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COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Joshua Cummings, Director

Creating Solutions for Our Future

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston County Planning Commission

FROM: Maya Teeple, Senior Planner
Ashley Arai, Agriculture Community Program Manager

DATE: May 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Work Session 1: Long-Term Agriculture Designation and Zoning Update

SUMMARY & DECISION POINTS

This is work session 1 on the Long-Term Agriculture Designation and Zoning Update, which is one component of CPA-16 "Community Driven Review of Agricultural Policies and Programs." At this work session, staff will present an overview of the proposed amendments as part of this project, outreach done to date, and the timeline for review.

Staff requests that the Planning Commission bring back any feedback and questions at this and the next meeting before moving forward to schedule a public hearing.

The proposed amendments as part of the Long-Term Agriculture Designation and Zoning Update includes:

Comprehensive Plan Amendments (Chapters 2, 3, and Appendix C)

- Amendments to land use descriptions and acreages (Chapter 2)
- Options for amendments to targeted designation criteria (soil type, parcel size, and agricultural diversity) for Long-Term Agriculture of commercial significance (Chapter 3)
- Addition of policy language for agriculture cluster development proposal (Chapter 2, Chapter 3)
- Relocation of soils list used for designation of long-term agriculture lands of commercial significance (Appendix C)
- Future Land Use Map (Map L-1), Long-Term Forestry and Agriculture Map (Map N-1)

Development Regulations and Zoning Map

- Amendments to Thurston County Code, chapters 20.03, 20.08A, 20.08G, 20.09, 20.09A, 20.09C, 20.30A, 20.54, and 20.60.

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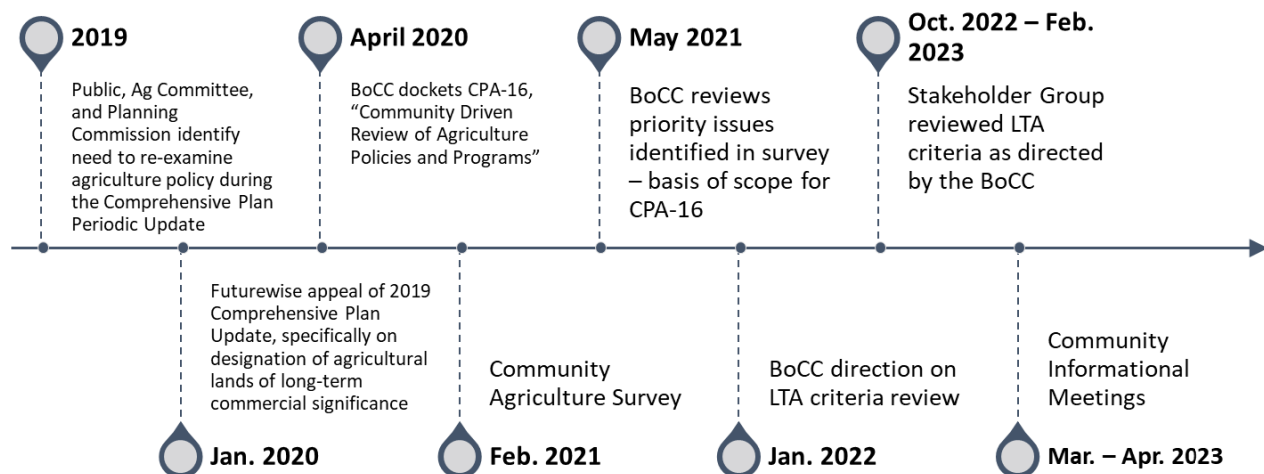
- Amendments to development regulations to clarify language, streamline permit processes, and increase flexibility for farmers
- Amendments to development regulations to require cluster development on prime agricultural lands that are not protected through zoning
- Amendments to the Official Zoning Map of Thurston County, Washington

BACKGROUND

In 2020, the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) docketed a project to review County agriculture policies and programs in response to:

- Community input received during the 2019 Comprehensive Plan Update;
- A Planning Commission recommendation in late 2019 to add a docket item that reviews agricultural policy and programs; and
- A Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB) appeal of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan's designation of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance (case no. [20-2-0001](#)).

This project was docketed as *CPA-16, Community-Driven Review of Agriculture Policies and Programs*. In February 2021, staff conducted a [community survey](#) to gain broader input on existing County policies and programs related to farmland and farming issues and help shape the scope of the CPA-16 project. Priority issues identified in the survey included permit streamlining, development code updates, changes to conservation incentive programs to increase opportunities, and hiring an agricultural program manager. These priority issues were used to develop the scope of the CPA-16 project. A BoCC briefing was held on May 13, 2021, to review the results of the community survey and discuss the preliminary scope for policy, regulatory, and program actions to implement the CPA-16 project.



Of the priority issues identified by the community, one was to review existing agricultural land use and zoning. Other components are being reviewed on separate tracks:

- Agricultural Program Manager – Hired
- Docket Item A-18, Agricultural Critical Areas Update – Complete
- Open Space Program updates – in review with BoCC
- Agriculture Permit Streamlining – In progress (in part being reviewed with LTA Zoning Update)
- Agriculture Code Provisions Update – In progress (in part being reviewed with LTA Zoning Update)
- Transfer of Development Rights/Purchase of Development Rights Update – In progress with grant award
- LTA Zoning Update – **this project**, in review with planning commission.

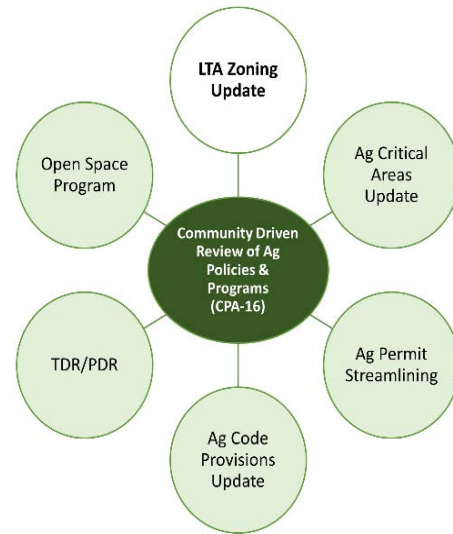


Figure 1. This project in review with the Planning Commission – the LTA Zoning Update – is one component of several that are part of CPA-16.

The land use designation for long-term agricultural lands of commercial significance is also under review as part of a GMHB appeal, specifically as it relates to soils criteria used in the current mapping of long-term agricultural lands. In January 2022, the BoCC set the scope for the Long-Term Agriculture Designation and Zoning review and directed staff to conduct a targeted review beyond soils of the following existing designation criteria for long-term agriculture:

- (Criteria 2, 4) Consider designating LTA within the Urban Growth Areas
- (Criteria 5) Consider including smaller acreage farms in the designation criteria
- (Criteria 8) Consider revising block size requirements

OUTREACH

Staff conducted outreach on this project to several stakeholders and the community. Stakeholder feedback has been used to identify major themes and develop a range of considerations for the Planning Commission.

- Agriculture Advisory Committee (8)
- Agritourism Advisory Committee (1)
- Voluntary Stewardship Program Workgroup (3)
- Stakeholder Workgroup (7)
- Community Informational Meetings (4)
- Targeted Outreach: Olympia Master Builders, Thurston Chamber of Commerce, Thurston Realtors Association, and Thurston Economic Development Council

STAKEHOLDER GROUP WORK

Community Planning convened a diverse stakeholder workgroup to review the targeted designation criteria. The group included small and large farmers, advocates from the farmland conservation community, building and realtor representatives, and other state and technical agencies as guests; several of the participants were new to county processes and new to learning about agricultural zoning in Thurston County.

The group spent over 14 hours across 7 meetings learning about the history and state law around agricultural zoning in Thurston County, asking questions, reviewing research, and discussing possible changes. The group worked through multiple iterations of possible changes to the criteria, which resulted in multiple iterations of maps. Initially, ideas around changing criteria resulted in a possible addition of between 23,000-140,000 new acres of Long-Term Agriculture. After seeing maps and discussing the criteria, the group further narrowed themes. The group did not arrive at a consensus on all the designation criteria, but the group did identify a lot of common ground and narrowed down the range of changes considerably.

General themes from the stakeholder workgroup include:

- Financial compensation for loss of development rights needs to go hand-in-hand with any expansion of LTA zoning
- LTA zoning is a community benefit, and farmers shouldn't have to carry the cost-burden alone
- Agriculture in Thurston County is diverse and includes different types of farms of different sizes
- Protecting land is important, but other programs that support farmers need to be re-worked or established
- Explore other tools (agriculture protection overlay) to protect lands that aren't protected through LTA zoning
- Water remains a concern for areas in LTA zoning that aren't already farming

Recapping major themes related to designation criteria:

- Soils
 - Protect lands with the highest proportion of prime farmland soils (75% or more)
 - Consider that accessory uses and farm buildings need non-prime soils to occur on and that farmers need more flexibility to utilize non-prime soils for uses that support agricultural viability
- Block Size (Blocks of Agricultural Land)
 - Criterion was originally adopted to reduce nuisance claims
 - Some felt this criterion is no longer as relevant and should be significantly reduced – very few single parcels, look at a smaller block size of 40-100 acres
- Parcel size

- Leave as 20 acres or consider a smaller acreage between 10-20 acres
- Consider what the average farm size is in Thurston County (average agricultural parcel size is 15.5 acres)
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)
 - LTA designation is not the right tool for protecting land within UGAs
 - Explore other options to protect agricultural uses in UGAs

COMMUNITY INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Community Planning held four informational meetings in the community to provide a summary of the project, stakeholder group themes, impacts of potential changes, and answer questions and take comments from the public. Meetings were advertised through webmail, press release, Facebook posts, and outreach to stakeholder groups in the community. In total, over 58 individuals signed in over the 4 meetings.

- **March 27, 2023, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** – South Union Grange – 10030 Tilley Rd. SW, Olympia, WA, 98512
- **March 30, 2023, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** – Rochester High School Commons – 19800 Carper Rd. SW, Rochester, WA, 98579
- **April 4, 2023, 6:00 – 7:00 PM** – Yelm Community Center – 301 2nd St. SE, Yelm, WA, 98597
- **April 7, 2023 – 6:30 – 7:30 PM** – Zoom

At the community meetings, many questions were similar to those that were received by the stakeholder group. A summary of some of the questions Community Planning heard in both processes is below:

- ***How does this relate to HCP mitigation?***
 - Depends on the individual property. The County plans to consider incentives for properties that have overlapping resource areas (like agriculture and habitat as listed in HCP) with the periodic comprehensive plan update.
- ***Why change properties included as those having 50% prime farmland soils coverage to those having 75%?***
 - Increasing the percent coverage of soils is intended to protect parcels that have the most prime farmland soils. Soil is a non-exclusive criterion, meaning there might be some properties that have a little less soil on them but meet other criteria, like they are within an agricultural block, or are a commercially significant farm nearby to other farms, and so are then included in the designation.
- ***Could the County consider split zoning so zoning restrictions are only on agricultural soils?***
 - Split zoning is difficult since the USDA Soils Data is not perfect down to site scale. It is preferable to resolve with development regulations because this allows for site-specific application. The proposed development regulation amendments resolve some of this by increasing flexibility for certain uses on non-prime soils.
- ***What is prime farmland – who and how is it determined?***

- United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services develops the soil information that is used. Prime farmland is defined as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economical manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. (pg. 622-A.3, [Title 430-622-National Soil Survey Handbook, June 2020](#))
- ***Where are other lands for conservation located in relation to existing and possible new agricultural lands? How much land is federal, state, county and city?***
 - The possible new agricultural lands are outside of city and federal lands. They are also located outside of parks and long-term forestry lands.
- ***What does the agritourism overlay do?***
 - The agritourism overlay district allows for agritourism activities and accessory uses to agriculture. It is intended to support the agricultural industry by allowing for additional uses. The intent is to protect and promote agriculture as an important component of the Thurston County economy. The proposed development regulation amendments include clarifications and permit streamlining for properties located in this district.
- ***Why is the County updating agricultural zoning?***
 - We are under appeal and are required to look at the soil information that is used in agricultural zoning. Reviewing the other criteria allows us to respond to the concerns of the community.
- ***How is water availability taken into consideration?***
 - Water availability is regulated by Ecology so is largely taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis.

Comments from the stakeholder group and community informational meetings include:

- Having a working transfer and purchase of development rights program is important.
- Concerns about reducing the block size down to 40 acres given a possible increase in nuisance claims.
- Soil type is based on crop but somewhat irrelevant to types of farms.
- Downzoning feels like a punishment to farmers--find incentives for the changes that need to be made.
- Cluster developments well received by some attendees at community informational meetings – ideal solution.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

To date, 3 written public comments have been received on the LTA zoning update. Other comments have been received on other components of CPA-16 and are included. Comments are included as Attachment F to this packet. Themes of comments related to zoning include:

- Reference to American Farmland Trust
- Food security is a national issue, and there is risk to losing more farmland
- Interest in historic barn preservation

Other comments request updates to the Transfer and Purchase of Development Rights programs, regenerative agriculture practices be incentivized, and adjustments to the Open Space Tax Program. These other updates, while part of CPA-16, are being reviewed on separate tracks.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE DESIGNATION

Long-Term Agriculture is both a zoning district and a land use designation. The long-term agriculture land use designation is a requirement under state law ([RCW 36.70a.040](#)) which states that counties shall designate agricultural lands and adopt development regulations to conserve these areas.

These areas are not intended for all agricultural lands, only for those of long-term commercial significance or that are **capable of being used** as such.

We hold land is “devoted to” agricultural use under RCW 36.70A.030 if it is in an area where the land is actually used or capable of being used for agricultural production.

City of Redmond v. Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board, 136 Wn.2d

Long-term commercial significance is determined by a set of criteria and policies that live in [Chapter 3](#) of the Comprehensive Plan. State law provides guidance in how to classify and designate agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance ([WAC 365-190-050](#)).

The County currently designates around 15,500 acres of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance, which are zoned as Long-Term Agriculture and Nisqually Agriculture. These lands are sited based on the following policies (Comprehensive Plan [Chapter 3](#) and Attachment A):

- Used or capable of being used for commercial agriculture

- ≥50% prime farmland soils (1990 USDA Soil Survey)
- Blocks of agricultural land at least 200-320+ acres
- Parcels 20 acres and greater
- No parcels inside Urban Growth Areas
- Nearby access to road, rail, or air routes to markets
- Outside of Natural Shoreline Environments

HISTORY OF LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE DESIGNATION IN THURSTON COUNTY

Thurston County has applied long-term agriculture zoning and designation since the early 90s. Over the years, some updates have been made to the designation criteria. More recently in 2020, Thurston County was appealed for using outdated soils information in the long-term agriculture zoning. This project responds to that appeal while also addressing community concerns.

- **Aug 16, 1993** – (Res. 10400) County adopts LTA criteria, land use and zoning, and development regulations
- **Dec 23, 1996** – (Res. 11322) County adopts text in comp plan that addresses process to reclassify LTA lands
- **Nov. 10, 2003** – (Res. 13039) County updates background text and chapter info on agricultural lands to be consistent with changes in state law. Some changes are made to designation criteria like clarifications to the agricultural diversity section and redesignation of agriculture section.
- **Jan. 21, 2005** – Petition for Review issued to Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board (WWGMHB), case number 05-2-0002, alleges the County failed to meet the Growth Management Act in the following ways.
 - County failed to review its agricultural resource land designations and as such over 1,000 acres that meet GMA criteria are not designated.
- **July 20, 2005** – Final decision and order of the WWGMHB, case number 05-2-0002. WWGMHB Ruled that criteria 3 (existing land use should include areas only used for agriculture) and 5 (predominant parcel size of 20 acres) failed to comply with the requirements of GMA under RCW 36.70A.060 and 36.70A.170.
 - Thurston County appealed that decision to the WA State Court of Appeals. The WA State Court of Appeals issued a decision (4/3/07) that partially overturned the WWGMHB ruling, finding that WWGMHB erred in invalidating the parcel size criterion number 5, and was found to have correctly invalidated criterion 3. County determined that it didn't need to reapply criteria 3 to designate any additional agricultural lands after updating it.

- **May 30, 2007** – (Res. 13815) Compliance Update – County updates designation criteria 3 to comply with WWGMHB case. Changes include addition of the definition of agricultural land clarified by the Supreme Court in 2006, and updates to designation criteria (3) for land capability and tax status to specify that agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance include areas used for or capable of being used for agriculture, as well as that other information in addition to open space tax enrollment can be used to identify areas of agriculture.
- **Oct. 22, 2007** – Compliance order, WWGMHB found that the failure to apply the new criteria (#3) to lands that hadn't been designated LTA and to consider those lands fails to comply with GMA.
- **Dec. 29, 2008** – (Res. 14180) Compliance Update – County adopts amendments to maps M-15 FLUM and M-42 LTA/LTF that apply revised criteria 3 and designate additional LTA lands.
- **March 22, 2009** – Compliance Hearing, the WWGMHB found that the County's application of the nine criteria for the designation of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance as stated in its comprehensive plan is compliant with GMA, but that removing lands from consideration for designation based on the presence of 51% or more wetlands on a parcel was clearly erroneous.
- **July 15, 2009** – (Res. 14254) Compliance Update – County adopts amendments to maps M-15 FLUM and M-42 LTA/LTF that include parcels that meet all 9 designation criteria if they were previously removed based on 51% wetlands.
- **Jan. 8, 2013** – (Res. 14845) Annual Amendment – Reconsider two areas designated as LTA and rezone to R 1/10 (Schader Crown Ranch/Weyerhaeuser)
- **March 13, 2013** – Petition for Review (PFR) – Futurewise files PFR based on LTA redesignation under 14845, case number 13-2-0015
- **May 20, 2014** – (Res. 15019) Annual Amendment (negotiated settlement in response to case no. 13-2-0015) – adds additional 188.5 acres (Schader Crown Ranch) and statement about soils criteria
 - Case no. 13-2-0015 is dismissed with changes adopted under resolution 15019 on July 17, 2014.
- **Aug. 7, 2019** – PC Recommendation to conduct an in-depth review of agricultural policies and programs as part of the periodic comprehensive plan update
- **Nov. 12, 2019** – (Res. 15836) – Periodic Update is adopted, which includes refreshed agriculture policies.
- **Jan 15, 2020** – Petition for Review – Futurewise challenges County's failure to update soils and map appropriately under Res. 15836. Case No. 20-2-0001.

- **Apr. 28, 2020** – BoCC Adopts Official Dockets for 2020-2021, which include CPA-16 as recommended by the Planning Commission, a community-driven review of agricultural policies and programs

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The Long-Term Agriculture zoning update includes changes to the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CHANGES

Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2

- Amendments to land use descriptions and acreages
- Addition of policy language for cluster development proposal

Comprehensive Plan Chapter 3

- Options for amendments to targeted designation criteria (soil type, parcel size, and agricultural diversity) for Long-Term Agriculture of commercial significance
 - Soil Type: Update soils information, consider 50% or 75% soils coverage
 - Parcel Size: Maintain 20 acre minimum or reduce to 15 acres (average agricultural parcel size)
 - Agricultural Diversity: Reduce to 100+ acres, or reduce to 40+ acres
- Policy language included for cluster development proposal
- Policy language included for proposed development regulations around increased flexibility on non-prime soils

Comprehensive Plan Appendix C

- Relocation of soils used for designation of long-term agriculture lands of commercial significance

Maps

- Future Land Use Map (Map L-1) updated depending on outcome of designation criteria
- Long-Term Forestry and Agriculture Map (Map N-1) updated depending on outcome of designation criteria

CODE AND ZONING CHANGES

Development Regulations

- Amendments to Thurston County Code, chapters 20.03, 20.08A, 20.08G, 20.09, 20.09A, 20.09C, 20.30A, and 20.60.
 - Amendments to development regulations to clarify requirements, streamline permit processes, and increase flexibility for farmers
 - Amendments to development regulations to require cluster development on prime agricultural lands that are not protected through zoning

- Cluster requirements would apply to properties that are designated as RR 1/5, RRR 1/5, and R 1/10, outside of urban growth areas, at least 20 acres in size, contain 50% of more prime farmland soils, and enrolled as current use agriculture in the assessor’s open space tax program within the past 7 years.
- An estimated 1,723 acres of land meet the above criteria and fall outside of all the LTA expansion maps. The remaining 4,967 acres fall within at least one LTA expansion map.

Zoning Map

- Amendments to the Official Zoning Map of Thurston County, Washington, dependent on the outcome of designation criteria

WHAT ARE OTHER JURISDICTIONS DOING?

Other counties designate agricultural resource lands as required under state law. Each county develops its own set of designation criteria, as guided by state law.

County	Prime Farmland Soils	Minimum Parcel Size	“Block Size” Criteria	Allowed in UGAs
Thurston	Yes – “predominantly” prime farmland soils	≥20 acres	320 acres or 200 if nearby to other LTA	No
Skagit	All lands with prime soils	Ag-NRL: ≥5 acres RRc-NRL: ≥40 acres	160 acres when nearby to other resource lands	No
Pierce	East County: 50% or 20 acres Central/South: 25% or 10 acres	East County: ≥10 acres Central/South: ≥40 acres	N/A	No
Snohomish	Must be prime	≥10 acres	40 acres if not nearby to other designated ag land	No
Lewis	Yes, and some non-prime for poultry,	≥20 acres	N/A	Considers proximity

	horticulture, fisheries			
Clark	Yes	≥20 acres	N/A	Considers proximity
Whatcom	Majority of area is prime	Large enough to maintain ag operations	N/A	Considers proximity

RELEVANT STATE LAW & POLICIES

The purpose of the Growth Management Act (GMA) is to prevent uncoordinated and unplanned growth, which can pose threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, health, safety, and quality of life. The GMA requires that jurisdictions designate agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance and includes guidance on how jurisdictions should approach this.

- [RCW 36.70A.030](#) – Definitions
 - (3) "Agricultural land" means land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees, not subject to the excise tax imposed by *RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, finfish in upland hatcheries, or livestock, and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production.
 - (15) "Long-term commercial significance" includes the growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production, in consideration of the land's proximity to population areas, and the possibility of more intense uses of the land.
- [RCW 36.70A.040](#) - Counties are required to designate agricultural lands and adopt development regulations conserving designated agricultural lands.
- [RCW 36.70A.060](#) – Requires that development regulations to assure conservation of agricultural lands be adopted, and that these regulations shall assure that the use of lands adjacent to natural resource lands does not interfere with their continued use.
- [RCW 36.70A.170](#) - Requires designation of agricultural lands with long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products.
- [RCW 36.70A.177](#) – Supports the county's use of innovative zoning techniques in areas designated as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance. The innovative zoning techniques should be designed to conserve agricultural lands and encourage the agricultural economy.
- [WAC 365-190-030](#) - Definitions
 - (1) "Agricultural land" is land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products

or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees, not subject to the excise tax imposed by RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, finfish in upland hatcheries, or livestock, and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production. These lands are referred to in this chapter as agricultural resource lands to distinguish between formally designated lands, and other lands used for agricultural purposes.

- **(11) "Long-term commercial significance"** includes the growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production, in consideration with the land's proximity to population areas, and the possibility of more intense uses of land. **Long-term commercial significance means the land is capable of producing the specified natural resources at commercially sustainable levels for at least the twenty-year planning period if adequately conserved.** Designated mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance may have alternative post-mining land uses, as provided by the Surface Mining Reclamation Act, comprehensive plan and development regulations, or other laws.
- [WAC 365-190-050](#) – Agricultural resource lands
 - (1) In classifying and designating agricultural resource lands, **counties must approach the effort as a county-wide or area-wide process. Counties and cities should not review resource lands designations solely on a parcel-by-parcel process.** Counties and cities must have a program for the transfer or purchase of development rights prior to designating agricultural resource lands in urban growth areas. Cities are encouraged to coordinate their agricultural resource lands designations with their county and any adjacent jurisdictions.
 - (3) Lands should be considered for designation as agricultural resource lands based on three factors:
 - **(a) The land is not already characterized by urban growth.** To evaluate this factor, counties and cities should use the criteria contained in [WAC 365-196-310](#).
 - **(b) The land is used or capable of being used for agricultural production.** This factor evaluates whether lands are well suited to agricultural use **based primarily on their physical and geographic characteristics.** Some agricultural operations are less dependent on soil quality than others, including some livestock production operations.
 - (i) Lands that are currently used for agricultural production and lands that are capable of such use must be evaluated for designation. **The intent of a landowner to use land for agriculture or to cease such use is not the controlling factor in determining if land is used or capable of being used for agricultural production.** Land enrolled in federal conservation reserve programs is recommended for designation based on previous agricultural use, management requirements, and potential for reuse as agricultural land.

- (ii) In determining whether lands are used or capable of being used for agricultural production, **counties and cities shall use the land-capability classification system of the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service as defined in relevant Field Office Technical Guides.** These eight classes are incorporated by the United States Department of Agriculture into map units described in published soil surveys, and are based on the growing capacity, productivity and soil composition of the land.
- (c) The land has long-term commercial significance for agriculture. **In determining this factor, counties and cities should consider the following nonexclusive criteria,** as applicable:
 - (i) The classification of prime and unique farmland soils, and farmlands of statewide importance, as mapped by the Natural Resources Conservation Service;
 - (ii) The availability of public facilities, including roads used in transporting agricultural products;
 - (iii) Tax status, including whether lands are enrolled under the current use tax assessment under chapter 84.34 RCW and whether the optional public benefit rating system is used locally, and whether there is the ability to purchase or transfer land development rights;
 - (iv) The availability of public services;
 - (v) Relationship or proximity to urban growth areas;
 - (vi) Predominant parcel size;
 - (vii) Land use settlement patterns and their compatibility with agricultural practices;
 - (viii) Intensity of nearby land uses;
 - (ix) History of land development permits issued nearby;
 - (x) Land values under alternative uses; and
 - (xi) Proximity to markets.
- (4) When designating agricultural resource lands, counties and cities may consider food security issues, which may include providing local food supplies for food banks, schools and institutions, vocational training opportunities in agricultural operations, and preserving heritage or artisanal foods.
- (5) When applying the criteria in subsection (3)(c) of this section, **the process should result in designating an amount of agricultural resource lands sufficient to maintain and enhance the economic viability of the agricultural industry in the county over the long term;** and to retain supporting agricultural businesses, such as processors, farm suppliers, and equipment maintenance and repair facilities.
- (6) Counties and cities may further classify additional agricultural lands of local importance. Classifying additional agricultural lands of local importance should include, in addition to general public involvement, consultation with the board of

the local conservation district and the local committee of the farm service agency. It may also be useful to consult with any existing local organizations marketing or using local produce, including the boards of local farmers markets, school districts, other large institutions, such as hospitals, correctional facilities, or existing food cooperatives.

OTHER TOOLS & UPDATES

Agricultural zoning is one tool in the toolbox to help protect lands for future agricultural use. In addition to updating agriculture zoning, staff is currently working to streamline development requirements, incentivize conservation practices, and provide flexibility in permitted farm uses. Community Planning has also received a grant to update farmland conservation incentive programs like Open Space, Transfer of Development Rights, and Purchase of Development Rights to make them work better for farmers. Public outreach for these planning efforts is scheduled to begin in Winter 2023.

CONSIDERATIONS

DESIGNATION CRITERIA FOR LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE

Consider which lands should be protected for agriculture of long-term commercial significance. This is not intended to protect all agricultural lands. Additionally, lands do not need to be currently used for agriculture, they only must be capable of being used as such in the future.

- For soils, should they include parcels with 50% coverage, or 75% coverage?
 - o Not all agricultural uses are contingent on soils.
 - o Including parcels that have at least 75% soils mapped on the property protects land with the most agricultural soils.
- For parcel size, should they protect parcels that are predominantly 20 acres or more, or down to 15 acres or more?
 - o The current density for Long-Term Agriculture is 1 house per 20 acres.
 - o The average agricultural parcel size in Thurston County is 15.5 acres.
- Should agricultural blocks be 200-320+ acres, be 100+ acres, or down to 40+ acres?
 - o Like uses occurring near to one another can add protection to the industry by reducing nuisance claims.
- Changes in criteria will impact landowners across Thurston County.
 - o Some lands that may be designated as Long-Term Agriculture are site-specific land use and rezone requests.
 - o Some land that may be designated as Long-Term Agriculture are tribal trust lands.
 - o Lands designated for Long-Term Agriculture may be able to put less houses on their property or have less uses available to them.
 - o Certain non-agricultural uses may be limited to parts of the property without prime farmland soils.

- o Changes will impact landowners in Rural Residential and Resource 1/5 (RRR 1/5), Rural Residential 1/5 (Rural Residential 1/5), Rural 1/10 (R 1/10), and Rural 1/20 (R 1/20)
- o As included in this packet, the draft maps would impact between 12,000 – 22,000 acres and between 240 and 510 parcels. Those numbers will adjust through this process as maps are cleaned up, the public process continues, and new shoreline information becomes available.

Table 2. Acreage of Possible New LTA by Draft Map Option and Zone

Zone Code	Baseline	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
R 1/10	520	540	1,030
R 1/20	2,900	1,750	1,890
RR1/5	790	450	580
RRR1/5	18,450	9,920	15,600
TOTAL	22,660	12,660	19,100

*** Numbers are rounded, and acreages will change as the process continues.*

MCALLISTER GEOLOGICAL SENSITIVE AREAS

Currently, farmland within the McAllister Springs aquifer recharge area is not included as long-term agriculture of commercial significance due to the sensitivity of the aquifer to pesticide and fertilizer use, and the proximity to urban uses to the north. Additional regulations exist in this area to protect the aquifer that may limit the viability of some farming operations. In the draft maps included in this packet, lands within McAllister Geologically Sensitive Area (MGSA) are excluded.

- Continue to exclude MGSA lands from long-term agriculture of commercial significance?

CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Currently, properties designated as long-term agriculture may include properties enrolled in designated forest land, timberland, or non-commercial forest.

- Should forested areas be excluded from agricultural lands of commercial significance? On what basis?
 - o State law ([WAC 365-190-040](#)) states that overlapping natural resource designations (mineral lands, agriculture, forestry) should not necessarily be considered inconsistent.
 - o Long-Term Agriculture protects land based on its capability to be used for commercial agriculture, now or in the future.
 - o Commercial forestry requires replanting.
 - o Trees removed because of conversion to agriculture requires a forest conversion permit.
 - o Removal of trees from these lands could impact carbon sequestration and climate mitigation efforts.

- o Lands proposed for designation as Long-Term Agriculture are all rural residential lands, and could be converted to residential uses at some point, also resulting in the loss of trees.
- o If excluding forested areas, which ones, and on what basis? More information may become available through other county updates (Healthy Forests Project) and state law (climate elements under GMA) at a later time to better inform policy on overlapping resources.

MINIMUM DENSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

The stakeholder group discussed the minimum density for development in agricultural areas. No agreement was reached. Some stakeholders felt the minimum development density should match whatever the parcel size that is protected for designation is. Other stakeholders felt density permitted should be less than the size of parcel protected.

- Should minimum density for development be amended in the zoning regulations for Long-Term Agriculture?
 - o No proposed amendments are included for minimum density.
 - o Current Long-Term Agriculture allows 1 house per 20 acres.
 - o Current Nisqually Agriculture allows 1 house per 40 acres, but allows for one unit per five acres if developed as a Planned Rural Residential Development (clustered).

CLUSTER REQUIREMENT

Stakeholder group members suggested Community Planning consider alternative options to protect land for farming outside of Long-Term Agriculture zoning. Community Planning staff developed a cluster requirement proposal that would apply to agricultural lands outside of the Long-Term Agriculture designation.

