

# Rural Land Study Update 2019

A Collaborative Report Identifying Rural Areas of Agricultural  
Significance and Tracking Changes Over Time



**Whatcom County Council  
Natural Resources Committee  
September 24, 2019**



# Contributors:

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- ▶ Whatcom County Staff
  - ▶ Chris Elder, AAC Support Staff
  - ▶ Sarah Watts, GIS Analyst
- ▶ Agricultural Advisory Committee Members
  - ▶ Larry Davis, Chair
  - ▶ Matthew McDermott, Vice-Chair
  - ▶ Dave Buys
  - ▶ Jagiwan Brar
  - ▶ Robin Fay
  - ▶ Barb Hento
  - ▶ Melodie Kirk
  - ▶ Anna Martin
  - ▶ Jeff Rainey
  - ▶ Lydia Strand
  - ▶ Dakota Stranik

# 2018 Agricultural Strategic Plan

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- ▶ **Immediate Priorities:**
  - ▶ Designating Agricultural Lands of Long-term Commercial Significance
  - ▶ Review Agricultural Zoning Code to ensure uses support and do not interfere with overall agricultural use of property and neighboring properties
- ▶ **Short-term Priorities**
  - ▶ Review Rural Study Areas for additional protective measures
  - ▶ Development of flexible policy framework
- ▶ **Medium-term Priorities**
  - ▶ Natural Resource Marketplace
- ▶ **Long-term Priorities**
  - ▶ Right to Farm enforcement
  - ▶ Water system planning & Agricultural planning coordination
  - ▶ Mitigation for the loss of agricultural land
  - ▶ Improved coordination with partner agencies

# 2018 Agricultural Strategic Plan

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## ▶ Ongoing Programs:

- ▶ Purchase of Development Rights Program (2019 data)
  - ▶ 23 easements completed to date
  - ▶ 1200 acres under easement
  - ▶ 140 development rights extinguished



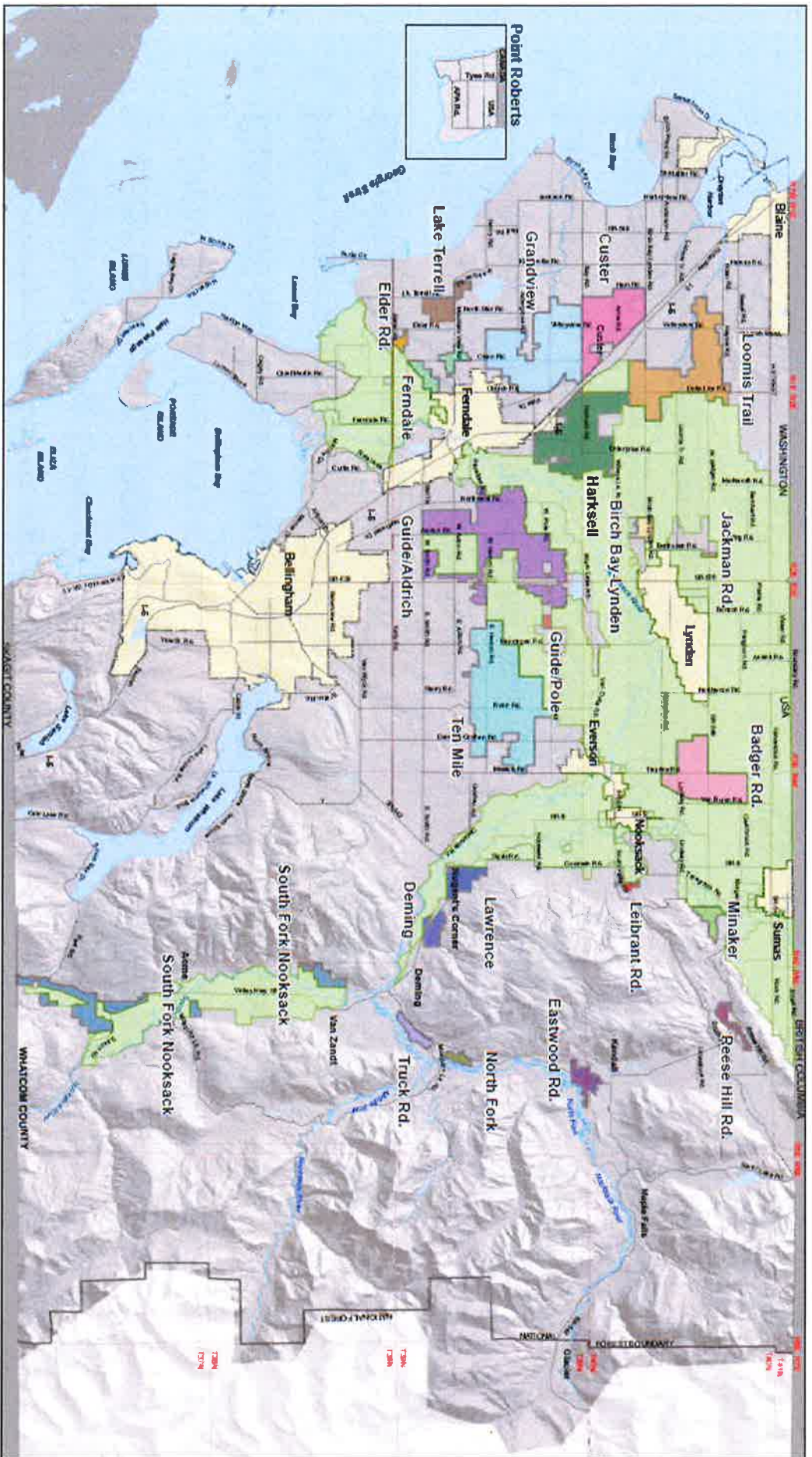
**PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAM**

