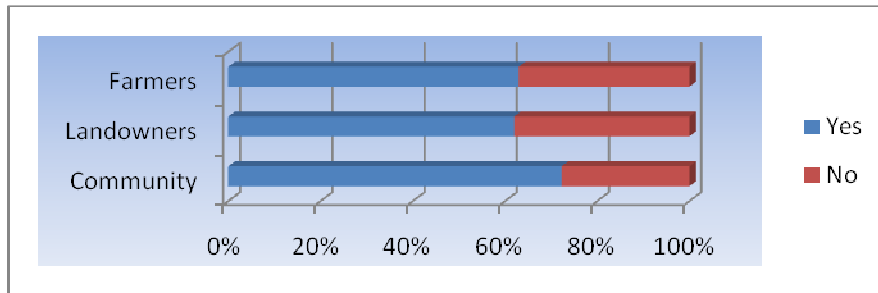


REGULATIONS

In addition to the previous question, two other questions were asked regarding the use of regulations for farmland.

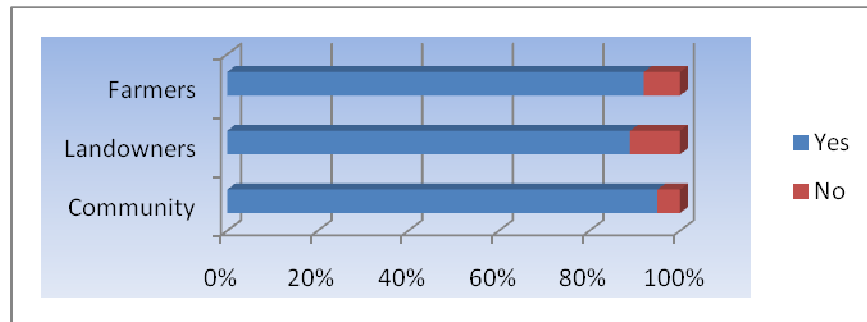
The majority of the respondents in all groups were in favor of using regulations to prohibit further conversion of farmland to non-farm usage.

Use of regulation to preserve farmland



A very strong majority was in favor of using regulations to ensure any development adjacent to farmland was compatible with agricultural practices.

Regulation for development adjacent to farmland



Refer to Appendix 1 for the full survey responses and related comments about the data findings.

Overall, all groups felt agriculture is an important contributor to Whatcom County's economy and way of life and are in favor of taking steps to preserve the farmlands that this industry depends on.

4. Public Forums

Public forums were held to bring together the various groups to discuss their ideas and concerns about developing an Agricultural Land Work Program (ALWP) for Whatcom County. These meetings built upon the findings from the baseline survey. The meetings engaged a broad mix of participants and were designed to promote participant-based discussions regarding their views on Whatcom County agriculture and specific methods for preserving farmland in the wake of steady population growth in the County.

Forum I consisted of two meetings, one in Bellingham (Oct. 1, 2008) and one in Lynden (Oct. 14, 2008). The two locations were chosen to assure the best possible attendance by North and South County residents. Postcard invitations were mailed to all 2,614 individuals who received the original questionnaire. In addition, Forum notices were sent to all city newspapers in the county. There were 31 attendees at the Bellingham event and 45 at Lynden. During this first Forum, the participants were presented the results of the survey to inform them of the scope of Whatcom County's Ag industry, the Contributions and Threats to this industry, and the public's level of interest in preserving Ag land. Following this session, the participants were asked to provide additional contributions of Whatcom's agricultural industry along with additional threats. Voluntary facilitators assisted in capturing the comments and observations in these breakout sessions. Refer to Appendix 2 for a summary of these results.

From this exercise the participants identified a broad array of contributions which the Ag industry provides Whatcom County and its residents. However, the long list of threats suggests a need for proactive programs by elected officials, committees, and volunteers if this industry is to survive locally.

The final agenda item at Forum I was a walkthrough of an initial schedule of potential Ag land preservation tools. The audience was invited to ask questions with the intent of raising the understanding level on such tools. The participants were asked to study these tools in more detail in preparation for Forum II.



Forum II also consisted of two meetings at the same two locations on Nov. 6th, and Nov. 12th. There were 18 attendees at the Bellingham meeting and 42 at Lynden. The objectives of this Forum were to obtain more in depth feedback on the preservation tools, gather ideas from the participants on additional tools, and gain insights from the community on where they thought "receiving areas" should be identified for a Transfer of Development Rights program. Breakout sessions were again facilitated by trained volunteers.

The participants were asked to describe their thoughts on the Challenges and Opportunities based on a sample list of preservation tools. The list presented was an in-progress list developed by the Technical Review Committee. Appendix 3 shows the responses from the attendees by tool. Following this exercise,

the breakout groups were asked to identify any additional tools they thought would be helpful in persevering Whatcom Ag land. Appendix 4 lists these ideas along with their associated Challenges and Opportunities. Not all the items on this list are tools per se but do give food for thought in crafting a comprehensive plan for Ag land preservation.

The groups were asked to choose their top three tools based on their prior work. While not a scientific process, the top three candidates across all groups were: Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) #1, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) #2, and Parcel Reconfiguration #3. Natural Resource Banking was 4th in the ranking. It should be noted that this ranking was a rough attempt at giving the committees and policy makers a general sense of the public's view on the relative importance of the various tools. In practice, each land parcel situation will require a review of the particulars, then a choosing of which tool(s) will be appropriate on a case by case basis.

As the last exercise in Forum II, the breakout groups were asked to identify areas they thought would make good "receiving areas" for a TDR program. They were given a zoning map of the County and asked to outline those areas they felt were most suitable to receive densities. Appendix 5 shows the descriptive and specific areas identified by each group including those areas they felt should be prohibited from taking additional densities.

Both forums included lively discussion about the role of regulation in preserving agricultural lands. Strong sentiments were expressed on all sides of the issue, with some attendees (including farmers, and community members) wanting a firmer line in the sand to stop the encroachment of development on Ag lands and preserve the land base for further generations to farm, and other attendees wanting more market-based approaches with reduced levels of regulation.

5. Technical Review Committee (TRC) and Process

A Technical Review Committee was appointed by the County Executive in June 2007 with the purpose of guiding the Ag Land Work Program on technical matters and making recommendations to the Ag Advisory Committee, the Natural Resource Committee of the County Council, and the County Administration. The assumption was the work of the TRC would take approximately 18 months. When convened in February 2008, the Committee members felt they could complete their work in less time and possibly produce final recommendations by December or January.

The following Committee was made up of broad representation with experience in farming, land use, planning, finance, development, and Ag policy.

TRC Committee Members

- Chuck Antholt – Ag Advisory Committee (ACC)
- Doug Dostal – Ag Business – Finance
- Greg Ebe – Farmer – Potato, Hydraulic engineer
- John Gillies – Facilitator - N. Lynden Water Improvement District
- Vicki Hawley – Farmer – Potato, Member of AAC
- Bill Querhn – Building Industry
- Larry Stoner – Land Use Planner
- Bob Tull – Development
- Dick Yoder – Farmer – Beef, Member of Whatcom Conservation District

David Stalheim & Samya Lutz from the County’s Department of Planning and Development Services (PDS) participated and contributed data analysis as requested by the TRC. Sarah Watts supported their work with GIS mapping. Later in the year, Dean Martin joined the PDS as the new Ag Specialist and attended these meetings and made contributions. Henry Bierlink from Whatcom Farm Friends (WFF) developed the agendas by consensus, facilitated the meetings, and documented the meeting notes. Paul Grey, also from WFF, participated in the meetings and provided the Committee with findings from the public involvement process as they occurred.

The initial Committee organization meeting was held on February 11th, 2008. A total of 17 meetings were held semi-monthly with the majority of Committee members present at each meeting. Each of the meeting notes were posted to the WFF website throughout the process for public review. A special tab and button was established on the WFF website to make it easy for the public to find and digest the proceedings of the TRC, the initial survey results, and the outputs from the Forums. The location of the WFF website is www.wcfarmfriends.com.

The formation and development of this new Committee was a learning experience for all involved. The Committee had to remind itself of the scope of its responsibility, learn the pros and cons of the various farmland preservation tools, request and digest land designations and possible reconfiguration scenarios, and consider cost implications of implementing the different preservation tools.

The Committee’s progress and activities are summarized below:

1. Defined their overall work plan
2. Identified the major threats to preserving 100,000 acres of farmland in Whatcom and discussed the significance of these threats
3. Decided the lands to be preserved are defined by the Agricultural Zone and the Rural Lands Study, approximately 108,000 acres

4. Reviewed and discussed gross calculation of the number of potential development rights in Ag Zone (2,136) and Rural Study Areas (1,766) and cost to buy these rights (\$500 – \$776 million).
5. Discussed competition between Ag lands and Critical Areas
6. Reviewed Natural Resource Bank concept paper developed by Henry Bierlink to deal with land and water issues holistically
7. Gathered, reviewed and discussed relevant resource materials and maps
8. Gave input to the Public Involvement Plan process and reviewed the Survey results
9. Developed concept of prioritizing the various factors that define and compete for Ag lands with GIS based overlays provided by Planning and Development Services
10. Discussed the issues of how to define receiving areas to support a viable TDR program
11. Reviewed and discussed map and tables produced by PDS on various scenarios for increasing densities in non-target rural areas, e.g. going from 5 to 10 dwelling units per acre
12. Reviewed past transactional history of the Conservation Futures Fund. In the past 5 years, an average of 53% of the incoming funds has been used for PDRs. The TRC discussed suggested criteria for future use of Conservation Futures funds for PDRs as well as bonding options.
13. Discussed idea of parcel reconfiguration as an additional way of moving developments rights to more marginal farming areas and preserve the ability to farm Ag parcels
14. Explored various land protection tools, their application, and cost implications
15. Gave input to WFF regarding the public involvement plan
16. Developed a refined recommendation list of preservation tools

6. TRC - Ag Preservation Tools Recommendation

The TRC worked through a number of preservation tool ideas over the course of their meetings. Some ideas were merged into a common tool, others became stand-alone tools, and yet others were dismissed as not actually being tools. A definition was developed for each tool along with Advantages and Disadvantages regarding the tool's effectiveness in preserving Ag land. In addition, commentary about each tool was distilled and captured for future consideration. Finally, the funding source for each tool was identified along with its potential impact on retiring DR's from Ag land or alternatively accommodating (moving) DR's to less desirable Ag land.