- Should the County apply a cluster requirement to agricultural lands outside of the long-term agriculture designation?
 - o Stakeholder members were generally supportive of the concept, but some concerns were expressed with it being a requirement.
 - o As included in this packet, the draft cluster requirement would impact between 1,700 – 5,000 acres and up to 149 parcels.

NEXT STEPS

This project is in-part in response to a GMHB appeal, and timely review is of the essence. Because of the level of public outreach done prior to the Planning Commission, staff requests the Planning Commission hold a hearing soon after the initial review starts, and then budget time for work sessions to discuss public comment and amendments after the public hearing.

To facilitate review and remain on track for final action by the end of the calendar year, staff anticipates the following schedule for Planning Commission review:

- May 3, 2023 – Work Session #1 – overview of the project, state law, proposed amendments
- May 17, 2023 – Work Session #2 – follow up questions from Planning Commission; tentatively request to set a public hearing
- June 21, 2023 – Tentative public hearing date; Work Session #3 for follow-up
- July 5, 2023 – Work Session #4 – follow up, possible recommendation
- July 19, 2023 – Work Session #5 – follow up, recommendation

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A, p. 19-22 – Current Designation Criteria Excerpt, Chapter 3
- Attachment B, p. 23-118 – Draft Comp Plan Changes (chapter 2, chapter 3, Appendix C)
- Attachment C, p. 119-154 – Draft Code Amendments
- Attachment D, p. 155-160 – Map Packet
- Attachment E, p. 161 – Outreach Report
- Attachment F, p. 162-187 – Public Comments Received

ATTACHMENT A - CURRENT DES CRITERIA CH.3

Natural Resource Lands

THURSTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted December 2020

Table 3-1. Acres of Land Enrolled in Agricultural Protection Programs

Program	Acres Enrolled
Open Space Tax Program	38,809
Voluntary Stewardship Program	N/A
Transfer of Development Rights	181
Purchase of Development Rights	942
Fee Simple Purchase	302
Agricultural & Conservation Easements	2,095

DATA RETRIEVED FROM: THURSTON COUNTY ASSESSOR'S PARCEL DATA (MARCH 14, 2018), TRPC (2017)

As of 2017, approximately 38,809 acres of land were enrolled in Open Space as Current Use Agriculture or Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land, 181 acres enrolled in TDR, 942 acres in PDR, 302 acres of land under a fee simple purchase, and 2,095 acres of land under an agricultural/conservation easement.⁶

E. AGRICULTURAL LANDS OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Growth Management Act (RCW36.70A.170) requires counties to designate agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance. In 2006, the Washington State Supreme Court clarified the definition of "agricultural land" by stating:

[w]e hold that agricultural land is land: (a) not already characterized by urban growth (b) that is primarily devoted to the commercial production of agricultural products enumerated in RCW 36.70A.30(2), including land in areas used or capable of being used for production based on land characteristics, and (c) that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production, as indicated by soil, growing capacity, productivity, and whether it is near population areas or vulnerable to more intense uses. We further hold that counties may consider the development-related factors enumerated in WAC 365-190-050(1) in determining which lands have long-term commercial significance. Lewis County v. Hearings Bd., 157 Wn2d 488 (2006) at page 502.

Criteria used to designate agricultural land of long-term commercial significance are based on: (1) the Washington State Supreme Court's Definition of agricultural lands found in *Lewis County v. Hearings Bd., 157 Wn.2d 488 (2006)*; (2) the Washington State Department of Commerce (COM) guidelines for the classification and designation of resource lands; (3) existing Thurston County policies; and (4) an analysis of local conditions. These criteria include:

⁶ TRPC (2017). "Farmland Zero Net Loss". *Thurston Regional Planning Council*.

1. Soil Type:

The classification and identification of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance is based upon the land capability classification system of the United States Department of Agriculture Handbook No. 210. Those classes of agricultural lands are based upon consideration of growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition. They have been incorporated into map units of the Department's soil surveys. The following list of prime farmland soils in Thurston County is based on the Soil Conservation Service's Soil Survey of Thurston County, Washington, 1990. Designated lands should include predominantly prime farmland soils. Future designations of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance should incorporate the most recent soils list from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The enumerated list of prime farmland soil types below is not intended as exclusive criteria.

SCS Map Unit #	Soil Description
14	Bellingham silty clay loam (where drained)*
26	Chehalis silt loam
29	Dupont muck (where drained)*
31	Eld loam
36	Everson clay loam (where drained)*
37	Galvin silt loam, 0 to 5 percent slope
38	Giles silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slope
41	Godfrey silty clay loam (where drained)*
50	Kapowain silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slope
64	Maytown silt loam
69	Mukilteo muck (where drained)*
70	Mukilteo muck (drained)*
71	Newberg fine sandy loam
72	Newberg loam
73	Nisqually loamy fine sand 0-3 percent slope (where irrigated)
75	Norma fine sandy loam (where drained)*
76	Norma silt loam (where drained)*
86	Prather silty clay loam, 3 to 8 percent slope
88	Puget Silt loam (where drained)*
89	Puyallup silt loam
97	Salkum silty clay loam, 3 to 8 percent slope
100	Scamman silty clay loam, 0-5 percent slope (where drained)*
104	Semiahmoo muck (where drained)*
105	Shalcar muck (where drained)*
106	Shalcar Variant muck (where drained)*
107	Skipopa silt loam, 0-3 percent slope

SCS Map Unit #	Soil Description
115	Sultan silt loam
120	Tisch silt loam (where drained)*
126	Yelm fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slope

** Large areas which are known to qualify as Class I wetlands, (wetlands with threatened or endangered species) and which are not already in agricultural use, should be excluded from designation.*

2. The Availability of Public Facilities and Services:

Since lands within Urban Growth Areas, as established within this Comprehensive Plan, are intended to be served by public facilities and services within a twenty-year period, agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance should be located outside of these boundaries.

3. Land Capability and Tax Status:

Designated agricultural lands should include only areas that are primarily devoted to the commercial production of agricultural products enumerated in RCW 36.70A.030(2), including land in areas used or capable of being used for production based on land characteristics. Aerial photograph interpretation can identify areas used for agriculture. Historic use information, current use information (including enrollment in the open space tax program) and soil types can help identify lands capable of being used for agriculture; however, these are not the only methods for determining land capability for agriculture.

4. Relationship or Proximity to Urban Growth Areas:

Since lands within Urban Growth Areas, as established within this Comprehensive Plan, are intended to be developed at urban densities over a twenty-year period, agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance should be located outside of those boundaries. Furthermore, designated agricultural lands should be separated from urban residential densities by a natural or man-made feature, (e.g., railroad, road, or river), in order to avoid potential land use conflicts.

5. Predominant Parcel Size:

For Thurston County, the predominant parcel size is 20 acres or more, which, in conjunction with soil type, provides economic conditions sufficient for managing agriculture lands for long-term commercial production.

6. Land Use Settlement Patterns and Their Compatibility with Agricultural Practices:

Except within urban growth areas, adjacent residential development should be minimal and at rural densities of one unit per five acres. Recent subdivision activity near or adjacent to designated agricultural lands is an indication of settlement patterns that may have an effect on the long-term viability of agriculture. The most compatible land uses within and adjacent to long-term agricultural lands include forestry, mining, parks and preserves, and open space.

7. Proximity of Markets:

Local or regional markets should be available. Designated agricultural lands should have access to road, rail, or air transportation routes to markets.

8. Agricultural Diversity:

A diversity of agricultural activities should exist, or the area should be sufficiently large to support diverse agricultural activities. No single designated agricultural area should be smaller than 320 acres, or 200 acres if near another designated area. This helps assure land use compatibility for long-term resource use, and a diversity of agriculture uses in one area. Boundaries should follow landmarks visible on the ground when possible, to provide visual distinction of land use areas.

9. Environmental Considerations:

Designated agricultural lands should be outside of Natural Shoreline Environments if they are not already being used for agriculture. The Shoreline Master Program regulations severely limit the ability to convert such areas to agricultural uses, and from one agricultural use to another.

The above criteria were applied to all agricultural lands of Thurston County and appropriate areas were designated as areas of long-term agricultural significance. These lands are shown on Map N-1. Lands of long-term agricultural significance are also identified as “Long-Term Agriculture” or “Nisqually Agriculture” on future land use map (Map L-1). Future lands that meet these criteria may also be considered for designation at the request of the farmland owner.

Also included on Map N-1 are two areas of designated agricultural lands located in the Nisqually Valley. These areas merit special consideration due to the unique values the Nisqually Valley holds. The following excerpt from the Nisqually Subarea Plan highlights those unique values:

"The Nisqually Planning Area serves as the eastern gateway to Thurston County. The 40 million yearly travelers along the I-5 Corridor will recognize it as one of the few undeveloped river valleys between Olympia and Everett. It is distinguished by the broad open areas of the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge north of I-5 and the rural farms south of the freeway. This picturesque rural setting is framed with a wooded hillside extending the length of the western McAllister Bluff which loops back into the valley. ...It is this combination of farm and forest, hillside and valley, or clusters of development and adjacent open areas which gives this planning area its distinctive character."

Farmland within the McAllister Springs aquifer recharge area was not found to meet long-term designation criteria due to the proximity of urban land uses to the north and the sensitivity of the aquifer to pesticide and fertilizer use, which may limit the viability of some types of farming operations. Low density zoning is maintained in this area, as are special provisions to protect water quality from the adverse impacts of a variety of land uses.

Table 3-2. Acreages of Long-Term Agriculture designation within Thurston County

Land Use Designation	Acreage
Nisqually Agriculture	984 acres
Long-Term Agriculture	14,894 acres

DATA RETRIEVED FROM: THURSTON COUNTY ASSESSOR'S PARCEL DATA, MARCH 14, 2018

ATTACHMENT B

DRAFT

COMPREHENSIVE

PLAN CHANGES

CHAPTER 2

LAND USE

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan depicts the future pattern of public and private use of the land in unincorporated Thurston County, and serves as both the Land Use and Rural Elements as they are defined by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA).

The Land Use Chapter includes county-wide population projections and the methodology used to derive these projections, population densities, and future land use designations, as well as the process and criteria for making those designations. The Land Use Chapter works in concert with the other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan to meet the requirements of the GMA (see sidebar).

The Land Use Chapter also identifies the location of urban growth areas (UGAs) around incorporated cities and towns. However, this chapter does not include land use designations for the UGAs. The respective city/county joint plans provide that information. Likewise, the Grand Mound Subarea Plan contains the future land use map for the Grand Mound UGA.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Growth Management Act requires a Land Use Element:

“...designating the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land, where appropriate, for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open spaces, general aviation airports, public utilities, public facilities, and other land uses. The land use element shall include population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth. The land use element shall provide for protection of the quality and quantity of ground water used for public water supplies. Whenever possible, the land use element should consider utilizing urban planning approaches that promote physical activity. Where applicable, the land use element shall review drainage, flooding, and stormwater run-off in the area and nearby jurisdictions and provide guidance for corrective actions to mitigate or cleanse those discharges that pollute waters of the state, including Puget Sound or waters entering Puget Sound.”

RCW 36.70A.070(1)

Some Land Use topics are covered more fully in other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan:

- ❖ Public utilities are covered in Chapter 7 – Utilities
- ❖ Review of drainage, flooding, and stormwater are covered in Chapter 7 – Utilities and Chapter 9 – Environment
- ❖ Measures protecting water quality and quantity are covered in Chapter 9 – Environment
- ❖ Measures promoting physical activity are covered in Chapter 11 – Health

II. URBAN GROWTH AREAS & SUBAREAS

A. HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THURSTON COUNTY'S URBAN GROWTH AREAS

In 1983, Thurston County, along with the cities of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater, blazed the trail for growth management in Washington State by signing an inter-local government agreement called the "Urban Growth Management Agreement." That early agreement included an Urban Growth Management Boundary around the three cities to serve as a limit for the cities' expansion for 20 years.

The purposes of the county's original growth areas remain relevant today:

To provide for higher intensity development around the county's incorporated cities and towns and unincorporated community centers in order to concentrate development in areas where minimal impact to the environment, natural resources and rural atmosphere will occur.

To minimize public costs and conserve energy by using services and facilities efficiently through concentration of development and integration of jobs, shopping, services and housing.

To phase urban growth and infill with the provision of urban public services and facilities.

One of the main effects of an urban growth area is to provide a limit for the extension of urban utilities, especially sewer service. To that end, overall residential density in urban growth areas should be high enough to support urban public services and to provide affordable housing choices.

Growth Management Requirements, continued from previous page...

A Rural Element, including:

- ❖ Lands not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest or mineral resources
- ❖ Land uses that are compatible with rural character ... and provide for a variety of rural densities
- ❖ Measures to protect rural character by:
 - Containing or otherwise controlling rural development
 - Assuring visual compatibility of rural development with the surrounding area
 - Reducing the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development
 - Protecting critical areas, and surface and groundwater resources
 - Protecting against conflicts with the use of agriculture, forest and mineral resource lands
- ❖ Limited areas of more intensive rural development

RCW 36.70A.070(5)

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There should be a variety of housing types, with most densities ranging from 4 to 16 dwelling units per acre.

Map I-1 identifies the urban growth areas for each city or town in Thurston County. The UGAs must accommodate the urban growth projected over the next 20 years including a reasonable market factor. Policies and actions emphasize the provision of urban land uses and services and include provisions specifically aimed at reducing low density residential sprawl. Joint plans established with each city and town include planning policies for each UGA. Joint plans are contained in separate documents, but are incorporated as part of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan.

Detailed land use designations for all UGAs around cities and towns are provided in the following joint plans (Map I-1 is keyed to the numbering below):

1. Olympia/Thurston County Joint Plan
2. Lacey/Thurston County Joint Plan
3. Tumwater/Thurston County Joint Plan
4. Yelm/Thurston County Joint Plan
5. Rainier/Thurston County Joint Plan
6. Tenino/Thurston County Joint Plan
7. Bucoda/Thurston County Joint Plan

B. GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT REQUIREMENTS FOR URBAN GROWTH AREAS:

The following points summarize the GMA requirements for urban growth areas (36.70A.110 RCW):

- ❖ For each city or town, the county must designate an urban growth area, within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature.
- ❖ An urban growth area may include territory outside of a city or town only if the territory already is characterized by urban growth or is adjacent to territory already characterized by urban growth.
- ❖ The urban growth areas in the county must be sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county over the next 20 years.
- ❖ Urban growth areas must permit urban densities and include open spaces.
- ❖ Urban growth should be located first in areas already characterized by urban growth that have existing public facility and service capacities to serve such development, and second in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served by a combination of both existing public facilities and services and any additional public facilities and services needed.

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- ❖ At least every 10 years, the county must reevaluate Urban Growth Areas and the densities permitted within them.

In addition to these requirements, the GMA required all jurisdictions in the county to jointly develop a set of County-Wide Planning Policies to guide joint planning between the County and cities for urban growth areas. The policies in this chapter are consistent with the County-Wide Planning Policies.

C. MARKET FACTOR

Pursuant to RCW 36.7A.110(2), the Growth Management Act allows counties to include a “reasonable land market supply factor” when sizing urban growth areas.

RCW 36.7A.110(2). An urban growth area determination may include a reasonable land market supply factor and shall permit a range of urban densities and uses. In determining this market factor, cities and counties may consider local circumstances. Cities and counties have discretion in their comprehensive plans to make many choices about accommodating growth.

The County will require cities to bring forward evidence to justify that this “market factor” is to account for land that is not likely to be available during the next 20-year period. A “market factor” is not a substitution for population projections, which are addressed separately in Section III.

D. WATER AVAILABILITY (HIRST DECISION)

Permit applicants for new homes and other development that need drinking water must show they have legal access to a safe source of water. Applicants can demonstrate legal access by showing they have permission to connect to a public water supply that has capacity to serve them or that they have water rights for the water source they propose to use. Historically, developers could also meet this requirement by proposing to drill or develop an exempt well, which allows development to occur without a formal water rights permit where the total water withdrawal was less than 5,000 gallons per day.

A 2016 decision by the Washington State Supreme Court (Hirst) establishes that local governments must ensure that potable water is legally available to serve new development. New development can only occur when it obtains water from approved systems with water rights, or from exempt wells where the county can ensure they do not reduce the flow in a water course below the minimum instream flow. In 2018, Washington state legislature signed into law Senate Bill 6091 that establishes standards for what constitutes proof of an adequate water supply; this includes participation from the County in the watershed planning process and implementation of fees that go towards that process.

➤ SEE CHAPTER 9 –
ENVIRONMENT, RECREATION,
AND OPEN SPACE FOR MORE
INFORMATION ON WATER
AVAILABILITY

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Historically, Thurston County and many others have allowed rural development to go forward using exempt wells. Many projects were approved that did not require the developer to evaluate their effects on instream flows.

E. SUBAREA PLANNING

Subarea planning is used in Thurston County to study and plan for distinct unincorporated communities within the county. The County maintains active subarea plans for the communities of Rochester, Grand Mound, and Nisqually Valley. These plans are incorporated by reference into the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2019, all three subarea plans were in the process of being reviewed and updated.

III. POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS

A. POPULATION ALLOCATION AND FORECAST

As mentioned above, the GMA requires the County to plan to accommodate the population projected by Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). The County-Wide Planning Policies direct the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)¹ to develop small-area population projections based on the framework of the countywide population projection provided by OFM (see Table 2-1). These small-area projections are often referred to as “population distributions” because they split up the projected population growth, distributing it among the county’s cities, towns, and rural areas. TRPC derives its own countywide population projections using a computer model that includes analysis of employment trends and more up-to-date population changes than what OFM uses.

Table 2-1. Population Allocation and Forecast by Thurston County Jurisdiction, 2017-2040

	2017 Population	2040 Population Forecast	Change, 2017- 2040	Percent Change
Thurston County Total	276,900	393,700	116,800	42%
Incorporated Cities	137,030	197,190	60,160	44%
Lacey UGA	35,470	59,040	23,570	66%
Olympia UGA	12,270	16,770	4,500	37%
Tumwater UGA	3,320	8,960	5,640	170%

¹ The Thurston Regional Planning Council is a 20-member intergovernmental board made up of local government jurisdictions within Thurston County, plus the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

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Yelm UGA	1,390	5,630	4,240	305%
Rainier UGA	110	640	530	482%
Tenino UGA	15	110	95	633%
Grand Mound UGA	1,325	1,990	665	50%
Total UGAs	53,900	93,140	39,240	73%
Rural County	85,220	101,930	16,710	20%
Total Unincorporated² Thurston County	137,050	184,080	55,190	39%

SOURCE: TRPC SMALL AREA POPULATION ESTIMATES AND POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORECAST WORK PROGRAM, 2017. ESTIMATES REFLECT CITY BOUNDARIES ON APRIL 1. A DECREASE IN UGA POPULATION OVER THE PLANNING PERIOD IS LIKELY DUE TO ANNEXATION.

The population distributions are intended to ensure that each city and town's Comprehensive Plan and any applicable Joint Plan accommodates the projected population growth. These population distributions are individually discussed in each of the Joint Plans adopted by the county. TRPC updates its population and land supply forecasting data under the GMA-required Buildable Lands Program. Numbers reflected in this plan should be treated as a point-in-time accounting of population distribution, and more current information may be obtained from TRPC.

As shown in Figure 2-1, around half of the projected population growth between 2017 and 2040 is likely to be located within incorporated cities, and another third in designated urban growth areas. Within the county's jurisdictions, the Lacey UGA is set to receive the largest proportion of population growth, in part because it is the largest UGA with the most developable area. The Lacey and Yelm UGAs are the fastest growing areas of the county, relative to their size, although all areas of the county are likely to experience significant population growth over the next two decades.

² Includes portions of Nisqually and Chehalis Indian Reservations in Thurston County.

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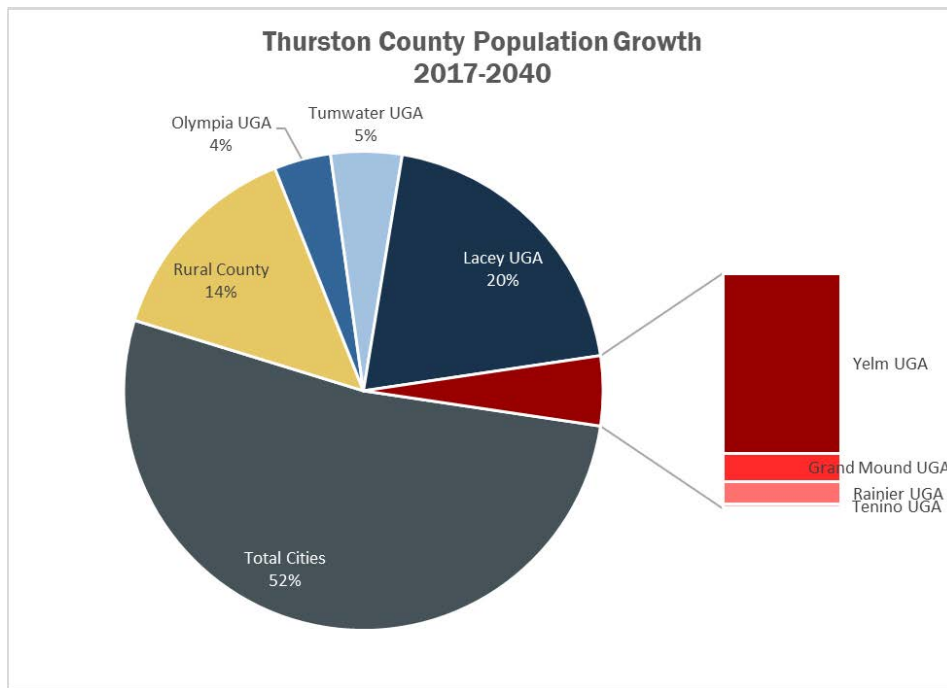


Figure 2-1. Thurston County Population Growth, 2017-2040: Proportion by Jurisdiction

RCW 36.70A.215 establishes a “Buildable Lands Program” requiring jurisdictions to track their ability to accommodate population growth. TRPC is the lead agency in Thurston County for the Buildable Lands Program, and provides data to the County for comprehensive and joint plan amendments required by RCW 36.70A.130 (1) and RCW 36.70A.130(3). The 2014 Buildable Lands Report found that there is sufficient land supply to accommodate projected population growth (to year 2035) in Thurston County’s urban areas (cities plus unincorporated urban growth areas), both overall and within each urban jurisdiction (see Table 2-2). Even considering the number of new dwelling units projected to be built over the 20-year planning period, the excess capacity falls within the established regional market factor of 10% to 25%.³

³ Smaller jurisdictions tend to have higher market factors due to the statistical difficulties in estimating supply and demand for small areas. For more information on how market factors and excess capacity is calculated, refer to the 2014 *Buildable Lands Analysis for Thurston County* (TRPC, 2014).

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Table 2-2. Residential Capacity in Urban Areas of Thurston County

	2010 Dwelling Units	DEMAND 2010-2035	SUPPLY 2010+	Excess Capacity
Bucoda	240	220	350	37%
Lacey & UGA	31,740	13,820	17,560	21%
Olympia & UGA	26,950	13,460	16,880	20%
Rainier & UGA	770	530	750	29%
Tenino & UGA	750	800	1,200	33%
Tumwater & UGA	10,570	8,600	11,010	22%
Yelm & UGA	3,050	7,200	10,310	30%
Grand Mound UGA	380	310	430	28%
TOTAL Urban Areas	74,450	44,940	58,490	23%

SOURCE: BUILDABLE LANDS REPORT FOR THURSTON COUNTY, TRPC, 2014.

NOTE: This capacity analysis is based on adopted policies as of 2012, and may be revisited depending on the results of the ongoing county and regional response to federal endangered species listings and state-wide legal changes related to rural water availability.

B. DENSITY & BUILDING INTENSITY

The most densely built areas of the County are, by design, the urban growth areas and cities. According to the 2014 Buildable Lands Report, the average density of residential development approved in urban areas of the county between 2006 and 2010 increased to 8.25 dwelling units per acre – up from 6.08 units per acre in the period from 2001 to 2005. Density is generally higher in incorporated cities than in UGAs, but varies across jurisdictions. Among UGAs, development in the Olympia UGA is achieving the highest average density at 7.79 units per acre, while Grand Mound averaged 6.52 units per acre. The UGAs for Yelm, Tenino, and Rainier are zoned for lower densities.

For new subdivisions, the cities achieved an average net residential density of 8.40 dwelling units per acre, where the unincorporated urban growth areas achieved 7.01 dwelling units per acre (between the years 2005 and 2009). This was an increase over the previous five years (2000-2004), when net residential density was 7.61 units per acre in the cities, and 5.95 units per acre in the unincorporated growth areas, though not as substantial an increase in density as in the earlier period from 1995-2000.

Outside designated urban areas, density of new development is typically 1 unit per 5 acres or less. An exception to this standard are rural portions of the county designated as limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs). The LAMIRDs accommodate small lot development and subdivisions that occurred prior to the adoption of the Growth Management Act in 1990 (e.g., around lakes, along some marine shorelines or at crossroads). A second exception is cluster-type developments that allow for smaller individual lots in exchange for greater area set aside for open

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space or resource use. The goals and policies in this plan seek to maintain rural character and resource uses as well as minimize and contain existing areas or uses of more intensive rural development in the rural area while directing urban growth to appropriate areas.

IV. LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

This section of the Land Use Chapter describes each of the land use designations depicted on the Future Land Use Map (Map L-1). Mineral lands of long-term commercial significance are designated on a separate map (Map N-2), and open space lands are shown on Map E-3. Parks and trails owned by the County are also identified in the Thurston County Parks Plan, which is maintained as a separate planning document. The policies in Section VII provide further guidance in determining the appropriate land use designations for lands in rural areas. Development of lands within UGAs around cities and towns are guided by the land use designations within the adopted city/county joint plans.

In interpreting this plan, the following descriptions of the land use designations and the associated policies in Section VII of this chapter should be given the greatest weight and importance. The accompanying Future Land Use Map (Map L-1) is intended to be a visual representation of the descriptions and policies. Where there are apparent inconsistencies between the text and the map, the text shall control.

A. GENERAL LAND USE GUIDELINES

Determining how and where to designate land uses throughout the county is a complex process that involves an evaluation of geographic and scientific information, legal and social parameters, and citizen preferences. The following table describes the general guidelines used to make designation decisions:

Location Criteria	
Land Capability/ Environmental Constraints	This guideline describes the characteristics of the land and its ability to support development at the intensity of use associated with each of the land use designations. It includes consideration of such factors as topography, permeability and stability of soils, geologic hazards, flood proneness and hydrologic conditions.
	When the term “environmental constraints” is used under this guideline, it refers to the presence of natural features of the land that would either: (1) limit an area’s ability to accommodate development (e.g., flood hazards, geologic instability); or (2) be very sensitive to development or be destroyed by development (e.g., wetlands, Mima Mounds, eagle habitat, sensitive aquifers, public drinking water supplies or other critical areas).
	Technology can moderate the effects of some constraints. For example, building foundations may be constructed on unstable grounds, and sensitive resources such as oyster growing waters may be protected from the impacts of

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	development by controlling pollutants from entering stormwater and keeping sewage drainage away from these waters. Generally, however, the presence of widespread constraints or important sensitive areas should indicate caution in making certain land use designations. Caution is needed because the potential intensity level of the classification may not be able to be achieved due to constraints posed by the natural feature or condition; or the natural feature or condition could be lost or degraded.
Natural Resources	This guideline describes the kinds of natural resources that may exist on lands in each designation, or indicates when a certain designation may be inappropriate if important natural resources exist on the land or if it is too close to and may adversely impact a nearby natural resource area, such as agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, or mineral deposits.
Public Services	This guideline describes the levels or types of public services associated with each land use designation are described under this guideline. It also addresses any special public service needs or impacts to be avoided in association with each land use designation.
Existing Land Uses	This guideline describes the types and levels or intensities of land uses that should exist (or not exist) in or near areas being considered for each land use classification.

General Decision-Making Guidelines

Citizen Preference Identified through Public Process	Desires of the citizenry for certain types of land uses over other types should be an important consideration in making land use decisions. Citizen preference is important, for example, when deciding to give weight to one factor over another, or in deciding among conflicting factors.
Impacts on Economy, Employment, Tax Base	A variety of factors associated with these impacts should be considered when making land use designation decisions. For example, a county-wide balance should be maintained between residential and industrial/commercial/agricultural/ forestry areas in order to enhance and provide diversity to the county's tax base and employment opportunities
Easy to Identify Boundaries	The boundaries of land use designations should follow easily identified features on the land, such as utility corridors or observable terrain changes. When areas with severe limitations for development (e.g., soils, geology, flooding) do not coincide with such identifiable landmarks, the boundaries should be drawn with land capability in mind.

B. RURAL AREA DESIGNATIONS

The purpose of rural areas as defined by the County in compliance with the GMA is:

- ❖ To support the rural aspects of Thurston County.
- ❖ To protect areas with environmental constraints and preserve and buffer natural resource areas of agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, mineral deposits and fish and wildlife habitats from encroachment by or irreversible conversion to more intense uses.
- ❖ To allow low intensity residential uses which do not require a high level of public services and facilities.
- ❖ To protect and promote natural resource-based industries.
- ❖ To protect “rural character” as defined in RCW 36.70A.030(14) as “the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:
 - (a) In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
 - (b) That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
 - (c) That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
 - (d) That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
 - (e) That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
 - (f) That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
 - (g) That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and ground water and surface water recharge and discharge areas.”

Rural areas are characterized by a balance between the natural environment and human uses with low density residential dwellings, farms, forests, mining areas, outdoor recreation and other open space activities. Commercial uses will be small in scale and will provide convenience services to the rural neighborhood. Industrial uses will generally be those that are related to and dependent on natural resources such as agriculture, timber or minerals. Home-based occupations and industries will be allowed throughout the rural area provided they do not adversely affect the surrounding residential uses. Rural area residential densities will commonly be one dwelling unit per five, ten, or twenty acres. As previously noted, the rural county also contains pockets of higher density development. Some of those areas have been designated as LAMIRDs, which allows additional limited higher density development. Specific densities for each area designated in the Comprehensive Plan are implemented through the Official Zoning Map of Thurston County and the Thurston County zoning code and other development regulations, which are consistent with this

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plan. Rural area lands are designated according to the land use guidelines above. See Table 2-3, below, for the percentage of land allocated to different rural uses.

Table 2-3

Percentage of Land Allocated for Rural Uses⁴

Land Use Category	Total Acres	Percent Designated
Designated resource use (designated agriculture, forestry, and mineral lands) ⁵	156,512 <i>(with mineral lands overlay: 296,795)</i>	39.8% <i>(75.5%)⁶</i>
Rural (residential density 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres)	14,176	3.6%
Rural (residential density 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres)	4,978	1.3%
Rural resource and residential (residential density 1 unit per 5 acres)	177,116	44.9%
Urban Reserve (residential density 1 unit per five acres)	1,752	0.4%
Limited Areas of More intensive Rural Development (LAMIRDs) (densities greater than 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres)	10,082	2.6%
Public Parks, Trails, and Preserves and Educational Institution Lands	9,393	2.4%
Military Reservation	18,404	4.7 %
Rural commercial and industrial use	870	0.2%
Totals	393,283	100% <i>(135.6%)</i>

Commented [MT1]: Updates will be made based on any changes as an outcome of this process.

Commented [MT2]: Update: may increase

Commented [MT3]: Update: may decrease

Commented [MT4]: Update: may decrease

Commented [MT5]: Update: may decrease

⁴ Excludes all lands within Urban Growth Areas, areas covered by water, public and railroad rights-of-way. Source: Thurston County Geo Data & Buildable Lands Work Program, Thurston Regional Planning Council.