## ▶ Open Space Taxation

- ▶ Open Space Farm and Agricultural Land
  - 106,258 acres (based on 2017 data)
- ▶ Open Space Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land
  - 244 acres (based on 2017 data)

THIS PROPERTY IS  
DESIGNATED  
**OPEN SPACE**  
PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS  
OF RCW 84.34. PUBLIC ACCESS  
IS PERMITTED FOR RECREATIONAL  
PURPOSES SUBJECT TO THE TERMS  
AND CONDITIONS OF WHATCOM  
COUNTY OPEN SPACE AGREE-  
MENT No. [REDACTED]

# 2019 Rural Study Areas



**Whatcom County**  
 - Rural Study Areas ■ Agriculture Zone

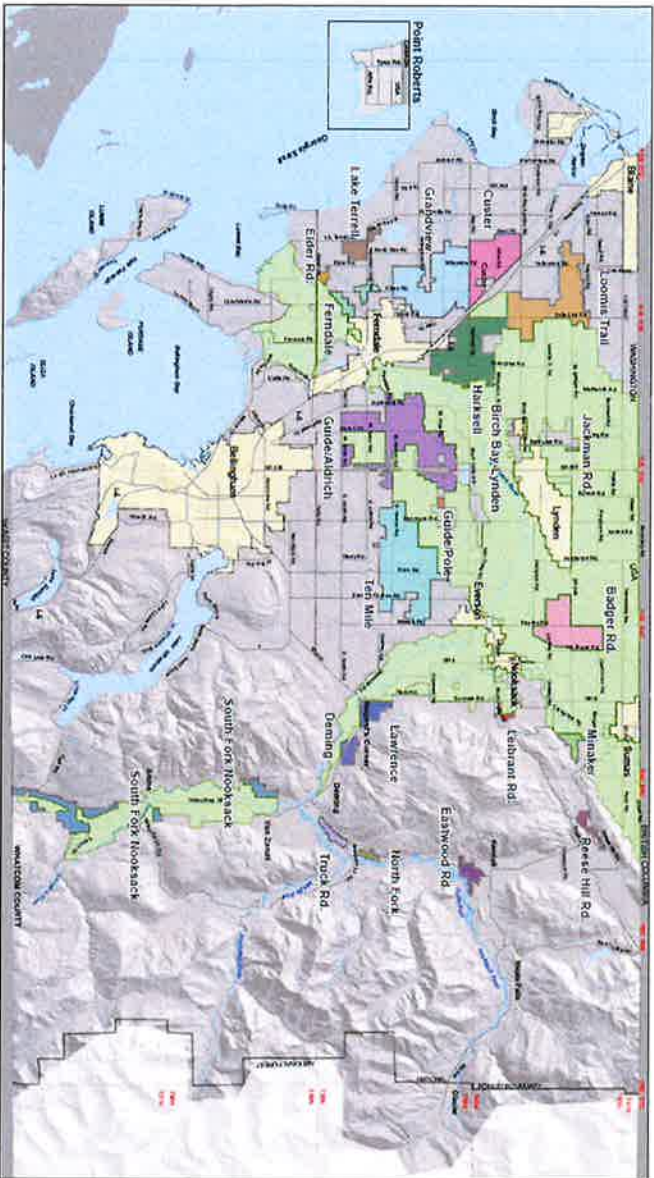
2019 Rural Study Areas (RSAs) are shown in yellow. The map was prepared by the Whatcom County Planning Department. The map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a guarantee, warranty, or representation of any kind. The map is subject to change without notice. The map is not to be used for any other purpose.