The TRC looked at a variety of ways to try to prioritize where DRs should be removed from Ag lands. Features such as parcel size, relation to other farms within a parcel, proximity to other working agricultural land, and risk of conversion were considered and developed into GIS scenarios. Still, committee members found it difficult to choose a metric to prioritize some agricultural lands over others for preservation. What they were able to consider was the degree to which development rights should be removed from agricultural lands, versus accommodated within agricultural lands. While an exact consensus could not be reached, most conceded that reality would demand some amount of accommodation, though set a target to remove about three-quarters of remaining DRs.

A tally of the tools that the TRC felt most hopeful about indicated that parcel reconfiguration was the most important tool followed by TDR, PDR, and clustering. Some expressed a desire to engage political leaders and leaders in the real estate and development community in a similar exercise of thinking through the tools and ranking the most hopeful.

Refer to Appendix 6 for the TRC's recommendations.

Time did not permit reviewing and analyzing the additional tool ideas generated from Forum II (refer to Appendix 4.) The County will need to decide whether these ideas warrant additional time and money to evaluate.

7. Summary and Next Steps

SUMMARY

The results from the public involvement survey conducted in April, 2008 demonstrated that the citizens of Whatcom County recognize and acknowledge the contributions of the local agricultural industry while also appreciating the many threats to this industry. When asked about a willingness to regulate the preservation of Ag lands, the Farmers and Landowners were split 62% in favor of regulation and 38% against such regulation. The Community-at-large was much more in favor of using regulations with a positive poll of 72%. In a corollary question regarding the use of regulations to ensure compatible development adjacent to farming, there was an overwhelming vote in favor of using regulation: Farmers 92%, Landowners 89%, and Community-at-large 95%. Admittedly, the term "regulation" means different things to different people in addition to the sensitivity between those who own farmland and those that don't.

For those citizens that participated in the survey, in the forums, and visited the Whatcom Farm Friends website, they became much more educated and appreciative of the complexities of land use management, especially as it relates to Ag land. The willing participants had multiple opportunities to express their views and ideas on how Ag land might be preserved in Whatcom County. This data was captured and tabulated and made available to the general public throughout the public involvement process using the Web and the Press. This data is contained in the appendixes of this report for the readers review.

Overall, the public's feedback suggests the county needs multiple tools to preserve Ag land and these tools need to be applied generally on a case by case basis. Concern was expressed regarding the use of certain tools especially where the funder was the taxpayer versus the open marketplace. Farmer and Community groups expressed a strong desire to maintain an agricultural land base for future farmers, while other Farmer and Landowner groups felt trying to save farmland is secondary at best to helping make farming economically viable in Whatcom County. The threat of over regulation and/or misguided regulation is a serious deterrent to farmers continuing to make sizeable re-investments in their farm operations.

The members of the Technical Review Committee processed through various preservation tools over the course of this year. They challenged themselves to think outside the box about new creative ways of preserving Ag land while respecting the rights of landowners. Three “new” tools were identified and defined through this process: Lease of Development Rights, Parcel Reconfiguration, and Natural Resource Banking. Advantages and disadvantages were identified for each tool along with the Committee’s commentary on each tool and likely funding sources. The table in Appendix 6 represents the TRC’s recommendation for consideration by the Ag Advisory Committee, the Natural Resource Committee of the County Council, and the County Administration.

Additional ideas were identified in Forum II for preserving Ag land as well as preserving Whatcom’s agricultural industry. Future study will be required to flesh out these ideas and determine their relative effectiveness. Refer to Appendix 4 for a listing of these additional ideas.

NEXT STEPS

This report provides substantial data and ideas to assist in developing more refined policies and practices for preserving Whatcom’s Ag land. The information gathered and compiled from the public involvement program and the recommendations of the TRC should now be used by the appropriate committees and the County Administration to recommend actions to the County Council. Below are suggested steps to be taken.

1. Review of this report by the Ag Advisory Committee in the 1st quarter of 2009 with a set of recommendations to the Natural Resource Committee for consideration.
2. Review of this report by the County Administration in the 1st quarter of 2009 to assess the impact of implementing the TRC recommendations and any other preservation ideas that appear to have potential value. Mr. Dean Martin, the County’s Ag Specialist, has reviewed the County’s current code to determine the level of accommodation that already exists in supporting the preservation tools recommended by the TRC. His review is summarized in Appendix 7.
3. Review and deliberation by the Natural Resource Committee of recommendations made by the AAC and the Planning & Development Services (PDS) department.
4. Review, deliberation and decision making by the County Council of recommendations made by the Natural Resource Committee. Revisit and update the original Purpose and Objectives of 2006 Ag Land Work Program based on new data provided by this report and follow on recommendations. Refer to the Background section of this report for the Purpose and Objectives.
5. Identification by the County Council of the committee or agency to proactively oversee the use of the final Ag land preservation toolkit. This action step recognizes the need for a consistent and focused management of threatened Whatcom Ag lands and the need for informed and selective use of the tools in the new toolkit.
6. Implementation by Whatcom County’s Planning and Development Services department of the necessary ordinance changes and land use programs to achieve the desired outcomes.

In the course of working through these suggested Next Steps, the public should be expected to meaningfully participate in the process along the way.

APPENDICES

1. PIP Questionnaire and Results

This Appendix contains the full survey questionnaire and the related responses from the following three groups: Farmers, Landowners, and Community. The questionnaires were returned over the period of April and May, 2008 and tabulated by Whatcom Farm Friends. Response rates for the three largest audiences, shown below, produced a margin of error of +/- 6% with a confidence level of 95%.

ABOUT YOU

1. How long have you lived in Whatcom County?

- 5 years or less
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-40 years
- over 40 years

Residency in Whatcom	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Less than 5 years	2%	2%	17%
6 – 10 years	2%	5%	12%
11 - 20 years	10%	10%	21%
21 – 40 years	23%	26%	28%
More than 40 years	63%	57%	22%

2. Do you live within?

- city limits
- outside city limits

Group	City	Outside City
Farmers	10%	90%
Landowners	10%	90%
Community	53%	47%

3. Please rate your reasons for living in Whatcom County.

(Check the column that applies to each of the five items below)

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Family lives here	_____	_____	_____
b. Business or job opportunity	_____	_____	_____
c. Recreational opportunities	_____	_____	_____
d. Open spaces	_____	_____	_____
e. Overall quality of life	_____	_____	_____

Reason	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Quality of life	82%	78%	81%
Family lives here	76%	68%	53%
Business/Job opportunities	71%	51%	38%
Open spaces	69%	55%	64%
Recreational opportunities	41%	35%	51%

ABOUT GROWTH

4. Assuming Whatcom County’s economy and population continues to grow, how would you like government to prioritize the following issues in planning for this growth?

(Please rate the following by marking the appropriate column)

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Affordable housing	_____	_____	_____
b. Family wage jobs	_____	_____	_____
c. Quality food supply	_____	_____	_____
d. Our natural resources	_____	_____	_____
e. Our open spaces, including our farmlands	_____	_____	_____

Factor	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Quality food supply	75%	65%	70%
Open spaces	73%	66%	78%
Natural resources	69%	51%	74%
Family wage jobs	68%	66%	72%
Affordable housing	50%	42%	56%

ABOUT AGRICULTURE

5. How important is agriculture to the economy of our County. Would you say that it is ...

(Please check one of the choices below)

- the most important contributor to our economy
 one of the most important contributors
 one of many contributors to our economy

Rating	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Most Important	38%	28%	18%
One of the most important	46%	51%	59%
One of many	15%	20%	23%

6. What do you think are the top three agricultural products produced in Whatcom County as measured by dollar sales?

(Please write in your responses below)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Group	1st	2nd	3rd
Farmers	Dairy	Berry	Potato
Landowners	Dairy	Berry	Potato
Community	Berry	Dairy	Potato

7. Do you believe current population growth and land use planning will result in our County's agricultural economy

(Please mark one of the choices below)

- Staying the same
 Increasing
 Decreasing

Group	Same	Increasing	Decreasing
Farmers	11%	7%	82%
Landowners	19%	8%	73%
Community	13%	10%	77%

8. Please let us know your opinion on how agriculture contributes to our county.

(Please mark your response to each of the statements below)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) Helps maintain a diverse economic base	___	___	___	___	___
b) Preserves our wildlife habitat	___	___	___	___	___
c) Protects our open spaces	___	___	___	___	___
d) Provides living wage jobs	___	___	___	___	___

Factor	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Diversifies our economy	96%	94%	88%
Protects our open spaces	88%	81%	85%
Provides living wage jobs	71%	59%	55%
Preserves wildlife habitat	64%	67%	68%