⁵ Low density residential uses are permitted in some of these areas, at densities ranging from 1 unit per 20 acres to 1 unit per 80 acres. Note that agriculture, forestry, and mining activities occur throughout the county, not just on land dedicated for these purposes. See Chapter 3.

⁶ Accounts for mineral lands designation, which is an overlay on other land use designations.

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The actual use of land may be different than the use for which it is designated. For example, nonconforming residential uses may exist in commercial or industrial areas, agriculture is a permitted use in all rural residential areas, and some designated mineral land is not yet mined. The designation categories are described in detail, below.

1. Rural resource and low density residential designations

About 90.3 percent of rural Thurston County is designated for resource and low density residential uses appropriate for maintaining rural character (see Table 2-3). These areas include designated forestry and agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance (see Chapter 3 for further discussion of designated resource lands and other natural resource uses). Other lands allow for rural residential uses. Low density residential designations will include lands that have soil composition and other characteristics suitable for forestry, farming, and mineral resource extraction and allow for as well as for natural resource activities such as agriculture, forestry, and mining. The purpose, characteristics, and location guidelines for each rural resource and low density residential category are described below.

FORESTRY	
Purpose	<p>To conserve forest lands of long-term commercial significance.</p> <p>To maintain and enhance resource-based industries.</p> <p>To discourage residential encroachment and other incompatible development from long-term forest lands.</p> <p>To promote and protect forestry and its dependent rural community through the enhancement, protection, and perpetuation of the ability of private and public landowners to grow and harvest timber.</p>
Definition and Characteristics	<p>This designation includes lands meeting the Growth Management Act definition for forest lands of “long-term commercial significance.” They are lands characterized by existing commercial resource production and have soils and other physical characteristics that are specially suited for timber production. Existing designated Forestry areas include much of the Bald Hills in southern Thurston County and the Black Hills in the western part of the county.</p> <p>Within designated forest lands, residential densities are limited to one unit per 80 acres, except for smaller ownerships (less than 640 acres in size) where residences, if clustered, can achieve a density of one unit per 20 acres.</p>

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FORESTRY

	Additionally, legal lots from 10 to 39.99 acres in size, under the same ownership since August 23, 1993, may be divided one time into a maximum of two lots.
Locational Guidelines	The criteria for locating designated Forestry areas are based on the physical growing conditions of the land as well as the proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense uses of the land. The full set of criteria is listed in Chapter Three - Natural Resource Lands.

AGRICULTURE

Purpose	<p>To conserve agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance <u>that are or can be</u> used for the production of crops, livestock or other agricultural products.</p> <p>To discourage residential encroachment and other incompatible development from long-term agricultural lands.</p> <p>To encourage the continued viability of agriculture.</p> <p>To encourage property owners to maintain property in agriculture uses.</p> <p>To promote and protect agriculture and its dependent rural community through the enhancement, protection, and perpetuation of the ability of the private sector to produce food and fiber.</p>
Definition and Characteristics	<p>This designation includes lands meeting the Growth Management Act definition for agricultural lands of “long-term commercial significance.” They are lands characterized by existing commercial resource production <u>or lands that may be used for commercial resource production</u> and have soils and other physical characteristics that are specially suited for agricultural production. Existing designated Agriculture areas include portions of the Nisqually, <u>Black, Deschutes</u>, Chehalis and Skookumchuck River Valleys, among other areas <u>throughout the County</u>. Within the designated lands in the Nisqually Valley, residential densities are limited to one unit per 40 acres, unless</p>

Commented [MT6]: Update as needed

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AGRICULTURE	
	residences are clustered, allowing a density of one unit per five acres. Within all other designated agricultural lands, residential densities are limited to one unit per 20 acres.
Locational Guidelines	The criteria for locating designated Agriculture areas are based on the Washington State Department of Commerce's guidelines for the classification and designation of resource lands, as well as existing county policies and an analysis of local conditions. The full set of criteria is listed in Chapter Three - Natural Resource Lands.

RURAL – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TWENTY ACRES	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect public health and safety by minimizing development and avoiding incompatible uses in environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas such as the Black River Corridor, the Nisqually Bluff, and parcels completely covered by critical areas. • Provide greater opportunities for protecting critical areas and creating open space corridors.
Definition and Characteristics	Primary land uses are open space, outdoor recreation, residential, agriculture, forestry and compatible mineral extraction approved through a special use process. Residences are allowed at a density of one dwelling unit per twenty acres but they may be further limited due to physical constraints and natural hazards, including the presence of critical areas.
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> This designation is appropriate for lands that are within the Black River Corridor, along the Nisqually Bluff or severely constrained by environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area may contain forests, mineral deposits, critical areas and soils suitable for agriculture.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> Allowed uses do not require provision of urban services or utilities. However, the area may be located along arterials, within areas containing pre-</p>

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RURAL – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TWENTY ACRES

	<p>existing small-lot development, and/or relatively close to existing centers of employment and/or personal services.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Uses.</i> The majority of the land is comprised of parcels twenty acres or larger in size, although some smaller parcels may be present. Residences, agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, open space, or undeveloped land may be present.</p>
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RURAL – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TEN ACRES

Purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimize flooding and development at risk of flooding in the Salmon Creek Basin. • To avoid increasing saltwater intrusion in areas underlain by aquifers with elevated chloride levels.
Definition and Characteristics	<p>Primary land uses are resource-oriented (e.g., mineral extraction approved through a special use process, agriculture and forestry), open space, and residential. Additional compatible uses that support or rely upon agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, and open space may be allowed. Residential densities are limited to one dwelling per ten acres but may be further limited due to physical constraints and natural hazards, including the presence of critical areas.</p>
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> This designation is appropriate for lands that are environmentally constrained, such as lands that are underlain by aquifers contaminated with chloride and lands within the flood prone Salmon Creek Basin.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area may contain forests, mineral deposits, soils suitable for agriculture, and critical areas.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> Allowed uses do not require provision of urban services or utilities. However, the area may be located along arterials, within areas containing pre-existing small-lot development, and/or relatively close to existing centers of employment and/or personal services.</p>

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RURAL – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TEN ACRES

	<i>Existing Land Uses.</i> The area is predominantly in parcels ten acres or larger in size, although some smaller and some larger parcels may be present. Residences, agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, open space, or undeveloped land may be present.
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URBAN RESERVE – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER FIVE ACRES

Purpose	To preserve development options in areas adjacent to existing urban growth areas, cities and towns until such time as the areas are included in urban growth areas (UGAs) and urban utilities and services become available.
Definition and Characteristics	Primary land uses are agriculture and forestry, open space, and low density residential. Permitted uses and development options are limited so as to avoid interfering with potential conversion of the area to urban use.
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> This designation is appropriate for lands that located adjacent to an urban growth area or city that appear to be capable of supporting urban development. Some critical areas or other minor physical constraints to development may be present.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area may have moderate potential for agriculture, forestry, or mineral extraction. However, the area should not include long-term agriculture or forestry lands.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> Allowed uses do not require provision of urban utilities and services. Public utilities and services should be feasible to extend upon inclusion of the area within an UGA.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Uses.</i> Scattered residences, agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, open space, or undeveloped land may be present.</p>

RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND RESOURCE -- ONE UNIT PER FIVE ACRES	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain the rural character of the county. To buffer environmentally sensitive areas and resource management areas from incompatible activities. To maintain a balance between human uses and the natural environment.
Definition and Characteristics	<p>Primary land uses in the one unit per five acre areas are resource-oriented (farming, forestry, mineral extraction), open space, and low density residential. Residential use may be limited due to physical land capability constraints, including the presence of critical areas. Innovative techniques are used by the County to provide a variety of rural densities within this designation.</p>
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> This designation is appropriate for lands that may have severe soil limitations, critical areas and/or very limited ground water. Lands subject to this designation may be located within the adjacent uplands to an aquaculture management district or “natural” shoreline under the Shoreline Management Program.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area has moderate potential for farming, or moderate potential for forestry management, or may be adjacent to long-term resource lands.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> The area is too far from the urban area to enable cost-effective provision of public services. Uses do not require extension or provision of urban services.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Uses.</i> The land is generally in parcels five acres or larger in size.</p>

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MCALLISTER GEOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREA	
Purpose	<p>To maintain areas of rural living where the natural environment is in balance with human use.</p> <p>To provide for residential, commercial, and agricultural uses of a type and density which will minimize the potential for contamination or significant loss in recharge capacity of a vulnerable groundwater aquifer and potable water source of great importance to the general public.</p>
Definition and Characteristics	That portion of the McAllister Springs recharge area outside the urban growth area boundary. These lands are characterized by natural resource-based uses, such as agriculture and forestry, residential uses at a density of one unit per five acres, and limited home-based industries and home occupations.
Locational Guidelines	This designation is limited to lands within the McAllister Springs recharge area outside of the north county Urban Growth Area boundary.

2. Limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRD) designations

Under the GMA, zoning districts allowing residential densities in the rural area greater than one dwelling unit per five acres are generally considered to promote sprawling, low-density development inconsistent with the Goal 2 of the GMA. To recognize existing residential development in the rural areas that is too intensive to be considered rural, in 1997, the Washington State Legislature adopted amendments to the GMA that provided for “limited areas of more intensive rural development”, or LAMIRDs. (RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)). Areas that meet the requirements established by the GMA can retain their higher density zoning. Areas that do not qualify for designation as a LAMIRD must be designated for a rural density of no more than one dwelling unit per five acres.

RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d)(i) defines LAMIRDs as:

“Rural development consisting of the infill, development, or redevelopment of existing commercial, industrial, residential, or mixed-use areas, whether characterized as shoreline development, villages, hamlets, rural activity centers, or crossroads developments.”

When designating residential LAMIRDs, the GMA requires the County to establish logical outer boundaries that contain the development that existed as of July 1, 1990

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(the date Thurston County was initially required to plan under the GMA). This “built environment” may include structures located above or below ground, such as buildings and water and sewer lines. Residential LAMIRDs also may include limited undeveloped lands that are located within the logical outer boundary, but they should not allow a new pattern of low density sprawl. Thurston County used the LAMIRD criteria adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 1997 to designate LAMIRD boundaries. Data used to establish these boundaries included aerial photographs from 1990, building permits, and water service systems that were in place by July 1, 1990.

A relatively small percentage (2.6%) of rural Thurston County is designated as residential LAMIRDs. These areas, which allow residential land use at densities greater than 1 unit per 5 acres (see Table 2-3), accommodate lots developed prior to July 1, 1990, and provide some limited infill potential as allowed under the GMA. These areas of more intensive rural development include unincorporated communities such as Boston Harbor and Rochester, crossroads communities, neighborhood developments, areas around rural lakes, and some marine shoreline areas. The purpose, characteristics, and locational guidelines for each LAMIRD category are described below.

RESIDENTIAL LAMIRD – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TWO ACRES	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To recognize residential development in the rural county that was predominately developed at a density of one dwelling unit per two acres prior to July 1, 1990. To minimize and contain these areas of more intensive rural development to prevent new patterns of low-density sprawl.
Definition and Characteristics	These areas are characterized by residential development at a density of approximately one dwelling unit per two acres. A limited amount of undeveloped land may exist within the logical outer boundary.
Locational Guidelines	<p>New or expanded areas of this designation should be avoided (see the following Goals and Policies section). Areas designated in this category meet the following criteria:</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area has low resource management potential, although small farms and forestry activities may be present nearby.</p>

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RESIDENTIAL LAMIRD – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TWO ACRES

	<p><i>Public Services.</i> Uses do not require extension or provision of urban services. The area may be served by a community water system.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Uses.</i> The area has existing residential developments at a density of approximately one dwelling unit per two acres. There may be some larger residential lots to allow for limited potential for infill development.</p>
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RESIDENTIAL LAMIRD – ONE DWELLING UNIT PER ACRE

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide for residential development in rural areas that was predominately developed at a density of one dwelling unit per acre prior to July 1, 1990. • To minimize and contain these areas of more intensive rural development, to prevent new patterns of low-density sprawl.
Definition and Characteristics	<p>These areas are characterized by residential development at a density of approximately one dwelling unit per acre. A limited amount of undeveloped land may exist within the logical outer boundary.</p>
Locational Guidelines	<p>New or expanded areas of this designation should be avoided (see the following Goals and Policies section). Areas designated in this category meet the following criteria:</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area does not have highly productive resource management potential, although small farms and forestry activities may exist nearby.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> Uses do not require extension or provision of urban services. The area may be served by a community water system.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Uses.</i> The area has existing residential developments at a density of approximately one dwelling unit per acre. There may be some larger residential parcels to allow for limited potential for infill development.</p>

RESIDENTIAL LAMIRD – TWO DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To recognize residential development related to marine and/or freshwater shorelines in rural areas that was predominately developed at a density of approximately two dwelling units per acre prior to July 1, 1990. To minimize and contain these areas of more intensive rural development to prevent new patterns of low-density sprawl.
Definition and Characteristics	These areas are characterized by residential development at a density of approximately two dwelling units per one acre. A limited amount of undeveloped land may exist within the logical outer boundary. These areas may have some existing commercial or resort-related land uses.
Locational Guidelines	<p>New or expanded areas of this designation should be avoided (see the following Goals and Policies section.) Areas already designated in this category meet the following criteria:</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> Area does not have farm or forestry management potential and is not within the uplands adjacent to an aquaculture management district.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> Uses do not require extension or provision of urban services. Although, the area may be served by a community water system.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Uses.</i> The area has existing residential shoreline development at a density of approximately two dwelling units per acre. There may be some larger residential parcels to allow for limited potential for infill development. Current land uses may include seasonal and year-round residences and resort/recreational activities. The area may be a marine or freshwater shoreline, including lakefront.</p>

3. Public land designations

Publicly-owned land designations, including parks, major institutions, and the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Military Base, make up about seven percent of the rural area. Additional publicly-owned and public purpose facilities are inventoried in Map E-2 and are discussed below.

PUBLIC PARKS, TRAILS AND PRESERVES	
Purpose	<p>To identify and protect unique and outstanding examples of publicly owned fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas or unique geologic features.</p> <p>To identify publicly owned (federal, state, and county) parks and trails that may be used for passive and active recreation.</p> <p>To acknowledge the ongoing responsibility of the county, state and federal government to protect critical areas and other resource values and provide for public recreation on lands within this designation.</p>
Definition and Characteristics	<p>The public preserves designation comprises two types of lands: publicly owned conservation lands and publicly owned parks and trails. Conservation lands are owned by a federal, state or county governmental entity and are maintained as closely as possible to their natural state. The resources present on these lands are unique or rare, and are at risk of loss or damage. Parks and trails may include conservation lands, but also include areas of both passive and active public recreation.</p>
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability/Environmental Constraints.</i> Lands within this designation have unique or rare resource values and are publicly-owned conservation areas, or provide opportunities for public recreation.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The resource values of conservation lands within this designation include important fish and wildlife habitat and unique geologic features.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> These areas are too far from the urban area to enable cost effective provision of public services.</p>

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PUBLIC PARKS, TRAILS AND PRESERVES	
	<p>Uses do not require extension or provision of urban services.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Uses.</i> The primary use of conservation lands is resource preservation, not public recreation. Examples of such lands include wildlife refuges, and state and county natural area preserves. The primary use of parks and trails may be public recreation, although some sites may also include conservation areas. Uses are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Recreation.</p>

MILITARY RESERVATION	
Purpose	To recognize the Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) military base and its military mission of training and national defense.
Definition and Characteristics	This designation comprises that portion of the JBLM military base located in Thurston County. These lands are owned by the federal government for the purpose of military training and national defense. Secondary uses are timber production and open space.
Locational Guidelines	This designation should include only those lands within the boundaries of the JBLM military base.

MAJOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	
Purpose	To recognize major colleges, universities, and educational facilities in rural areas of the county, and encourage development on existing campuses that are planned, designed and managed in a way that minimizes impact on the adjacent area.
Definition and Characteristics	This designation covers educational facilities and their supporting uses within the county. Unincorporated county currently has one major educational facility: The Evergreen State College (TESC). Additional development

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MAJOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION	
	within this designation may occur if it meets the overall purposes above.
Locational Guidelines	This designation is intended for major educational institutions within the county.

4. Commercial and industrial land designations:

The rural area contains limited commercial and industrial land uses (.2%) that provide economic opportunity and services to rural area residents.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONVENIENCE COMMERCIAL	
Purpose	To provide for the location of very small businesses that serve nearby residents with everyday convenience shopping goods and services.
Definition and Characteristics	<p>Neighborhood convenience areas are characterized by a high degree of compatibility with surrounding residential areas. Compatibility is achieved through the use of small buildings, small overall area devoted to commercial use, and design and layout which screens residential areas from lights, storage and parking areas.</p> <p>Typical neighborhood convenience uses are small groceries, gas stations and other small-scale businesses, including residences in conjunction with such businesses.</p> <p>Most neighborhood convenience areas will consist of only one business. However, the various types of neighborhood convenience uses serving a given area should be clustered together in small planned centers or around existing single businesses to avoid the development of commercial strips or many small businesses strung out along arterial roads.</p> <p>Neighborhood convenience in rural areas should not exceed one acre in size. They commonly serve a population of less than 5,000.</p> <p>Examples of neighborhood convenience stores or centers include Gull Harbor, and Meridian Road at Yelm Highway.</p>

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NEIGHBORHOOD CONVENIENCE COMMERCIAL

Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> The area should have minimal environmental constraints and be capable of supporting commercial development. Land should be relatively level and free of critical areas.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area has minimal natural resource management potential. Development of the area will have little detrimental impact on nearby agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, mineral deposits or other natural resource uses.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> Neighborhood convenience commercial areas should be located on collector or arterial roads. New designations should be sited at intersections and at locations that are or can be freed of congestion problems resulting from topography or poor road design. Their siting should not result in significant traffic impacts on local streets serving residential areas. Utility service, including on-site, should be at a level appropriate to serve the intensity of proposed commercial activity.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Use.</i> For the siting of new neighborhood convenience businesses, there should be residential development in the area not served by such businesses. In rural areas, neighborhood convenience uses may be located as needed for convenience, and should be more widely separated than in urban growth areas. New neighborhood convenience businesses to serve areas where one or more such businesses already exist should be located adjacent to the existing businesses in small centers or clusters, rather than having businesses strung out along major roads.</p>
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RURAL COMMERCIAL CENTER

Purpose	<p>To provide for the commercial needs of an identified rural community.</p> <p>To provide for redevelopment and infilling of rural commercial areas in a unified center configuration, not as strip commercial development.</p>
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RURAL COMMERCIAL CENTER	
	To provide for limited expansion of a commercial center to serve the growth of the surrounding rural community over time, contained within the logical outer boundary of the commercial center.
Definition and Characteristics	<p>Rural Commercial Centers serve an identified rural community and have a range of uses to meet the everyday needs of the community. Development within these centers shall be functionally and visually compatible with the surrounding rural area and uses in order to protect the rural character. Typical uses in Rural Commercial Centers are small offices, retail sales, grocery stores, drug stores, video stores, garden supplies, nurseries, hardware, lumber sales, service stations, taverns, boat and auto sales, mini-storage facilities, and public facilities and services.</p> <p>The Rural Commercial Centers within the County vary in size, based upon the size of the rural community served. Existing Commercial Centers include Rochester, South Bay/Schinke Road, Steamboat Island Road Interchange at Highway 101, among others. Expansion of a Rural Commercial Center is addressed in the goals and policies section below.</p>
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> The boundaries of Rural Commercial Centers should be logical (see policy below), and the area should have minimal environmental constraints and be capable of supporting commercial development. Land should be relatively level and free of critical areas.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area has minimal natural resource management potential. Development of the area will have little detrimental impact on nearby agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, mineral deposits or other natural resource uses.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> Rural Commercial Centers should be located at major crossroads within the rural community that they serve and should take direct access off of collector or arterial roads. Expansion of Centers should only take place where traffic congestion will not result from topography or poor road design and where traffic will not have significant</p>

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RURAL COMMERCIAL CENTER

	<p>impacts on the surrounding rural area and uses. Utility services, including on-site septic systems and community water systems, should be at a level appropriate to serve the proposed uses.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Use.</i> Uses within the Rural Commercial Center designation shall be compatible with rural character, which includes both functional and visual components. The functional component describes land put to uses that are dependent on a rural setting. For example, localized commercial uses that serve a rural population or other rural activities are dependent upon a rural location close to their constituencies. On the other hand, a commercial business that is oriented to a larger than rural market or service area is not dependent upon a rural location. If a proposed commercial business will interfere with the surrounding rural area or uses by significant traffic, light, noise, etc., then that business is incompatible with rural character.</p> <p>The visual component describes the visual attributes of the traditional rural landscape. If the visual character of the rural landscape is unduly disrupted or altered by a proposed commercial use, then that use is incompatible with rural character.</p>
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HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

Purpose	To provide for the location of facilities and services needed by the traveling public (food, gas, lodging). They are to be located at or in the vicinity of major highway and freeway interchanges.
Definition and Characteristics	Uses typical of highway commercial areas are motels, gas stations, restaurants, travel trailer parks, and convenience stores for the traveling public. They should be located where they can be reached conveniently and safely at major highway and freeway interchanges. Existing Highway Commercial locations in rural areas include the south side of the Mud Bay/Highway 101 interchange and Martin Way/I-5 interchange in the Nisqually Valley.

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HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL	
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> The area should have minimal environmental constraints and be capable of supporting commercial development. Land should be relatively level and free of critical areas.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area has minimal natural resource management potential. Development of the area will have little detrimental impact on nearby agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, mineral deposits or other natural resource uses.</p> <p><i>Public Services.</i> The area has state highway or freeway interchange access and is or can be freed of congestion problems resulting from topography or poor road design. Siting should not result in significant traffic impacts on streets serving residential areas. Utility service is available or can be provided to the level required by proposed uses.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Use.</i> In most cases, the area may already be committed to commercial use. For proposed new Highway Commercial areas, the land should be undeveloped or largely undeveloped.</p>

RURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRIAL	
Purpose	<p>To provide areas for natural resource based industrial uses, located near agriculture, forest and mineral resource lands.</p> <p>To provide areas where industrial uses may locate that involve the processing, fabrication, wholesaling and storage of products associated with natural resource uses</p> <p>To provide areas where industrial uses may locate that are functionally and visually compatible with the character of the rural area.</p>
Definition and Characteristics	<p>This industrial designation applies within the rural area of the County. A wide range of natural resource-related uses may be accommodated which are dependent upon agriculture, forest practices or mineral extraction or industries that are dependent upon a rural setting. Industrial areas and development shall be functionally and</p>

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RURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRIAL	
	visually compatible with the surrounding rural area and uses in order to protect the rural character. (Note that additional industrial areas are located in the Rochester-Grand Mound area, as well as the Yelm Urban Growth Area. These areas are described in the corresponding Subarea or Joint Plan.)
Locational Guidelines	<p><i>Land Capability and Environmental Characteristics.</i> Land should be capable of supporting industrial development with minimal environmental constraints. Particularly important is the ability to support uses without significant adverse effects on surface or ground water. Land should generally be level and free of critical areas.</p> <p><i>Natural Resources.</i> The area should be located so that development will not detrimentally impact agriculture, forestry, aquaculture or other natural resource uses. The area to be designated industrial should itself have minimal potential for natural resource management/utilization.</p> <p><i>Public Services:</i></p> <p><u>Utilities.</u> Utility services should be at levels appropriate to serve the rural area and the intensity of proposed industrial activity. Industrial development will be limited to uses not requiring public sewer and where the land can support the industrial uses with on-site septic systems and water without adversely affecting surface or groundwater.</p> <p><u>Transportation.</u> Rural industrial areas should rely either on rail service or be within close proximity of a freeway interchange or state highway. Such areas shall have direct access to arterial or collector roads and shall not result in significant adverse traffic impacts on surrounding rural areas and uses.</p> <p><i>Existing Land Use.</i> Uses within this designation shall be compatible with rural character, which includes both functional and visual components. The functional component describes land put to uses that are dependent on a rural setting. For example, sawmills should be close to forest lands. An industry that has no orientation to rural or resource based activities is not dependent upon a rural location. If rural lands and/or rural uses on those lands will</p>

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RURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRIAL

be interfered with by the traffic, light, noise, etc. from a proposed industrial use, then that use is incompatible with rural character.

The visual component describes the visual attributes of the traditional rural landscape. If the visual character of the rural landscape is unduly disrupted or altered by a proposed use, then that use is incompatible with rural character. Site design, landscaping, design and construction of internal and access roads and building scale should reinforce the set boundaries and rural nature of the industrial area to further discourage future industrial expansion beyond the industrial boundary.

V. LANDS FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES

The GMA requires the County to identify lands useful for public purposes, such as utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfills, sewage treatment facilities, stormwater management facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses [RCW 36.70A.150]. These areas are described throughout the Comprehensive Plan, and in more detail as follows:

The Transportation Chapter (Chapter 5) identifies the type and quality of county roads, bike paths, railways, and other transportation corridors;

Capital Facilities (Chapter 6) inventories and prioritizes acquisition of public purpose lands, and identifies needs for shared facilities with other jurisdictions;

The Utilities Chapter (Chapter 7) identifies major utility providers; and

The Environment, Recreation and Open Space Chapter (Chapter 9) includes a map of important open spaces/greenspaces and addresses stormwater and waste management.

In addition, the County identifies and plans for public recreation facilities in the Comprehensive Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan 2020, which is adopted separately from this Comprehensive Plan. See Appendix C for a list of the other planning documents that address public facility planning in Thurston County.

The current location and distribution of major public purpose lands in the rural area are inventoried on Map E-2. Some of these lands are designated and/or zoned for specific public purposes, such as parks and public preserves. Other public lands are identified for planning purposes, as the location of lands owned by other agencies, jurisdictions, or private companies may change over time. Joint Plans further identify public purpose lands in the UGAs.

A. ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Thurston Regional Planning Council provided the Interjurisdictional forum for developing the required process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. A process endorsed by the Thurston Regional Planning Council in January 1994 is included in the Special Use Chapter of the Thurston County Zoning Ordinance and below:

DESIGNATION OF ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES:

Essential public facilities are public facilities and privately owned or operated facilities serving a public purpose that are typically difficult to site. They include:

1. State education facilities; state or regional transportation facilities; prisons, jails and other correctional facilities; solid waste handling facilities; airports; and inpatient facilities such as group homes, mental health facilities and substance abuse facilities; sewage treatment facilities; and communication towers and antennas.
2. Facilities identified by the State Office of Financial Management as essential public facilities, consistent with RCW 36.70A.200; and
3. Facilities identified as essential public facilities in the county's zoning ordinance.

SITING ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES:

Essential public facilities may be allowed as permitted or conditional special uses in the zoning ordinance. Essential public facilities identified as special uses in the applicable zoning district shall be subject, at a minimum, to the following requirements.

1. County classification of essential public facilities as follows:
 - a. Type One: Multi-county facilities. These are major facilities serving or potentially affecting more than one county. These facilities include, but are not limited to, regional transportation facilities, such as regional airports; state correction facilities; and state educational facilities.
 - b. Type Two: These are local or inter-local facilities serving or potentially affecting residents or property in more than one jurisdiction. They could include, but are not limited to, county jails, county landfills, community colleges, sewage treatment facilities, communication towers, and inpatient facilities (e.g., substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes). [NOTE: Such facilities which would not have impacts beyond the jurisdiction in which they are proposed to be located would be Type Three facilities.]
 - c. Type Three: These are facilities serving or potentially affecting only the jurisdiction in which they are proposed to be located.

In order to enable the county to determine the project's classification, the applicant shall identify the approximate area within which the proposed project could potentially have adverse impacts,

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such as increased traffic, public safety risks, noise, glare, emissions, or other environmental impacts.

2. Early notification and involvement of affected citizens and jurisdictions as follows:

- a. Type One and Two facilities. At least 90 days before submitting an application for a Type One or Type Two essential public facility, the prospective applicant shall notify the affected public and jurisdictions of the general type and nature of the proposal, identify sites under consideration for accommodating the proposed facility, and identify opportunities to comment on the proposal. Applications for specific projects shall not be considered complete in the absence of proof of a published notice regarding the proposed project in a newspaper of general circulation in the affected area. This notice shall include the information described above and shall be published at least 90 days prior to the submission of the application.

The Thurston Regional Planning Council may provide the project sponsor and affected jurisdiction(s) with their comments or recommendations regarding alternative project locations during this 90-day period.

(The purpose of this provision is to enable potentially affected jurisdictions and the public to collectively review and comment on alternative sites for major facilities before the project sponsor has made their siting decision.)

- b. Type Three facilities. Type Three essential public facilities are subject to the county's standard notification requirements for special uses.
3. Essential public facilities shall not have any probable significant adverse impact on critical areas or resource lands, except for lineal facilities, such as highways, where no feasible alternative exists (adapted from County-Wide Policy 5.2(a)).
4. Major public facilities which generate substantial traffic should be sited near major transportation corridors [adapted from County-Wide Policy 5.2(b)].
5. Applicants for Type One essential public facilities shall provide an analysis of the alternative sites considered for the proposed facility. This analysis shall include the following:
 - a. An evaluation of the sites' capability to meet basic siting criteria for the proposed facility, such as size, physical characteristics, access, and availability of necessary utilities and support services;
 - b. An explanation of the need for the proposed facility in the proposed location;
 - c. The sites' relationship to the service area and the distribution of other similar public facilities within the service area or jurisdiction, whichever is larger; and
 - d. A general description of the relative environmental, traffic, and social impacts associated with locating the proposed facility at the alternative sites that meet the applicant's basic siting criteria. The applicant shall also identify proposed mitigation measures to alleviate or minimize significant potential impacts.

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- e. The applicant shall also briefly describe the process used to identify and evaluate the alternative sites.
6. The proposed project shall comply with all applicable provisions of the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and other county regulations.
7. In acquiring and developing parks, trails and other recreation facilities, the County should explore every opportunity to create revenue centers within the park system to generate funding for ongoing park maintenance and operation needs.

B. OLYMPIA AIRPORT AREA

The Olympia Regional Airport is located within the Tumwater UGA, and its development and the use of adjacent areas is primarily guided by the Tumwater/Thurston County Joint Plan and accompanying development regulations for the Tumwater Urban Growth Area. However, airport approach and departure areas influence lands outside the Tumwater UGA, creating an airport hazard overlay area addressed in this Comprehensive Plan. The guidance provided below gives direction as to the types and intensities of land uses most compatible with the noise effects and safety concerns of a growing municipal airport. This section of the Plan is also intended to identify those uses most compatible with the safety needs of low flying aircraft. The airport area is designated for the following purposes:

- ❖ To identify areas around the Olympia Airport where high concentrations of people should be discouraged for health and safety reasons and where uses compatible with high noise levels are encouraged.
- ❖ To enable future development of the Olympia airport and air service to Thurston County without major disruption or incurring safety hazards.

1. Definitions and Characteristics

The “airport hazard overlay area” includes those lands within the airport approach areas and the airport traffic pattern area (see Map L-3). These lands are directly within the immediate sphere of influence of the Olympia Airport, both in terms of immediate operations and long-range development plans.

The airport hazard overlay area should be characterized by land uses that are compatible with an airport or its activities. Such land uses outside the Urban Growth Area include agriculture, open space oriented recreation and low intensity residential (densities of 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres or lower densities). High to moderate levels of noise will occur and, therefore, land uses compatible with such noise impacts are encouraged in airport areas. Uses that require tall structures, which produce extensive visual pollution through smoke, glare or dust and which may create hazards for low overflying aircraft are incompatible with the airport area.

2. Guidelines for Development in Airport Hazard Overlay Areas

Land underlying the airport approach areas should be kept in very low intensity uses, including very low residential density (not to exceed 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres) to protect against possible accidents.