## Criteria for establishing Rural Study Areas

- ▶ Proximity to active agricultural areas
  - ▶ Adjacent to Ag District
  - ▶ In or adjacent to PDR Target Area or previously RSA
  - ▶ Inclusion of area provides a buffer between Ag & more intensive uses
- ▶ Current land use characterized by agriculture
- ▶ High percentage of APO and prime soils
- ▶ Parcelization of the Area
  - ▶ Acreage totals by parcel size
  - ▶ Number of parcels by given size
- ▶ Land use as identified on Assessor's records
- ▶ Evaluation of forested areas for potential ecological benefits adjacent to agricultural use

# Rural Study Areas



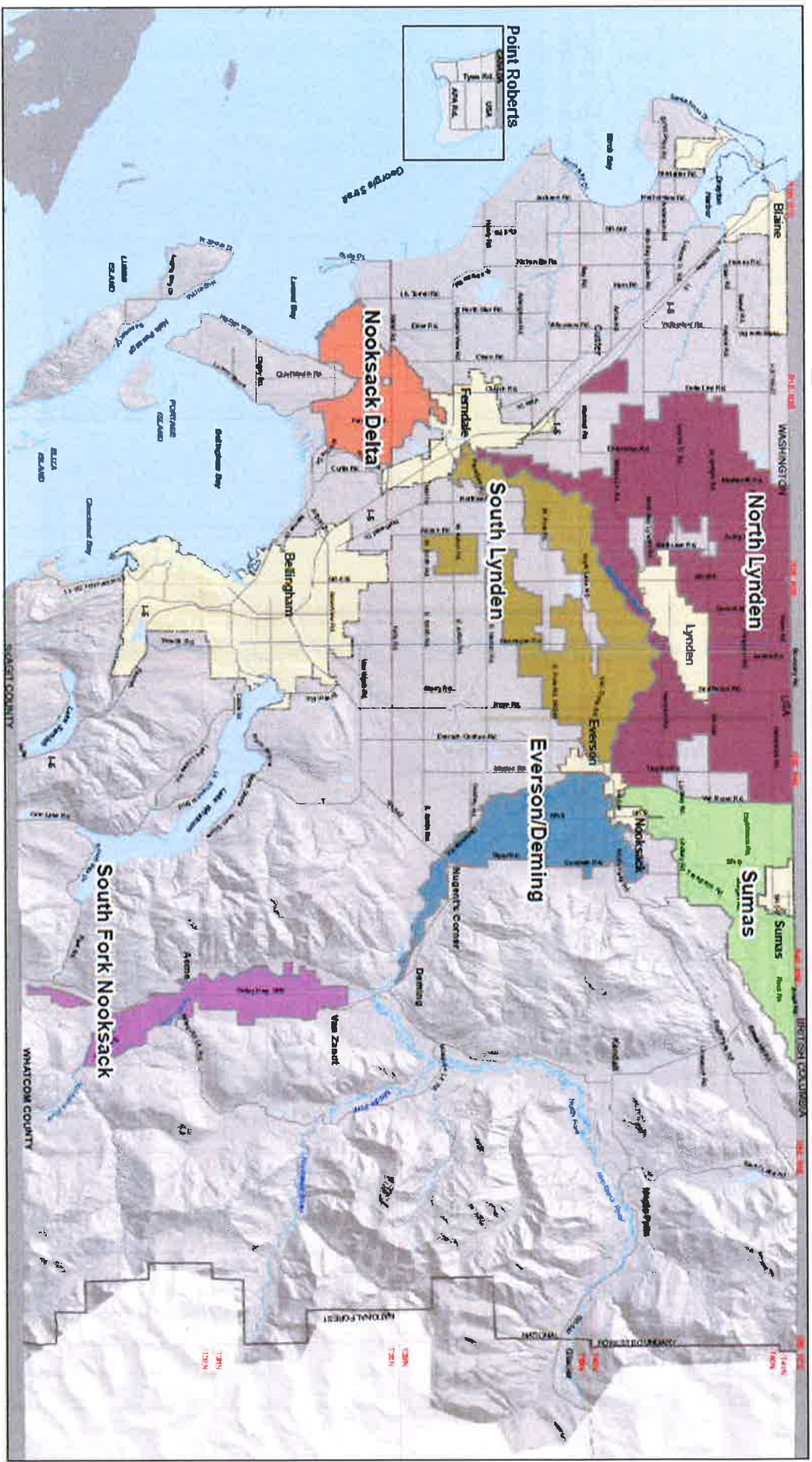
**Whatcom County**  
- Rural Study Areas

