

Garrett County Rural Issues Questionnaires Results – April 24, 2007

The following summary compiles the results of two questionnaires. The first questionnaires were conducted at six community-based meetings sponsored by the Garrett Preston Rural Development Coalition between January 11th and January 24th, 2007. The second questionnaire was conducted at a Garrett County Rural Issues Land Use Planning meeting on March 27, 2007.

Please note that for the January meetings the results in **BOLD** represent answers from farmers only (44 total responses) while the results in *Italic* represent all responses collected (49 total responses).

RESULTS:

- a. Do you feel the Agriculture Resource (AR) and/or the Rural Resource (RR) areas should be examined so other areas of the county could be added to the AR and RR land use categories?

<u>January Meetings:</u>	Yes: 31 (70.5%) ♦ <i>36 (73.5%)</i>	No: 10 (22.7%) ♦ <i>10 (20.4%)</i>
<u>March Meeting:</u>	Yes: 20 (91%)	No: 2 (9%)
<u>Total:</u>	Yes: 56 (82%)	No: 12 (18%)

- b. One major component of the Garrett County Subdivision Ordinance is a limit on the density of housing lots in a subdivision in Agriculture Resource and Rural Resource areas. What do you feel would be the ideal number of acres per housing lot:

<u>January Meetings:</u>	<u>March Meeting:</u>
1 lot / 3 acres: 13 (29.5%) ♦ <i>13 (26.5%)</i>	1 lot / 3 acres: 10 (48%)
1 lot / 5 acres: 3 (6.8%) ♦ <i>3 (6.1%)</i>	1 lot / 5 acres: 3 (14%)
1 lot / 10 acres: 3 (6.8%) ♦ <i>4 (8.2%)</i>	1 lot / 10 acres: 3 (14%)
1 lot / 25 acres: 12 (27.3%) ♦ <i>14 (28.6%)</i>	1 lot / 25 acres: 4 (19%)
1 lot / 50 acres: 5 (11.4%) ♦ <i>6 (12.2%)</i>	1 lot / 50 acres: 1 (5%)

Total:
1 lot / 3 acres: 23 (38%)
1 lot / 5 acres: 6 (10%)
1 lot / 10 acres: 7 (11%)
1 lot / 25 acres: 18 (30%)
1 lot / 50 acres: 7 (11%)

- c. Under consideration is also the idea of clustering lots in one location on a developed piece of land to maintain larger tracts of farmland. Do you agree with the idea of clustering houses together in AR and RR areas?

<u>January Meetings:</u>	Yes: 36 (81.8%) ♦ <i>41 (83.7%)</i>	No: 5 (11.4%) ♦ <i>5 (10.2%)</i>
<u>March Meeting:</u>	Yes: 19 (83%)	No: 4 (17%)
<u>Total:</u>	Yes: 60 (87%)	No: 9 (13%)

d. With regard to clustering, which of the following statements do you most agree with?

It should be mandatory that lots be clustered together on the least desirable land for agriculture and forestry which will also have the least impact on the operation of a farm.

January Meetings: **18 (40.9%)** ♦ 22 (44.9%)
March Meeting: 12 (50%)
Total: 34 (48%)

It should be optional that lots be clustered together on the least desirable land for agriculture and forestry which will also have the least impact on the operation of a farm. Choosing this option would be an incentive to getting additional total lots.

January Meetings: **15 (34.1%)** ♦ 16 (32.7%)
March Meeting: 9 (38%)
Total: 25 (35%)

The placement of lot clusters should not be regulated.

January Meetings: **9 (20.5%)** ♦ 9 (18.4%)
March Meeting: 3 (13%)
Total: 12 (17%)

e. Another consideration would be how large lots should be allowed to be. What do you think would be the ideal maximum lot size in AR and RR areas?

January Meetings:

1 acre: **12 (27.3%)** ♦ 13 (26.5%)
 2 acres: **6 (13.6%)** ♦ 9 (18.4%)
 3 acres: **7 (15.9%)** ♦ 7 (14.3%)
 5 acres: **9 (20.5%)** ♦ 9 (18.4%)
 10 acres: **5 (11.4%)** ♦ 5 (10.2%)

March Meeting:

1 acre: 9 (41%)
 2 acres: 4 (18%)
 3 acres: 4 (18%)
 5 acres: 2 (9%)
 10 acres: 3 (14%)

Total:

1 acre: 22 (34%)
 2 acres: 13 (20%)
 3 acres: 11 (17%)
 5 acres: 11 (17%)
 10 acres: 8 (12%)

f. Another way to look at maximum lot sizes is as a percentage of the total acres of the parcel to be subdivided. What would you think would be the ideal proportion of lot sizes in AR and RR areas in this case?