Preferred zoning in the airport area (outside of the Urban Growth Area) should be that which permits uses of the land that are best able to coexist with potential noise problems. Agriculture and open space uses are most desirable in this area

No radio interference or obstructions should penetrate air navigation surfaces. Such penetrations include smoke emissions, steam or glare that would cause safety hazards.

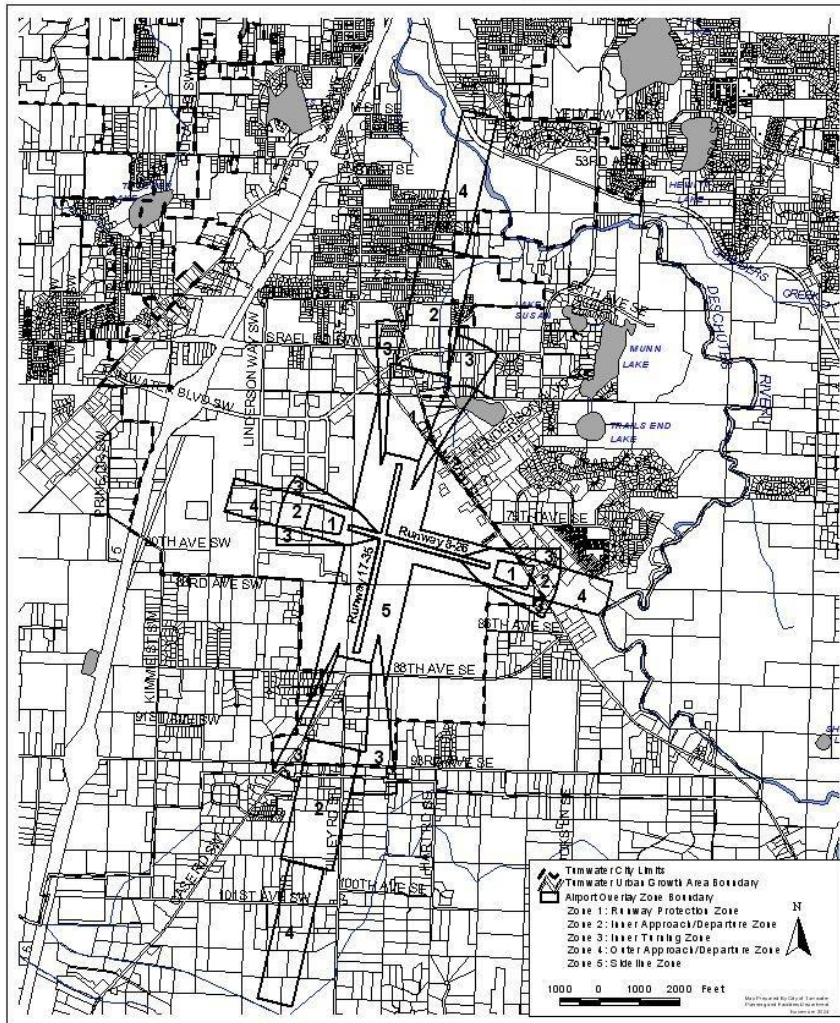
Final plats within 2 miles of the airport hazard overlay area, should contain statements notifying prospective purchasers the property may be affected by airport operations (see Exhibit A).

New, non-residential uses that would involve a concentration of people (e.g., recreational facilities, schools, child and adult care facilities, hospitals, and other types of gathering places) should not be located within the Inner and Outer Approach/Departure Zones and Inner Turning Zone (Zones 2, 3 and 4 in Exhibit A) in the rural area.

Structures and trees within the airport hazard overlay area should not penetrate airspace surfaces as defined by Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77, except as necessary and incidental to airport regulations.

EXHIBIT A

Airport Overlay Zone



C. JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD

Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), the largest military installation on the west coast, is located east of Lacey and north of Yelm, straddling the Thurston and Pierce County boundary. JBLM was established in 2010, with the combination of Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base into a single unit. The base encompasses over 90,000 acres, approximately one-fifth of which is located within Thurston County. While most of JBLM's infrastructure, including the McChord Airfield, is located in Pierce County, areas of the base within Thurston County are used for training operations, including at night. Some land within the county near JBLM is regularly exposed to noise levels that may be incompatible to some land uses (see Map L-3).

Noise Zone ⁷	Decibel Level (dBA)	Land Use Recommendation
I	< 65	Generally acceptable with any residential or noise sensitive uses.
II	65-75	Normally not recommended with residential or noise-sensitive uses.
III	> 75	Not recommended for residential or noise-sensitive uses. No areas of Zone III in Thurston County.

Most of the land adjacent to JBLM in Thurston County is in the unincorporated rural county, and is designated for low density residential or resource use, which is generally compatible with these operations. Open space, agriculture, and low-density uses adjacent to military activities can provide a buffer that protects surrounding areas from the nuisance and safety risks of military operations.

In 2015, the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership (SSMCP) conducted a JBLM Joint Land Use Study; one of the goals of that effort is protecting public health, safety, and welfare of the civilian and military communities by promoting safe and compatible growth. Recommendations from the JLUS study include encouraging land uses that are compatible, acceptable, and feasible in the vicinity of the military airfield ranges, increasing communication between military and jurisdictional planners, seeking creative solutions to preserve habitat for threatened and endangered species, as well as addressing noise concerns from aircraft and training operations.

VI. LAND USE DECISION-MAKING

The process used to determine major land use policies and decisions can be as important as the decisions themselves. The process can make the difference between policies that will be used because they are widely accepted, or those that will be ignored.

In making land use decisions, one of county government's ongoing challenges is to balance the various special interests of the community within the context of protecting the health, safety, and

⁷ Source: Air Installation Compatible Use Zone Study (2014) and JBLM Joint Land Use Study, Existing Conditions Report (2015)

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welfare of the community at large. Therefore, an issue of particular concern is how to take into account the variety of community interests as the policies are being developed.

How constituents are notified of new policy making projects and how they are able to influence the decisions are very important in this regard. Thurston County was among the first in Washington State to give residents the opportunity to develop their own detailed subarea plans.

The kinds of plans prepared by a local government and the degree of coordination between them can make the difference between land use decisions that seem to go in one direction through one planning process and another way through other plans. One of the objectives in this chapter deals with how plans are to be related and which plan provides the framework for the others.

Another important aspect of the land use decision making process is how land use plans are coordinated with permit and regulatory requirements and other programs.

An additional concern is how to achieve balance between being able to rely on land use plans to direct future development for a reasonable length of time into the future, yet keeping them updated as conditions change.

Related to the issue of reliability of plans is coordination between the county and other jurisdictions so that all are working toward common goals for future development. This is particularly important within county areas subject to annexation by cities.

The last section of the goals, objectives and policies in this chapter provides direction for four aspects of decision-making:

1. How citizens participate;
2. What kinds of plans the county will prepare to guide its physical development and how they will interrelate;
3. How to keep the comprehensive land use plan and its implementing documents up to date, understandable and reliable; and
4. How governments should coordinate, particularly for lands around the cities and towns where future annexations will occur.

VII. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES⁸

- **GOAL 1: TO PROVIDE FOR RURAL AREAS THAT:**

⁸ Additional Goals, Objectives, and Policies throughout this Plan further elaborate on rural land use issues. For example, resource protection is discussed in Chapters 3 and 9, utilities and public services are discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, and economic development in the rural area is discussed in Chapter 8. All the policies within this Plan are internally consistent.

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- MAINTAIN A SUSTAINABLE BALANCE BETWEEN HUMAN USES AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN ORDER TO PROTECT RURAL CHARACTER;
- MAINTAIN THE LAND AND WATER ENVIRONMENTS REQUIRED BY NATURAL RESOURCE-BASED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITATS, RURAL LIFESTYLES, OUTDOOR RECREATION, AND OTHER OPEN SPACE; AND
- DEVELOP AT LOW LEVELS OF INTENSITY SO THAT DEMANDS WILL NOT BE CREATED FOR URBAN LEVELS OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES.

OBJECTIVE A: Rural Land Use and Activities - County development requirements and programs provide for a balance between human uses and the natural environment in rural and resource areas, the conservation of rural resources, and for low levels of demand for public services and facilities.

POLICIES:

1. Priority rural area land uses should be small scale farms, forestry and mining areas, outdoor recreation and other open space activities, scattered residences, and rural residential developments.
2. Residential development in rural areas should be allowed on lands that can physically support it and at densities that will not require urban levels of service or significantly impact rural character or environmental quality. Densities should be low enough to discourage leapfrogging of UGA development, and not undermine the natural environment or natural resource management.
3. Residential areas of more intensive rural development shall be minimized and contained to avoid additional low-density sprawl in the rural area. Those areas of higher density development that meet the statutory criteria established in RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d) should be designated as limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs). The criteria for designating LAMIRDs include establishing boundaries that:
 - a. Ensure preservation of the character of the existing neighborhood and community;
 - b. Follow physical boundaries such as water bodies, streets and highways, and land forms;
 - c. Prevent abnormally irregular boundaries;
 - d. Ensure that public facilities and services are provided in a manner that does not permit low-density sprawl; and
 - e. Shall not extend beyond the logical outer boundary of the July 1, 1990 built environment, with limited ability for additional infill.

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4. Residential use near designated long-term agriculture or forestry areas, designated mineral lands, and other natural resource lands should be developed in a manner that minimizes potential conflicts and reduces unnecessary conversion of farm and forest land. When mechanisms such as clustering and buffering are used, these mechanisms should be scaled, located, and designed to maintain rural character and environmental quality.
5. Residential use occurring on active farms with prime farmland soils that are not designated long-term agriculture should be developed through clustering to conserve underlying prime soils for farming operation.
5. Agriculture and forestry should be accommodated on rural lands in addition to designated long-term resource lands. The development of rural areas for residential uses should not preclude the use of land for agriculture or timber production. Mineral extraction consistent with the provisions of this plan should be permitted through a special use process.
6. Home-based occupations and industries should be allowed throughout the rural area provided they do not adversely affect the surrounding residential uses or rural character.
7. Isolated commercial and industrial businesses in the rural area, legally established on or before July 1, 1990, that may not be principally designed to serve the existing or projected rural population and nonresidential uses, but do provide job opportunities for rural residents, should be allowed to expand or change use provided the expansion or conversion does not constitute new urban development in the rural area, is contained on the same lot as the existing use, is visually compatible with the surrounding rural area, and detrimental impacts to adjacent properties will not be increased or intensified.
8. New industrial uses in rural areas (other than small scale home-based industries) should generally be those appropriate to the lower densities and land uses of rural areas, such as:
 - a. Industries related to and dependent on natural resources of agriculture, aquaculture, timber, and minerals and
 - b. Industries that are functionally and visually compatible with the character of the rural area and dependent upon a rural setting.
9. Neighborhood convenience commercial uses should be permitted throughout rural areas, located at road intersections and taking access from collector or arterial roads. Generally, other types of commercial uses should locate in the urban area, the rural towns, or in rural commercial centers.
10. Rural commercial centers should be designated as limited areas of more intensive rural development (LAMIRDs) using the criteria established in RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d). Rural commercial centers should be designated only for identified rural community areas, like Rochester and Steamboat Island Road at Highway 101. These centers should serve a larger rural community than neighborhood convenience and have a greater variety of uses, while maintaining a rural character.

Commented [MT7]: New policy to pair with cluster overlay concept

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11. Municipal sewer utilities should not be extended into rural areas except to protect basic public health and safety, and the environment. See also Goal 1, Objective B, Policy #7, below.
12. Buildings and roads should be located on sites in ways that minimize the need for cutting, grading or the removal of native plant material.
 - a. Clearing, grading, and development activities should respect natural features, processes and wildlife habitat.
 - b. Neighboring properties, stormwater drainage facilities and surface water bodies should be protected from sedimentation and increased runoff during and after construction.
 - c. As much natural vegetation as possible, especially large trees, should be preserved as development occurs.
13. Archaeological and historic resources should be identified and protected to the greatest extent possible.
14. Special uses that may be permitted in the rural area should be constrained in size and scale so as to maintain rural character. The primary purpose of special uses should be to serve the rural area residents of Thurston County.
15. To the extent possible, future land use designations, or changes to existing land use designations, should take into account the availability of water rights and an adequate water supply as this information becomes available and as directed through the streamflow restoration watershed planning process identified in RCW 90.94.
16. The County should maintain open space corridors between urban growth areas and areas of more intensive rural development to prevent sprawl and to preserve wildlife corridors. Mechanisms to permanently protect such corridors, such as purchase of development rights, zoning, and critical area regulation should be pursued. (See Chapter 9, Environment, Recreation and Open Space for additional policies regarding open space corridors.)
17. The County should discourage incompatible uses adjacent to general aviation public use airports. Incompatible land uses may include residential, multi-family, height hazards, uses that attract large concentrations of people, wildlife hazards, and special uses such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes, and explosive/hazardous materials. The County should consult with the Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation Division when amending policies or regulations that would affect public airports.

OBJECTIVE B: Housing and Residential Densities in Rural Areas - County requirements and programs for housing in rural areas should encourage residential development that is compatible with small scale as well as commercially-significant farming, forestry, aquaculture, open space, outdoor recreation, rural service levels, and generally with the rural character where human use does not overbalance the natural environment. Use of

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innovative techniques in addition to zoning designations provides a variety of densities in rural areas.

POLICIES:

1. A variety of rural densities should be provided to accommodate the wide variety of rural land uses that comprise the rural character.
2. Thurston County may not expand beyond the logical outer boundary that existed in 1990 or intensify beyond the 1990 rural residential land use designations or zoning districts that permit densities greater than 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres. Areas of more intensive rural residential development shall be minimized and contained to avoid additional low density sprawl that is not compatible with rural character and service levels.
3. Within rural areas, proposed new residential development should not negatively affect land based and marine aquacultural activities and farm and forestry activities. Aquaculture activities should not be considered a nuisance if they are operating in a reasonable manner and within applicable regulations. In addition, buffers between the residential uses and aquaculture districts should be provided by the residential development.
4. Residential development adjacent to agriculture or forestry uses should be designed in a manner that minimizes potential conflicts and reduces unnecessary conversion of farm and forest land. Such mechanisms as clustering and buffering should be employed to reduce potential conflicts.
5. Individual septic systems should be the method for handling residential sewage in rural areas. Only in areas of identified health hazards or water quality problems should sewer systems be permitted. In such cases, the county should be the sewer and water provider.
6. Community water systems are required in unsewered areas where residential density exceeds one unit per acre, and for densities of one unit per two acres in areas of excessive porosity.
7. Urban governmental services, as defined in the Growth Management Act, should generally not be extended outside urban growth areas, except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not encourage urban development. This policy does not apply to rural governmental services as defined in the Growth Management Act, including domestic water supply, fire and police protection services, transportation and public transit services, and other public utilities associated with rural levels of development.
8. Residential neighborhoods should be protected from incompatible land uses.
 - a. Neighborhood identity should be preserved by maintaining natural boundaries and recognizing significant archaeological and historic resources.

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- b. Vegetated buffers should be provided between arterials and residential developments, and between residential and non-residential land uses.
- 9. The County should protect significant archaeological and historic resources through cluster development, overlay zoning, transfer of development rights, tax incentives, and other appropriate mechanisms.
- 10. Rezoning of any parcel with a rural designation to a different designation should only occur when:
 - a. circumstances have substantially changed since the current land use designation/zoning was adopted and the definition, characteristics or locational guidelines for the current district no longer apply;
 - b. the rezone would promote the general welfare of the affected community;
 - c. the rezone would maintain or enhance environmental quality; or
 - d. Thurston County pursues a legislative rezone.
- 11. If rezoning is requested for a portion of a land use designation:
 - a. the impact of a proposed rezone on landowners remaining in the original designation should be evaluated and considered;
 - b. the proposed rezone should only be allowed if there is projected to be minimal adverse impact on neighboring landowners and on the continued use of a rural district for natural resource-based industries or conservation purposes;
 - c. regular, easily definable boundaries should be maintained; and
 - d. the rezoning should not increase the demand for urban levels of service.

OBJECTIVE C: Compatibility with Joint Base Lewis-McChord – Ensure future development minimizes risk to life, property, and the well-being of County residents from military training operations, and maintains compatibility with current and future missions at JBLM.

POLICIES:

- 1. The county should partner with JBLM and the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership to anticipate and meet population growth and service demands related to military missions.
- 2. Siting of uses adjacent to Joint Base Lewis-McChord should take into account noise impacts from the base.
- 3. Development and infrastructure proposals located near Joint Base Lewis-McChord should be reviewed for potential compatibility challenges with training operations, including: noise sensitive uses in areas of known exposure to aviation and range noise; physical

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infrastructure that could interfere with low-level flight operations; and sources of electrical emissions that could interfere with military communications or navigation systems.

4. Wherever feasible, the county should use open space and conservation planning to buffer surrounding uses from nuisance and safety risks associated with military operations, and support the recovery of Endangered Species Act-listed species that would otherwise limit the scope of training on JBLM lands.
5. The county should partner with JBLM to make information on the potential impacts of training operations available to residents.
6. The county should work with JBLM to ensure ongoing, mutual communication about mission or operational changes that could affect the surrounding community, or about infrastructure or development projects that could affect training operations.

- **GOAL 2:** TO DESIGNATE URBAN GROWTH AREAS THAT CUMULATIVELY PROVIDE AREA AND DENSITIES SUFFICIENT TO PERMIT THE URBAN GROWTH THAT IS PROJECTED TO OCCUR IN THE COUNTY OVER THE SUCCEEDING 20 YEARS.

OBJECTIVE A: Designating Urban Growth Areas - Include in urban growth areas territory that is located outside of a city or town only if such territory is already characterized by urban growth or is adjacent to territory already characterized by urban growth.

POLICIES:

1. Urban growth areas should contain areas characterized by urban growth.
2. Urban growth areas should be served by or planned to be served by municipal utilities.
3. Urban growth areas should contain vacant land near existing urban areas that is capable of supporting urban development.
4. Urban growth areas should be designated so as to be compatible with the use of designated natural resource lands and critical areas.
5. Urban growth areas should follow logical boundaries and consider citizen preferences.
6. The county should attempt to reach agreement with each city and town on the location of an urban growth area within which the city or town is located.
7. Expansion of an urban growth boundary should ensure provision of transportation, municipal water and an adequate water supply for the succeeding 20 years in a manner that does not degrade the Puget Sound or waters flowing into it. North County jurisdictions⁹

⁹ "North county jurisdictions" refers to growth areas around Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater

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must ensure that the area can be served by municipal sewer, and South County jurisdictions¹⁰ must demonstrate that the expansion area can be served by sewage disposal methods that provide for the effective treatment of waste water in a manner that does not degrade waters flowing into the Puget Sound in the succeeding 20 years.

8. Expansion of an urban growth area boundary should meet one of the following two criteria:
 - a. There is insufficient land within the existing urban growth area to permit the urban growth that is forecast to occur in the succeeding 20 years; or
 - b. There can be shown an overriding public benefit to public health, safety and welfare by moving the urban growth boundary.
9. The area that is designated for the expansion of any urban growth area should be contiguous to an existing urban growth boundary.
10. Reductions in any urban growth boundary should ensure that sufficient land will remain within the reduced urban growth area to permit the urban growth that is forecast to occur in the succeeding 20 years including a reasonable market factor.
11. A variety of densities and housing types should be provided in urban growth areas, with planned densities of four units per acre or higher, except where limited by physical constraints. The exact locations of housing densities are to be determined by joint plans or subarea plans.
12. Expansion or reduction of any urban growth area should be compatible with the use of designated natural resource lands, designated archaeological and historic resources, and with critical areas.
13. The designation of or change to urban growth areas should be consistent with the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies.
14. In order to protect the supply of adequate water to rural area residents and natural resource industries, the County should consider mitigation methods for rural area water supplies that are purchased or transferred from the rural area for use in a city or urban growth area.

OBJECTIVE B: Planning Framework for Urban Growth Areas - Adopt and maintain a joint plan for each urban growth area around a city or town. For urban growth areas around unincorporated centers, the policy framework for urban growth should be embodied either in this Comprehensive Plan or subarea plan.

¹⁰ "South county jurisdictions" refers to growth areas around Yelm, Rainier, Tenino, Bucoda, and the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area.

POLICIES:

1. The adopted joint plans will serve as the basis for County planning decisions and as the pre-annexation comprehensive plans for the cities to use when annexations are proposed within urban growth areas.
2. Compatible level of service standards for public services and facilities should be jointly adopted and maintained among jurisdictions within urban growth areas.
3. The County should support development consistent with joint plans.
4. For those UGAs that include incorporated and unincorporated areas, growth management agreements between the county and the municipalities should establish common standards for roads and utilities. The agreements should also establish that land use patterns adopted within the joint plan will be honored for a mutually agreeable period following adoption of the plan or annexation.
5. The County should coordinate its planning and development regulations with the cities for urban growth areas.

OBJECTIVE C: Accommodating Projected Growth - Concentrate medium and higher-intensity residential, commercial and industrial development in urban growth areas in a way that ensures livability and preservation of environmental quality, open space retention, varied and affordable housing, and high quality urban services at the least cost.

POLICIES:

1. Encourage infilling in areas already characterized by urban growth that have the capacity and provide public services and facilities to serve urban development.
2. Through the Buildable Lands Program, the County should ensure that average residential densities in urban growth areas are sufficient to enable the county as a whole to accommodate its 20-year population projection including a reasonable market factor.
3. Where urban services and utilities are not yet available, require development to be configured so urban development may eventually infill and become urban.
4. Consider the use of innovative development techniques within urban growth areas, such as cluster housing and the transfer of development rights.
5. Land use plans within UGAs should balance change with recognition of the distinct identities of neighborhoods and support variety and choice in living and working environments.
6. Residential development in UGAs should include a variety of housing types. Overall densities should be high enough to support efficient public services and provide affordable housing choices, but there should be a variety of densities based on land capability,

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environmental sensitivity, and constraints in providing services. In areas where urban growth and sewer extensions are scheduled to take place later, residential development should be kept at very low densities for the short-term or developed in a manner that will not preclude later infilling at higher densities.

7. Mining, forestry, farming, and related natural resource industries may occur in urban growth areas, but in the long-term can expect to be replaced by more intensive urban land uses and activities.
8. Industrial and commercial development of all types may occur in urban growth areas, particularly the larger and more intensive types of development which require higher levels of public services and facilities. Within the urban growth areas around the incorporated towns, the industrial and larger commercial development should take place inside the towns themselves in order to support their roles as the economic centers of their areas.
9. The highest levels of public services and facilities should be provided in urban growth areas, but may be provided at lesser levels in the smaller towns' urban growth areas. Some services and facilities may only be provided after areas incorporate or are annexed to adjacent cities or towns. These urban services and facilities may include water supply; sanitary and storm sewers; police and fire protection; paved streets with curbs, sidewalks and street lights; and public transit and bicycle paths. Other services may include community and neighborhood parks, government offices, libraries, medical facilities, manned fire stations, and animal control.
10. Open space lands contributing to the livability of UGAs should be preserved, including those providing scenic amenity, community identity and buffers within and between urban and rural areas.
11. Reductions in any urban growth boundary should ensure that the reduced urban growth area will include effective sewer and water and transportation service areas, and will retain the ability to accommodate projected population growth for a 20-year period including a reasonable market factor.
12. Significant archeological and historic resources contributing to the sense of place, providing links to our past, and enhancing quality of life should be protected and preserved.
13. The County should weigh the need to accommodate projected growth in a particular area against the potential impacts of that growth on critical areas. Some areas of the County are not appropriate for urban growth due to the occurrence and/or sensitivity of critical areas or the possibility of creating a public safety hazard.

OBJECTIVE D: Annexations and Incorporations - The county should review annexations and incorporations for consistency with this Comprehensive Plan, effective subarea plans and impacts on county land use, traffic circulation, public services and facilities and integrity and continuity of service areas and boundaries.

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POLICIES:

1. Annexations should be supported within designated urban growth areas of cities and towns.
2. Annexations of unincorporated islands should be actively encouraged and creation of new unincorporated islands should be discouraged.
3. Annexations may not occur outside of designated urban growth areas.
4. Cities and towns may require an annexation commitment as a condition of utility service within designated urban growth areas.
5. New city and town incorporations should provide adequate facilities and services for urban growth consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

- **GOAL 3:** LAND USE PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING SHOULD ENSURE THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND GENERAL WELFARE WITHIN A QUALITY LIVING ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT UNDULY JEOPARDIZING THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

OBJECTIVE A: Citizen Participation in the Planning Process - An effective system to ensure participation by individuals and groups in planning and decision making should be maintained.

POLICIES:

1. The development and amendment of the Comprehensive Plan, including subarea plans and joint plans with cities shall involve residents of the area in the drafting of the plans.
2. Citizen opinion should be ascertained in advance of decision-making on major land use issues.
3. Meetings should be held in neighborhoods on major land use issues affecting those neighborhoods.
4. New land use policies and regulations should involve participation by the public and should reflect community interests and preferences for new development.
5. The county should provide adequate staff support to help persons seeking development permits and participating in permit review processes.
6. Development permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
7. Communications between the county and citizen groups should be facilitated by providing information on programs, regulations, and development projects impacting various areas of the county.

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8. The County should provide for public involvement early and continuously throughout the process of developing and amending plans and regulations and shall utilize a variety of public participation and information strategies.
9. The county should maintain lists of individuals, neighborhood groups, organizations and professional groups interested in land use should be maintained for use by all county departments to send notification of proposed programs, issues and actions relating to land use. Persons and groups should be advised of the listing service and given opportunity to participate.

OBJECTIVE B: Plans and Programs for the County's Physical Development - A system of coordinated plans should direct the county's physical development and provide the framework for a variety of implementing mechanisms.

POLICIES:

1. The Comprehensive Plan should serve as the master plan to guide the county's physical development and the preparation of the county's subarea plans, joint plans and plans for special services, functions or issues.

The public should be notified when the Comprehensive Plan is being prepared, revised or amended. The Comprehensive Plan should be prepared with participation by interested individuals and groups.
2. Subarea plans can be used to identify the area-specific land use and transportation plans for geographic subareas of the county. Subarea plans should be developed consistent with the Comprehensive Plan as needed to accommodate unique features or needs of a discrete portion of the rural area, using the following principles:
 - a. Involvement of property owners and residents of the subarea, as well as any other interested persons and groups should be sought in the preparation of subarea plans;
 - b. The future land use pattern and transportation system prepared for subareas should be based on and consistent with, the goals, policies, and guidelines for land use and transportation planning established in the Comprehensive Plan;
 - c. The County should work with interested citizens to prepare the subarea plans. The Planning Commission should review the draft plans for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan's framework and guidelines, and for compatibility with neighboring areas.
 - d. Existing subareas should be periodically re-evaluated, and new subarea plans may be developed as needed.
3. Joint plans between the county and incorporated cities and towns should promote consistency and certainty about how the area will be planned and developed in the future. The plans should be prepared and used according to the following principles:

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- a. Participation in Joint Plan preparation should be sought by residents of the city/town, affected unincorporated area, and any other interested individuals and groups;
 - b. Joint plans should be adopted as part of the comprehensive plans of the cities, towns and county;
 - c. The future land use pattern and transportation systems identified in joint plans should be honored as development in the county and annexations to the cities/towns take place; and
 - d. Joint plans should provide for phasing of development and the orderly extension of city/town services and annexations.
4. Special function plans related to the county's physical development should be prepared for issues, services or functions provided by or subject to approval of county government. They should be developed according to the following principles:
 - a. Special function plans (e.g., plans for parks, sewage, solid waste, stormwater management, etc.) should be based on the framework for the county's physical development established in the Comprehensive Plan and joint plans. The goals, objectives, and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan should be followed; as should the intensity levels and location of land uses and transportation networks in subarea plans still in effect and in joint plans; and
 - b. Special function plans may be prepared for the county as a whole, or for parts of the county, with boundaries to be based on the scope of the issue or service.
 5. The County should continue to evaluate and periodically update subarea boundaries and plans for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and the GMA.

OBJECTIVE C: Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan - Implement the Comprehensive Plan through county programs and regulations.

POLICIES:

1. The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed, evaluated, and revised periodically and as changing circumstances require. Such review includes an annual amendment process and the 8-year periodic review required under the GMA [RCW 36.70A.130(5)(b)].
2. Land use decisions should conform to adopted Comprehensive and Subarea plans still in effect.
3. Certainty, understanding, and efficiency of the permitting process should be promoted.
4. Granting of variances from development regulations should be minimized.

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5. Regulations should be monitored to determine whether they are accomplishing their intended purposes.
6. Nonregulatory approaches, such as public education, should be considered in addition to regulation when exploring remedies to problems.
7. New planning policies and implementing regulations should reflect the need or problems they are intended to address.
8. Budgetary support should be provided to ensure that regulations are adequately administered and enforced, including investigation and prosecution of violations; implementation of permit conditions, zoning and other requirements; and coordination among county departments in the administration of permit conditions and other requirements.
9. Policies and procedures for civil enforcement should precede implementation of criminal enforcement.

OBJECTIVE D: Intergovernmental Cooperation - Systems to promote and ensure intergovernmental awareness and cooperation on county-wide goals should be instituted and maintained.

POLICIES:

1. Thurston County should cooperate with all governmental jurisdictions, including the Commander of the Joint Base Lewis-McChord military base, Indian Tribes within the county, and neighboring counties so that county-wide goals are achieved.
2. Land use decisions involving county lands adjacent to other jurisdictions should take into consideration the current land use and long-range goals of the neighboring jurisdictions. The County should provide adequate notification and opportunity to comment to adjacent jurisdictions prior to final action on a Comprehensive Plan or development regulation amendment. At a minimum, the County should provide notification to state agencies as listed by Department of Commerce, and the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Base Commander, at least 60 days prior to final action on a Comprehensive Plan or development regulation amendment.

CHAPTER 3

NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Natural Resource Lands chapter of the Comprehensive Plan addresses goals and policies for the four main resource lands in Thurston County: agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and minerals. Natural resource lands are key to Thurston County's economy, community, and history. These areas provide valuable products and raw materials that support jobs, create tax revenues, and are important components to the local and regional economies. Additionally, natural resources also provide aesthetic, recreational, and environmental benefits to the public. Protection and enhancement of these natural resource lands is paramount to the county and its citizens.

Thurston County implements GMA's statewide goal (see sidebar) through policies and programs tailored to our local community's vision for the County's natural resources. This chapter is separated into sections by the four major natural resource industries:

- ❖ Agriculture
- ❖ Aquaculture
- ❖ Forestry
- ❖ Mineral resources

2019 Update: Critical Issues

- ❖ Increasing population, development, and incompatible uses near resource industries or lands;
- ❖ An aging population in the agricultural industry;
- ❖ Pressure on rural resource lands from increasing urban growth;
- ❖ Regulatory obstacles, such as lack of supporting infrastructure.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Growth Management Act (GMA) sets the following goal for natural resource industries:

"Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses."

RCW 36.70A.020 (8)

To support this goal, counties planning under GMA must:

- ❖ designate agricultural lands, forestlands, and mineral resource lands "not characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance" for the commercial production of that resource.

RCW 36.70A.170

- ❖ adopt development regulations "to assure the conservation of [designated] agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands."

RCW 36.70A.060

II. PLANNING CONTEXT FOR NATURAL RESOURCE INDUSTRIES

Natural resource industries are discussed within the regional County Wide Planning Policies that guide coordination of planning across the cities within Thurston County as well as the County itself.