 Agriculture Zone



Area	Total Acres	Potential Additional Development Unit
Birch Bay-Lynden	249	19
Custer	2,058	114
Deming	318	46
East Badger	2,098	105
Eastwood Road	406	22
Elder Road	113	20
Ferndale	518	72
Grandview	3,682	319
Guide Aldrich	4,596	267
Guide/Pole	72	15
Harksell	2,992	236
Jackman Road	35	4
Lake Terrell	555	77
Lawrence	492	52
Leibrant	98	5
Loomis Trail	3,142	246
Minaker	282	22
North Fork	128	8
Reese Hill Road	258	17
South Fork	1,497	95
Ten Mile	4,633	320
Truck Road	227	11
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>28,449</b>	<b>2,092</b>

# Agricultural Zoning Areas



**Whatcom County**  
- Agricultural Zoning Areas

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# Exhibit D -- Land Cover Change 2004 -2016

Agriculture Zone	Acres	SFR		% APO	OSAG	Soils	C/U/T/P		Fallow		Farmland		FI		Farmstead SFR		SFR		Multi/Mobile H		Vacant		Quarry		Forest						
		Finalized	%				2016	2004	Change	2016	2004	Change	2016	2004	Change	2016	2004	Change	2016	2004	Change	2016	2004	Change	2016	2004	Change	2016	2004	Change	
Eaton/Deming	7,874	12	71%	83%	42	42	0	0	59	64	5	4,693	4,718	25	234	250	161	161	98	106	12	45	42	3	272	272	0	1,975	1,928	47	
Noordsack/Delta	6,717	0	43%	29%	21	18	3	1,387	1,581	204	3,981	4,006	25	75	74	1	28	28	34	34	0	22	22	0	0	0	0	697	668	29	
North Lynden	35,503	89	87%	91%	130	110	10	317	335	18	26,280	26,284	4	1,391	1,326	65	597	579	396	378	18	114	67	47	29	29	0	3,672	3,798	126	
South Fork	5,937	3	68%	87%	22	22	0	11	20	9	3,312	3,436	124	124	117	7	68	68	72	70	2	75	18	57	0	0	0	2,034	1,976	58	
South Lynden	15,351	30	90%	92%	54	43	11	166	133	33	12,390	12,572	182	570	550	20	260	251	239	215	24	46	47	1	60	60	0	1,209	1,062	147	
Sumas	12,316	21	91%	94%	64	63	1	55	58	3	10,134	10,193	59	522	506	16	228	216	65	60	5	16	14	2	22	22	0	861	836	25	
<b>Total</b>	<b>83,698</b>				<b>323</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1,995</b>	<b>2,001</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>62,730</b>	<b>63,209</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>2,823</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,448</b>	<b>10,262</b>	<b>186</b>	
<b>RSA</b>																															
Birch Bay Lynden	249	0	59%	100%	3	3	0	6	6	0	170	174	4	12	8	4	7	7	11	11	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	28	28	0	
Cluster	2,058	16	51%	49%	4	4	0	38	36	2	1,258	1,264	6	47	45	2	46	46	36	34	2	9	9	0	0	0	0	558	558	0	
Deming	318	0	97%	62%	1	1	0	0	0	0	194	198	4	7	6	1	11	8	7	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	86	86	0	