ABOUT AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

9. Protecting & conserving ag lands is important to me.

(Please mark the response that best reflects your opinion)

Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
___	___	___	___	___

Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Farmers	66%	24%	3%	6%	2%
Landowners	52%	32%	9%	3%	3%
Community	62%	32%	1%	3%	3%

10. What are the greatest threats to the preservation of farmland in Whatcom County?

(Please mark the response that best reflects your opinion)

	High	Medium	Low	No Affect
a. Encroachment by urban growth	___	___	___	___
b. Environmental regulations	___	___	___	___
c. Economic viability of farming	___	___	___	___
d. Access to water for irrigation and livestock	___	___	___	___
e. Access to farm labor	___	___	___	___
f. Five- acre home sites and buildable parcels within Whatcom farmlands	___	___	___	___
g. Other – (Please describe below and rate)	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___
_____	___	___	___	___

Factor	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Economic viability of farming	96%	93%	88%
Urban encroachment	92%	84%	94%
Access to water for irrigation	88%	78%	90%
Environmental regulations	84%	86%	59%
Five acre parcels w/in ag lands	83%	73%	85%
Access to farm labor	77%	69%	63%

Additional commented threats by group:

Farmers

- Right to farm laws
- Tribal developments (casinos)
- The accumulated value of land and bldgs. on large multi-generational farms who then retire and split up acreage and sell at development prices
- Corporate buyouts vs. independents
- Zoning that allows parceling
- Whatcom Farm Friends and County Council taking rights away that have made farmers for years
- The price of land
- Land, planning, courage, and fear of pain
- Taxes
- Five acre home sites are too large for people to maintain and waste of land
- Uncooperative Natives
- Developer's and legal loopholes
- Too many home sites are being built on prime Ag land
- City people complaining about Ag noise with machinery
- Cost of Farming

B.I.A. and their logic
Incompetent County Officials who don't understand farming and what makes it work
Regulation on housing density and apartment height
Gov regs, lack of flood protection, lack of reservoirs for water for future use
Not allowing farmland to be properly drained
Market value for farmers, society need to pay more for its food
Developers
Real estate developers, population growth
Lawyers and their interpretations of GMA

Landowners

Allowing Developers to use prime farming land. There is a lot of land east of town past Everson up in the hills.
Too many regulations by people that don't have understanding about the real world. They want to make good farmland what? For fish and eagles nests.
Too many regulations that force Ag to sell out
People in high position who don't understand Ag
Taxes
Reg. that create/describe farmland/open spaces
Over regulation by government
Not dredging river. The Nooksack River needs dredging from Deming so gravel can be harvested and have good jobs, roads, wages, and have the best fish returns in the world
Fish and Game and Wetlands
Bureaucracy
The inability to say stop and no more
Development outside Growth areas. Development should be centered around towns
Wet Land classification
Poor farming practices because of public perception of land use
Environmental regulations for farmers
Fish and Wildlife restrictions
Fuel costs
Land Developers
The planting of trees on good farmland
No common sense in regulations
Realtors
Government regulations
Property Taxes
Our educated biologists and county preservationists
Permit requirements
Change in priorities
Government mandated wet lands and mitigation for developers
Whatcom County Planning Regulations
High real estate values
Zoning doesn't mean anything
High cost of living

Developers having the money to buy large tracts of land and their influence to be able to annex into cities or to "trade" lands with county owned land.

County Council changing rules every year

It's not just the environmental regulations, it's the need for agriculture

High Taxes

Build homes on non useable land. Lynden has moved north using valuable farm land.

Global economy

County Council

Population growth

Land use law fits everybody

Inheritance tax & inability to pass it on

Wealthy corps wearing down little people with no money

County restrictions, gov. regs

Ag land cheap to build on because of location and water and septic availability

Long term effects of fertilizer & contamination of soil

Community

Gas and diesel prices for machinery

Population increase

Building (homes) encroachment

Politicians

Land speculators and developers

Allowing growth outside the city in areas unusable for farming

Greed on the part of elected officials

Farm labor

Extreme well-funded pressure by developers

Farmers to farm the farmland

Five acre lots need to be reduced to allow for more houses to the elderly, therefore less land needed

Strong regulatory protections for farms

Sprawl is #1

Increased taxes

Lack of down zoning

Any govt. subsidized farming is a threat

Cluster housing on larger land parcels

I don't think that many students are encouraged to pursue agriculture-it doesn't seem to get as much respect as other career choices.

Potential disease

Urban sprawl

A culture far removed from farming

Farmer selling to developers for their retirement

Competition from farm producers

Cost of maintaining open space

High land prices

Governmental interference - too many agencies

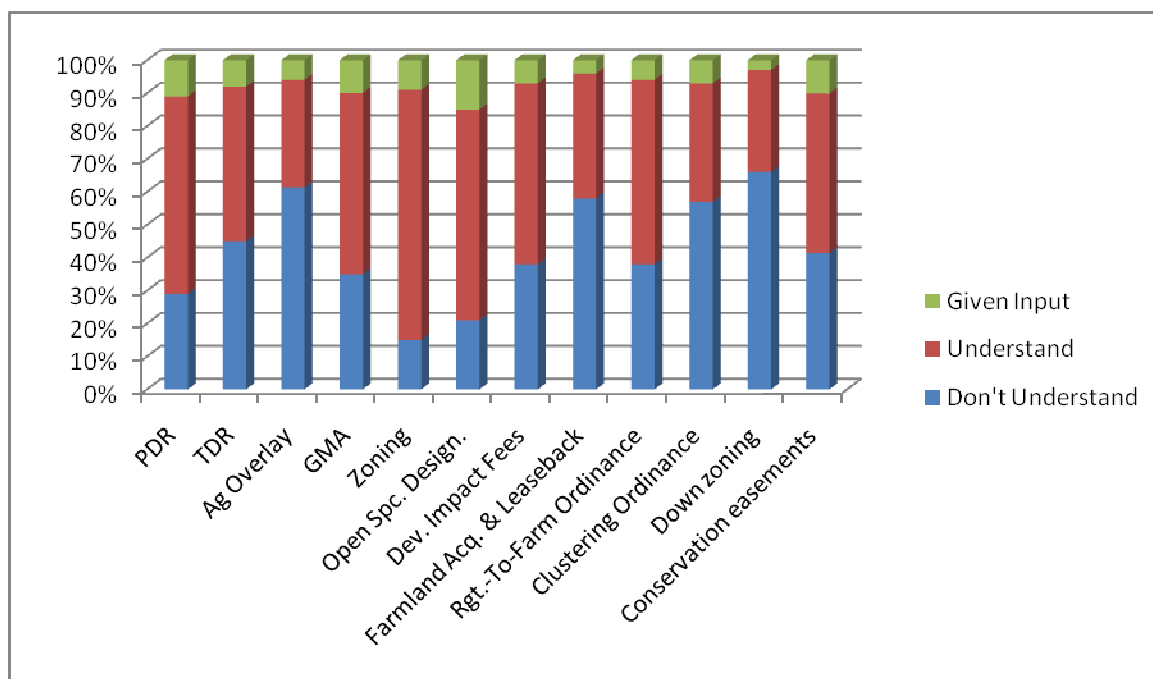
Pesticide Use

11. This question is designed to help us understand your familiarity and understanding of the various programs available to manage land uses. (Please refer to the scale below then check your responses in the columns at the right)	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*
a. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)					
b. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)					
c. Agricultural Protection Overlay (APO)					
d. Growth Management Act (GMA)					
e. Zoning					
f. Open Space designation or "Current use" taxation					
g. Development impact fees					
h. Farmland acquisition & lease-back program					
i. Right-to-Farm ordinance					
j. Clustering ordinance					
k. Down zoning					
l. Voluntary conservation easements					

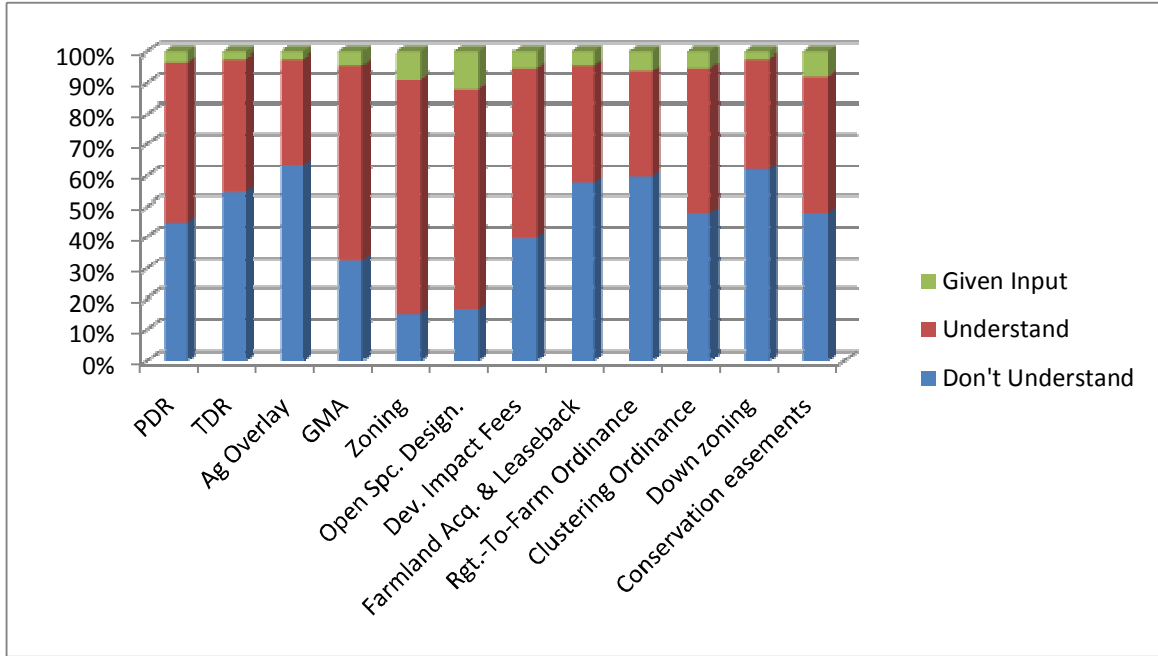
***Rating scale:**

- 1 = Have not heard of the program
- 2 = Have heard about it but don't know its meaning
- 3 = Have heard about and understand it somewhat
- 4 = Have heard about it and understand it completely
- 5 = Have given my input on the program