- 2.2 The boundaries of designated urban growth areas should be compatible with the use of designated resource lands and critical areas.
- 2.4 Expansion of Urban Growth Boundaries must demonstrate that urbanization of the expansion area is compatible with the use of designated resource lands and critical areas.
- 2.5 Reduction of an Urban Growth Boundary must be compatible with the use of designated resource lands and critical areas.
- 3.1.g Concentrate development in urban growth areas and protect rural areas by designating rural areas for low intensity, non-urban uses that preserve natural resource lands, protect rural areas from sprawling, low-density development and assure that rural areas may be served with lower cost, non-urban public services and utilities.
- 7.2 Support the recruitment, retention and expansion of environmentally sound and economically viable commercial, public sector and industrial development and resource uses, including the provision of assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance.
- 7.5 Build a vital, diverse and strong local economy, including job opportunities that support community and household resilience, health, and well-being, by nurturing urban and rural agricultural and food oriented businesses, and protecting resource lands.
- 10.7 Provide for public access to natural resource lands, while ensuring that uses and economic activity which are allowed within those lands are sustainable.

III. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

A. COMMUNITY VISION:

The residents of Thurston County envision a diverse and thriving agricultural industry that is able to respond quickly to changing market conditions. They recognize the essential role of land conservation and local food and crop production in maintaining the quality of life and long-term sustainability of the community. In addition, they recognize the multiple benefits provided by farmland, including wildlife habitat and flood control. The community also recognizes that maintaining viable agricultural resources requires a partnership with the farming community.

The community as a whole takes responsibility for conserving prime farm lands, promoting local markets, minimizing incompatible land uses, and providing other community support. This includes support for regulatory processes that are sensitive to the needs of farmers and that

recognize the need to protect the environment. Farmers take responsibility to preserve soil fertility and ground and surface water quality, and to promote a land stewardship ethic for existing and future generations.

B. BACKGROUND:

Agriculture in Thurston County has an important and varied role. ~~Although Thurston County is not often noted as a farming county, While Thurston County has grown at a rapid pace and lost to development more than half the land that was farmed 50 years ago, the County still retains 150,000 acres of prime agricultural soils as mapped by the United States Department of Agriculture. Those prime soils are distributed widely throughout the county, including within urban growth areas. Not all areas that have prime soils will be suitable for commercial agriculture.~~ Local commercial agriculture accounts for almost 15 percent of the County's land use and produces over \$120 million worth of farm products a year.¹ According to data collected for the Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program, land used for agricultural activities within the County is estimated at 125,600 acres, and accounts for nearly 25 percent of land use when non-commercial agriculture is included.² A thriving local agricultural industry is essential to the long-term sustainability of the community. It preserves nonrenewable resource land, enhances regional self-reliance for food and jobs, maintains diversity of the local economy, reduces dependence on petroleum products, and increases the quality of life. Many local farms provide additional benefits to the larger community such as flood control, wildlife habitat protection, nutrient cycling, and scenic open space. Some farms also provide seasonal recreation opportunities, such as corn mazes, U-pick farms, pumpkin patches, hay rides, Christmas fairs, and petting zoos. As the county's population continues to grow, the need for conservation measures to protect agricultural resources intensifies because of increased development pressure on farmlands and greater local demand for agricultural products. This interconnection between urban and rural residents within the county and local farmers points to the need for community-wide awareness, appreciation, and support for farming.

C. FARMING DIVERSITY AND MARKETS:

Thurston County products range from nursery stock to hay, from strawberries to dairy products, representing the diversity of our local resources. According to the 2017 USDA Agricultural Census, Thurston County has 25 percent pastureland, 35 percent cropland, 13 percent other, and 27 percent woodland (Figure 3-1). Most of the top-ranked producer counties in Washington do not have the same agricultural diversity as Thurston County. This diversity is possible due to the unique soil and water resources that occur here and the variety of markets available for farm products. ~~The county has a diversity of soils – sandy well drained, clay loam soils, loamy sand, prairie soils – spread throughout the county. For example, sandy, well-drained soil types in areas throughout the county give rise to very successful seedling tree enterprises. These soils allow for~~

¹ USDA. (2012). Census of Agriculture: Thurston County Profile. *United States Department of Agriculture*.

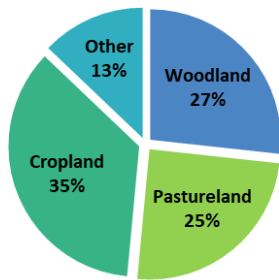
² Thurston County. (March, 2017). Voluntary Stewardship Program: Appendix H – Thurston County Baseline Conditions & Existing Information. *Thurston County*, p. 26.

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the planting and harvesting of plants during wet weather, when other soils are impossible to work. This characteristic allows crops to be grown here that are difficult to grow on heavier soils. In addition, clean water from relatively shallow aquifers provides for the irrigation needs of a variety of different crops.

Thurston County has a diversity of types and sizes of farms. Farms in Thurston County come in sizes from less than an acre to more than a thousand acres. The average agricultural parcel size for in Thurston County is 15.5 acres.³ They include larger-scale commercial farms, organic farms, historic family farms, smaller-scale, close-to-market produce farms, orchard farms, and part-time farming operations. Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms have become popular within the county, providing a direct relationship between the consumer and the farm on which an agricultural product is raised. Over 60 local farms sell their produce directly to consumers, through Farmers Markets, U-Pick, special orders, and roadside farm stands.⁴ Fish farming operations have also located here, finding substantial quantities of clean water, an important factor in the successful

Agricultural Make-Up of Thurston County in 2017



rearing of fish (see Aquaculture section, below). Along with chickens, cows, and sheep, Thurston County farmers raise alpacas, llamas, emus, and other diverse types of livestock. Several turf-growing companies have also located in Thurston County partly because of the county's proximity to a major marketing area and because of the availability of good farm ground. Proximity to markets has been a factor in sustaining the county's egg and poultry producers (Thurston County leads the state in egg production with an inventory of 1,433,800 "layers", or 20 percent of the states total, in the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture).

Figure 3-1. Agricultural Makeup of Thurston County
SOURCE: UNITED STATES DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE, CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE, 2017

Farmers in Thurston County are affected by changing conditions: markets, federal, state and local regulations, land costs, water rights issues, and land uses

surrounding farming areas. Long-term trends show a loss in farmland (6,500 acres since 2000; 90,000 since 1950); an aging farm population with an average age of 59; development pressure

³ Calculated by taking the average parcel size of all parcels that are current use agriculture, agriculture not in current use, or contain WSDA Cropland (2017) mapped on the property. This is not necessarily indicative of farm size, since some farms may have several parcels.

⁴ South Sound Community Farm Land Trust. (2017). South of the Sound Community Farm Land Trust 2017 Farm Map.

(126,000 new residents by 2040) that leads to increase in land cost; and continued loss of large farms and contiguous farmland.⁵ Thurston County lost more than 14,000 acres of farmland over the past five years, down to 62,250 in 2017 from 76,638 in 2012.⁶ Figure 3-2 illustrates the decline in average farm size since 1997. In the year 2017, there were fewer large farms than previous years. Since 2012, there has been a decrease in the number of farms on less than 10 acres.

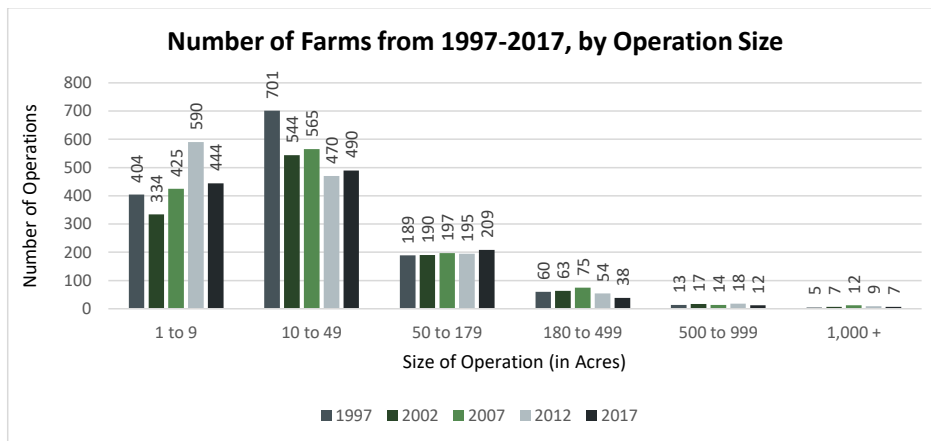


Figure 3-2. Number of Farms from 1997-2017, by operation size.

SOURCE: UNITED STATES DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE, CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE, 2017.

According to the *South Puget Sound Agricultural Producer Needs Assessment* (WSU, 2017), top identified need areas include regulatory reform; capital, equipment, and infrastructure; access to productive resources including land and water; research, education, networking and information resources; and market access.

Farmers in Thurston County, regardless of farm size or commodity produced, share a common sense of stewardship and love of the land. Farmers and residents that benefit from fresh, local agricultural products want farming to continue in this county. Due to market and regulatory issues which are outside the control of local farmers, there is a need for a comprehensive approach to maintain the commercial viability of local agriculture. Farmers need to be flexible and capable of growing a diversity of crops to remain competitive, and there needs to be a program of community support for local agriculture. There is also a need for protection of an affordable land base, soil

⁵ Bramwell, S., Moorehead, S., Meade, A., Sero, R., Gray, S., and Miles Nowlin. (2017). "South Puget Sound Agricultural Producer Needs Assessment". *Washington State University*.

⁶ USDA. (2017). Census of Agriculture: Thurston County Profile. *United States Department of Agriculture*.

fertility, and ground and surface water quality and quantity, in order to maintain and enhance resource opportunities for existing and future generations.

D. EXISTING PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE

An overriding philosophy in this Plan is that in order to preserve agricultural land for future generations, the business of agricultural production must remain economically viable. Agricultural producers serve a vital role in the care and management of ~~prime agriculture agricultural~~ lands as well as make significant economic, cultural, and environmental contributions to the quality of life in Thurston County. This Plan places great emphasis on protecting the economic viability of agriculture businesses to encourage agricultural producers to continue to serve as stewards of the land and contributors to the quality of life in the future.

Food, feed, forage, fiber, and oil seed crops are all best produced on farmland soils that provide superior physical and chemical characteristics. Historically, valuable agricultural lands have been diverted and eliminated by urbanization in the form of low-density suburban sprawl located outside cities and their urbanized environments. Thurston County has a number of programs that exist to support agricultural viability and minimize the conversion of farmland to other uses:

Open Space Tax Program

In 1970, the Washington State Legislature passed the Open Space Tax Act, recognizing the need to protect farmlands from high property taxes in an effort to stem conversion of farmland to urban and suburban land uses. Thurston County administers the Act through a local farm and agricultural tax classification that provides eligible farmers the ability to have their productive and idled farmland taxed at its current use, instead of its "highest and best use." This significant property tax savings helps reduce pressures to convert farmland, and helps relieve speculative land values which drive up property tax assessments. While many farmers are currently enrolled in this program, some are not or do not know how to enroll. In 2017, approximately 8 percent of the County's lands were enrolled in an Open Space program related to agriculture. Of those lands enrolled, 88 percent was enrolled as current use agriculture, and the remaining 12 percent was enrolled as open space, which can include idled farmland. The policies and action recommendations provide for encouraging enrollment and publicizing the program.

Another threat to increased farmland tax values is taxes or assessments for sewer, water, public utility districts, local improvement districts, and utility local improvement districts. The policies discourage the inclusion of farmland in these districts.

Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

The Voluntary Stewardship Program was created under the Growth Management Act ([Chapter 36.70A RCW](#)) in 2011 to give counties the option to use locally driven watershed-based plans and incentive-based tools to protect critical areas located on agricultural lands. Prior to 2011, the main tool for counties to ensure protection of critical areas on agricultural land was regulation. Regulation of agricultural land can threaten farm viability and lead to legal battles. The VSP provides an alternative approach to balance the protection of critical areas with agricultural viability.

It is this land ethic that drives the newly developed Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) in Thurston County. Instead of enacting further critical areas regulation on agricultural lands, the VSP allows the county and a technical assistance provider to work closely with landowners to develop voluntary, site-specific stewardship plans. The VSP is a watershed-wide, incentive-based approach to protect and voluntarily enhance critical areas while maintaining and improving the long-term viability of agriculture.

In addition to protecting critical areas, the VSP is a collaborative effort that is working to fill some of these needs and provide a comprehensive approach to maintain the long-term viability of local agriculture. In order to remain viable, agriculture requires adequate water and land with good soil to produce healthy crops of food, fiber, and fuel. The VSP is one of the methods that the County is using to reduce threats to the economic viability of local agriculture, reduce farmland conversion, and ensure food security.

Conservation Futures

Conservation Futures is a land preservation program authorized by RCW 84.34.200 that protects, preserves, maintains, improves, restores, and limits the future use of threatened areas of open space, timberlands, wetlands, habitat areas, culturally significant sites, and agricultural farmlands within Thurston County. Thurston County established a Conservation Futures program in 1989. Conservation Futures funds, acquired through a property tax levy, may be used for the following approaches to agricultural land conservation:

❖ Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

Thurston County established a Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR) in 2011. This program authorizes Thurston County and other qualified conservation programs to purchase development rights with the intent to preserve farmland. Land owners are compensated when they agree to conserve their land. Generally, property owners retain ownership and continue to reside on their lands under the PDR program. The PDR program is open to all lands that meet the definition of agricultural lands, as defined by the Open Space Tax Program (RCW 84.34.020).

❖ Fee Simple Purchase

This program is the acquisition of land by a land trust or conservation agency. The land may be leased or sold to farmers who agree to use the land for agricultural purposes. Land trusts own the land in a fee simple purchase, and have the greatest control over how the land is managed. Some tools to create affordable access include allowing long-term leases or sale of land in exchange an agreement to use sustainable agricultural practices.

❖ Agricultural and Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust, where the use of the property is permanently limited in order to protect agricultural or conservation value. In the case of an agricultural conservation easement, continued agricultural use is required, but land owners may continue to occupy the land.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Thurston County's Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR) allows agricultural land owners to realize the value of their land without having to sell the property for development. The County's Transfer of Development Rights Programs allows property owners of land in the Long-term Agriculture zoning district (Sending Area) to gain credit for unused development rights that can be sold and transferred to another property in an urban area (Receiving Area). This approach helps to preserve the rural character and agricultural economy of Thurston County.

Table 3-1. Acres of Land Enrolled in Agricultural Protection Programs

Program	Acres Enrolled
Open Space Tax Program	38,809
Voluntary Stewardship Program	N/A
Transfer of Development Rights	181
Purchase of Development Rights	942
Fee Simple Purchase	302
Agricultural & Conservation Easements	2,095

DATA RETRIEVED FROM: THURSTON COUNTY ASSESSOR'S PARCEL DATA (MARCH 14, 2018), TRPC (2017)

As of 2017, approximately 38,809 acres of land were enrolled in Open Space as Current Use Agriculture or Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land, 181 acres enrolled in TDR, 942 acres in PDR, 302 acres of land under a fee simple purchase, and 2,095 acres of land under an agricultural/conservation easement.⁷

E. AGRICULTURAL LANDS OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Growth Management Act (RCW36.70A.170) requires counties to designate agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance. Designation of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance intends to conserve lands that are used or can be used for commercial agriculture use, while discouraging residential encroachment and other incompatible development, and to encourage continued viability of agriculture. The designation does this primarily by limiting the number of houses on a property within it, limiting uses and development on prime farmland soils to

⁷ TRPC (2017). "Farmland Zero Net Loss". *Thurston Regional Planning Council*.

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those that support agriculture, and by notifying nearby neighbors that agricultural uses could occur nearby which might cause dust, noise, and odors.

In 2006, the Washington State Supreme Court clarified the definition of “agricultural land” by stating:

[w]e hold that agricultural land is land: (a) not already characterized by urban growth (b) that is primarily devoted to the commercial production of agricultural products enumerated in RCW 36.70A.30(2), including land in areas used or capable of being used for production based on land characteristics, and (c) that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production, as indicated by soil, growing capacity, productivity, and whether it is near population areas or vulnerable to more intense uses. We further hold that counties may consider the development-related factors enumerated in WAC 365-190-050(1) in determining which lands have long-term commercial significance. Lewis County v. Hearings Bd., 157 Wn2d 488 (2006) at page 502.

Criteria used to designate agricultural land of long-term commercial significance are based on: (1) the Washington State Supreme Court’s Definition of agricultural lands found in *Lewis County v. Hearings Bd.*, 157 Wn.2d 488 (2006); (2) the Washington State Department of Commerce (COM) guidelines for the classification and designation of resource lands; (3) existing Thurston County policies; and (4) an analysis of local conditions. These criteria include:

1. Soil Type:

The classification and identification of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance is based upon the land capability classification system of the United States Department of Agriculture Handbook No. 210. Those classes of agricultural lands are based upon consideration of growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition. They have been incorporated into map units of the Department’s soil surveys. Thurston County uses prime farmlands as listed in the Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture Web Soil Survey (2022). The following list of prime farmland soils in Thurston County is based on the Soil Conservation Service’s Soil Survey of Thurston County, Washington, 1990.

Designated lands should include **predominantly (50% or more)** prime farmland soils. Future designations of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance should incorporate the most recent soils list from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The enumerated list of prime farmland soil types below is not intended as exclusive criteria.

SCS Map Unit #	Soil Description
14	Bellingham silty clay loam (where drained)*

Commented [MT1]: Baseline: as written
Scenario 1: at least 75% or more prime farmland soils
Scenario 2: at least 75% or more prime farmland soils

Commented [MT2]: Recommendation from stakeholder member to remove list completely or place in an appendix.

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26	Chehalis silt loam
29	Dupont muck (where drained)*
31	Eld loam
36	Everson clay loam (where drained)*
37	Galvin silt loam, 0 to 5 percent slope
38	Giles silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slope
41	Godfrey silty clay loam (where drained)*
50	Kapowain silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slope
64	Maytown silt loam
69	Mukilteo muck (where drained)*
70	Mukilteo muck (drained)*
71	Newberg fine sandy loam
72	Newberg loam
73	Nisqually loamy fine sand 0-3 percent slope (where irrigated)
75	Norma fine sandy loam (where drained)*
76	Norma silt loam (where drained)*
86	Prather silty clay loam, 3 to 8 percent slope
88	Puget Silt loam (where drained)*
89	Puyallup silt loam
97	Salkum silty clay loam, 3 to 8 percent slope
100	Scamman silty clay loam, 0-5 percent slope (where drained)*
104	Semiahmoo muck (where drained)*
105	Shalcar muck (where drained)*
106	Shalcar Variant muck (where drained)*
107	Skipopa silt loam, 0-3 percent slope
115	Sultan silt loam
120	Tisch silt loam (where drained)*
126	Yelm fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slope

** Large areas which are known to qualify as Class I wetlands, (wetlands with threatened or endangered species) and which are not already in agricultural use, should be excluded from designation.*

2. The Availability of Public Facilities and Services:

Since lands within Urban Growth Areas, as established within this Comprehensive Plan, are intended to be served by public facilities and services within a twenty-year period, agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance should be located outside of these boundaries.

Commented [MT3]: Not currently applying this criteria when mapping designation. Suggestion is to remove. Wetlands are protected through CAO regulations at site level, through permitting and also under the SMP shoreline designations.

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3. Land Capability and Tax Status:

Designated agricultural lands should include only areas that are primarily devoted to the commercial production of agricultural products enumerated in RCW 36.70A.030(2), including land in areas used or capable of being used for production based on land characteristics. Aerial photograph interpretation can identify areas used for agriculture. Historic use information, current use information (including enrollment in the open space tax program) and soil types can help identify lands capable of being used for agriculture; however, these are not the only methods for determining land capability for agriculture.

4. Relationship or Proximity to Urban Growth Areas:

Since lands within Urban Growth Areas, as established within this Comprehensive Plan, are intended to be developed at urban densities over a twenty-year period, agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance should be located outside of those boundaries. Furthermore, designated agricultural lands should be separated from urban residential densities by a natural or man-made feature, (e.g., railroad, road, or river), in order to avoid potential land use conflicts.

5. Predominant Parcel Size:

For Thurston County, the predominant parcel size is 20 acres or more, which, in conjunction with soil type, provides economic conditions sufficient for managing agriculture lands for long-term commercial production.

Commented [MT4]: Baseline: 20 acres
Scenario 1: 20 acres
Scenario 2: 15 acres

6. Land Use Settlement Patterns and Their Compatibility with Agricultural Practices:

Except within urban growth areas, adjacent residential development should be minimal and at rural densities of one unit per five acres. Recent subdivision activity near or adjacent to designated agricultural lands is an indication of settlement patterns that may have an effect on the long-term viability of agriculture. The most compatible land uses within and adjacent to long-term agricultural lands include forestry, mining, parks and preserves, and open space.

7. Proximity of Markets:

Local or regional markets should be available. Designated agricultural lands should have access to road, rail, or air transportation routes to markets.

8. Agricultural Diversity:

A diversity of agricultural activities should exist, or the area should be sufficiently large to support diverse agricultural activities. No single designated agricultural area should be smaller than 320 acres, or 200 acres if near another designated area. This helps assure land use compatibility for long-term resource use, and a diversity of agriculture uses in one area. Boundaries should follow landmarks visible on the ground when possible, to provide visual distinction of land use areas.

Commented [MT5]: Baseline: 320 acres or 200 if nearby
Scenario 1: 100 acres
Scenario 2: 40 acres

9. Environmental Considerations:

Designated agricultural lands should be outside of Natural Shoreline Environments if they are not already being used for agriculture. The Shoreline Master Program regulations

Commented [MT6]: For draft maps, current shoreline environments are used. Mapping drafts will be updated using new designations once the BoCC has taken a final action on the SMP.

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severely limit the ability to convert such areas to agricultural uses, and from one agricultural use to another.

The above criteria were applied to all agricultural lands of Thurston County and appropriate areas were designated as areas of long-term ~~agricultural-commercial~~ significance. These lands are shown on Map N-1. ~~Also included on Map N-1 are two areas of designated agricultural lands located in the Nisqually Valley, which merit special consideration due to their contribution to the distinctive character of a picturesque rural setting of the Nisqually Subarea, as highlighted in the Nisqually Subarea Plan.~~ Lands of long-term agricultural significance are also identified as “Long-Term Agriculture” or “Nisqually Agriculture” on future land use map (Map L-1).

~~Future lands that meet these criteria may also be considered for designation at the request of the farmland owner.~~

Commented [MT7]: Moved down

~~Also included on Map N-1 are two areas of designated agricultural lands located in the Nisqually Valley. These areas merit special consideration due to the unique values the Nisqually Valley holds. The following excerpt from the Nisqually Subarea Plan highlights those unique values:~~

~~"The Nisqually Planning Area serves as the eastern gateway to Thurston County. The 40 million yearly travelers along the I-5 Corridor will recognize it as one of the few undeveloped river valleys between Olympia and Everett. It is distinguished by the broad open areas of the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge north of I-5 and the rural farms south of the freeway. This picturesque rural setting is framed with a wooded hillside extending the length of the western McAllister Bluff which loops back into the valley. ...It is this combination of farm and forest, hillside and valley, or clusters of development and adjacent open areas which gives this planning area its distinctive character."~~

Commented [MT8]: Shortened, moved above, per stakeholder feedback.

Farmland within the McAllister Springs aquifer recharge area was not found to meet long-term designation criteria due to the proximity of urban land uses to the north and the sensitivity of the aquifer to pesticide and fertilizer use, which may limit the viability of some types of farming operations. Low density zoning is maintained in this area, as are special provisions to protect water quality from the adverse impacts of a variety of land uses.

Table 3-2. Acreages of Long-Term Agriculture designation within Thurston County

Land Use Designation	Acreage
Nisqually Agriculture	984 acres
Long-Term Agriculture	14,894 acres

Commented [MT9]: Table numbers would be updated with any changes, corresponding changes made to Chapter 2 numbers as well.

Commented [MT10]: Numbers may change, increase by 12,000-23,000 acres

DATA RETRIEVED FROM: THURSTON COUNTY ASSESSOR'S PARCEL DATA, MARCH 14, 2018

Currently, there are 15,878 acres of designated agricultural lands: 984 acres are designated Nisqually Agriculture, and 14,894 acres are designated Long-Term Agriculture (Table 3-2).

Becoming Designated: ~~Future lands that meet designation criteria for agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance may also be considered for designation at the request of the land~~

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owner. Landowners may apply to voluntarily add individual properties to the designation through a comprehensive plan amendment process. See the Goals, Objectives, and Policies section for specific requirements.

Redesignation of Agricultural Areas: While the emphasis of this Plan is to prevent the loss of agricultural lands, the County is subject to trends and events that it has little ability to control. The process and procedures used to identify and designate agricultural land are based on the best available information, and not site-specific conditions. While the areas designated for long-term agricultural use meet the primarily physical criteria for long-term commercial use, other factors, and ~~site-site~~ specific conditions may arise that can render commercial agriculture activity completely non-viable. If farming economics changes so as to affect the long-term potential for farming in a substantial portion of an agriculture district, the land use designation should be reconsidered. In addition, if site-specific evidence conclusively indicates that land does not meet the criteria for designation as agricultural land, the land use designation should be reconsidered.

Piecemeal redesignation of lands within the designated agricultural areas should not be allowed. The farm areas designated as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance were chosen because there was a critical mass of operating farms with significant investments in land, buildings, and other improvements, productive farm soils, and absence of incompatible land uses. The piecemeal redesignation of individual properties from agricultural use to residential use can have a domino effect. Conflicts between new residents and surrounding farmers make it harder for the farms to continue. These conflicts also add pressure to those surrounding farmers to seek redesignation of their land. Therefore, the reevaluation of agricultural land should occur only for whole areas of land designated as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance.

Redesignation of the agriculture areas to other land use designations should be taken up only when changes in economic conditions, surrounding land use or regulatory conditions are negatively affecting farms throughout the district, over a period of several years, or site-specific scientific evidence conclusively indicates the land does not meet the criteria for designation as agricultural land. The losses of an individual farm should not be reason, by itself, for eliminating or endangering the remaining acres of Thurston County's best resources of agricultural land in the future.

The following criteria are provided to capture, in a general way, the limited nature of the circumstances under which the County should reevaluate a whole area designated as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance.

- A. Changes in surrounding land use severely inhibit or severely interfere with continued agriculture use;
- B. Changes in market conditions severely reduce the economic viability of agriculture use; or
- C. Changes in regulatory requirements severely reduce the economic viability of agriculture use; or
- D. Site specific scientific evidence conclusively indicates the land does not meet the criteria for designation as agricultural land.

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These circumstances should create severe losses of agricultural production lasting several years, covering a wide range of crops or products, and affect a majority of the producers in the area, before a reevaluation of agricultural lands is undertaken. One issue of concern is the ability of farmers to secure and maintain water rights for changing agricultural operations. More attention to this issue is needed at the state and local level.

IV. AQUACULTURE RESOURCES

A. COMMUNITY VISION:

The residents of Thurston County recognize that aquaculture is of statewide and national interest. Properly managed, aquaculture can result in long-term over short-term economic and environmental benefit. Aquaculture, like other natural resource industries, is an important component of the county's rural character and economy. The residents of Thurston County envision a thriving and robust aquaculture industry and take responsibility for ensuring that its potential can be fully realized. They also strive to initiate and maintain a constructive and progressive partnership with the aquaculture industry.

The aquaculture industry, comprised of responsible users of Thurston County's marine and fresh water resources, promote wise stewardship of tidelands and other areas associated with their aquaculture activity. The aquaculture industry supports regulations that are operationally-feasible, scientifically sound, and fairly enforced. They are committed to environmental protection through full implementation of environmental codes of practice.

B. BACKGROUND:

A thriving shellfish industry is located along the county's Puget Sound shorelines. The warm, nutrient rich tide flats of southern Puget Sound is an exceptionally valued shellfish growing area. Shellfish growers have taken advantage of this, producing more oysters than anywhere else in Puget Sound. In addition to oysters, Thurston County is also home to clam (including geoduck), mussel, and scallop farming and fish hatcheries. Geoduck production began to increase in 2000 and has maintained a mostly upward trajectory, surpassing production of the Pacific oyster.⁸ Thurston County is also home to sand lance spawning, smelt spawning, and herring spawning and holding areas.⁹ With an average value of sales at \$18,326,000, Thurston County is ranked 4th in the state and 17th nationally for aquaculture production.¹⁰ Aquaculture within Thurston County accounts for 17

⁸ Washington Sea Grant. (December, 2015). Shellfish Aquaculture in Washington State. [*University of Washington*](#).

⁹ WDFW. (2016). Forage Fish GIS data.

¹⁰ USDA. (2012). Census of Agriculture: Thurston County Profile. *United States Department of Agriculture*.

percent of “livestock” sales for the County.¹¹ Washington State is a national leader in shellfish production.

**AQUACULTURE MAKES UP ALMOST ONE QUARTER
OF LIVESTOCK SALES IN THURSTON COUNTY**

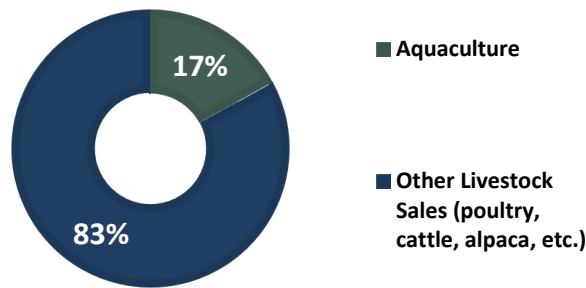


Figure 3-3. Livestock Sales in Thurston County (USDA, 2012)
SOURCE: UNITED STATES DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE, CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE, 2012

In addition to marine based aquaculture operations, several tribal, public, and privately owned land based fish farms reside in Thurston County, including salmon and trout hatcheries. In 2017, there were 3 WDFW salmon hatcheries in Thurston County that hatch Coho, Chinook, and Steelhead. These operations rely on the plentiful and clean water from shallow aquifers to raise fish, many pumping millions of gallons a day. Unlike surface waters that have fluctuating temperatures dependent on the season, groundwater remains a constant 50 degrees, allowing for the consistent and sustained growth of the fish.

There are also several natural populations of Chinook and Steelhead within Thurston County, including 3 federally threatened populations. Wild salmon runs have continued to decline due to human influences (loss & fragmentation of habitat, pollution, dams, overfishing) and changes to the natural environment (fluctuating marine conditions, increase in predators, climate change).¹²

Protection of commercial and recreational shellfish resources: There are over 40 commercial shellfish operations and associated industries in Thurston County. Shellfish is also harvested recreationally in public parks and on private beaches, and by the Tribes for their resource needs. Shellfish harvesting is an important aspect to quality of life in the County. Protection of this commercial and cultural resource is a growing concern in Thurston County. As our population

¹¹ WSU. (2014). “Agriculture: A Cornerstone of Thurston County’s Economy”. *Washington State University*.

¹² RCO. (2010). Salmon Recovery in Washington. Retrieved from: https://www.rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery/

continues to grow and the downstream impacts of development continue, additional pressure is put on the shellfish industry as those impacts threaten some shellfish growing areas.

Shellfish do not need clean water to grow, but they must have clean water to be safely eaten. Because shellfish are filter feeders, they filter all particles out of the water, including bacteria, chemical, biotoxins, and viruses. Accumulated contaminants can make people sick.¹³ The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) monitors water quality for shellfish harvesting. Thurston County references DOH's Annual Inventory of Commercial and Recreational Shellfish Areas to determine what lands are designated as harvestable for shellfish.

Protection of water quality, both groundwater and surface water, is particularly important for commercial and recreational shellfish harvesting. Downgrades in water quality affect commercial growers and public health, and the County continues to experience downgrades of shellfish growing areas. The County forms a shellfish protection district when there is a downgrade, and works to restore the resource to a harvestable level.