E. Badger	2,098	11	71%	68%	6	6	0	64	64	0	1,036	1,056	20	47	43	4	45	45	34	34	0	8	8	0	207	207	0	590	574	16	
Eastwood Rd.	406	0	41%	61%	0	0	0	1	1	0	272	274	2	16	14	2	12	12	13	13	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	89	89	0	
Elder Rd.	113	0	97%	83%	0	0	0	0	0	0	93	93	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	16	16	0	
Ferndale	518	0	91%	74%	0	0	0	19	19	0	370	377	7	5	5	0	14	14	2	2	0	15	15	0	0	0	0	82	73	9	
Grandview	3,682	74	83%	30%	64	61	3	111	111	0	1,958	1,987	28	73	73	0	100	94	194	173	19	0	13	13	0	0	0	1,098	1,098	0	
Guide/Adrich	4,596	93	60%	94%	67	54	13	65	65	0	2,862	2,957	95	157	154	3	222	212	360	293	67	72	67	5	0	0	0	698	701	3	
Guide/Pole	72	0	63%	73%	0	0	0	2	2	0	52	55	3	3	2	1	2	2	10	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	1	
Harknell	2,992	31	45%	98%	21	15	6	73	75	2	1,624	1,646	22	120	113	7	105	102	274	265	9	40	39	1	0	0	0	681	683	2	
Jackman Rd.	35	0	91%	100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	30	0	1	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	
Lake Terrell	555	0	96%	81%	0	0	0	8	8	0	454	455	1	6	6	0	5	5	1	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	46	45	1	
Lawrence	492	9	60%	88%	16	16	0	4	4	0	293	299	6	13	13	0	17	17	28	22	6	0	0	3	3	0	0	108	108	0	
Lehrant	98	0	98%	68%	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	50	3	4	4	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	34	0	
Loomis Trail	3,142	39	51%	55%	10	9	1	53	52	1	1,428	1,400	28	78	78	0	96	94	258	196	62	5	5	0	0	0	0	1,133	1,150	17	
Minaker	282	3	99%	66%	2	2	0	0	0	0	209	209	0	14	14	0	16	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	23	0	
North Fork	128	0	64%	71%	0	0	0	1	1	0	60	70	10	2	2	0	5	4	4	4	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	54	50	4	
Reese Hill Rd.	258	0	93%	65%	0	0	0	4	4	0	164	164	0	2	2	0	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80	80	0	
South Fork	1,497	8	24%	28%	11	11	0	19	19	0	437	429	8	35	35	0	35	35	84	82	2	20	8	12	34	20	14	758	794	36	
Ten Mile	4,633	55	68%	77%	80	75	5	58	58	0	2,723	2,779	56	138	126	12	140	128	243	204	39	11	11	0	55	55	0	1,082	1,094	12	
Truck Rd.	227	0	35%	77%	10	9	1	1	1	0	147	147	0	3	3	0	4	4	13	15	2	5	5	0	0	0	72	60	12		
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,449</b>				<b>285</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15,852</b>	<b>16,164</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1,585</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7,320</b>	<b>7,351</b>	<b>31</b>