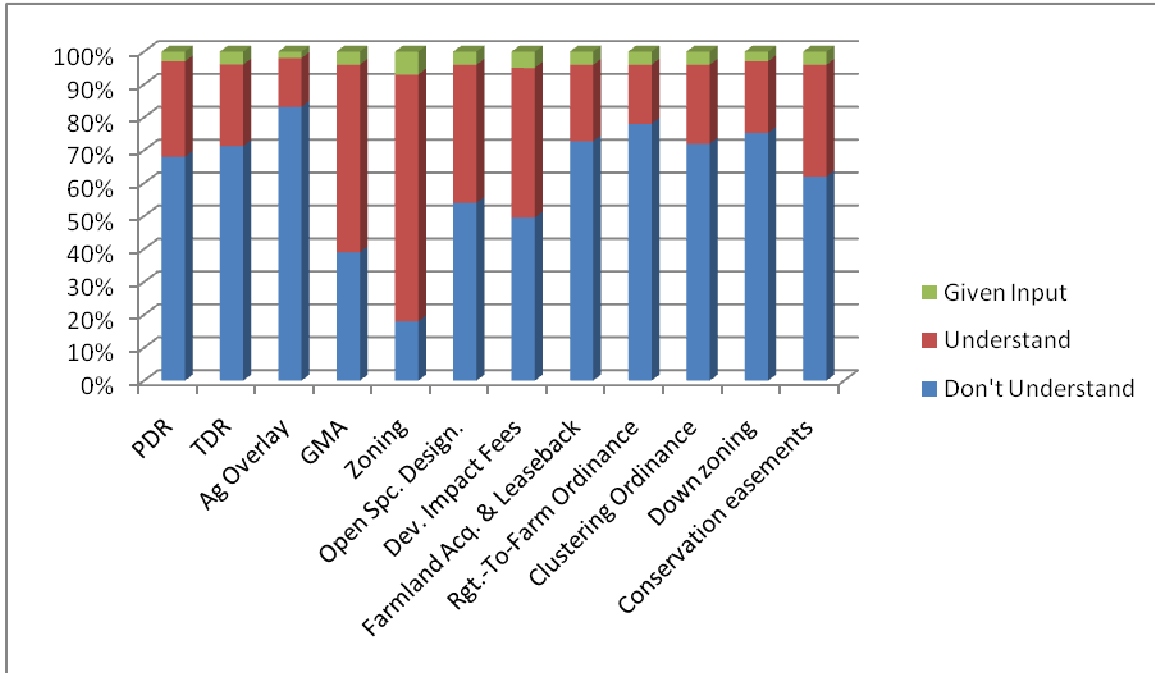
FARMERS – Understanding of Farmland Conservation Tools



LANDOWNERS– Understanding of Farmland Conservation Tools



COMMUNITY– Understanding of Farmland Conservation Tools



12. Where do you discover information about existing and upcoming Whatcom County land use regulations? (Please circle those that apply to you)

- a) Bellingham Herald
- b) Lynden Tribune
- c) Weekly publications (Whatcom Independent, Foothills Gazette, Cascadia Weekly)
- d) Ferndale Record Journal
- e) Attending County Council and Committee meetings
- f) Minutes from County Council and Committee meetings
- g) Neighbors
- h) Advocacy Organizations (please describe below)

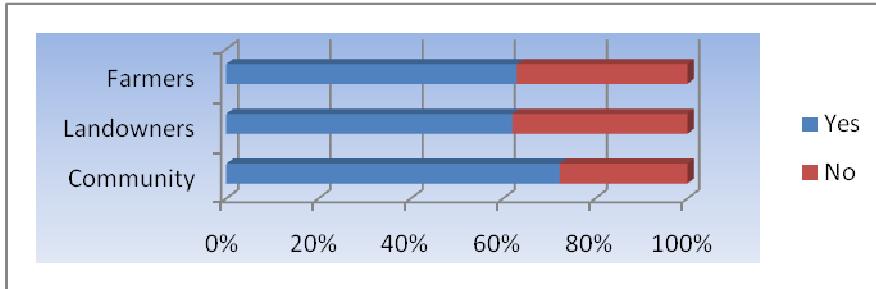
- i) Other sources – (please describe below)

Group	Bellingham Herald	Lynden Tribune	Weekly's	Ferndale Journal	County Council
Farmers	65%	50%	18%	6%	10%
Landowners	42%	22%	5%	6%	6%
Community	70%	16%	29%	5%	5%

Percentages do not total to 100% based on multiple responses.

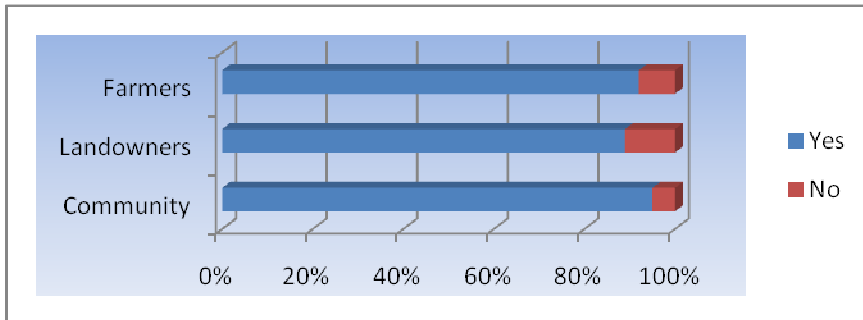
13. In your view, should land use regulations prohibit the conversion of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses?

- Yes
- No



14. Should land use regulations ensure that development adjacent to agricultural uses is compatible with agricultural practices?

- Yes
- No



15. If land use regulations are used to protect farmland in Whatcom County’s rural areas, do you have any opinions about what regulations should be emphasized?

(Please be as specific as possible)

Listed below are excerpts from comments received from Farmers and the Community. No comments to this question were received from the Landowners.

FARMERS’ COMMENTS REGARDING THE USE OF REGUALTIONS

(You) can’t force land to remain in farm use if not economically viable.

Land is usually a farmer’s retirement, the value and ability to sell it as they wish must be protected.

Cluster zoning works well, the farmer can develop part of the farm – which makes him profitable and farm on the remaining acreage.

Farmland preservation through innovative new farming techniques, and old ones, needs to stay a part of Whatcom.

Protect the value of farmland development with respect to the individual farmer’s retirement.

Use all the tools you can find. Farmland is a non-renewable natural resource.

Don’t allow ag land to be rezoned as rural.

Have the courage to put R5 parcels back into ag zone. Severally restrict 5 acre home sites.

No more five acre parcel split offs. Maybe split two acres off the prime land max.

Don’t extend water and sewer to rural areas.

Put housing on poorer land.

Environmental regulations should not make prime land into wetlands.

Allow farmers and farm groups to design and implement strategies for environmental concerns.

Let us continue to farm and stop restrictive regulations that cost us a lot of money.

Protect farmer from lawsuits and harassment claims. Every time one person complains farmer must take 4 + hours of time with an inspector without pay and are not allowed to know who called in.

More funding is needed for PDR s at the state and federal levels. TDRs are needed immediately!

Let's sell and develop current homesteads versus breaking up these parcels.

Regulation seems to be too flexible – there's always a loophole. Enforce "no net loss of farmland" for everyone, including state and cities.

Problem – taxation is based on assessment formulas in effect.

COMMUNITIES' COMMENTS REGARDING THE USE OF REGULATIONS

Limit growth as much as possible when it comes to farmland.

If a farmer wants to sell to a developer or put his land into 5 acre plots he should be able to.

I think our farmland is very important. We need to exist with our farmland and be able to control what we put in our water.

Starts in cities - need to encourage them/us to use city land spaces better than to structure taxes to support ag land.

The assumption of using "Land use regulations" is a bad course of action- the viability of agriculture ground should be determined by market demand.

Rezone prime soils that are rural as agricultural. Strengthen and replace APO's with stronger protection.

Grandfather homes on small acreages so their taxes won't increase from current assessed program.

The presence of developers needs to be moderated to preserve our precision agricultural lands.

No more development on 5 acre lots by using water rights. No more wells or city/county extension of water lines.

Prime farmland should be protected against urban sprawl with allowances for additional dwelling (limited numbers) for extended family or farm workers.

The people who do zonings need to have a clue as to the vision of our county beyond 10 years- common sense needs to dictate what is the best stewardship of our land and our county.

Give the farmer an opportunity to preserve farmland while having a decent retirement. I think TDR's might accomplish this. Not sure about PDR's.

Current land use regulations harm viability of farms because of rules reflect political views not needed rules to protect environment.