The County is concerned with protecting existing and future aquaculture operations from incompatible development. Aquaculture operations may conflict with other adjacent uses, such as public access, recreation, shoreline residential development, and natural protected areas. County policies discourage encroachment from incompatible uses to avoid nuisance conflicts and water quality degradation. The policies also provide that normal aquaculture practices should not be considered a nuisance unless they threaten the public health and safety. Clearly there is a need for balance on this issue, since aquaculture operations operate in areas where the environment is particularly fragile, and where other kinds of activities occur. Because of this, the policies recommend that adverse impacts from aquaculture operations be minimized. Development of guidelines to help guide aquaculture operations in avoiding potential conflicts is also proposed. Aquaculture operations within Thurston County are eligible to participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program (see section III on Agriculture).

Tribes and shellfish: Tribes are a co-manager of shellfish resources. The Squaxin Island and Nisqually tribes are important stewards of all shellfish that occur in their usual and accustomed harvest areas in the waters of Thurston County, and have rights to harvest 50 percent of the resource for their own use. The rights and responsibilities of tribes are an important consideration when planning for the protection and development of the shellfish resource, and when regulating land uses upstream from shellfish areas.

Upland fish farms: In addition to shellfish growing areas, Thurston County is also home to a handful of fin fish farms on upland sites. Land-based fish rearing facilities, seaweed and net pen rearing facilities also require good water quality to operate. Supporting this unique aquacultural activity, while minimizing potential water pollution and land use conflicts, is an important goal of the Comprehensive Plan.

¹³ Thurston County. (February, 2001). Shellfish Facts. *Thurston County Environmental Health*.

V. FOREST RESOURCES

A. COMMUNITY VISION:

The citizens of Thurston County recognize the multiple public benefits of public and private forest land, including economic benefits, wildlife habitat, scenic resources, and recreational opportunities. Supporting economically viable forest land slows the conversion of rural areas to other non-resource uses and supports a rural economy of both large and small forestry operations. The community wishes to avoid discouraging forestry by avoiding regulations that place an undue burden on forest landowners, while recognizing the responsibility of forest landowners to be good stewards of the County's forests and other environmental resources.

B. BACKGROUND:

Forest lands are a paramount economic resource for Thurston County and the State of Washington. This valuable resource must be conserved and protected to ensure timber and forest production into the future. It is the State's policy to encourage forestry and restocking of forests (RCW 84.33.010). Good forestry management and environmental stewardship has many benefits, including:

- ❖ Improved water quality;
- ❖ Improved air quality;
- ❖ Carbon sequestration;
- ❖ Reduced soil erosion;
- ❖ Less storm and flood damage;
- ❖ Protection of wildlife habitat;
- ❖ Biodiversity;
- ❖ Scenic and recreational open spaces.

➤ CHAPTER 9 INCLUDES
INFORMATION ON THE
COUNTY'S PARKS AND
RECREATION FACILITIES

Forestry production activities have had a long history in Thurston County evolving from the timber "mining" days of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the sustained yield forestry management that occurs today. Currently, approximately 60 percent of Thurston County is covered by forest, and over 30 percent of the County is managed for forestry by private or public operators. Additional forest land is maintained on Fort Lewis. DNR-managed trust lands in the county, such as Capitol Forest, are managed to conserve forest resource lands. DNR-managed lands also provide extensive recreation opportunities that help to generate revenue for local county services, public schools, and universities. Recreation opportunities (Chapter 9) exist both in state and privately owned timber lands in the County. Forest lands offer a variety of recreational experiences, including:

- ❖ Boating
- ❖ Camping
- ❖ Fishing
- ❖ Hiking
- ❖ Horseback riding

- ❖ Hunting
- ❖ Mountain Biking
- ❖ Target Shooting
- ❖ Off-road Vehicles
- ❖ Winter Activities
- ❖ Rock Climbing
- ❖ Geocaching

A variety of other economic products are harvested from forests in Thurston County additional to timber, including hard woods, salal, ferns, moss for the floral industry, and mushrooms for a growing local and export food market.

C. FOREST LANDS IN THURSTON COUNTY:

Most of the forest land within Thurston County is considered forest lands of long-term commercial significance (see Section D below). Long-Term Forestry (see Table 3-3) is the single largest land use designation in the County and makes up approximately 29 percent of county lands. Forestry also occurs in the Rural Residential Resource 1/5 designation within the County. More than 50,000 acres of forest and timber land enrolled in the Open Space Tax Program are not designated as Long-Term Forestry.¹⁴

Table 3-3. Acreage of Forestland in Thurston County

Zone	Acres of Land	Percentage of Land Base
Long-term Forestry (LTF)	143,850 acres	29 %
Designated Forest Land (outside LTF)	50,302 acres	10 %
Timberland (outside LTF)	2,458 acres	0.5 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>196,610 acres</i>	<i>40 %</i>

DATA RETRIEVED FROM: THURSTON COUNTY ASSESSOR'S PARCEL DATA, MARCH 14, 2018

Minimizing Conflicts Between Forestry and Other Land Uses: An overarching concern of forest landowners in the County, especially rural foresters, is encroachment and the potential impact that adjacent land uses may have on forestry operations. The policies provide that normal forestry practices should not be considered a nuisance unless they threaten the public health and safety. This is consistent with RCW 7.48.305, which states that forest practices undertaken in conformity with all applicable laws and established prior to surrounding non-forestry uses, are presumed to not constitute a nuisance unless the activity has a substantial adverse effect on the public health and safety. Forest operations must remain economically viable to withstand encroachment of rural development. However, the policies also recognize that forestry operations need to minimize the

¹⁴ Data retrieved from Thurston County Assessor as of March 2018

~~Adopted December 2020~~DRAFT 2023

potential adverse impacts on other uses and the environment. Thus, the policies try to strike a balance between forestry management and other activities and environmental concerns.

D. DESIGNATING FOREST LANDS OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Growth Management Act requires cities and counties to classify and conserve forest lands of long-term commercial significance. The Act defines "long-term commercial significance" as determined by the growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production, in consideration of the land's proximity to population areas, and the possibility of more intense uses of the land. The Washington State Department of Commerce recommends that classification of forest lands be based on the private forest land grades of the Department of Revenue (WAC 458-40-530; see Table 3-4), among other criteria. Thurston County employed this land grade system, in addition to physical, biological, economic, and land use factors, to help determine which areas should be designated as forest lands of long-term commercial significance.

Table 3-4. Washington State Private Forest Land Grades

<u>Species</u>	<u>Site Index (Growth Potential)</u>	<u>Land Grade¹⁵</u>
Douglas Fir	136 ft. and over	1
	118 - 135 ft.	2
	99 - 117 ft.	3
	84 - 98 ft.	4
	under 84 ft.	5
Western Hemlock	136 ft. and over	1
	116 - 136 ft.	2
	98 - 115 ft.	3
	83 - 97 ft.	4
	68 - 82 ft.	5
Red Alder	under 68 ft.	6
	117 ft. and over	6
	under 117 ft.	7

The predominant species growing in Thurston County is Douglas Fir. There is no occurrence of land grade 1, and very little of land grade 4. Most of the county is evenly split between land grade 2 and land grade 3. For designating forest lands of long-term commercial significance, Thurston County initially identified those areas where forest land grade 2 predominates.

¹⁵ Land Grade 1 = highest, Land Grade 7 = lowest.

In addition to physical growing conditions, however, the state also requires that the county consider the effects of proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense uses of the land, as indicated by:

1. The availability of public services and facilities conducive to the conversion of forest land.

In Thurston County, this is defined as the areas where the extension of public services and facilities is not planned for at least 20 years. Since lands within the Urban Growth Area boundaries, as established within this Comprehensive Plan, are intended to be served by public facilities and services within a 20-year period, forest lands of long-term commercial significance should be located outside of these boundaries.

2. The proximity of forest land to urban and suburban areas and rural settlements: forest lands of long-term commercial significance are located outside the urban and suburban areas and rural settlements.

In addition to being outside Urban Growth Areas, long-term forest lands should be far enough from urban areas that land use conflicts are avoided.

3. The size of the parcels: forest lands consisted of predominantly large parcels.
For Thurston County, this means parcel sizes of predominantly 640 acres or larger.
4. The compatibility and intensity of adjacent and nearby land use and settlement patterns with forest lands of long-term commercial significance.

For Thurston County, this means that residential development should be minimal within the surrounding area and generally at a rural density of one unit per five acres to limit land use conflicts with forestry operations, such as trespassing, vandalism, shooting, and dumping. Other compatible land uses within and adjacent to commercial forestry include agriculture, mining, parks, preserves, and other open space. Each area designated as forest land of long-term commercial significance should total approximately 5,000 acres or more.

5. Property tax classification: property is assessed as open space or forest land pursuant to Chapter 84.33 or 84.34 RCW.

Thurston County considered properties enrolled in the Classified or Designated Timber programs, as well as public land managed for timber production.

6. Local economic conditions which affect the ability to manage timber lands for long-term commercial production.

Economic conditions should be conducive to long-term timber management. In Thurston County, unfavorable economic conditions include locations with high administrative costs due to complaints from nearby landowners, locations requiring extensive security control efforts, and locations in which allowable forest practices such as burning and chemical applications will significantly interfere with other permitted land uses. Favorable economic

conditions include land grade 2 forest soils, which provide (in conjunction with large parcel sizes) the growth potential to manage timber lands for long-term commercial production.

7. History of land development permits issued nearby.

For Thurston County, this means that recent residential development is an indicator of a pattern or direction of growth that may be encroaching on the forest land.

The above criteria were applied throughout unincorporated county areas to designate forest lands of long-term commercial significance. Designated long-term commercially significant forest Lands (as of August 23, 1993) are shown on Map N-1. Currently designated forest lands of long-term commercial significance are identified as "Long-Term Forestry" on the Future Land Use Map, Map L-1. Future lands meeting these criteria may also be designated.

VI. MINERAL RESOURCES

A. COMMUNITY VISION:

The citizens of Thurston County recognize mining as an important part of the local and regional economy. Mineral resources such as sand and gravel supply materials for road maintenance and construction projects throughout the region. The community seeks a balance between the need for mineral resources and the need to protect the environment and the community from any adverse impacts of mining through best management practices, reclamation, and restoration. Good stewardship of mining operations takes a partnership among mining operators, county citizens, and regulatory agencies.

B. BACKGROUND:

Thurston County is fortunate to possess ample deposits of valuable mineral resources, consisting primarily of sand, gravel and bedrock, but also including some coal and metal ore deposits. The deposits are perhaps doubly significant considering their proximity to major population areas and construction projects that use sand and gravel.

The Growth Management Act defines "minerals" as gravel, sand, and valuable metallic substances (RCW 36.70A.030(12)). Other minerals may be designated as appropriate.

Although rich in sand and gravel, the County has relatively few areas of high-quality basalts used in construction activities. Shot rock is important for highway construction and flood control rip rap. The sandstone quarries at Tenino have provided valuable building material for the State Capitol and other structures around the County. There are no known valuable metallic minerals within the County. These resources occur throughout the county with the largest concentrations found in the west and south. A major portion of the county's mineral resources coincides with designated forest resource lands. The quantity of commercially significant sand and gravel has been estimated at 6.1

billion tons (3.8 billion cubic yards), and bedrock resources are estimated to be unknown. This is much more than sufficient to meet long-term demand for the foreseeable future.¹⁶

Thurston County's planning efforts for mineral lands are guided by GMA statute and rules, which set forth three primary steps:

1. *Identify* all mineral resources (primarily sand, gravel and bedrock) and *classify* these resources based on estimates of quantity and quality, and commercial value;
2. *Designate* mineral resource lands which have long-term commercial significance, and which are not already characterized by urban growth. Designation must also consider relevant geologic, economic, land use and environmental criteria identified in the GMA rules; and
3. *Conserve* designated mineral resource lands through policies and development regulations to ensure that extraction is feasible and is not inadvertently precluded by development, or because surrounding land uses will conflict with and interfere with future extraction.

C. BALANCING CONFLICTS:

The mineral extraction process does pose potential conflicts with surrounding uses, particularly rural residential uses and critical areas. When the County designates mineral lands of long-term commercial significance, the location and value of the resource as well as its proximity to existing residential areas are evaluated. During the permit process for new mining activity, the County considers:

- ❖ Groundwater protection;
- ❖ Air and water quality;
- ❖ Travel impacts;
- ❖ Surrounding residential densities;
- ❖ Habitat impacts;
- ❖ Other concerns.

To avoid these impacts, the county implements conditions and BMPs through the Special Use Permit process and Mineral Extraction Code. This ensures that mining operations are in keeping with public health and safety and environmental protection. Just as sand and gravel is a natural resource, so too is the groundwater and air quality the county depends on. The Special Use Permit process also ensures that mineral extraction is generally located away from incompatible land uses.

¹⁶ AESI, *Mineral Resource Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance Inventory Study*, August 2017. In 2016, Thurston County contracted with Associated Earth Sciences, Inc. (AESI) to identify and classify mineral resources in the County and create a base inventory map showing the location of mineral resources. AESI developed a draft inventory and classification system largely based on data from DNR and USGS, with some supplementary information from Washington Department of Transportation and private studies. This inventory (Map N-3) identified 189,475 acres of land containing long-term commercially significant mineral resources, which were eligible to be considered for designation.

Noise, traffic and road impacts are also considered during the Special Use Permit Process. The movement of large amounts of mineral resource necessitates good roads capable of handling significant numbers of heavily-loaded trucks. Loaded trucks en route from the extraction site may lose a very small but potentially hazardous portion of their load, and track dirt or mud onto public roadways.

Existing, non-operating or abandoned mining sites pose a concern to many county residents. These sites may leave aquifers vulnerably exposed and invite illegal waste dumping. The reclamation process is an important process managed by DNR, and is required for all active and future mining operations. Several old and abandoned pits exist in the county from before mining was permitted and reclamation was required. The reclamation program helps to ensure that all lands and waters within the state are protected after mining is complete.

The policies for mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance aim to ensure the long-term viability of the mining industry while protecting public health and the environment. The policies call for:

- ❖ Mining to minimize adverse impact on the environment.
- ❖ Mining to minimize effect on surface and groundwater, and air quality.
- ❖ Mineral extraction sites to be restored as mining occurs.
- ❖ Non-operating or abandoned sites to be addressed.
- ❖ Mineral extraction to be located in rural, low density areas.

Co-designation of Long-Term Mineral Resource Lands and Long-Term Agricultural Lands

As a natural result of geologic forces, it is not uncommon in Thurston County to have quality mineral deposits located under prime farmland soils. Mining operations may result in temporarily breaking up the contiguous land base that is a central component of the Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance. Removing, stockpiling and spreading soil to allow for mining may create a risk to the productive capacity of prime farmland soils. There is a natural conflict between the two competing natural resource industries: agriculture and mining. While agriculture is a sustainable industry, mining relies on a fixed, non-renewable resource.

Allowing for co-designation of mineral lands and agricultural lands may be compatible, but it is critical that the identified land base for agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance not be jeopardized. Agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance are designated based on a number of criteria (see section III.E), one of which is a threshold of prime farmland soils on the property. This may mean that a parcel within the agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance designation has some portions of a parcel that are not as high-quality for farming as other parts of a contiguous block. Allowing mineral extraction on the edges of designated long-term agricultural lands may provide a valued use of the land when it does not break apart the contiguous designated land base for agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance.

D. DESIGNATING MINERAL RESOURCES OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Within Thurston County, minerals of potentially long-term commercial significance include sand and gravel deposits, coal deposits, and a few rock resources, such as columnar basalt (shot rock) and sandstone.

In the past, Mineral Resource Lands were designated on a site-by-site basis. Lands or portions of a legal lot or parcel meeting criteria were designated through a Comprehensive Plan Amendment process.

In order to meet state guidelines, Thurston County contracted with Associated Earth Sciences, Inc. (AESI) to identify and classify mineral resources in the County and create a base inventory map showing the location of mineral resources. AESI developed a draft inventory and classification system largely based on data from DNR and USGS, with some supplementary information from Washington Department of Transportation and private studies. This inventory identified 189,475 acres of land containing long-term commercially significant mineral resources, which were eligible to be considered for designation.

Mineral resource land designation and associated policies in this chapter are based on:

- ❖ A geologic inventory supplemented site-specific data when available;
- ❖ A hierarchical classification of resources based on resource quality and quantity;
- ❖ Designation criteria consistent with WAC 365-190-170;
- ❖ Policies to balance potential conflicts.

The mineral resource land designation represents an increase in designated mineral lands from 5,623 acres (2019) to 142,666 acres (2020). The 2020 mineral resource land designation of 142,666 acres represents a reduction from the overall geologic inventory of 189,475 acres of potentially viable mineral deposits (Table 3-5). The current designated mineral resource lands are mapped as an overlay to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Areas were excluded from consideration based on jurisdictional and legal issues, environmental constraints, and land use compatibility.

Table 3-5. Acreage of Mineral Resource Lands in Thurston County

Mineral Resource Lands	Acres of Land
Previously Designated Mines (2019 and previously)	5,623 acres
Mineral Resource Lands Inventory (2017)	189,475 acres
Designated Mineral Lands (2020)	142,666

GMA GUIDANCE FOR DESIGNATION OF MINERAL RESOURCE LANDS

Counties must designate mineral resource lands in order to achieve the natural resource industries goal of the Growth Management Act. The major requirements under State guidelines include the following:

- ❖ Must approach designation as a countywide process, and not review mineral lands solely on a parcel-by-parcel basis;
- ❖ May consider a longer planning period than the typical 20 years, to assure the availability of minerals for future uses and not preclude their access due to incompatible development;
- ❖ Should base their classification of mineral lands on underlying geology and distance to market, and should use information from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the United States Geological Service, and relevant information from property owners;
- ❖ Should determine if adequate mineral resources are available for projected needs from designated mineral lands;
- ❖ Must consider mining a temporary use at any given location, that could be followed by another land use after mining is;
- ❖ Should designate mineral lands as close as possible to their likely end use area;

In classifying mineral resource lands, counties should consider the following minimum guidelines:

- ❖ Geology: depth and quality of resource and characteristics of resource site
- ❖ Projected life of the resource
- ❖ Resource availability and needs in the region
- ❖ Accessibility and proximity to point of use or market
- ❖ Energy costs of transporting materials
- ❖ Proximity to population areas
 - General land use patterns
 - Availability of utilities, including water supply
 - Surrounding parcel sizes and uses
 - Availability of public roads and public services
 - Subdivision and zoning of small lots

- WAC 365-190-040; 070

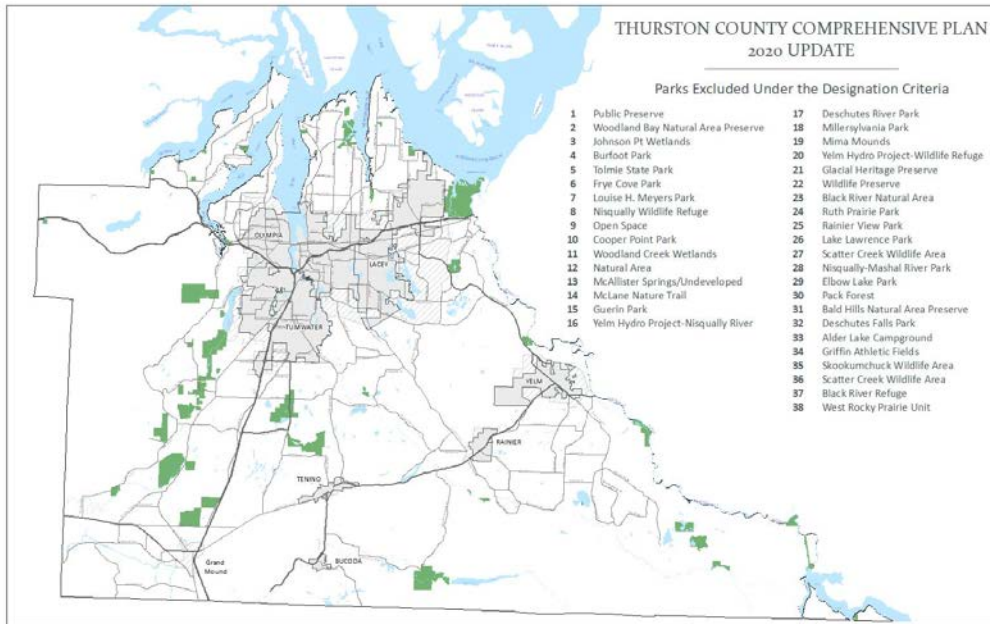
To determine the location of mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance, the County applies state minimum guidelines provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce under WAC 365-190-070 (see sidebar). Based on those guidelines and additional considerations to protect public health, safety, and the environment, the County has developed the following criteria to designate mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance.

MINIMUM DESIGNATION CRITERIA

1. **Mineral Deposits.** Designated mineral resource lands should contain deposits consisting of sand and gravel, coal, sandstone, basalt, or other igneous rock, based on U.S. Geological Survey maps or site-specific information prepared by a geologist, or as indicated by State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) mining permit data.
2. **Location.** Designated mineral resource lands shall be separated by a distance of at least 1,000 feet from public preserves, which include parks, national wildlife refuges, state conservation areas, wild life areas, and other government owned preserves, but excluding hunting areas. In addition, designated mineral resource lands shall be at least 1,000 feet from urban growth areas and rural residential areas with existing densities predominantly one dwelling unit per five acres or higher, in order to minimize land use conflicts during the long-term operation of the mine.

To qualify for a mineral resource designation, at least 60% of the area within 1,000 feet of a proposed site must be made up of parcels 5 acres in size or larger, excluding parcels owned by the applicant.
3. **Minimum Site Size.** An area proposed for the mineral resource lands designation should be at least 5 acres in size.
4. **Marketability.** Mineral resource lands shall contain non-strategic minerals which are minable, recoverable and marketable in the present or foreseeable future as determined by a licensed professional geologist.
5. Mineral resource lands shall not include historical/cultural preservation sites.
6. Mineral resource lands may include lands designated for long-term forestry.

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Designation means that the presence of mineral resources and analysis of land use compatibility has been completed at a broad, landscape scale, and designated sites are eligible to apply for the permits needed for extraction and/or processing of minerals. Designation does not mean that any specific site within the designation will be approved for an active mine. Such designation should not be used as a basis for granting a special use permit. Every proposal for mineral extraction must complete additional environmental review at the project level and obtain the required permits.

Becoming Designated: In order to receive a permit for mineral extraction, the land must first be designated mineral resource lands. If land is not currently designated as a mineral resource land of long-term commercial significance (Map N-2), it may be eligible for designation with the appropriate information. This process is completed through a comprehensive plan amendment with the required geologic information. See the Goals, Objectives, and Policies section for specific requirements.

Removal from Designation: A property owner may file an application for the removal of designation. This process is completed through a comprehensive plan amendment with the required geologic information. See the Goals, Objectives, and Policies section for specific requirements

Beyond Designation: Protecting mineral deposits of long-term commercial significance for mining use is an important goal of the designation process, permitting process, and comprehensive plan policies. Policies aim to prevent residential and other incompatible uses from locating adjacent to these deposits. Several factors are addressed outside of the designation process. For example, the County recognizes that a mining operator's hauling distance to the resource user is an important factor to its economic viability. However, the policies also provide that mining activity should not encroach on existing residential uses nor adversely affect the environment.

Designated mineral lands may include environmentally sensitive areas. The presence of critical areas on the site may prohibit or restrict mineral extraction operations, as addressed at the site-specific permit level. Mine operators must go through all required review and permitting prior to beginning any mining activity on designated land. Map N-2 identifies mineral resource lands that meet the designation criteria and is considered the "Official Designated Mineral Resource Lands" map. Map N-2 is an overlay to the underlying land use designation of property shown on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. Map N-2 supplements but does not change the underlying land use designation of affected properties.

Long-term commercially significant (designated) mineral deposits should be conserved for long-term resource extraction. To this end, the following measures shall be implemented:

1. A Resource Use Notice shall be provided to new developments within a specified distance of designated mineral lands.
2. Existing mining operations outside designated mineral lands shall inform prospective property owners of the long-term resource nearby.

These measures are intended to assure that the use of lands adjacent to designated mineral lands shall not interfere with the continued use, in accordance with best management practices (BMPs), of the designated lands for mineral extraction.

VII. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL LAND- IN ORDER TO ENSURE AN ADEQUATE LAND BASE FOR LONG-TERM FARM USE. (THIS APPLIES TO ALL AGRICULTURAL LAND, INCLUDING AREAS OUTSIDE OF AGRICULTURE OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE)

OBJECTIVE A: Conserve (no net loss) and enhance agricultural lands for long-term farming use.

POLICIES:

1. Residential uses adjacent to farms should be developed in a manner which minimizes potential conflicts and reduces unnecessary conversion of farmland. The use of "cluster"

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development patterns should not result in increased density adjacent to existing farms, and should ensure that resource use parcels intended for agricultural use can be reasonably farmed.

2. Commercial farmland owners should be encouraged to retain their lands in commercial farm production and enroll their land in the Open Space- Farm and Agriculture Tax Program.
3. Farmland owners no longer meeting commercial requirements for current use agriculture should be encouraged to enroll their land in the Open Space Tax Program as Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land.
4. In order to reduce development pressure on the farm and rural areas, future development should be directed toward designated growth areas where existing and planned services can more easily accommodate growth. Outside these growth areas, densities should remain low.

~~5. For rural residential lands with underlying prime farmland soils and active farms, clustering is encouraged in an effort to conserve underlying prime soils for farming operation.~~

Commented [MT11]: For Cluster Overlay Concept

~~5.6.~~ Agricultural lands within the Nisqually Valley should be given a high priority for protection by means customized to the Valley's unique characteristics. Agricultural lands within the Nisqually Subarea should be protected from the encroachment of existing and potential residences within the valley and along the adjacent wooded hillsides.

~~6.7.~~ The County should continue to develop innovative strategies for the conservation of farmland. Strategies such as rural cluster subdivisions, Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), conservation easements, and the Voluntary Stewardship Program should continue to be implemented throughout the county.

~~7.8.~~ The County should work with conservation groups and farmland owners to encourage participation in voluntary programs for the conservation of agricultural and working lands.

~~8.9.~~ Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs should be utilized as incentives for farmers to stay in agriculture on agricultural lands within the County to ensure that agricultural and working lands stay available for such uses.

OBJECTIVE B: Encourage and educate the community about the value of the county's agricultural resources.

POLICIES:

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1. The county should encourage the schools and the media to provide more information on the special problems, potential, and importance of local agriculture to all citizens.
2. The county should work with community groups to support the continued viability of agriculture and encourage community support for it.

OBJECTIVE C: Provide regulations that are supportive to long-term agricultural use.

POLICIES:

1. Farmers often need to work with a variety of federal, state, and local government regulations and agencies. Thurston County staff should be trained to assist farmers in working their way through this often time-consuming and complex process.
2. The county should encourage farmer participation in the Voluntary Stewardship Program to promote the long-term viability of agricultural activities in participating watersheds while protecting and enhancing critical areas as so to help relieve the regulatory burden.
3. The County should provide the agricultural community with an advocate, or “agricultural liaison”. The advocate will provide technical assistance, and facilitate objectives of the County’s Working Lands Strategic Plan, as well as the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
4. Noxious weeds pose a significant economic threat to agriculture. The County Noxious Weed Control Board should have the opportunity to recommend control options as part of their integrated pest management program in accordance with the proposed Ground Water Management Plan, the Thurston County Pest and Vegetation Management Policy, and any other applicable county policies.
5. Thurston County shall not be precluded from regulating agricultural chemicals if adequate protection of the resources and public health are not being met by existing regulatory agencies.
6. Within Thurston County, agricultural activities should be given protection from nuisance claims in accordance with State law, RCW 7.48.305.
7. The County should continue to work with flood agencies and neighboring jurisdictions to address ongoing flooding problems of the Chehalis River and other areas that adversely affect agricultural operations.

GOAL 2: CONSERVE AGRICULTURAL LAND OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE.

OBJECTIVE A: Prioritize agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance for conservation.

POLICIES:

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1. Designated agricultural lands should be zoned at very low densities to ensure the conservation of the resource for continued agricultural use.
2. Non-agricultural development within designated agricultural areas should be limited to non-prime farmland soils where possible.
- ~~3.~~ Non-agricultural development within designated agricultural areas should be compactly developed, in order to conserve the largest area possible for continued agricultural use.
- ~~3.4.~~ The County should provide flexibility for farmers by allowing a variety of associated uses that support agriculture in agriculture zones and within the agritourism overlay district, provided they are located on non-prime farmland soils when possible.
- ~~4.5.~~ The county discourages the establishment or expansion of local improvement districts, utility local improvement districts, or sewer, water or public utility districts into designated agricultural areas of long-term commercial significance.
- ~~5.6.~~ Except within urban growth areas, land uses that are adjacent to long-term commercial agriculture areas should be of compatible use, such as sawmill operations, warehousing, agri-businesses, and low density residential.
- ~~6.7.~~ Adequate water rights should be reserved for designated agricultural land of long-term commercial significance.
- ~~8.~~ The designation of agricultural land of long-term commercial significance should be reevaluated if changes in surrounding land use or farming economics create severe losses lasting several years, covering a wide range of crops or products, and affect a majority of the producers in the area.
- ~~9.~~ A landowner may submit application for inclusion in the Long-Term Agriculture designation outside of the update cycle by filing a comprehensive plan amendment. The landowner shall include:
 - a. Submittal of a master application and comprehensive plan amendment application with associated fees.
 - b. Soil survey and associated maps developed by a qualified soil scientist to provide evidence of prime soils on the property, and
 - c. Information that indicates the property meets the County's adopted designation criteria to determine the appropriateness of the proposed property for designation as an agricultural land of long-term commercial significance.
- ~~7.d.~~ Environmental review pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act.

Commented [MT12]: Relates to development code

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~~8.10.~~ A resource use notice should be placed on any new subdivision or residential building permit located within 500 feet of designated agriculture land of long-term commercial significance, which states that a variety of commercial agricultural activities may occur that may not be compatible with residential development. The notice should also state that a person's right to recover under a nuisance claim against agricultural activities may be restricted.

OBJECTIVE B: Provide programs that help farmers of agricultural land of long-term commercial significance realize the capital from the land's development potential without converting it to non-agricultural uses.

POLICIES:

1. Educate and encourage farmers to utilize Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs as economic incentives to stay in agriculture.
2. Educate and encourage farmers to work with land trusts and conservation agencies to use fee simple purchase and conservation easements as economic incentives to stay in agriculture.
3. Encourage farmers to participate in the VSP to maintain and improve the long-term viability of their agricultural operations.

AQUACULTURE RESOURCES – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 3: PROTECT AND PRESERVE AQUACULTURE GROWING AREAS TO ENSURE AN ADEQUATE RESOURCE BASE FOR LONG-TERM USE.

OBJECTIVE A: The County should provide land use and water management programs to conserve and enhance commercial marine aquaculture areas and land based aquaculture for long-term economic use.

POLICIES:

1. Impacts to shellfish growing areas classified for harvest by the Department of Health should be addressed throughout County ordinances.
2. Uses of lands that are near designated marine aquacultural areas should be compatible, such as forestry and low density rural residential. Those uses should not increase stormwater runoff or otherwise degrade water quality for aquacultural use.
3. Facilities for land based and marine aquacultural operations should be protected from incompatible adjacent or nearby land uses.