# Parcel Size Breakdown 2018

Parcel Size Breakdown 2018

Agriculture Zone	Acres	Total parcels	AVG. Parcel Size	Parcel Size Breakdown 2018							Buildout	Exist. DU	Pot. Add. DU
				<5 Ac.	# Parcels	5-10 Ac.	# Parcels	10-20 Ac.	# Parcels	>20 Ac.			
Everson/Demling	7,874	507		418	205	620	88	1090	79	5618	135	323	228
Nooksack Delta	6,717	326		167	91	420	62	962	65	5069	108	48	82
North Lynden	35,503	1869		1585	736	1647	232	4260	270	27845	635	1097	821
South Fork	5,937	280		197	96	323	45	797	53	4412	90	121	117
South Lynden	15,351	848		646	316	947	129	1980	133	11706	272	542	398
Sumas	12,316	669		516	245	752	99	1907	127	8991	209	375	287
	83,698												

Parcel Size Breakdown 2018

RSA	Total Acres	Total Parcels	AVG. Parcel Size	Parcel Size Breakdown 2018										Exist. DU	Pot. Add. DU
				<5 Ac.	# Parcels	5-10 Ac.	# Parcels	10-20 Ac.	# Parcels	>20 Ac.	# Parcels				
Birch Bay Lynden	249	34	7.3	44	16	53	9	107	8	40	1	32	19		
Custer	2,058	141	14.6	122	44	396	46	364	26	1,169	25	92	114		
Deming	318	30	10.6	26	10	64	11	30	2	195	7	17	46		
East Badger	2,098	133	15.8	67	26	257	31	671	46	1,096	30	72	105		
Eastwood Road	406	32	12.7	19	6	70	10	174	12	125	4	25	22		
Elder Road	113	6	18.8	9	2	5	1	14	1	81	2	2	20		
Ferndale	518	30	17.3	13	6	56	7	103	7	342	10	14	72		
Grandview	3,682	432	8.5	765	244	608	98	730	48	1,559	42	309	319		
Guide Adlrich	4,596	641	7.2	902	347	1,233	176	1,002	77	1,447	41	598	267		
Guide/Pole	72	13	5.5	21	10	13	2	0	0	27	1	7	15		
Harksell	2,992	532	5.6	816	346	801	125	470	33	889	28	484	236		
Jackman Road	35	8	4.4	10	5	11	2	12	1	0	0	4	4		
Lake Terrell	555	22	25.2	12	7	7	1	106	6	426	8	6	77		
Lawrence	492	72	6.8	104	47	95	14	89	6	201	5	56	52		
Leibrant	98	8	12.3	9	2	23	3	22	2	42	1	5	5		
Loomis Trail	3,142	457	6.9	690	295	577	85	574	39	1,109	38	347	246		
Minaker	282	22	12.8	20	10	20	4	12	1	227	7	15	22		
North Fork	128	12	10.7	8	3	37	6	0	0	81	3	5	8		
Reese Hill Road	258	16	16.1	8	4	19	2	98	6	128	4	10	17		
South Fork	1,497	191	7.8	204	90	374	52	492	36	371	13	113	95		
Ten Mile	4,633	397	11.7	606	185	998	149	778	57	2,223	63	329	320		
Truck Road	227	20	11.4	23	7	54	8	0	0	135	5	16	11		



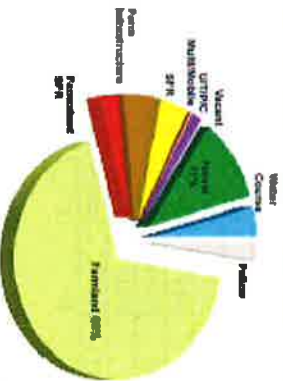
# Birch Bay Lynden RSA

Map 1



## Legend

- RSA - 249 ac.
- Land Use - 2016 (Changes from 2004 in italics)**
- Pasture - 6 ac. (0 ac.)
- Farmland - 170 ac. *(4 ac.)*
- Farmland Infrastructure - 12 ac. (4 ac.)
- Farmstead SFR - 7 ac. (0 ac.)
- Single Family Residential - 11 ac. (0 ac.)
- Multi/Mobile Home Park - 1 ac. (0 ac.)
- Utility/Transport/Comm - 3 ac. (0 ac.)
- Vacant - 1 ac. (0 ac.)
- Forest - 28 ac. (0 ac.)
- Water Course - 10 ac. (0 ac.)
- Current Zoning
- New Single Family Rise, (SFR) Permits 2000-2018 (0)
- Residential/ not associated with farming operator