County needs to reimburse people fairly when they tell people how to use land or when they take land away.

Make it palatable for farmers to farm and you won't have to worry about "open space" and agriculture.

Five and ten acre sites are swallowing up county land. Make it feasible for people to have 1/4 and 1/10 acre home sites.

Protect water, enforce zoning, hire more zoning enforcement personnel.

2. Forum I – Ag’s Contributions and Threats

CONTRIBUTIONS

In April, 2008 a county-wide survey was conducted as part of the County’s Ag Land Work Program.

The results below show the frequency with which each audience agreed with the various ways agriculture contributes to Whatcom’s economy and quality of life.

Contribution	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Diversifies our economy	96%	94%	88%
Protects our open spaces	88%	81%	85%
Provides living wage jobs	71%	59%	55%
Preserves wildlife habitat	64%	67%	68%

As a follow up to the mailed survey, two forums where held in Bellingham and Lynden in October, 2008. During these forums, the participants were asked to identify additional contributions made by the local agricultural industry beyond those shown above. The responses were recorded by location without regard to significance or ranking.

Contribution (additional)	Bellingham	Lynden
Provides food to ourselves & neighbors	x	x
Reduces fuel consumption for transportation	x	x
Connects us to our roots, natural environment	x	x
Working land prevents sprawl	x	
Pays more in taxes than it costs in services	x	x
Connects us to a larger picture (legacy)		x
Adds to social capital in community		x

Contribution (additional)	Bellingham	Lynden
Maintains our values & state of mind		x
Provides an honest profession – founded on soil, rain, and hard work		x
Presents opportunities for leadership with new technologies		x
Offers a model for our youth		x
Produces tangible outputs vs. services		x
Creates a healthy family environment		x
Contributes to food security	x	x
Contributes to cultural diversity		x
Offers a recession proof industry		x
Builds variety of skills		x

THREATS

The results below show the frequency with which each surveyed audience agreed with the various ways Whatcom agriculture is threatened.

Threats	Farmers	Landowners	Community
Economic viability of farming	96%	93%	88%
Urban encroachment	92%	84%	94%
Access to water for irrigation	88%	78%	90%
Environmental regulations	84%	86%	59%
Five acre parcels w/in ag lands	83%	73%	85%
Access to farm labor	77%	69%	63%

As a follow up to the mailed survey, two forums were held in Bellingham and Lynden in October, 2008. During these forums, the participants were asked to identify additional threats to Whatcom's agricultural industry beyond those shown above. The responses were recorded by location without regard to significance or ranking.

Threats (additional)	Bellingham	Lynden
Lack of community knowledge & support of Ag	x	x
High cost of farmland properties	x	x
High cost of farm infrastructure	x	
Lack of food processors	x	x
Access to capital	x	x
Lack of new farmers, loss of young farmers	x	x
High cost of energy	x	
Sand and gravel mining	x	x
Dependency on federal's \$'s for conservation	x	

Threats (additional)	Bellingham	Lynden
Loss of honey bees for pollination	x	
Death of a farmer w/o a succession plan	x	x
Wetland mitigation obligations	x	
Flooding on the Nooksack River (maintenance)	x	x
CREP program – trees planted too close to drainage	x	x
Lack of long term planning (too many changes)		x
Climate change impacts on Ag practices		x
Foreign ownership of Ag lands		x
Cheap food imports driving down food costs		x
Complaints & threat of lawsuits		x
Zoning that does not allow for farmer to live on small parcel of their land late in life		x
Regulations reducing the enjoyment of farming		x
Emphasis on fish needs in ditches & drainages		x
Cluster developments on prime Ag lands due to CAO priorities		x
Cost of preservation tools		x
Lack of marketing opportunities		x
Restrictions on exports		x
Under investment in research		x
Tax increases		x
Ethanol development		x
Lack of legal clarity on water rights		x
Lack of cohesive collaboration by farmers across all types of Ag		x

3. Forum II – Challenges and Opportunities

Tool	Challenges	Opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have too little money for this program 2. To create political will to supply more money 3. Maximizing impact of each purchase 4. Gap between appraised value and farmer perceived value 5. Farmer knowledge (or lack of), acceptance and trust of program 6. Uncertainty in regulatory framework 7. Too expensive 8. Federal dollars may not be secure 9. Process takes long time 10. Right to develop is gone forever 11. Competition for funding dollars with parks 12. Needs to be tweaked 13. Could restrict farmers' future 14. Piecemeal process when all the land is valuable/needed 15. Taxpayer don't understand tool, may think it is a windfall for farmers 16. PDR can't put dent in 4.000 D.U.s 17. Management of PDRs long term 18. Continuation of Conservation Futures Fund 19. Conversion of PDR saved land from working farms to hobby farms 20. Increased value of Ag land in Whatcom – making profits harder to achieve for farmers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pair PDR with community education to raise will to be taxed (People want clean air, water, local food) 2. Add incentives (tax) for private purchases 3. Pay off debt and buy more land 4. Permanent solution to farmland preservation 5. Target dollars to prime Ag soils not just as zoned 6. Learn from where it is successful 7. Education general public 8. Get a big tax advantage 9. Separates land from development 10. Transaction that both parties agree to 11. Only proactive working tool we have
<input type="checkbox"/> Lease of Development Rights (LDR)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May be poor use of dollars 2. Too uncertain to just buy time 3. No sense to lease and not buy later 4. Only interested in tool if it is moving to permanent tool (Don't spend taxpayers money on temporary solution) 5. Funding sources 6. Lack of incentives 7. Not sustainable 8. What are the appropriate time limits? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buying time 2. Quicker than PDR 3. Delay is an opportunity 4. Effective band-aid solution 5. Purchase over time – something between PDR and LDR 6. Creates problems for grandchildren 7. Gives thinking time for farmers 8. Long term lease allows future planners more room

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Concerns of misuse 10. LDRs only if they are a gateway to PDRs 11. Prolongs the decision and stability of farmland 12. Will cost more in the long run 13. Built in farm subsidy 	<p>to make decisions based on surrounding land growth pattern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Affordable short term solution
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No operating bank 2. Need smart bank 3. Need both sending and receiving areas 4. Could create inverse incentives in receiving areas 5. Need for collaboration with urban areas 6. No market to buy (need to create market) 7. Comes out of consumers' pocket in the form of higher price for new homes. Could actually drive people to homes in rural area. 8. How to define receiving areas and where to put them 9. Requires strong regulatory system 10. More rules & regulations not appreciated by all 11. Shouldn't compete with PDRs 12. Focus on existing UGAs 13. Hasn't been successful in other locales 14. No incentive to make it worthwhile 15. There is no mandate for city/county cooperation 16. Ratio of sending to receiving rights 17. Developers not required to buy receiving rights 18. Requires strong political will 19. NIMBY issue at time of implementation 20. Need to keep mix of lot sizes in cities too 21. City dwellers not persuaded receiving densities will actually preserve farmland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increases density for developer – height limits, FAR 2. Require TDR purchase if development is lower than zoned density 3. Increase choice of housing styles & require purchase of TDR 4. Market driven solution 5. Cost would only be administrative 6. Could be combined with Natural Resource banking to ensure holistic planning 7. Growth Mgt. Coordinating Council looking at accommodation growth potential 8. Lots of non-Ag rural areas 9. Landowners have more control 10. Developers get density bonus 11. Allows for more diverse funding 12. Fundamentally fair – equitable transaction for landowner
<input type="checkbox"/> Parcel reconfiguration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrative costs-uncertainty of applicants 2. Needs clear standards for acceptable applications 3. Must actually increase Ag utility 4. More people in farm areas = more risk of conflict 5. Increase need for infrastructure potentially 6. History has shown this tool doesn't work 7. Could be critical areas 8. Not very effective in stopping sprawl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could increase Ag utility 2. Combine with other tools, e.g. TDR 3. Shifting boundaries can benefit neighbors 4. Opportunity to sell critical areas to conservation organizations 5. Chance to bank dollars to purchase of development rights 6. Can increase opportunity to farm for neighbor

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Facilitation capacity of the County Planning depart. to make this work 10. Costly to land owner to start conversation with County 11. Need for some parcels below size needed for houses/residents 12. Need panel review to assure prime Ag land is being preserved 13. Size of impact of this tool in reducing the problem of 4,000 D.U.s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7. More flexible than clustering 8. Opportunity to sell part of property to farmer 9. Preserves prime land 10. Helps succession planning 11. Short plat options to allow reconfigurations 12. Allows smaller lot sizes for residences 13. Allows farmers to keep asset value
<input type="checkbox"/> Down zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Takes market value away from farmers 2. Community conflict 3. Political backlash from landowners in decreasing value 4. Creating reasonable incentives for taking away perceived value 5. Consolidate lots to one house per 40 acres 6. Farmland is farmers' 401K 7. Does not build community 8. Threatens Ag production if it costs farmers their asset value and loan status 9. Be careful of unintended consequences (see #8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low cost 2. Easy administratively 3. Can create permanency & stability for farmland 4. Has most potential to preserve volume of parcels 5. Look for precedent in other areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition & Leaseback/Resale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If run by government, subject to the winds of politics 2. Who will administrate it? 3. Where will the funding come from? 4. Needs to be coupled with something more permanent 5. Some non-profits are interested in conservation, not Ag, will let Ag potential decline 6. Who owns the property? 7. Not moving large number of parcels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less likely to create conflict 2. No government approval 3. Could save a parcel immediately threatened by development 4. Lease generates revenue 5. Supports concept of public stewardship of Ag land 6. Successful elsewhere, good models exist 7. Create a Public Development Authority w/ sunset 8. Bond issue 9. Could be attractive to new farmers 10. Example in Massachusetts of 300 acres production site – community farm 11. Brings commons approach to Ag land 12. Links farmers to affordable lands
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resource Banking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficult to comprehend 2. Difficult to value and prioritize 3. Complexity: Competing interests, agencies, laws 4. Crossing jurisdictions, difficult to get all sectors to agree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brings competing interests, agencies, and laws together for common good 2. Protects water rights 3. Less dollars needed from taxpayers