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4. Land based and marine aquacultural activity should not be considered a nuisance if carried out in a reasonable manner and within applicable regulations. Restrictions should not be imposed on aquacultural activities unless they are necessary for preserving the public health, welfare, and safety.
5. Proposed residential and other uses in aquacultural areas should be developed in a manner that minimizes potential conflicts with aquaculture operations.
6. Aquacultural activities should be undertaken in a way that minimizes adverse impacts, such as views from upland property and general environmental quality.
7. Aquacultural operations that draw on groundwater supplies should not degrade the quality nor substantially reduce the quantity of groundwater.
8. Water quality in the county's marine and inland waters, and groundwater in the county should be protected from degradation. Degraded waters should be restored within the drainage basins of designated commercial marine aquaculture areas, or areas of significant recreational shellfish harvesting.
9. Landowners in drainage basins feeding aquaculture growing waters should be eligible for the Open Space Tax Program, if they undertake conservation measures to protect water quality.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM:

The Shoreline Master Program is the county document which governs development on the shorelines in compliance with the State Shoreline Management Act (RCW 90.58). Within the master program there are policies and regulations relating to aquaculture. The Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives and policies are intended to complement those in the master program; both documents should be consulted in reference to developing in the shoreline area.

FOREST RESOURCES – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 4: CONSERVE FOREST LANDS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A VIABLE FORESTRY INDUSTRY WHILE PROTECTING ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES.

OBJECTIVE A: Forest lands should be conserved and enhanced for long-term economic use.

POLICIES:

1. Residential development adjacent to forestry uses should occur in a manner which minimizes potential conflicts and reduces unnecessary conversion of forest land through use of such mechanisms as clustering, buffers, etc.

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2. The county supports and encourages the maintenance of forest lands in timber and current use property tax classifications consistent with RCW 84.33 and 84.34.
3. Within Thurston County, forest practices should be given protection from nuisance claims in accordance with state law.
4. The county should provide outreach and information to forestland owners about county regulatory and permitting processes.
5. The County should seek funding opportunities to be used to purchase development rights from willing forest landowners to preserve the resource for future generations.
6. The County should work with conservation groups, commercial family forest land owners, and others to encourage voluntary participation in a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program for the conservation of managed working forest lands.

OBJECTIVE B: Provisions should be made for forest lands to accommodate public recreation and conservation of fish and wildlife habitats, scenic vistas, and nearby property values.

POLICIES:

1. Public trails, camping facilities, and other low intensity recreation uses are encouraged in forest lands.
2. The county endorses the concept of cooperative resource management as developed in the Timber, Fish and Wildlife agreement, which is an agreement among industrial timber landowners, environmental groups, state resource agencies, and Indian tribes for managing the state's public and private timber lands and public resources.
3. Some mature forest stands should be purchased in the metropolitan fringe areas of the county for their historic and aesthetic values for parks and other recreational uses, unless they are designated as forest lands of long-term commercial significance.
4. When timber harvesting is for conversion to other uses, the county should ensure that harvesting is done in a manner compatible with land uses of the surrounding area and maintenance of water quality, environmentally sensitive features, and fish habitat.
5. Owners of forest lands planned for conversion to another use should provide buffers between their property and adjacent forestry uses.
6. Forestry activities should not alter wetlands or stream corridors.

GOAL 5: CONSERVE FOREST LANDS OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE IN ORDER TO ENSURE AN ADEQUATE LAND BASE AND DISCOURAGE INCOMPATIBLE USES.

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OBJECTIVE A: Forest lands of long-term commercial significance should be conserved (no net loss) and enhanced for productive economic use.

POLICIES:

1. The primary land use activities in forest lands of long-term commercial significance should be commercial forest management, agriculture, mineral extraction, recreation, accessory uses, and other non-forest related economic activities relying on forest lands.
2. Land use activities within or adjacent to forest lands of long-term commercial significance should be sited and designed to minimize conflicts with forest management, and other activities on forest land.
3. Commercial forest land considered desirable for acquisition for public recreational, scenic and park purposes should first be evaluated for its impact on a viable forest industry and local government revenue and programs.
4. The county discourages the establishment or expansion of coal improvement districts, utility local improvement districts, or sewer, water or public utility districts in lands designated as long-term commercial significance which result in the imposition of assessments, rates, or charges on designated forest land.
5. Clustering of residential development on adjacent rural lands is encouraged. The open space in clustered development should be adjacent to the forest lands of long-term commercial significance.
6. The county should encourage the continuation of commercial forest management by supporting land trades that result in consolidated forest ownerships and are in the public interest.
7. The county should encourage the continuation of commercial forest management by working with forest managers to identify and develop other incentives for continued forestry.
8. The County should strongly discourage residential development within the Long-Term Forestry designation. However, nothing in this policy should be construed to prevent the owner of designated Long-Term Forestry from living on his/her land, provided that applicable building requirements are met.
9. Subject to any state or local regulation of critical areas, the county encourages the multiple economic use of forest land for a variety of natural resource and other land use activities particularly suited for forest lands because of physical and topographical characteristics; remoteness from populated areas; availability of water supplies; the quality of the forest environment; or where the efficient provision of statewide or regional utilities, energy generating and/or transmission facilities, or public facilities require access across or use of such forest lands.

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10. Designated forest lands of long- term commercial significance should be protected from nuisance claims from neighboring development through a resource use notice placed on any new subdivision or residential building permit located within 500 feet. The notice should state that a variety of forestry activities may occur that may or may not be compatible with residential development, and a person's right to recover under a nuisance claim against forestry operations may be restricted.

GOAL 6: PROTECT RURAL FOREST LANDS ENROLLED IN A CURRENT USE TAX ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FROM PRESSURES TO CONVERT TO OTHER USES.

OBJECTIVE A: Provide measures to protect owners of rural forest lands from development pressures.

POLICIES:

1. Development regulations should accommodate and encourage clustering of residential development on rural lands adjacent to rural forest lands. The open space in clustered development should buffer rural forest land from development.
2. Land use activities adjacent to forest land in rural areas should be sited and designed to minimize conflicts with forest management and other permitted activities on forest land.
3. A Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program should be utilized as an incentive for property owners to conserve forest lands within the county to ensure that working forest lands continue to stay available for such uses.

MINERAL RESOURCES – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 7: IDENTIFY, DESIGNATE AND CONSERVE MINERAL RESOURCE LANDS OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE.

OBJECTIVE A. Identify, classify and designate mineral resource lands that are not characterized by urban growth, that contain commercially significant mineral deposits, and that satisfy applicable criteria established by the Growth Management Act (GMA) statute and rules, and Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan.

POLICIES:

1. Using the best information available, Thurston County should identify all unincorporated lands that contain commercially valuable deposits of mineral resources. This inventory should be periodically reviewed every 4 years. If no data is available for an update at 4 years, the inventory should be reevaluated for update again at the 8-year periodic update cycle established under the Growth Management Act.
 - a. Thurston County has completed a preliminary geologic inventory of large areas throughout the county ("prospects") containing deposits of sand, gravel, bedrock and other mineral resources (Map N-3). The locations and nature of these resources

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are mapped and described in a report titled “Mineral Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance Inventory Study” (Associated Earth Sciences, Inc., 2017). The study will be updated and revised periodically as new geologic information becomes available.

- b. The inventory excludes lands characterized by urban growth, including land within cities, designated urban growth areas, and certain lands owned by federal, state and tribal governments, for which the county lacks legal authority to designate and regulate resource lands.
 - c. The County should establish a process to periodically notify and allow the owners of property that are not currently included in the Mineral Resource Lands inventory to petition to be considered for inclusion. The petition shall include:
 - i. Technical and geologic information that support mineral resources exist, such as boring samples or subsurface geologic data, including reported depth, volume and area,
 - ii. Associated maps developed by a qualified geologist to provide evidence of marketability and value of the mineral deposit, and
 - iii. Information that indicates mineral resources meet County established criteria for classification and designation.
 - d. A landowner may submit application for inclusion in the Mineral Resource Lands Inventory outside of the update cycle by filing a comprehensive plan amendment. In addition to the criteria under policy 1(c), the landowner shall include:
 - i. Submittal of a master application and comprehensive plan amendment application with associated fees.
2. Designated mineral resource lands are identified on Comprehensive Plan Map N-2. The mineral resource designation is an overlay to the underlying land use designation of property shown on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, which supplements but does not change the underlying land use designation of affected properties.
 3. Properties that are currently designated as mineral resource lands in the Comprehensive Plan and/or that are operating pursuant to a valid mining permit are considered to be mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance.
 4. Designation as mineral resource land indicates that the property has been reviewed to determine the presence or absence of specific geologic, land use and environmental features at a county-wide, comprehensive planning level, and that the land is potentially appropriate for mineral extraction subject to adopted site-specific review and permitting procedures and applicable development regulations. Designation does not convey any permit, approval or authorization to mine or otherwise use, alter or develop any designated property, and is

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not a substitute for site-specific review and permitting of a proposed mining operation consistent with applicable Thurston County development regulations. Designation does not create a presumption that an individual property or project should be approved for mining.

5. Designation as mineral resource lands in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan is a pre-condition for submitting an application to the county to extract mineral resources on a specific site, unless a site meets specific exceptions as listed in the County Code.
6. Using the best information available, Thurston County should identify all unincorporated lands that meet the minimum designation requirement. The Designated Mineral Resource Lands map (Map N-2) should be periodically reviewed every 4 years. If no data is available for an update at 4 years, the designation should be reevaluated for update again at the 8-year periodic update cycle established under the Growth Management Act.
 - a. The County should establish a process to periodically allow the owners of property that are not currently included in the Designated Mineral Resource Lands map to petition to be considered for inclusion. The petition shall be based on the following process:
 - i. Submittal of necessary geologic information, including: (1) Technical and geologic information that support mineral resources exist, such as boring samples or subsurface geologic data, including reported depth, volume and area; (2) Associated maps developed by a qualified geologist to provide evidence of marketability and value of the mineral deposit, and; (3) Information that indicates mineral resources meet County established criteria for classification and designation;
 - ii. Update of the countywide mineral resource inventory and classification;
 - iii. Review using adopted designation criteria, to determine the appropriateness of the proposed property for designation; and
 - iv. Environmental review pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act.
 - b. Individual changes to the Designated Mineral Resource Lands map may be accomplished outside of the update cycle by an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan as part of the county's annual plan review and amendment process. In addition to the criteria under policy 6(a)(i-iv), the landowner shall also include:
 - i. Submittal of a master application and comprehensive plan amendment application with associated fees.
 - c. Designated mineral resource lands may be removed from the comprehensive plan map by action of the Board of County Commissioners if it is determined that mineral excavation is no longer an appropriate use because of changed conditions and/or the land no longer meets the criteria for designation.

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- d. A property owner may file an application for removal of mineral resource lands designation with the department outside of the update cycle. The application shall be based on the following process:
 - i. Submittal of a master application and comprehensive plan amendment application with associated fees and necessary geologic information, such as:
 - (1) Information to support that mineral resources are depleted to a point that it is no longer economically feasible to mine on the site;
 - (2) Evidence that market conditions have changed to such a degree that it is no longer economically feasible to continue mining on the site.
 - ii. Update of the countywide mineral resource inventory and classification.
 - iii. Evidence that the site no longer meets the adopted designation criteria.
 - iv. Environmental review pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act.
 - e. At the time of any countywide update to the Designated Mineral Lands Map (Map N-2), in the event that new parks exist that were not previously excluded from the map and meet the definition of “public parks and preserves”, the County should exclude the park from the designated mineral lands map, but should also consider reducing or eliminating the 1,000 foot separation distance. This is based on the understanding that future parks are siting in a known designated mineral resource use area.
 - f. For the purposes of the Designated Mineral Lands Map (Map N-2), a “public park and preserve” is defined as the following: a park in the Thurston County Parks Layer that is at least 5 acres or larger, and is government owned, including public preserves, national wildlife refuges, habitat and wildlife areas, natural areas, state conservation areas, and developed or undeveloped parks used for passive or active recreation. This definition does not include the following: non-government parks, parks smaller than 5 acres, trailhead parcels, county-owned boat launches, county-owned trails, the off-road vehicle park, and the Evergreen State College. This is displayed on the in-chapter map located on page 3-26.
7. Mineral lands and Agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance may be co-designated when mining would not negatively impact the contiguous land base of designated agricultural lands, and when the co-designated land is contiguous with adjacent mineral lands.

OBJECTIVE B. Ensure that lands adjacent to designated mineral resource lands do not interfere with mineral extraction.

POLICIES:

1. Mineral extraction industries should be allowed to locate where prime natural resource deposits exist.
2. Designated mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance should be conserved for potential mineral extraction, and the use of adjacent lands should not

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interfere with the use of designated mineral extraction sites that are being operated in accordance with best management practices and other laws and regulations.

3. Mineral extraction sites that are being operated in accordance with applicable best management practices and other laws and regulations should be given increased protection from nuisance claims from landowners who have been notified of designated mineral lands and/or the mineral extraction site.
4. New residential uses should be discouraged from locating near prime designated mineral deposit sites until mineral extraction is completed, unless adequate buffering is provided by the residential developer.
5. A permit may be issued for properties within a certain distance of designated mineral resource lands only after the resource use notice has been signed by the property owner and recorded against the property, according to the requirements in the Thurston County Code. The notice shall contain a statement that the ability of owners or occupants to recover for nuisances arising from activities on the designated mineral lands may be restricted. The notice shall also inform that an application might be made for mining-related activities, including mining, extraction, washing, crushing, stockpiling, blasting, transporting, and recycling of minerals (RCW 36.70A.060).

GOAL 8: ENSURE THAT IMPACTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER SURROUNDING LAND USES FROM EXTRACTION ON MINERAL RESOURCE LANDS OF LONG-TERM COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE ARE MITIGATED FOR AND MANAGED THROUGH THE PERMITTING PROCESS.

OBJECTIVE A. The County should provide regulatory mechanisms that balance and minimize conflicts between extractive industries, other land uses, and general environmental concerns.

POLICIES:

1. Designated mineral resource lands should be located in low density rural areas where conflicts between extraction operations and surrounding land uses can be avoided or minimized. Designated lands should not be characterized by a predominance of environmental constraints.
2. Extraction industries shall not adversely impact adjacent or nearby land uses, or public health and safety.
3. Areas where existing residential uses at densities of greater than 1 unit per 5 acres predominate shall be protected against intrusion by mineral extraction operations.
4. Buffer mineral extraction sites that are adjacent to existing residential areas. Buffers could consist of berms and vegetation to minimize impacts to adjacent property owners.
5. Mineral extraction activities shall not negatively affect nor endanger surface and groundwater flows and quality.
6. Some critical areas may prohibit or restrict allowed mineral extraction uses. Consider critical areas, including fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, floodplains, aquifer recharge

~~Adopted December 2020~~DRAFT 2023

areas, and geologic hazard areas at the permit level before approving mineral extraction, as regulated under Thurston County Code, Title 24.

7. Consider maintenance and update of public roads at the permit level before approving mineral extraction.
8. Mineral extraction on designated agricultural lands should be avoided unless the soils can be restored to their original productive capabilities, as identified in a soil survey, as soon as possible after mining occurs.
9. Accessory uses to mining (crushing, screening, or washing) should only be located on adjacent mineral lands that are not co-designated with long-term agriculture.

GOAL 9: ENSURE THAT RECLAMATION AND RESTORATION ARE DESIGNED FOR THE APPROPRIATE POST-EXTRACTIVE USE OF THE SITE AND ARE COMPATIBLE WITH PLANNED FUTURE USE OF ADJACENT LANDS.

OBJECTIVE A. Identify and plan for post-extractive uses of mineral resource lands at the time of permitting a mineral operation.

POLICIES:

1. Post-extractive uses should be identified, at the time of permitting, for mineral resource lands.
2. Restoration of mineral extraction sites should occur successively as the site is being mined. The site should be restored for the appropriate future use and should blend with the adjacent landscape and contours.
3. The county shall ensure that mine site excavation and reclamation are consistent with county, city, and tribal land use plans and the state Surface Mine Reclamation Act (RCW 78.44).
4. The county should pursue innovative reclamation plans in concert with private landowners for the final conversion of exhausted mineral resource lands into desirable uses – such as park land, open space, forest land, community lakes, housing, agricultural land, and other uses – that are compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and zoning. These uses should be compatible with adjacent land uses. Such reclamation plans will be considered as favorable mitigations of the mining activity during the county's SEPA review process.
5. In areas of co-designated mineral lands and agricultural lands, post-reclamation of mineral extraction sites should maintain the long-term agricultural use and should occur in a timely fashion.

EXCERPT OF APPENDIX C

Appendix C

THURSTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted December 2020 DRAFT 2023

Design guidelines applicable only within the Grand Mound urban growth area were developed through a community workshop process in 1998. The design guidelines apply to commercial, industrial and multifamily developments. The purpose is to encourage the development of visually attractive developments that will give Grand Mound its own cohesive identity and distinguish it from other interchange areas along the I-5 corridor. The guidelines are also intended to promote high quality development that will enhance property values and mitigate the impacts of urban development through enhanced architectural design. (Resolution No. 12108, 12/20/99)

10. 2017 Voluntary Stewardship Work Plan

The Thurston County Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) is an alternative approach to protect critical areas on agricultural lands. The VSP allows the County to work closely with stakeholder to develop voluntary, site-specific stewardship plans for agricultural uses in lieu of critical areas regulations. The County submitted a plan that was approved by the Washington State Conservation Commission on April 26, 2017.

11. Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture Web Soil Survey (2022)

Thurston County bases classification and identification of agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance upon the land capability classification system of the United States Department of Agriculture Handbook No. 210. Designated agricultural lands are mapped using prime soils as listed in the Natural Resource Conservation Service USDA's Web Soil Survey, 2022 and are listed below.

SCS Map Unit #	Soil Description
1	Alderwood gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes (if irrigated)
2	Alderwood gravelly sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes (if irrigated)
14	Bellingham silty clay loam (where drained)*
20	Cagey loamy sand (if irrigated)
26	Chehalis silt loam
29	Dupont muck (where drained)*
31	Eld loam
36	Everson clay loam (where drained)*
37	Galvin silt loam, 0 to 5 percent slope
38	Giles silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slope
41	Godfrey silty clay loam (where drained)*
46	Indianola loamy sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes (if irrigated)
47	Indianola loamy sand, 5 to 15 percent slopes (if irrigated)
50	Kapowsin silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slope
64	Maytown silt loam
65	McKenna gravelly silt loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes (if drained)*

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Commented [MT1]: Recommendation from stakeholder member to remove list completely from chapter 3 or place in an appendix.

The following are new soils included with this update to LTA. 1, 2, 20, 46, 47, 65, 84, 109, 110, 114, 116, 1100, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1214, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1312, 1325, 3200, 3201, 3203, 3401, 3402

69	<u>Mukilteo muck (where drained)*</u>
70	<u>Mukilteo muck (drained)*</u>
71	<u>Newberg fine sandy loam</u>
72	<u>Newberg loam</u>
73	<u>Nisqually loamy fine sand 0-3 percent slope (where irrigated)</u>
75	<u>Norma fine sandy loam (where drained)*</u>
76	<u>Norma silt loam (where drained)*</u>
84	<u>Pilchuck loamy sand (if irrigated)</u>
86	<u>Prather silty clay loam, 3 to 8 percent slope</u>
88	<u>Puget Silt loam (where drained)*</u>
89	<u>Puyallup silt loam</u>
97	<u>Salkum silty clay loam, 3 to 8 percent slope</u>
100	<u>Scamman silty clay loam, 0-5 percent slope (where drained)*</u>
104	<u>Semiahmoo muck (where drained)*</u>
105	<u>Shalcar muck (where drained)*</u>
106	<u>Shalcar Variant muck (where drained)*</u>
107	<u>Skipopa silt loam, 0-3 percent slope</u>
109	<u>Spana gravelly loam (if drained)*</u>
110	<u>Spanaway gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes (if irrigated)</u>
114	<u>Spanaway-Nisqually complex, 2 to 10 percent slopes (if irrigated)</u>
115	<u>Sultan silt loam</u>
116	<u>Tacoma silt loam (if drained or protected from flooding)*</u>
120	<u>Tisch silt loam (where drained)*</u>
126	<u>Yelm fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slope</u>
1100	<u>Steilacoom-Yelm complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes (if drained)*</u>
1210	<u>Roundtree loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes (if drained and protected from flooding)*</u>
1211	<u>Fordprairie-Roundtree complex, 0 to 10 percent slopes (if protected from flooding)</u>
1212	<u>Scatter-Fordprairie-Roundtree complex, 0 to 12 percent slopes</u>
1213	<u>Elma-Fordprairie complex, 0 to 12 percent slopes</u>
1214	<u>Fordprairie-Roundtree-Water complex, 0 to 10 percent slopes (if protected from flooding)</u>
1221	<u>Rennie silty clay loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes (if drained and protected from flooding)*</u>
1222	<u>Maytown-Rennie complex, 0 to 10 percent slopes (if protected from flooding)</u>
1223	<u>Maytown-Chehalis-Rennie complex, 0 to 10 percent slopes (if protected from flooding)</u>
1224	<u>Chehalis-Maytown complex, 0 to 10 percent slopes</u>
1225	<u>Eld-Fordprairie complex, 0 to 12 percent slopes</u>
1312	<u>Scatter-Elma complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes</u>
1325	<u>Eld-Fordprairie-Elma complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes</u>
3200	<u>Huttula gravelly loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes (if irrigated and drained)*</u>
3201	<u>Daviscreek-Huttula complex, 0 to 10 percent slopes (if irrigated)</u>
3203	<u>Grandmound gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 15 percent slopes (if irrigated)</u>
3401	<u>Rony-Gate complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes (if drained)*</u>
3402	<u>Gate silty clay loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes</u>

B. LAND DIVISION:

1980 Thurston County Platting and Subdivision Ordinance

Adopted by the Thurston County Board of Commissioners and updated as needed to provide consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and other development regulations. This document describes the process of platting and land subdivision and states requirements for streets, drainage and utilities. Available for purchase or reference from the Thurston County Development Services Department.

Attachment C

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES		
Section	Chapter Name	Proposed Update(s)
Section I	Chapter 20.03, Structure, Interpretations and Definitions	Add new and revise existing definitions for agricultural uses referenced in rural zoning districts.
Section II	Chapter 20.08A, Long-Term Agriculture District (LTA)	Add new permitted uses along with corresponding design standards and review procedures to support long-term economic viability for agricultural sector
Section III	Chapter 20.08G, Agritourism Overlay District (AOD)	Repeal and replace chapter with revised language that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provisions for agricultural resource subdivisions (clustering) • Clarified list of permitted uses • Clearer and more objective development standards
Section IV	Chapter 20.09, Rural Residential--One Dwelling Unit Per Five Acres (RR 1/5)	Include reference to agricultural resource subdivision (clustering) standards in TCC Chapter 20.08G AOD
Section V	Chapter 20.09A, Rural Residential/Resource -One Dwelling Unit Per Five Acres (RRR 1/5)	Include reference to agricultural resource subdivision (clustering) standards in TCC Chapter 20.08G AOD
Section VI	Chapter 20.09C, Rural--One Dwelling Unit Per Five Acres (R 1/10)	Include reference to agricultural resource subdivision (clustering) standards in TCC Chapter 20.08G AOD
Section VII	Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development	New provisions for agricultural resource subdivisions that require clustering of residential units in order to conserve prime agricultural lands
Section VIII	Chapter 20.54, Special Uses	Add new special uses in LTA zoning to support long term economic viability for agricultural sector
Section IX	Chapter 20.60, Administrative Procedures	Include reference to agricultural resource subdivision (clustering) project submittal requirements

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Staff Comments:	<i>Italics</i>	Unaffected Omitted Text	...

The proposed amendments contained herein are included on the 2022-2023 Official Comprehensive Plan Docket as Item CPA-16. Comprehensive Plan Docket Item CPA-16 is a legislative proposal to update policies, programs, and related regulations to support agriculture. Specifically, this code package is being reviewed with one component of CPA-16: the Agriculture Zoning Update. This proposal is comprised of one (1) chapter that would be repealed and replaced and eight (8) chapters that would be amended.

I. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.03 TCC (STRUCTURE, INTERPRETATIONS AND DEFINITIONS) shall be amended to read as follows to include new and revised definitions for agricultural uses:

Chapter 20.03 – STRUCTURE, INTERPRETATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

20.03.040 – Definitions

The following definitions shall be used in the interpretation and administration of this title. The definition of various terms as presented in this section does not necessarily represent the same definitions as may be found for the same terms in other chapters of the Thurston County Code.

...

2.7 “Agricultural accessory use” means a use that shall predominantly serve the principal use of the farm, but may also serve other farms. It shall be considered accessory to an agricultural use if it is located on either the same lot or other lots that collectively or in singular comprise a principal use of a farm or farm held or leased by a farm manager or their immediate family.

2.7.3 "Agricultural composting" means on farm composting of agricultural waste resulting from the production of farm or agricultural products, including but not limited to, wastes from the raising or growing of plants or animals, manure and animal bedding, and feedstock that contributes to the microbial degradation of organic agricultural wastes and the production of a nuisance-free finished product. Natural materials from land clearing activity are permitted feed stocks. Feed stocks used in agricultural composting shall not include wood pieces or particles containing paint, laminates, bonding agents or chemical preservatives such as creosote, pentachlorophenol, or copper-chrome-arsenate.

2.7.6 “Agricultural crop production facility” means the primary processing, packaging, and storage of agricultural products. Examples include fruit and vegetable packing and shipment plants, warehouses, fruit and vegetable cold storage plants, and other uses involved in the harvesting and primary processing of locally grown agricultural products.

2.8 "Agricultural home stay" means a farm or farmhouse that has eight or fewer guest accommodations such as standalone structures, tree houses, and campsites. The agricultural home stay must be located on and be a part of a farm that produces agricultural products as a

primary source of income. Meals and light foods or snacks may be served to registered guests of an agricultural home stay at any time. The maximum length of stay shall be thirty days per visit and the maximum number of overnight guests per day shall be limited to sixteen. means a farm or farm house that has eight or fewer guestrooms. The agricultural home stay must be located on and be a part of a farm that produces agricultural products as a primary source of income. Meals and light foods or snacks may be served to registered guests of an agricultural home stay at any time.

2.9 "Agricultural land" means land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees, timber and forest products, ~~finish in upland hatcheries~~ agroforestry products, aquaculture, or livestock, and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production.

2.9.3 "Agricultural product" means those plants and animals useful to humans and includes, but is not limited to, forages and sod crops, dairy and dairy products, poultry and poultry products, livestock, including breeding, grazing, and recreational equine use, fruits, vegetables, flowers, seeds, grasses, trees, freshwater fish and fish products, apiaries, equine and other similar products, or any other products which incorporates the use of food, feed, fiber, or fur.

2.9.5 "Agricultural services" means uses that support the agricultural industry and operate primarily outside an office setting. Typical uses include soil preparation and soil testing services, farm and farm labor management services, blacksmithing, farriers, landscape and crop fertilizing services, livestock veterinary services, and other commercial services which typically provide the personnel and equipment necessary to maintain agricultural productivity.

2.9.7 "Agricultural supply sales" means retail storage and sale of feed, grain, fertilizers, and small farming equipment sales, service, and repair. Accessory uses may also include retail sales of fencing, small domestic pets and livestock, and livestock and pet supplies and equipment.

3. "Agriculture" ~~means the use of a tract of land for (a) the tilling of the soil; (b) the raising, harvesting and processing of crops or plant growth of any kind, including forest practices; (c) pasturage; (d) horticulture including wholesale greenhouses; (e) dairying; (f) raising of poultry and livestock; (g) shellfish or fish farming, including finfish in upland hatcheries; or (h) raising, harvesting and processing of clams, oysters and mussels.~~ means the current employment of land for the primary purpose of obtaining a profit by raising, harvesting and selling crops or the feeding, breeding, management and sale of, or the produce of, livestock, poultry, fur-bearing animals or honeybees or for dairying and the sale of dairy products or any other agricultural or horticultural use or animal husbandry or any combination thereof. An individual agricultural use on a farm shall have its maximum square footage measured separately, one use to another. Agriculture includes:

- a. preparation, storage and disposal by marketing or otherwise of the products or by-products raised on such land for human or animal use.
- b. current employment of land for the primary purpose of obtaining a profit by stabling or training equines including but not limited to providing riding lessons, training clinics, and boarding.

- c. on-site construction and maintenance of equipment and facilities used for the activities described in this definition.

...

3.3 "Agritourism Overlay District (AOD)" means an overlay zoning district covering an area defined by the official Thurston County Zoning Map, which incorporates the standards of the underlying zoning district. The main goal of the AOD is to support local agriculture and provide alternatives to the conversion of farm land through sustainable rural economic development and empowering farmers to attempt new, entrepreneurial endeavors which augment, support and highlight local agriculture.

~~Uses permitted within the AOD include, but are not limited to agricultural home stays, farm kitchens and bakeries, educational and interpretive seminars, you pick operations (Christmas trees, pumpkin patches, berry picking etc.), day tours, cooking and food preservation classes, elder hostels, petting zoos, horseback riding, zip lines/aerial rope slide courses, photography, nature watching, temporary gatherings, farm weddings and festivals, country inns, small scale wineries, craft distilleries and micro breweries. Non-listed agritourism uses within the AOD are subject to the standards of Chapter 20.08G TCC, unless such uses are specifically exempt from Thurston County review and approval.~~

...

3.4 “Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering” means commercial raising or boarding of animals or production of animal products, such as eggs or dairy products produced on-site, but excluding the slaughtering and processing of animals unless conducted in a mobile slaughter unit which is operated in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. Examples include grazing, ranching, dairy farming, commercial stables, and breeding programs.

3.4.5 “Aquaculture, Fish Processing, and Hatcheries” means the raising, production and processing or sales of finfish, shellfish, or other aquatic or marine animal or plant species.

...

14.5 "Buildings housing animals" means buildings and enclosed areas, such as stables, kennels, catteries, hen houses, barns or other structures or paddocks, that are designed or used to house animals. “Buildings housing animals” shall not include pastures for rotational grazing.

...

31.5 "Country inn" means a restaurant and/or temporary overnight accommodations ~~to be located in a R 1/20, R 1/10, RR 1/5, RRR 1/5, RL 1/2, RL 2/1, or RL 1/1 zone or agritourism overlay districts and~~ which may include a lounge not to exceed twenty-five percent of restaurant area and facilities for banquets, meeting space, weddings, and similar parties and activities.

...

46.2.5 “Farm” means the land and structures used, or capable of being used, for the raising, harvesting or distribution of agricultural products, without regard to whether such lands and structures are contiguous, adjacent, or non-adjacent, provided that such property or properties are under a single ownership, lease agreement, or management agreement. A "farm" is defined as a

~~tract of land cultivated for the purpose of agricultural production devoted to the raising of crops and/or domestic animals and where the farmer or farm family participates in the day-to-day labor and management of the farm, and owns or leases its productive assets.~~

46.2.6 “Farm Kitchen” means a building or portion of a building on a farm used or designated to be used for the baking, cooking or preparation of food for distribution, sale and consumption of agricultural products on or off the farm site, provided that at least one ingredient is grown in Thurston County and the kitchen contains any two of the following: a kitchen-type sink, refrigerator, range, or 220 H2 outlet.

...

51.5 "Forest practice" means any activity conducted on or directly pertaining to forest land and relating to growing, harvesting or processing timber, including but not limited to:

- a. Road and trail construction;
- b. Harvesting, final and intermediate;
- c. Precommercial thinning;
- d. Reforestation;
- e. Fertilization;
- f. Prevention and suppression of diseases and insects;
- g. Salvage of trees;
- h. Brush control;
- i. Scientific research related to forest lands management; and
- j. Agroforestry, silviculture, and the gathering of forest products (e.g., bark, berries, nuts and mushrooms).

"Forest practice" shall not include forest management activities. For purposes of this chapter, "forest practices" includes preparatory work such as tree marking, surveying and road flagging.

...

86.2 Mobile Slaughter Unit means a self-contained slaughter and meat processing facility that meets local, state and federal operating standards that can travel from site to site or be located at an aggregate site.

...