January Meetings:

2% of total parcel size: **13 (29.5%)** ♦ 16 (32.7%)
 5% of total parcel size: **7 (15.9%)** ♦ 8 (16.3%)
 10% of total parcel size: **13 (29.5%)** ♦ 13 (26.5%)

March Meeting:

2% of total parcel size: 6 (43%)
 5% of total parcel size: 4 (29%)
 10% of total parcel size: 4 (29%)

Total:

2% of total parcel size: 22 (43%)
 5% of total parcel size: 12 (24%)
 10% of total parcel size: 17 (33%)

- g. Another way to reduce the number of lots available in AR and RR areas of the county and to create revenue for land owners in the AR and RR areas is to create a TDR (Transferable Development Rights) program. A TDR program would require a person creating lots outside of the AR and RR area to purchase a development right (most of the time one lot equals multiple development rights). Please indicate if you agree with the implementation of a TDR program:

Garrett County should not have a TDR program	<u>January Meetings:</u> 18 (40.9%) ♦ 18 (36.7%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 7 (32) <u>Total:</u> 25 (39%)
Garrett County should have a TDR program.	<u>January Meetings:</u> 20 (45.5%) ♦ 24 (49.0%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 15 (68%) <u>Total:</u> 39 (61%)

- h. If the county would adopt a low density (one lot/10 acres or more) in AR and RR areas, many folks may own lots that are smaller than the allowable size that can be subdivided. One idea would be to allow persons with these smaller lots to subdivide their properties so that housing would go on non-farm land within the Agriculture Resource and Rural Resource Areas. Which of the following statements would you support?

The lots that are smaller than a subdividable lot size should not be allowed to be subdivided.	<u>January Meetings:</u> 15 (34.1%) ♦ 15 (30.6%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 5 (24%) <u>Total:</u> 20 (31%)
Lots smaller than the subdividable lot size should be allowed to be subdivided with a size no smaller than 3 acres.	<u>January Meetings:</u> 10 (22.7%) ♦ 10 (20.4%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 12 (57%) <u>Total:</u> 22 (34.5%)
Lots smaller than the subdividable lot size should be allowed to be subdivided provided lots are no smaller than 3 acres and the property owner must purchase a development right from another landowner in the AR and RR areas of the county.	<u>January Meetings:</u> 14 (31.8%) ♦ 18 (36.7%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 4 (19%) <u>Total:</u> 22 (34.5%)

- i. Land Preservation programs have been a very successful part of most County land use programs. Garrett County currently has about 5,000 acres enrolled in the Maryland Agriculture Land Foundation program and other easement programs. Most of this has been funded with available state funds. To increase the amount of acres in land preservation Garrett County could develop a county funded program. Which of the following statements do you feel Garrett County should do about a county program?

Garrett County should not have a county funded land preservation program.	<u>January Meeting:</u> 4 (9.1%) ♦ 4 (8.2%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 2 (9%) <u>Total:</u> 6 (9%)
Garrett County should develop a county program with available county funds	<u>January Meetings:</u> 13 (29.5%) ♦ 13 (26.5%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 11 (50%) <u>Total:</u> 24 (37%)
Garrett County should develop a county program with funds coming from an impact fee assessed on subdivided property.	<u>January Meetings:</u> 22 (50.0%) ♦ 26 (53.1%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 9 (41%) <u>Total:</u> 35 (54%)

3. Select the statement below that best describes your situation: <i>(some chose more than one)</i>	
Own and operate a working farm	<u>January Meetings:</u> 32 (72.7%) ♦ 32 (65.3%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 11 (46%) <u>Total:</u> 43 (57%)
Own property that is not a working farm (three or more acres)	<u>January Meetings:</u> 9 (20.5%) ♦ 9 (18.4%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 1 (4%) <u>Total:</u> 10 (13%)
Renting land that is operated as a farm	<u>January Meetings:</u> 1 (2.3%) ♦ 1 (2.0%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 1 (4%) <u>Total:</u> 2 (3%)
Farming with parents or other partnership arrangement	<u>January Meetings:</u> 1 (2.3%) ♦ 1 (2.0%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 2 (8%) <u>Total:</u> 3 (4%)
Own a house on a lot less than 3 acres	<u>January Meetings:</u> 3 (6.8%) ♦ 8 (16.3%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 9 (38%) <u>Total:</u> 17 (23%)
Do not currently own land in Garrett County	<u>January Meetings:</u> 0 (0%) ♦ 0 (0%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 0 (0%) <u>Total:</u> 0 (0%)
4. What is your age?	
16 – 30	<u>January Meetings:</u> 1 (2.3%) ♦ 1 (2.0%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 2 (8%) <u>Total:</u> 3 (4%)
31 – 50	<u>January Meetings:</u> 12 (27.3%) ♦ 14 (28.6%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 4 (17%) <u>Total:</u> 18 (25%)
50+	<u>January Meetings:</u> 30 (68.2%) ♦ 33 (67.3%) <u>March Meeting:</u> 18 (75%) <u>Total:</u> 51 (71%)