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Is there enough water to make this program work? 6. No formal process exists yet 7. Complex issues need to be addressed 8. Water rights issue needs to be addressed first 9. Farmers should have first dibs on water 10. Seems complex and costly 11. Need an “exchange rate” between resources 12. Need to change local, State, and Federal laws 13. Tool needs ombudsman 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Only tool that looks at big picture
<input type="checkbox"/> Right-to-Farm Ordinance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hard to enforce & define “best mgt. practices” 2. Farmers sue farmers 3. Needs to be coupled with protection against frivolous suits 4. Education about the scope and limits of this ordinance 5. Close loophole for “bad actors” 6. Does not get large acreage preserved 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free 2. Deal with “bad actors” 3. Shift this right amongst farm family members 4. Use this right as incentive with other tools 5. Power for the farmer 6. Signage and public awareness can be increased 7. “Welcome to the Ag Zone” signs 8. Help pay for lawsuits 9. New farmer gets parcel at an affordable price if he/she extinguishes the development right 10. Modernize this ordinance to include best practices 11. Brings down land value at time of transfer/inheritance
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Easements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Still unfamiliar to landowners 2. Voluntary – how many landowners will step up? 3. Funding more difficult than PDRs 4. Works if philosophical commitment and dollars are there 5. Federal laws change, expensive for lawyers to draw up 6. Some types of easements not compatible with Ag use 7. Could be forced on people, not always voluntary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tax incentives expire 2009 2. Allow public/private partnerships 3. Can build on existing process 4. Preserves land for Ag use 5. Eases inheritance tax 6. Low cost transaction
<input type="checkbox"/> Clustering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaves residences in Ag land 2. Creates infrastructure pressure 3. Foot in the door for development 4. Not currently allowed in Ag zone 5. Can increase density 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better to cluster than haphazard development 2. Optimize soil use 3. Limit the use of land w/i the cluster 4. Education - could increase communication between farmers and non-farmers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Too many loopholes 7. Clustering on prime land 8. Developers can put non-Ag covenants, legal fees 9. CAO trumps Ag preservation goals 10. Not getting lands preserved/locked within residential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Requires no siting on prime land 6. Better than checker boarding Ag land 7. More chance of doing something with development parcels later 8. Remaining Ag parcels need to be connected & accessible for farming
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4. Forum II – Additional Tools Suggestions

Tool	Challenges	Opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Conditional Use	Residences as conditional in Ag land	Same for surrounding land Why is competing use for Ag land a threat to Ag land?
<input type="checkbox"/> Trading	Trading development rights for securing water rights	Why do some farmers have insecure or no water rights?
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	Connect community-at-large with farmers through education	May involve using school systems Foodshed concept Export value of local Ag
<input type="checkbox"/> Growing new farmers	More farmers gives farmland a better change to survive	
<input type="checkbox"/> New markets	Create new markets (outlets) for Whatcom grown food	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-perpetual easements	25-50yr., 50-99yr.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Help w/ harvest	Improve production levels	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mini-share cropping	Farmer leases 1 acre of a 5 acre parcel from landowner	Challenges: Water rights & privacy Opportunities: No cost to the public, Sustainable CSA programs, rent for landowners, build up soils
<input type="checkbox"/> Ag Mitigation	No net loss of Ag land.	If you develop on Ag land you need to adjust elsewhere
<input type="checkbox"/> Roadside Const.	Limit construction to within 200 ft. of roadside	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accessory Const.	All construction in Ag zone can be done only as an accessory to Ag	
<input type="checkbox"/> Permit Allocation	Allocate “x” number of permits per year to control development rate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Proactive tools	Tools that support farmers to practice their trade	Like in Europe
<input type="checkbox"/> TDR- Hybrid	Density transfer credit breaks into separate transactions	Simpler
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Tax	Tax development right. Reduce tax on lands used for Ag	Allocate tax burden to those who use services
<input type="checkbox"/> Road centerline	Include road area up to centerline in acreage calculation. Could bump a 38 acre parcel up to a 40 acre parcel	Used in Skagit County. Contact Brandon Black
<input type="checkbox"/> Property assessments	Revise formulas for assessment of properties	

Tool	Challenges	Opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Ag Department	Establish Ag department in County government to put on par with other groups	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ag Policy	Policy that educates the public on Ag's contributions and threats	
<input type="checkbox"/> New Formula	New formula for development rights to be responsive to financial trends and growth trends	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bond	Generate funding more quickly to protect Ag land	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning v1	Time limit on vested period, e.g. 2yrs., no action	Like Oregon
<input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning v2	Rezone Ag Study Areas from R5/R10 to Ag acres	Approx. 22,000 acres
<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt Wells	Broaden interpretation for Ag use - irrigation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ag Viability	Tools that would strengthen the economic viability of Whatcom Ag	Keep all size parcels in mind when creating tools
<input type="checkbox"/> Soil Protection	Tools that would protect soils for future Ag, not just current farmers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Voters Initiatives		
<input type="checkbox"/> Levies		To get additional PDR funds
<input type="checkbox"/> Taxing Levels		Impact on farm's open space does not make sense late in life

5. Forum II – Receiving Areas Suggestions

Grp.	Commented Areas	Specific Areas	Prohibited Areas
	Bellingham Forum 11.06.08:		
A.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Areas poised for development 2. Develop where the jobs are 	Birch Bay, Ferndale, UGA N. of Bellingham	
B.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where highest density of utilities exist 2. In mixed use developments 3. Receiving areas for light industrial & commercial along busy roads such as Bender/Badger 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ferndale on hill 2. Blaine 3. Bellingham <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Infill potential areas w/i city boundaries b. In UGA (give businesses exposure) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kendall 2. E. of Lynden
C.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase densities in UGAs 2. Increasing densities within existing cities 3. Create density bonus which would be worth more if in existing city vs. UGA 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ferndale & UGA 2. Bellingham & UGA 3. Blaine with consideration given to drainage & watershed 4. Infill along I-5 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Columbia Valley
	Lynden Forum 11.12.08:		
A.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited to cities & UGAs (Lynden should be exempted) 2. Cities should be prioritized 3. Clay soils 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bellingham & UGAs 2. Ferndale & UGAs 3. W. of Ferndale 4. Blaine 5. Birch Bay 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flood plains 2. Lynden UGAs 3. Everson 4. Nooksack 5. Sumas UGA 6. Rural Study Areas <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clearbrook b. Ten & Theil 7. PDR Target Areas <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enterp. & Harksell b. Stein & Bahme

Grp.	Commented Areas	Specific Areas	Prohibited Areas
B.	1. W. of I-5 w/ exceptions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bellingham & UGAs 2. Slater to Smith (N. of Bellingham) 3. Blaine 4. Birch Bay 	
C.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bellingham (central) 2. Bellingham UGAs (Upzone to receive TDRs) 3. Birch Bay 4. Ferndale – west area 5. Create TDRs in rural areas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sumas 2. Everson 3. Nooksack 4. Lynden 5. Lake Whatcom watershed 6. Small scale Ag on small parcels near Bellingham
D.	1. Receiving areas around cities to contain their sprawl	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ferndale – West of city 2. N. of Bellingham – along Van Wyck Rd. 3. NW of Bellingham 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ag zone 2. Rural Study areas
E.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where water purveyors exist to service residential users 2. Infill existing cities with eye toward diversity in housing options 3. Near employment centers 4. Five acre parcels not being farmed. Convert to 1 acre parcels adjacent to cities 5. Put in LAMIRD areas to create little hamlets 6. Uplands, hilly areas not suitable for farming 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Birch Bay 2. Bellingham – urban villages (Barkley Village, Samish Way, Old Town) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bellingham – prevent over densification 2. Don't put density near industrial 3. Not along Meridian on way to Canada

6. TRC – Preservation Tools Recommendation

Tool	Definition – Advantages/Disadvantages	Comments/Funding
<input type="checkbox"/> Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)	<p>Development rights are retired in exchange for compensation. Landowners sell a residential development right to a qualified public agency or private conservation organization. Landowners retain ownership and use of their land for agricultural purposes. PDR programs do not give government agencies the right to develop land.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Established program with well defined procedure. Matching State & Federal funds are available</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Small impact in acres protected on an annual basis, unless the program is paired with a leveraging tool such as an installment purchase agreements. Matching dollars maybe limited in future years.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Over the 5 yr. life of the PDR program 84 development rights have been purchased and 641 acres protected. More dollars would make more impact. County should consider an annual allocation of Conservation Futures dollars and possibly bonding against these funds. A strategic application of PDR dollars to high priority target parcels is needed. The process of receiving applications, processing them, getting appraisals carried out is lengthy. Requesting matching grant support from the Federal and/or State Governments can have short deadlines.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> Percentage of County’s Conservation Future’s Fund with matching dollars from State & Federal Gov’t. Costs in Whatcom County have averaged approximately \$50,000 per development right.</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> There is the potential of retiring 480 DR’s in the next 20 years based on the funding and usage momentum of this tool.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Lease of Development Rights (LDR)	<p>Similar to PDR except there is a term to the conservation easement. The compensation to the landowner is dependent on the length of the term. The LDR would likely contain an option for right of first refusal to buy or for renewal of the easement.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Farmer/landowner doesn’t have to make a decision in perpetuity and may be more interested in negotiating a shorter term easement. It takes pressure off of a landowner from making a hasty decision e.g. at the time of estate settlement. In so doing this keeps farm land farming for the duration of the lease and allows time for landowners to look at the potentials of PDR, TDR and possible other programs for him/her.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Does not permanently remove development rights from Ag lands. No federal funding available.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> A variation of the PDR, leasing of development rights would address the issue of landowners giving up their development rights in perpetuity. This idea may serve as a useful short term tool for highly threatened parcels.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> No funding source defined</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> No DR’s would be retired with this tool.</p>

