

Response to the Visual Montage: What is rural to you?

Rural is...

- Farms/field of crops
- Historic/archaeological – but could be preservation or urban
- Rural has habitation; not overdeveloped, not overpopulated, resting lightly on land; horse raising is agriculture
- More ag
- Not a lot of traffic
- Reflects historical lifestyle
- No sidewalks, wooden sidewalks
- 2-story buildings with housing above stores
- mom and pop businesses
- “vibe” present that makes it rural
- green setting that frames buildings/street scene
- without trees or natural vegetation would not look rural
- looks loosely organized – density ok if there isn’t something lurking around the corner
- no sidewalks, no overhead lights, no transmission lines. Built ohana unit: so evolving rural, adding ohana to existing densities
- swale, open drainage, no sidewalks, lot sizes are large
- no sidewalks, need bumps in rural areas for speeding urban drivers, more greenscape
- small town country feel
- if that’s the extent of high density rural village, than is rural, rural needs village
- low rise, rural village
- if can ride horse on side of road and horse can take a dump and don’t have to pick up, then rural

Rural is (not)...

- Gentleman ranching, not ag. Looks like Kentucky or upstate New Jersey
- Connection of lifestyle more urban
- Socioeconomic character
- Divided highway
- No rural corridor, no rural village where people get goods
- Too dense, houses set close together
- Looks like cultural “park”
- Red roof in background suggests street and potential density around
- Landscaped, not wild and free
- Can’t “recreate” rural
- Chain store
- Gas station signage – corporate architecture/look
- Newer building with false fronts that are meant to look rural
- Street light looks more polished than rural

Response to the Visual Montage: What is rural to you?

- Lot of land not used in rural manner and house stuck in middle of it
- Mentality reflected in building
- Architectural style not rural – very urban, very new
- Architect brings values from somewhere else
- Placement of house – rural wisdom wouldn't put house on top of ridge
- Speed bump in road
- See (\$) value in roads – don't see roads like that in Ka'u
- Looks like high-end subdivision – expensive driveways
- Suburban type of development
- Tried to make buildings quaint
- Parking lot is focus of shopping center
- No rust on roofing
- Not functioning rural, retirement rural, no use of land
- No native vegetation
- “beware of dog”/“keep out” sign on fence

What's important about rural to you?

- Nature, open space
- Quiet, at night it's dark
- Independence
- How rural affects highway system
- Support sustainability
- Low cost development alternative
- Economic opportunities within rural area
- Everybody knows everybody
- Ag uses
- Affordable housing (mentioned twice)
- Connection to the land, `aina
- More natural environment
- Preserving what was there, keeping scenic beauty
- Maintaining natural landscape and vistas
- Maintain sustainability
- Lifestyle (rural)
- Ensuring that rural lasts
- Nature of open space, connection to `aina
- Preventing land speculation so values don't shoot so high
- Access to the land for gathering, etc.
- Shoreline access
- Public transportation
- Preserving or restoring local character and ecosystem, connection of land to ocean, watershed planning
- Space between neighbors
- Few people, more trees, peace and quiet (can include cows mooing, chickens crowing)
- Valuing voice of land as wisdom base; seed saving
- Preserving green space and natural resources
- Lower stress level
- Less density, appropriate infrastructure
- Community with shared values
- Long-term guaranteed ag area preserved
- Ahupua`a concept – satisfy needs of community within area
- Agriculture as primary basis of zoning in ag lands
- Regional and multigenerational communities
- Education and empowerment of residents especially of those who have been there for several generations
- Economically viable ag industry
- More land available for smaller farmers, Hamakua Coast in few hands
- Peace and quiet
- Offered opportunity for better lifestyle
- Maintaining open space

What's important about rural to you?

- Insurance that rural lifestyle can be maintained, taxes don't go so high

What questions do you have about preserving and maintaining rural areas?

- How do we get ag land into rural to preserve ag? How do we make a better distinction between what is really “rural” and real ag? Taxation as part of this.
- How do we support more buses and alternate transportation choices, strengthen village centers (especially in Puna)? How do you keep a new road out of rural areas?
- Can we or can't we? What is it that we can (do)? What can be done within current picture/framework? Within how decisions are made?
- What revision might be needed to current zoning to ensure protection of ag land?
- How can we get connecting corridors out of rural community/centers – like building bypass roads?
- Is the county willing to adopt ordinances to protect natural habitat? How do you contain/deal with excessive building in ag areas?
- What role will the Hawaiians play in this process?
- Will the State help the farming community? Soil & Water Conservation Districts not doing too much
- What role will Hawaiian community and culture play in development of strategies and tools in guiding growth development in this island/these islands?
- How are State special use permits helping or hurting in rural area?
- To what extent is interagency (State, county, federal) coordination occurring with respect to special habitats, watershed functions, coastal and marine resources? CA Coastal Commission: jgregg@coastal.ca.gov – Jack Gregg – guidance document for implementing watershed-based planning, integrating water quality language/standards into local general plans.
- Give weight to decentralized energy systems – off-grid alternatives
- How can we get a dim sum restaurant in Puna?
- How can we provide ways for people in rural areas to support themselves without driving to jobs?
- Is it possible to maintain a rural lifestyle in Puna where there are 50,000 lots ready for development?
- How does this project to redefine rural lands affect our ability to protect important ag lands? Could there be unintended consequences for IAL by doing this?
- When is the State going to enforce what's already on the books? (sewage infractions, Hokulia, etc.)
- How can we address different rural conditions? Strategies between different types of rural communities?
- Are there technical tools that show land use conditions like what was shown for Montgomery County, MD?
- How can we have appropriate economic development in rural areas for people who live there?
- What tools are available to promote rural character in existing areas, already permitted?
- How do you handle drainage and sewage in rural areas? How can these be consciously handled? How do you integrate or build on the ahupua`a concept?

What questions do you have about preserving and maintaining rural areas?

- Clarification of zoning and general plan for people
- How do we get golf courses not be zoned as an ag use?
- Will local governments be willing to waive excise taxes paid by local consumers on locally-grown produce to promote purchasing of local ag products?
- How do we quantify, strengthen, and enforce ag use on ag-zoned lands?
- How will we redefine “development” so that it gives better results than “growth”?
- Is there a mechanism that county can use to help resolve local conflicts without calling police?
- What can we do to ensure affordable farm land for future generations?

Other comments:

The implications of peak oil and how the local economy is able to adapt to the enormous changes that this singular event will be the most important focus for the Planning Department(s) on all islands.

1. What plans are in motion to respond usefully and appropriately to this?
2. What means of providing leadership in response to such areas as:
 - Agriculture, sustainability, alternative energy sources, transportation, emergency food supplies, community cooperation & communication councils, changes to education, hospital services.

Peak oil is real and will have enormous consequences to all economies. We do not know when or the extent of the fracture lines, but that this issue is not being planned for before it occurs is a tragedy and absence of responsibility.