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# Birch Bay-Lynden RSA

Map 2



- Legend**
- RSA Boundaries - 249 Ac.
  - PDR Purchases - 0 ac.
  - APO Soils - SSURGO - 244 ac.
  - FEMA 100 yr Floodplain - 0% of Area
  - OSAG - Open Space Ag. Taxation - 80% of Area

- WDFW Priority Habitats & Species 2017
- Fish Bearing Streams - 0 miles
- WSDA Crop Type 2017
- Berry - 118 ac.



This map was prepared by the Washington Department of Ecology, in cooperation with the Washington Department of Agriculture, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contract or warranty of any kind. The user assumes all responsibility for the use of the information contained herein.



Request approval of associated Resolution as defined in AB2019-475

## **DECLARING THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S SUPPORT FOR THE UPDATE TO THE RURAL LAND STUDY TO IDENTIFY AREAS DESERVING HEIGHTENED AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION MEASURES**

WHEREAS, the Agricultural Advisory Committee was established under Whatcom County Ordinance 2001-036 and is governed by Whatcom County Code Chapter 2.34; and

WHEREAS, the Agricultural Advisory Committee is to provide review and recommendations to the Whatcom County Council on issues that affect agriculture, including assistance with establishment, promotion, and implementation of a comprehensive agricultural protection program; and

WHEREAS, the county has identified 100,000 acres as being the minimum acreage needed in farming to support a viable agriculture industry in Whatcom County (RES 2009-040); and

WHEREAS, the county has identified areas outside the roughly 87,500-acre Agriculture zone where agricultural land protection efforts should be strengthened (RES 2009-040); and

WHEREAS, the Agricultural Advisory Committee and staff were requested by the county to recommend options that strengthen farm land preservation policies in these areas (RES 2009-040); and

WHEREAS, the county has requested the Agricultural Advisory Committee's 2009 list of tools and strategies be further developed with recommendations made that enable implementation of these tools (RES 2009-040); and

WHEREAS, County Council adopted the 2018 Agriculture Strategic Plan (RES 2018-027) to support the goals of farmland preservation and to support the agricultural industry in Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, the Agricultural Advisory Committee conducted open public meetings in 2018-2019 to develop an update to the Rural Land Study to more accurately identify priority areas outside of the Agriculture Zone; and

WHEREAS, the Agricultural Advisory Committee unanimously voted to endorse the 2019 Rural Land Study Update on May 22, 2019; and

WHEREAS, members of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and staff discussed the Rural Land Study Update with the County Council at the September 24, 2019 Natural Resources Committee meeting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council hereby endorses this Rural Land Study Update, and commits the time and resources necessary for development and implementation of heightened agricultural protection measures as proposed by the Agricultural Advisory Committee during its 2019 -2020 season; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Council affirms the important role of the Agricultural Advisory Committee and Agriculture Program staff in developing recommendations for appropriate code changes and comprehensive plan amendments as identified in the Whatcom County Agricultural Strategic Plan and supporting documents such as the Rural Land Study Update.

# Thank you!



## **Agricultural Advisory Committee**

*Chair:* Larry Davis

*Vice-Chair:* Matthew McDermott

*Committee Members:* Dave Buys, Jagiwan Brar, Robin Fay,  
Barb Hento, Melodie Kirk, Anna Martin, Jeff Rainey, Lydia Strand,  
Dakota Stranik

*AAC Staff Support:* Chris Elder

*GIS Analyst:* Sarah Watts