Tool	Definition – Advantages/Disadvantages	Comments/Funding
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	<p>Development rights are transferred out of agricultural areas to receiving areas for compensation. This program allows landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel of land to prevent farmland conversion to non-farm use. TDR programs require the creation of a market which includes the identification of a sending area (from which DRs are removed) and receiving areas which require DRs in order to develop.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> High potential for removing development rights from prime Ag lands.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Receiving areas have not yet been defined to take the transferred development rights. Difficult to appraise the value of development rights.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> High potential if receiving areas can be identified and a market for the development rights is developed. The County needs to create receiving and sending areas which include the ag zone and the area identified under the Rural Lands Study. This must also be done in concert with transportation plans. Criteria must be established to define receiving areas. A Conservation Bank would make TDR transactions easier to execute since it would facilitate timely transactions.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> Companies who desire to develop parcels including funding for on-going monitoring and administration.</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> This tool would retire DR's out of Ag land but is heavily dependent on the direction of Countywide land use policies.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Parcel reconfiguration	<p>Movement of lot lines to make land parcels more suitable for farming, while enabling development to occur. Reconfiguration can also include transferring development rights within a given landowner's holdings to remove development rights from prime agricultural soils.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> This would allow the movement of development rights by a landowner from prime agricultural areas thus allowing larger, more farmable tracts. In so doing the reality of soil heterogeneity is recognized and a landowner's DRs are not diminished.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Does not remove development rights from defined Ag land zone.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> This tool is a concession to the understanding that not all currently unbuilt development rights in the Ag protection areas need to be removed. This tool reforms current land division codes and makes density transfers within single ownership parcels possible. The concept is to site residences in areas where minimal disruption to Ag activities will occur. Development rights transferred would no longer be in Open Space designation. The deed would clearly recite the Right-to-Farm ordinance.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> No additional funding required beyond administration.</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> This tool would not retire DR's but accommodate them. It moves DR's from prime Ag land to less desired Ag land.</p>

Tool	Definition – Advantages/Disadvantages	Comments/Funding
<input type="checkbox"/> Down zoning /Zoning Based Development	<p>A change in the zoning for a particular area that results in lower residential densities. For example, a change in zoning code from 10 acres per dwelling to a required 40 acres per dwelling. Some jurisdictions couple Down zoning with a TDR program.</p> <p>Another option that removes development potential is to require that a lot meet the size requirements for the zoning district in order to allow development. Many lots that are smaller than the underlying zoning (substandard lots) would not be developed unless they meet approved conditions.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Reduction of development rights in Down zoned areas.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> No compensation to the farmers and landowners for reduction in land values unless directly linked to a TDR program.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Down zoning and zoning-based development do not compensate landowners for the reduction in their property values. Down zoning and/or requiring permits for substandard parcels would likely disrupt the current financing arrangements farmers have with the lending institutions based on their current land values. The TRC finds that down zoning without compensation to be more disruptive than useful.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> No funding required.</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> Potential for significant retirement of DRs, though the TRC’s recommendation is not to use this tool.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition & Leaseback/Resale	<p>Purchase of land by a public or private non-profit with leaseback or resale to a farmer for agricultural use only.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Can be combined with other tools to achieve long-term protection. Adaptable tool which can be implemented quickly.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Upfront capital needed for acquisitions. Questions of who controls the land, government or private entity. Government not structured to be land managers.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Acquisition of Ag lands by public and private agencies should be considered with leaseback or resale to farmers for Ag use only. Can be used to ensure long-term affordability through Community Land Trust model.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> Government and non-profit organizations</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> This tool would retire DR’s but is highly dependent on new funding sources.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resource Banking	<p>This “tool” brings together land and water policies recognizing that long term land protection requires clear and consistent access to water. It also incorporates comprehensive watershed analysis and implementation of land and water policies that reflect the community’s priorities for each drainage.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Holistic approach in considering all factors competing for sustainable farm operations. Would facilitate PDR and TDR programs by reducing timing issues of sellers and buyers.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> New concept requiring cooperation of multiple regulatory agencies (Federal, State, and County).</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> This “tool” brings together land and water policies recognizing that long term land protection requires clear and consistent access to water. For example, farm owners are willing to give up DRs in order to be assured “water rights”. Incorporating other elements (water rights, wetland mitigation, carbon credits, etc.) simply expands the scope and purpose of the “bank”.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> To be determined.</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> This tool would retire DR’s but is dependent on a more complex banking mechanism.</p>

Tool	Definition – Advantages/Disadvantages	Comments/Funding
<input type="checkbox"/> Right-to-Farm Ordinance	<p>A state law or local ordinance that protects farmers and farm operations from public and private nuisance lawsuits.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Reduced cost of farmers having to defend against lawsuits from residents living near farm operations.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Poor farm practices may not get corrected as quickly. This ordinance does not protect farming operations from proposed federal rules that require notification and temporary removal of residents in the vicinity of certain agricultural practices.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Farmers should be allowed to recover legal expenses from party lodging frivolous lawsuits against them.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> No funding required</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> This “tool” does not directly address DR’s.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Easements	<p>Legally recorded agreements that limit land to specific uses. Easements may apply to entire parcels of land or to specific parts of the property. Most easements are permanent however term easements impose restrictions for a limited number of years. Land protected by conservation easements remains on the tax rolls and is privately owned and managed. A federal tax law change regarding voluntary easements is creating additional incentives for landowners for tax and estate planning.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Voluntary choice by landowner.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Can mean reduction in land value by owner.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Conservation easements can be voluntary by owner and/or applied as a result of using other tools.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> Only administrative funds required if voluntary.</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> This tool would retire DR’s. Only farm under voluntary conservation easement is the Miller Farm in early 1980’s. Some increase in interest in this tool can be assumed due to tax law incentives and education.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Clustering	<p>A land use policy that requires residences to be built close together in areas where large minimum lot sizes are generally required. By grouping houses on small sections of a larger parcel of land, clustering can be used to preserve suitable blocks of farmland.</p> <p><u>Advantages:</u> Preserves suitable blocks of farmland while allowing concentrated development.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages:</u> Causes demand for public services and infrastructure to support the residences in the cluster. Also, potential incompatibility between the residences and farming operations.</p>	<p><u>Comment:</u> Current application of clustering under the Ag Protection Overlay often conflicts with critical areas protection. Critical areas are protected while prime resource lands become the housing parcels. The county should initiate an effort to “balance” the code as currently written to provide equal protection for both “resource lands” and “critical areas”.</p> <p><u>Funding Source:</u> No public funding required.</p> <p><u>DR Impact:</u> This tool would not retire DR’s but accommodate them. The tool would be limited as it would only apply to parcels over 20 acres in the Rural Study Areas.</p>

7. County Code and Proposed Preservation Tools

1. PDR – Purchase of Development Rights

There is an on-going Purchase of Development Rights Program in Whatcom County. Code changes are not required. Funding for appraisals and for purchasing the development rights has sometimes been an issue.

Code location: Chapter 3.25A

2. LDR – Lease of Development Rights

The existing development rights program in the code is for the purchase of the rights in perpetuity. If the county were to go to lease options, the code should be clarified to specify how that would work. Other organizations such as private entities and non-governmental organizations can do this, perhaps in anticipation of the county coming in at a later time to purchase the rights.

Potential code changes to current chapter 3.25A

3. TDR – Transfer of Development Rights

The county code has provisions for the transfer of development rights. Sending and receiving areas need to be established through changes in the zoning map, however. In addition, regulatory changes would need to be placed into the code to establish a market for the development rights.

The code currently has provisions for a Development Rights Bank and an Oversight Committee. This committee (on paper only) is charged with making recommendations to the Council on: purchasing, holding and selling development rights; establishing “in lieu fees”; accepting grants; and accepting donated funds and development rights.

Code location: Chapter 20.89

4. Parcel Reconfiguration

Lot line adjustments are an option in the current code, but might not be sufficient to implement this option as described in the summary. Additional code language may be required as well as staff training in order to make this a viable option.

Potential code changes to current chapter 20.40.250

5. Down Zoning and Zoning-Based Development

Down zoning and basing development on zoning would need changes in the code to make them happen. If these options were tied to a Transfer of Development Rights program (as has been done in some places), the code would need to be changed to reflect that as well.

Potential code changes to current chapter 20 and others, and specifically 20.89, maps

6. Acquisition and Leaseback or Acquisition and Resale

These options, where the development potential is removed before resale or leasing, may be possible under existing code. The county can purchase property or interests in property and can also sell or lease property it owns. This may be more feasible for non-governmental organizations or as a partnership between the county and NGOs.

