

2024 Comprehensive Plan Summary of Rural-Related Comments – Combined Comment Sources

Prepared April 2025 for the Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update

This summary addresses rural-focused comments compiled from four data sources: April 2023 Comments, February 2024 DEIS comments, April 2024 Preliminary Alternatives, and August 2024 Final Draft Community Rural Comments. Out of 1,092 total comments, 312 specifically mentioned rural issues such as farming, forestry, agriculture, clear cutting, and related topics. Each section below contains a thematic overview based on recurring concerns expressed by commenters.

Links to all comment periods:

- [April 2023](#)
- [February 2024](#)
- [April 2024](#)
- [August 2024](#)

Environmental Concerns (196 responses, 62.8%)

Respondents voiced deep concern about the environmental impacts of rural development and industrial forestry. Clear cutting, loss of forest canopy, and damage to salmon habitat and wetlands were frequently mentioned. Port Gamble Forest was cited repeatedly as a key environmental asset. Commenters stressed the need for protections against runoff, erosion, and the cumulative effects of timber and residential development in sensitive areas.

Zoning and Land Use (238 responses, 76.3%)

Many comments opposed rezoning rural lands to allow for high-density residential or commercial uses. Respondents argued that rural zoning should protect working farms, forests, and open space. There was widespread concern about large landowners such as Raydient and Rayonier developing formerly resource-designated land. Several comments described this as a violation of the county's rural vision and a threat to long-standing land use values.

Traffic and Transportation (145 responses, 46.5%)

Rural residents raised repeated concerns about increased traffic, especially from logging trucks, construction vehicles, and new housing developments. Common themes included narrow roads, lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and general traffic safety. Many requested traffic studies before any rural growth plans are approved.

Infrastructure and Utilities (94 responses, 30.1%)

A significant number of commenters questioned whether rural infrastructure—such as water systems, septic tanks, and stormwater facilities—could support further development. Several noted that current infrastructure is already failing or inadequate and raised concerns about who would pay for upgrades associated with expanded growth.

Public Services and Facilities (24 responses, 7.7%)

Comments highlighted challenges in emergency response, policing, and public health services in rural areas. Respondents argued that public services are already stretched thin, and new development would further reduce access and response times.

Procedural and Legal Issues (44 responses, 14.1%)

Many respondents expressed distrust in the planning process. Several raised legal questions about Growth Management Act compliance and procedural fairness. There were concerns that public input was not meaningfully integrated and that large private landowners held disproportionate influence over zoning decisions.

Housing and Growth (170 responses, 54.5%)

Numerous rural residents opposed high-density or multifamily housing projects in rural areas, citing threats to community identity and resource-based livelihoods. Some supported modest rural growth tied to agriculture or housing for local workers but rejected urban-style development patterns as incompatible with rural values.

General Opposition or Support (134 responses, 42.9%)

Many comments expressed general opposition to growth alternatives that would enable major development in rural zones. The 'no action' alternative was widely favored as a way to slow growth and preserve open space. Others emphasized the need for better alignment between planning decisions and rural priorities.

Other/Uncategorized (10 responses, 3.2%)

A small set of comments reflected deeply personal attachments to rural living, such as appreciation for peace, open space, traditional industries, or family land. These comments were not tied to a specific policy but reflected strong resistance to urbanization.