Additional Comments from the January Meetings:

How large is DCL watershed? Can it expand?
This was very informational
Municipalities should do more to encourage residential growth inside town limits as opposed to scattered home in rural areas. Cities did a great job luring people back to downtown living - small town American could do the same? (particularly Grantsville, Accident, Friendsville, Kitzmiller)
Water resources need to be addressed before lot sizes and densities can be accurately determined!!
GC should finance costs involved with donated conservation easements on an income needed basis so that landowners would be encouraged to donate.
Water resources need to be studied & studies updated in relation to land use decisions. I believe this is crucial!
Thanks for the meeting...would like more meetings
A lot of info to digest. Don't feel that I understand well enough to complete your survey.
How do you realistically prevent a farmer from giving relatives the right to build on 3 acres here and 3 acres there? Especially with land becoming too pricey for people working in this county? Living near the New Germany St. Park, I am asked by people renting my sister's cabin next door (from Baltimore, Washington, New Jersey) if there is land nearby for sale. Given the baby boomer population retiring, I believe there will be much more pressure on land outside the lake area than is expected.
I am concerned about sensitive areas such as those around state parks that are being heavily developed with dwellings on less than 3 acres (due to grandfathering). These small parcels are being sold for exorbitant prices and will negatively affect the parks. Golf courses should not be "open space" nor cemeteries or school yards!
Difficult to make blanket statements regarding density requirements out of context of other land planning tools. It is good work to present this information to the community. Thank you.
I support tightly clustered lots along with county wide zoning that is similar to some European countries (i.e. Switzerland). They have a long range focus on preserving farms, forests, and the associated lifestyle.
It's important to place importance on preserving agriculture's viability in Garrett County not only through the comprehensive plan but through other resources also.
We need a program that protects ag land and maintain or subsidize the owner for lost land value
Maintain our equity
Need to do better with the ag preservation program
It is imperative that farm equity NOT be diminished by any change in land development plans.
Landowners should have choice in what we do with our own land. We work the land, pay taxes, take all the risks in finances.
Farmland preservation should be more active and pay a realistic price for easements
Encourage clustering with incentives. Encourage small lot size, so local people will be able to afford to buy a lot.
I feel the existing regs have worked well. Leave them alone.
Improving the Ag Preservation Fund would solve most of the loss of open space you have discussed today. County should utilize the Deep Creek Lake Tax to help support open space in the remaining portions of the county. Bringing ag preservation funds into development funding reality will preserve more farm land.
I am not sure about some of these questions

Additional Comments from the March Meeting:

Garrett County should not have a TDR program unless there are appropriate receiving areas.
Lots smaller than the subdividable lot size should be allowed to be subdivided with a size no smaller than 3 acres. Although I'd say smaller than 3 ac is OK.
An additional comment to an answer of "yes" to Question "a.": Definitely, and I have identified an area (#1) in the Savage River watershed.
Comment on Question "b.": These options only make sense in combination with cluster plans.
Comment on Question "h." option 1: I see this on adjacent ag land where family owned land has resulted in 4 homes on about 2 acres – quite an eyesore.
Comment on Question "i." option 3: Someone, besides county tax revenue, needs to support this.
Thanks for soliciting input. And, the maps at this meeting (3/27/07) are VERY helpful. I greatly appreciated being able to suggest an AR designation in Eastern Garrett Co. on one of the maps.
Presently our density in the three (R, AR, RR) areas being discussed is 18,326/352,761 acres or 1 unit per 20 acres – this should be very acceptable – why change something that is already working well
Don't <u>force</u> people to put land in preservation either by direct or <u>indirect</u> pressure. Don't put low housing all in one or two places because you end up with "Bradly Manor" but we need more affordable housing.
Keep lot sizes the same as they are <u>currently</u> !!
Provide incentive to develop properties (lots) for first time home/property owners (young people starting out): No ag. Severance on those; if developed no impact fee; tax break on remainder
My ground is all I have it my future if I need to sell I shouldn't be restricted.
An additional comment to an answer of "yes" to Question "c.": need proper incentives
I would like to see zoning for the entire county. I feel that 2i is one way to provide equity for Farmers who I believe deserve this + yet preserve the farmland usage + rural nature of most of the county. Development needs to be encouraged with a variety of options + incentives to take place around current towns.
I'm in favor of clustering, infilling, smaller lot sizes. Restrict or prevent subdivision in the most pristine and untouched areas. Incentify development near existing population centers.