No code specific reference needed

7. Natural Resources Banking

This proposal would require code changes, and changes in state legislation (perhaps federal as well). The concept might be possible as part of a Growth Management Act type of process where the development of agricultural operations is tied to natural resources capacity. Instead of talking about traffic capacity, we would be talking about topics such as water availability, critical areas, groundwater recharge and other natural resources capacity issues in the context of supporting agricultural operations.

Potential code changes to current chapters 16, 20 and others

8. Right to Farm Ordinance

The county has a right-to-farm ordinance. Code changes are not required. Code changes could be considered that would make the ordinance more effective.

Code location: Chapter 14.02

9. Conservation Easements

Changes in code language are not required for the county to enter into agreements with landowners for conservation easements. The conservation easement is part of the Purchase of Development Rights program and the Transfer of Development Rights Program. When development rights are removed, conservation easements are placed on the property. In the cases the county deals with, agricultural conservation easements occur to protect the agricultural capacity of the land.

No code specific reference needed

10. Clustering

The county's current code allows for clustering, and in some cases requires it. The clustering provisions have not always worked as desired for protecting agricultural land. Some of these shortcomings can be minimized with improved code language.

Potential code changes to current chapters 20.38 and 20.40

8. Glossary of Terms

(Terms courtesy of American Farmland Trust)

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT (ACE) - A legal agreement restricting development on farmland. Land subjected to an ACE is generally restricted to farming and open space use. See also conservation easement.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT - A legally recognized geographic area formed by one or more landowners and approved by one or more government agencies, designed to keep land in agriculture. Also known as agricultural preserves, agricultural security areas, agricultural preservation districts, agricultural areas, agricultural incentive areas, agricultural development areas and agricultural protection areas.

Agricultural Protection Zoning (APZ) - Agricultural protection zoning ordinances protect the agricultural land base by limiting non-farm uses, prohibiting high-density development, requiring houses to be built on small lots and restricting subdivision of land into parcels that are too small to farm.

CLUSTER ZONING - A form of zoning that allows houses to be built close together in areas where large minimum lot sizes are generally required. By grouping houses on small sections of a large parcel of land, cluster zoning can be used to protect open space.

COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH MANAGEMENT - A state, regional, county or municipal government program to control the timing, location and character of land development.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - A regional, county or municipal document that contains a vision of how the community will grow and change and a set of plans and policies to guide land use decisions. Comprehensive plans also are known as general plans and master plans.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT - Legally recorded, voluntary agreements that limit land to specific uses. Easements may apply to entire parcels of land or to specific parts of the property. Most are permanent; term easements impose restrictions for a limited number of years. Land protected by conservation easements remains on the tax rolls and is privately owned and managed.

DOWNZONING - A change in the zoning for a particular area that results in lower residential densities. For example, a change from a zoning ordinance that requires 10 acres per dwelling to an ordinance that requires 40 acres per dwelling is a down zoning.

LAND TRUST - A private, nonprofit conservation organization formed to protect natural resources such as productive farm and forest land, natural areas, historic structures and recreational areas. Land trusts purchase and accept donations of conservation easements. They educate the public about the need to conserve land, and some provide land use and estate planning services to local governments and individual citizens.

MITIGATION ORDINANCE - An ordinance or section of an ordinance or state law that requires developers of agricultural land to protect an equivalent quantity of land with similar characteristics in the same political jurisdiction. In some cases, developers may satisfy the mitigation requirement by paying a fee.

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR) PROGRAM- Landowners sell an agricultural conservation easement to a qualified public agency or private conservation organization. Landowners retain full ownership and use of their land for agricultural purposes. PDR programs do not give government agencies the right to develop land. Development rights are extinguished in exchange for compensation.

RECEIVING AREA - Areas designated to accommodate development transferred from agricultural or natural areas through a transfer of development rights program.

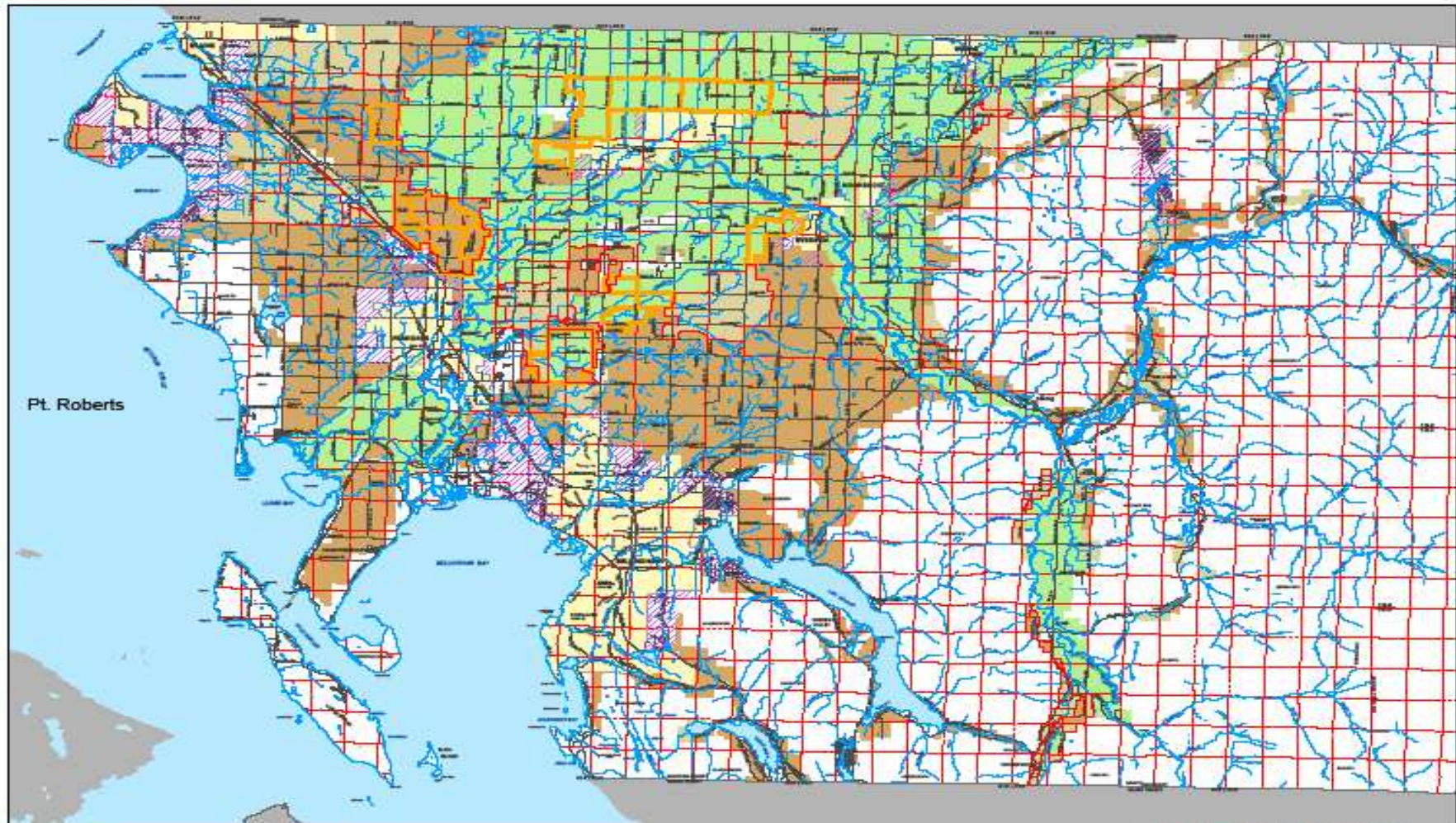
RIGHT-TO-FARM LAW - A state law or local ordinance that protects farmers and farm operations from public and private nuisance lawsuits. A private nuisance interferes with an individual's use and enjoyment of his or her property. Public nuisances involve actions that injure the public at large.

SENDING AREA - Area to be protected through a transfer of development rights program. Landowners may sell their development rights to private individuals or a public agency; the rights are used to build homes in a designated receiving area.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR) PROGRAM - A program that allows landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel of land to prevent farmland conversion. TDR programs establish "sending areas" where land is to be protected by agricultural conservation easements and "receiving areas" where land may be developed at a higher density than would otherwise be allowed by local zoning. Landowners in the sending area sell development rights to landowners in the receiving area, generally through the private market. When the development rights are sold on a parcel, a conservation easement is recorded and enforced by the local government. In some cases, the local government may establish a "TDR bank" to buy and sell development rights. The development rights created by TDR programs are referred to as transferable development rights (TDRs) or transferable development credits (TDCs).

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY - A theoretical line drawn around a community that defines an area to accommodate anticipated growth for a given period of time, generally 20 years. Urban growth boundaries are a growth management technique designed to prevent sprawl. They are often used to guide decisions on infrastructure development, such as the construction of roads and the extension of municipal water and sewer services.

9. County Zoning Map



**Whatcom
County**

- City Limits
- Agriculture Zone - 87,562 ac.
- R5 Zoning - 85,913 ac.
- R10 Zoning - 27,474 ac.
- Rural Study Areas - 22,413 ac. (Ac. in Rural Zones NOT overlapping with PDR Target Areas: RSA 7,303; R10A 13,831)
- PDR Target Areas - 11,572 ac. (Ac. in AG 7,518; Ac. in Rural Zones NOT overlapping with Rural Study Areas: RSA 139; R10A 0)
- Urban Growth Area

USE OF WHATCOM COUNTY'S GIS DATA IMPLIES THE USER'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

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October 2008