~~115. "Riding stable, arena, academy" means premises where six or more horses are kept for rental purposes, or where six or more horses are used at any one time for prearranged events, such as training classes, exhibitions or shows, five or more times per year. This shall not include stable facilities used solely for boarding or breeding of horses. "Riding arena and event facility" means a facility where equine training clinics, rodeos, or shows are hosted with six or more off-site horses participating in the event. This shall not include stable facilities or arenas used solely for providing riding lessons, horse training, or breeding of horses.~~

127.2 "Slaughter house" means a permanent structure or establishment designed to accommodate the confinement and slaughtering of live animals in accordance with local, state and federal regulations. This includes the assembly, cutting, and packing of meats from carcasses but excludes temporary, mobile or other on-farm systems for dispatching animals.

...

129.7 "Stockyard" means any facility consisting of pens or other enclosures and their appurtenances for the temporary keeping of livestock, in which livestock services such as feeding, watering, weighing, sorting, receiving, shipping, and preparation for slaughter are offered to the public. Stockyards shall not include public livestock auction facilities, feedlots, or quarantine registered feedlots.

II. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.08A (LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE DISTRICT) shall be amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20.08A LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE DISTRICT (LTA)

20.08A.010 Purpose.

It is intended that agriculture be the primary use in this district and that other uses be sited so as to minimize their impact on, or conflicts with, surrounding agricultural uses. This district is not intended to preclude farming in other areas of the county. The purpose of this district is to:

1. Conserve agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance used for the production of crops, livestock, or other agricultural products;
2. Protect agricultural lands from incompatible development;
3. Encourage the continued economic viability of agriculture;
4. Encourage property owners to maintain property in agriculture uses; and
5. Promote and protect agriculture and its dependent rural community through the enhancement, protection, and perpetuation of the ability of the private sector to produce food and fiber.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997; Ord. 10398 § 3 (part), 1993)

20.08A.020 Primary uses.

Subject to the provisions of this title, the following uses are permitted within this district:

1. Agriculture.
2. Agricultural Accessory Uses.
3. Agricultural Composting.
4. Agricultural Services.
5. Animal Production, Boarding, and Slaughtering.
6. Aquaculture, Fish Processing, and Hatcheries.
7. Farm housing accessory to a farm residence to accommodate agricultural workers and their families employed on the premises, as provided:
 - a. For legal lots between five and 19.99 acres in size, as of the effective date of this chapter, one farm housing unit is permitted.
 - b. For legal lots between twenty and 39.99 acres in size, two farm housing units are permitted.
 - c. For legal lots between forty and 59.99 acres in size, three farm housing units are permitted.

- d. For legal lots between sixty and 79.99 acres in size, four farm housing units are permitted.
 - e. For legal lots eighty acres or larger in size, additional farm housing units are permitted based on the same formula, subject to approval of a special use permit.
 - f. These housing units may only be leased, sold or subdivided subject to the density provision of Section 20.08A.040(1); otherwise, the maximum density provisions of Section 20.08A.020(5)(a) through (e) apply to farm housing units.
 - g. The sewage disposal and water supply shall be approved by the environmental health department.
 - 8. Farm Kitchen.
 - 9. Farm Stand not exceeding four hundred square feet in size
 - 10. Forest Practices.
 - 11. Mobile Slaughter Unit
 - 12. Nurseries/Greenhouses Wholesale.
 - 13. Single-family and farm residences, in accordance with Sections 20.08A.035, 20.08A.040, and 20.08.045 (limited to one primary residential structure per lot, not including farm housing).
-
- ~~1. Agriculture, including forest practices;~~
 - ~~2. Single-family and farm residences, in accordance with Sections 20.08A.035, 20.08A.040, and 20.08.045 (limited to one primary residential structure per lot, not including farm housing);~~
 - ~~3. Greenhouses—wholesale;~~
 - ~~4. Accessory uses and structures including, but not limited to, a farm residence, barns, garages, storage buildings for crops, feed and equipment sheds, nurseries, shipping, receiving and handling facilities, and retail facilities for the sale of agricultural products primarily produced on the premises and related products;~~
 - ~~4.5 Farm stands for retail sale of agricultural products grown in the Pacific Northwest are permitted as a matter of right, i.e. no land use approval is required, provided the farm stand is a membranous structure (e.g. tent or canopy), does not exceed four hundred square feet if enclosed on one or more sides, or seven hundred square feet if open on all sides and meets the standards contained in Section 20.54.070(11.7)(a). The stand may not be in place for more than six months out of the year. Wood or metal framed structures meeting all applicable Building Code requirements and the standards contained in this section may operate year around.~~
 - ~~4.6 On-site advertising signs of no more than four square feet meeting the standards of TCC Section 20.40.035 are exempt from Thurston County review and approval. Larger signs are permitted pursuant to Chapter 20.40 TCC and may require a building permit.~~
 - ~~5. Farm housing accessory to a farm residence to accommodate agricultural workers and their families employed on the premises, as provided:~~

- ~~a. For legal lots between five and 19.99 acres in size, as of the effective date of this chapter, one farm housing unit is permitted.~~
- ~~b. For legal lots between twenty and 39.99 acres in size, two farm housing units are permitted.~~
- ~~c. For legal lots between forty and 59.99 acres in size, three farm housing units are permitted.~~
- ~~d. For legal lots between sixty and 79.99 acres in size, four farm housing units are permitted.~~
- ~~e. For legal lots eighty acres or larger in size, additional farm housing units are permitted based on the same formula, subject to approval of a special use permit.~~
- ~~f. These housing units may only be leased, sold or subdivided subject to the density provision of Section 20.08A.040(1); otherwise, the maximum density provisions of Section 20.08A.020(5)(a) through (e) apply to farm housing units.~~
- ~~g. The sewage disposal and water supply shall be approved by the environmental health department.~~

(Ord. 11804 § 42, 1998; Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1998; Ord. 10398 § 3 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14678, § 2, 11-15-2011; Ord. No. 14773, § 7(Att. F), 7-24-2012)

20.08A.022 Secondary uses.

Subject to the provisions of this title, the following uses are permitted on lands with nonprime farmland soils. Up to one acre of prime farmland soils can be converted to accommodate a secondary use if nonprime farmland soils are not present on the property or cannot be readily accessed without adversely impacting the primary agricultural use.

1. Agricultural Crop Production Facility.
2. Agricultural Supply Sales.
3. Biochar Production Facility, Commercial.
4. Home-Based Industry in accordance with the special use specific standards set forth in Section 20.54.070(15)
5. Nurseries/Greenhouses Retail.
6. Renewable Energy Facilities.
7. Stockyard.

20.08A.025 Special uses.

1. Special uses shall only be permitted on nonprime farmland soils, ~~unless the applicant demonstrates that the proposed use cannot be accommodated on such soils.~~ Up to one acre of prime farmland soils can be converted to accommodate a secondary use if nonprime farmland soils are not present on the property or cannot be readily accessed without adversely impacting the primary agricultural use.

2. See Chapter 20.54 for special uses permitted in this district.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 3 (part), 1993)

20.08A.030 Family member unit.

1. In addition to the maximum number of dwelling units, excluding farm housing units, permitted on a lot, one temporary mobile/manufactured home or modular home may be located upon a lot for the purpose of housing a person or persons who are family members to a person residing in an existing structure on the lot when application for family unit approval is requested. A person is a family member when related by blood, marriage or adoption.
2. Persons wishing to establish a family member unit shall furnish proof of family member status and shall receive written approval to establish such unit from the department before locating or constructing the unit.
3. Dwelling units placed on a lot pursuant to this section shall be removed when the family member no longer occupies the family member unit.
4. Dwelling units which are located pursuant to this section shall be removed prior to sale of the property, unless the purchaser provides a letter to the county stating the family member unit will be occupied by a family member.
5. A family member unit must have an approved sewage disposal system, adequate water source and all other applicable permits.

(Ord. 11804 § 43, 1998; Ord. 11398 § (part), 1997: Ord. 10595 § 10, 1994: Ord. 10398 § 3 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14773, § 10(Att. I), 7-24-2012)

20.08A.035 Subdivision standards.

Any division of land within this district shall comply with the following requirements:

1. The director or hearing examiner shall find that the proposed subdivision meets the purpose and intent of the long-term agriculture district as a prerequisite to approval.
2. Land may be subdivided for agricultural uses, subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Only primary and secondary uses are permitted on lots created pursuant to this section as long as the lots are within this district.
 - b. Minimum lot size is twenty acres for a farm residence; with no dwelling unit, minimum lot size is five acres.
 - c. All divisions of land approved pursuant to this section shall contain a notice of the restriction described in Section 20.08A.035(2)(a) and (b).
3. Land may be subdivided for nonagricultural uses subject to the following requirements:

- a. The subdivision shall meet the standards established in Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development, to the extent consistent with this chapter. Where the requirements in Chapter 20.30A conflict with the requirements of this chapter, the more restrictive standards shall apply.
- b. There shall be no minimum lot size for nonagricultural-use lots. The lot size must meet the requirements of the Thurston County Sanitary Code to safely accommodate an approved water supply and on-site sewage disposal system, including space for a reserve drainfield.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997; Ord. 10398 § 3 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14773, § 10(Att. I), 7-24-2012)

20.08A.040 Design standards.

The following standards are established as the minimum necessary to ensure that the purpose of this district is achieved and maintained as new lots are created, new uses are established, and new buildings are constructed:

1. Building Type and Size:

- a. New non-residential uses in structure(s) that include between 400 square feet and 8,000 square feet shall be subject to a Ministerial Site Plan Review process (Section 20.60 TCC).
- b. New non-residential uses in structure(s) that include between 8,000 square feet and 20,000 square feet shall be subject to an Administrative Site Plan Review process (Section 20.60 TCC).
- c. New non-residential uses in structure(s) that include more than 20,000 square feet shall be subject to a Special Use Permit process (Section 20.54 TCC).
- d. New non-residential uses may be located within an existing, nonconforming structure that does not meet the minimum lot size or setback requirements if the director determines the use and all related appurtenances can be accommodated on site.

~~42.~~ Maximum Building Height: thirty-five feet

~~23.~~ Minimum Yard Requirements:

- a. Single-Family Residential.
 - i. Front yard—see Chapter 20.07;
 - ii. Side yard—fifteen feet;
 - iii. Rear yard—twenty-five feet;
- b. Single-family residential on lots created in accordance with the planned rural residential development chapter: see Chapter 20.30A,

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- c. All other commercial, industrial and non-residential structures: see Chapters 20.07 and 20.54. All other structures: see Chapters 20.54 and 20.07

34. Maximum Coverage by Hard Surfaces. Maximum hard surface coverage for new development in this district is as follows (also see Chapter 20.07):

- a. Lots one and one-half acres or greater: Fifteen percent.
- b. Lots less than one and one-half acres: Sixty percent or ten thousand square feet, whichever is less.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997; Ord. 10398 § 3 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14773, § 7(Att. F), 7-24-2012; Ord. No. 15355, 1(Att. A, § P), 10-18-2016)

20.08A.045 Density.

- 1. The maximum density shall not exceed one unit per twenty acres. For farm housing, see Section 20.08A.020(5); and
- 2. The maximum number of dwelling units allowed on a site shall be calculated by subtracting all submerged lands as defined in the Shoreline Master Program for the Thurston Region, as amended, from the area of the parcel and, then applying the allowed zoning density in Section 20.08A.045(1).

(Ord. No. 14773, § 7(Att. F), 7-24-2012)

20.08A.060 Additional regulations.

Refer to the following chapters for provisions which may qualify or supplement the regulations presented above:

- 1. Chapter 20.08G, Agritourism Overlay District;
- 2. Chapter 20.30A Planned Rural Residential Development;
- 13. Chapter 20.34, Accessory Uses and Structures;
- 24. Chapter 20.40, Signs and Lighting;
- 35. Chapter 20.44, Parking and Loading;
- 46. Chapter 20.45, Landscaping and Screening; and
- 7. Chapter 20.54, Special Use.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997; Ord. 10398 § 3 (part), 1993)

III. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.08G (AGRITOURISM OVERLAY DISTRICT (AOD)) shall be repealed and replaced, to read as follows:

Chapter 20.08G AGRITOURISM OVERLAY DISTRICT (AOD)

20.08G.010 Purpose statement.

The purpose of the agritourism overlay district (AOD) is:

1. To preserve working lands and support the agricultural industry of Thurston County as a viable economic activity.
2. To discourage the conversion of lands used for agriculture to other incompatible uses by supporting agricultural viability and economic activity.
3. To provide clear legislative authority for agricultural landowners to launch agritourism activities in specific rural areas of Thurston County to supplement their income, educate visitors about their way of life, and share their agricultural heritage with others.
4. To protect and promote agriculture as an important component of the Thurston County economy.
4. To implement the goals and objectives of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, which recognizes the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of our agricultural and working lands.
5. To empower farmers and other rural landowners to start new, entrepreneurial endeavors that augment, and highlight the importance of local agriculture.
6. To entice visitors to rural Thurston County to see and experience the value of local agricultural lands to our culture, economy, landscape, and local food supply.
7. To boost agricultural commerce in rural Thurston County by establishing a broad overlay district that reduces barriers and inconsistencies among the base zoning districts, while maintaining and promoting the high quality of the environment and the economy in rural

(Ord. No. 14725, § 2(Att. B), 3-13-2012)

20.08G.015 - Conflicts with other regulations.

If a specific AOD standard or regulation conflicts with other specific development standards in the Thurston County Zoning Ordinance (Title 20 TCC), the AOD rules and standards shall apply. Additionally, if any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or other portion of this ordinance or its application to any person is, for any reason declared invalid, illegal or unconstitutional in whole or in part by any court or agency of competent jurisdiction, said decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof.

(Ord. No. 14725, § 2(Att. B), 3-13-2012)

20.08G.020 General residential development standards.

Subdivisions for nonagricultural uses in the Agritourism Overlay District shall be clustered in accordance with Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development (PRRD). The planned rural residential development requirements shall apply to all subdivision projects that meet the following criteria:

1. Designated RR 1/5, RRR-1/5 and R 1/10 on the official zoning map; and
2. Located within unincorporated Thurston County and outside designated urban growth area boundaries; and
3. Contains a minimum of 20 acres or more; and
4. Contains 50 percent prime farmland soils or more as identified in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and USDA Soil Survey for Thurston County; and
5. Designated as farm and agriculture current use open space or farm and agricultural conservation land open space for county property tax purposes within the past seven years.

The above provisions shall not apply if a landowner provides a site-specific soil survey developed in accordance with the National Resource Conservation Services Soil Survey Manual that confirms the prime farmland soils mapped by the USDA Soil Survey are incorrect or less than what is depicted.

20.08G.020 General AOD use standards.

General use standards for all AOD uses identified in this chapter shall be as follows:

1. Rural theme. AOD uses shall incorporate a rural theme in terms of building style and design. This means that AOD uses involving new structures shall complement or enhance, rather than detract from the rural environment.
2. Agricultural use protections. New AOD uses shall be located, designed, and operated so as not to interfere with normal agricultural practices on and off-site. Where feasible, AOD uses shall be located on lands with non-prime farmland soils.
3. Compliance with other standards. AOD uses shall comply with all other applicable county regulations, including but not limited to health, land use, environmental, building/construction, and public works requirements and standards, as well as any applicable state and federal requirements.
4. Design standards. Unless otherwise authorized by this Chapter, impervious surface coverage, building height and building setback standards for AOD uses shall be the same as the underlying zoning district.
5. Parking, landscaping, and signage standards. Unless otherwise authorized by this Chapter, all AOD uses shall provide parking and loading, landscaping and screening, signs and lighting in accordance with Chapters 20.40, 20.44, and 20.45 TCC.

7. Noise standards. All AOD uses generating noise detectible off-site shall observe Chapter 10.36 TCC, Public Disturbance Noise.

(Ord. No. 14725, § 2(Att. B), 3-13-2012)

20.08G.030 Exempt AOD uses.

Exempt AOD uses are those uses permitted as a matter of right under this chapter subject to the use standards contained in Section 20.08G.020 and any other local, state, or federal permit requirements. Exempt AOD uses are limited to the following except as otherwise authorized by the Director:

1. An accessory commercial or retail use offering direct sale of agricultural products grown and/or produced on-site involving four hundred or less square feet of floor area, subject to all other applicable local, state, and federal requirements. This shall include, but not be limited to roadside farmstands, cottage food operations, and farm bakeries.
2. Manned and unmanned you-pick operations, including, but not limited to vegetable and berry picking, pumpkin patches, and similar uses.
3. Christmas tree sales.
4. Hayrides/sleigh rides.
5. Farm tours and agricultural clinics, seminars or classes, organized group activities such as nature watching or star gazing with no overnight accommodations.
6. Farmers markets operating under the guidelines of the Washington State Farmers Market Association as amended, where no permanent structures are involved.
7. Activities and uses defined as nature tourism, geo-tourism, culinary tourism, art tourism, or eco-tourism, where no permanent structures are involved.
8. Agriculturally related experiences occurring on a farm where no structure is involved. This shall include, but not be limited to corn/crop mazes, hay bale sculptures, and similar crop art installations, animal feeding, petting zoos, archery ranges, fee fishing, and similar low-intensity activities.
9. Short-term, agritourism events including, but not limited to food and wine festivals, art shows, weddings and similar temporary gatherings are permitted subject to the Special Use requirements of TCC Section 20.54.070, subsections 41.5(d). Short-term agritourism events shall be allowed up to twenty-one days per year and shall be limited to three consecutive days per event, with a minimum of ten days between events unless otherwise approved by the Director. For temporary events lasting two or more days with an expected daily attendance exceeding two hundred individuals, the on-site manager or owner shall notify all adjacent neighbors bordering the subject property in writing of the date, time, duration, and description of the event. Notification shall occur at least five business days prior to the beginning of the event.

(Ord. No. 14725, § 2(Att. B), 3-13-2012)

20.08G.040 Permitted uses and siting standards.

The following AOD uses are permitted subject to the development standards contained in Section 20.08G.020 and the requirements provided in this Section.

1. Permitted Uses – General Siting Standards.

- a. Establishment of any permitted use provided for in this section shall be subject to an Administrative Site Plan Review process (Section 20.60 TCC).
- b. Any proposal to increase the allowable square footage of a permitted use provided for in this Section shall be subject to a Special Use Permit process (Section 20.54 TCC).
- c. Permitted uses may be located within an existing, nonconforming structure that does not meet the minimum lot size or setback requirements of the underlying zoning district if the director determines the use and all related appurtenances can be accommodated on site and are compatible with the rural theme of surrounding development.
- d. Permitted uses shall be limited to lands with non-prime farmland soils. Up to one acre of prime farmland soils can be converted for a permitted use if non-prime farmland soils are not present on the property or cannot be readily accessed without adversely impacting a primary agricultural use.
- e. New structures and parking areas shall be located to minimize adverse impacts to adjacent residential uses. In addition to the standards set forth in Chapter 20.44 TCC, parking areas shall be set back a minimum of twenty-five feet from external property lines and landscaped to soften the visual appearance from adjacent residential uses and public rights-of-way.

2. Permitted Uses - Specific Siting Standards

- a. Farmers markets operating under the guidelines of the Washington State Farmers Market Association as amended, where one or more permanent structures are involved totaling less than 8,000 square feet.
- b. Accessory nonagricultural commercial or retail uses involving a building or structure greater than 400 square feet and less than 2,000 square feet in size where the primary use of the property is agriculture.
- c. Small scale wineries, microbreweries, cider mills, craft distilleries, and similar small scale craft beverage production facilities less than 8,000 square feet in size, including any associated tasting room and retail space.
- d. Country inns less than 8,000 square feet in size located a minimum of 100 feet from all property lines. Country inns shall be accessed from a paved road, located a minimum of one-half mile from a county arterial or collector, and spaced a minimum of one air mile from another country inn or neighborhood convenience use.

- e. Agricultural home stays where the size of individual guest accommodations shall be limited to six hundred square feet of area, totaling no more than 2,400 square feet for the entire project site.
- f. Activities and uses defined as nature tourism, geo-tourism, culinary tourism, art tourism or eco-tourism, where there are one or more permanent structures involved totaling less than 8,000 square feet.

(Ord. No. 14725, § 2(Att. B), 3-13-2012; Ord. No. 14985, §§ 2—4(Att. A), 1-28-2014)

IV. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.09 (RURAL RESIDENTIAL-ONE DWELLING UNIT PER FIVE ACRES (RR 1/5) shall be amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20.09 – RURAL RESIDENTIAL-ONE DWELLING UNIT PER FIVE ACRES (RR 1/5)

20.09.042 - Subdivisions within the Agritourism Overlay District.

Subdivisions for nonagricultural uses in the Agritourism Overlay District shall be clustered in accordance with Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development (PRRD). The planned rural residential development requirements shall apply to any RR 1/5 parcel:

1. Located within unincorporated Thurston County and outside designated urban growth area boundaries; and
2. The single parcel is sized a minimum of 20 acres or larger; and
3. Contains 50 percent or more prime farmland soils as identified in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and USDA Soil Survey for Thurston County or as identified in a site-specific soil survey developed in accordance with the National Resource Conservation Services Soil Survey Manual; and
4. Contains 50 percent or more land designated as agricultural current use open space for county property tax purposes within the past seven years.

...

20.09.070 - Additional Regulations

Refer to the following chapters for provisions which may qualify or supplement the regulations presented above:

1. Chapter 20.08G, Agritourism Overlay District (AOD);
2. Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development;
- ~~13.~~ Chapter 20.32, Open Space;
- ~~24.~~ Chapter 20.34, Accessory Uses and Structures;
- ~~35.~~ Chapter 20.40, Signs and Lighting;
- ~~46.~~ Chapter 20.44, Parking and Loading;
- ~~57.~~ Chapter 20.45, Landscaping and Screening.

V. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.09A (RURAL RESIDENTIAL/RESOURCE-ONE DWELLING UNIT PER FIVE ACRES (RRR 1/5)) shall be amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20.09A – RURAL RESIDENTIAL/RESOURCE-ONE DWELLING UNIT PER FIVE ACRES (RRR 1/5)

20.09A.055 - Subdivisions within the Agritourism Overlay District.

Subdivisions for nonagricultural uses in the Agritourism Overlay District shall be clustered in accordance with Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development (PRRD). The planned rural residential development requirements shall apply to any RR 1/5 parcel:

1. Located within unincorporated Thurston County and outside designated urban growth area boundaries; and
2. The single parcel is sized a minimum of 20 acres or larger; and
3. Contains 50 percent or more prime farmland soils as identified in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and USDA Soil Survey for Thurston County or as identified in a site-specific soil survey developed in accordance with the National Resource Conservation Services Soil Survey Manual; and
4. Contains 50 percent or more land designated as agricultural current use open space for county property tax purposes within the past seven years.

...

20.09A.070 - Additional Regulations

Refer to the following chapters for provisions which may qualify or supplement the regulations presented above:

1. Chapter 20.07, Lot, Yard, Use Aand Structure Regulations;
2. Chapter 20.08G, Agritourism Overlay District (AOD)
23. Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development;
34. Chapter 20.34, Accessory Uses and Structures;
45. Chapter 20.40, Signs and Lighting;
56. Chapter 20.44, Parking and Loading;
67. Chapter 20.45, Landscaping and Screening;
78. Articles III and IV of the Thurston County Sanitary Code;
89. Chapter 15.05, Thurston County Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual;
910. Chapter 17.15, Agricultural Uses and Critical AreasThurston County Agricultural Activities Critical Areas Ordinance;
1011. Chapter 20.23, McAllister Geologically Sensitive Area District; and
1112. Title 24, Thurston County Critical Areas Ordinance.

VI. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.09C (RURAL-ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TEN ACRES (R 1/10)) shall be amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20.09C – RURAL-ONE DWELLING UNIT PER TEN ACRES (R 1/10)

20.09C.055 - Subdivisions within the Agritourism Overlay District.

Subdivisions for nonagricultural uses in the Agritourism Overlay District shall be clustered in accordance with Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development (PRRD). The planned rural residential development requirements shall apply to any RR 1/5 parcel:

1. Located within unincorporated Thurston County and outside designated urban growth area boundaries; and
2. The single parcel is sized a minimum of 20 acres or larger; and
3. Contains 50 percent or more prime farmland soils as identified in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and USDA Soil Survey for Thurston County or as identified in a site-specific soil survey developed in accordance with the National Resource Conservation Services Soil Survey Manual; and
4. Contains 50 percent or more land designated as agricultural current use open space for county property tax purposes within the past seven years.

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20.09C.070 - Additional Regulations

Refer to the following chapters for provisions which may qualify or supplement the regulations presented above:

1. Chapter 20.07, Lot, Yard, Use And Structure Regulations;
2. Chapter 20.08G, Agritourism Overlay District (AOD)
23. Chapter 20.30A, Planned Rural Residential Development;
34. Chapter 20.34, Accessory Uses and Structures;
45. Chapter 20.40, Signs and Lighting;
56. Chapter 20.44, Parking and Loading;
67. Chapter 20.45, Landscaping and Screening;
78. Articles III and IV of the Thurston County Sanitary Code;
89. Chapter 15.05, Thurston County Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual; and
910. Chapter 17.15, Agricultural Uses and Critical AreasThurston County Agricultural Activities Critical Areas Ordinance; and
1011. Title 24, Thurston County Critical Areas Ordinance.

VII. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.30A (PLANNED RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (PRRD)) shall be amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20.30A PLANNED RURAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (PRRD)

20.30A.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide for residential development in rural areas in a way that maintains or enhances the county's rural character; is sensitive to the physical characteristics of the site; retains large, undivided parcels of land that provide opportunities for compatible agricultural, forestry and other rural land uses; protects sensitive environmental resources; facilitates creation of open space corridors; and minimizes impacts of road and utility systems.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

20.30A.020 Applicability.

Planned Rural Residential Developments (PRRD) are permitted within the following districts consistent with the development standards in this chapter:

1. Long-Term Agriculture District (Chapter 20.08A);
2. Nisqually Agricultural District (Chapter 20.08C);
3. Long-Term Forestry District (Chapter 20.08D);
4. Rural—One Dwelling Unit per Five Acres (Chapter 20.09);
- ~~45.~~ Rural Residential/Resource—One Dwelling Unit Per Five Acres (Chapter 20.09A);
- ~~56.~~ Rural—One Dwelling Unit per Twenty Acres (Chapter 20.09B);
- ~~67.~~ Rural—One Dwelling Unit per Ten Acres (Chapter 20.09C); ~~and~~
- ~~78.~~ Urban Reserve—One Dwelling Unit per Five Acres (Chapter 20.09D); and
9. Agritourism Overlay District (Chapter 20.08G).

(Ord. 13884 § 8, 2007: Ord. 13834 § 10, 2007: Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 15355, 1(Att. A, § KK), 10-18-2016)

20.30A.030 Permitted uses.

Same as the underlying district and any applicable overlay districts, subject to the limitations on land uses within the resource use parcels specified in Sections 20.30A.35(3) and 20.30A.040(3).

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

20.30A.031 Minimum and maximum project acreage for PRRD.

1. The minimum project size is twenty acres.
2. The total number of dwelling units permitted is subject to the density of the underlying zoning district.
3. PRRDs which are contiguous are deemed a single project if (a) they are under common ownership, (b) the applicant(s) for PRRD or other development approval are the same or a related person or entity; or (c) the PRDs are being developed as a unified project. For purposes of this section, persons or entities are related if one owns any ownership interest in the other or exercises any legal control or influence in the decisions of the other.

(Ord. No. 14524, § 7, 6-7-2011)

20.30A.035 Agricultural resource use parcel requirements.

1. Establishment of an Agricultural Resource Use Parcel. Each PRRD required pursuant to 20.08G.020 Agritourism Overlay District, General Residential Development Standards shall contain an agricultural resource use parcel comprising a minimum of 75 percent of the subdivision.
2. Ownership. The resource use parcel may be owned by a homeowners association, corporation, partnership, land trust, individual, or other legal entity.
3. Use. The following uses of the agricultural resource use parcel are permitted, subject to any land use limitations in the underlying zoning or overlay districts:
 - i. Agriculture
 - iii. Natural areas including, but not limited to, critical areas and associated buffers, shorelines, and wildlife corridors;
 - i. One farm residence and accessory uses, including a home occupation, pursuant to Chapter 20.54 TCC.
 - ii. Primary and secondary uses identified in the Long-Term Agriculture District (Section 20.08A TCC).
 - iii. Permitted uses identified in the Agritourism Overlay District (Section 20.08G TCC).
4. Farm Residence. A residence within the agricultural resource use parcel shall count toward the total number of residential units allowed.
5. Plat Restrictions. The limitations on the use and subdivision of the agricultural resource use parcel, as provided in Sections 20.30A.035(3) and 20.30A.080(2), shall be noted on the plat. If not all the allowable density is used, the number of lots which may be created in the future shall also be noted on the plat. The limitations noted on the plat shall be effective until annexation to a city or town.

20.30A.040 General resource use parcel requirements.

1. Establishment of a Resource Use Parcel. Each ~~PRRD planned rural residential development~~ shall contain a resource use parcel comprising as a minimum the following percentage of the proposed subdivision:
 - a. Long-term agriculture district—eighty-five percent;
 - b. Nisqually agriculture district—ninety percent;
 - c. Long-term forestry district—seventy-five percent;
 - d. Rural – one dwelling unit per five acres – sixty-five percent;
 - e. Rural residential/resource—one unit per five acres district—sixty-five percent;
 - f. Rural—one dwelling unit per twenty acres—sixty-five percent;
 - g. Rural—one dwelling unit per ten acres—sixty-five percent;
 - h. Urban Reserve—sixty-five percent.
2. Ownership. The resource use parcel may be owned by a homeowners association, corporation, partnership, land trust, individual, or other legal entity.
3. Use. The following uses of the resource use parcel are permitted, subject to any land use limitations in the underlying district:
 - a. Permitted uses:
 - i. ~~Agriculture, including forest~~ Forest practices;
 - ii. Passive recreation;
 - iv. Natural areas including, but not limited to, critical areas and associated buffers, and wildlife corridors;
 - v. Community and individual water systems, sewage system drain fields, and stormwater facilities serving the subdivision, subject to the standards in Section 20.32.070. Such facilities shall not be permitted in agricultural and forestry districts where they would significantly impede the agriculture or forestry use or potential for such use; and
 - vi. One single-family residence and accessory uses, including a home occupation, pursuant to Chapter 20.54, and farm housing pursuant to Chapters 20.08A, 20.08C, or 20.09A.
 - b. Special Uses. Only the following special uses are permitted in resource use parcels created in the rural residential/resource—one unit per five acres district, subject to Chapter 20.54:
 - i. Boat launches;
 - ii. Riding stables and arenas;
 - iii. Golf courses and associated uses;
 - iv. Commercial campgrounds.

4. A residence within the resource use parcel shall count toward the total number of residential units allowed.
5. Plat Restrictions. The limitations on the use and subdivision of the resource use parcel, as provided in Sections 20.30A.040(3) and 20.30A.080(2), shall be noted on the plat. If not all of the allowable density is used, the number of lots which may be created in the future shall also be noted on the plat. The limitations noted on the plat shall be effective until annexation to a city or town.

(Ord. 11539 § 1, 1997: Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 11025 § 19, 1995: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14524, § 8, 6-7-2011; Ord. No. 15355, 1(Att. A, § LL), 10-18-2016)

20.30A.050 Optional open space.

The residential development may also include open space areas in addition to the resource use parcel described in Section 20.30A.040 above, in accordance with Chapter 20.32. Permanent open space may qualify for an exemption from the requirement of a drainage plan, in accordance with Chapter 15.05 TCC.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14524, § 9, 6-7-2011)

20.30A.060 Reserved.

Editor's note(s)—Ord. No. 14524, § 10, adopted June 7, 2011, repealed § 20.30A.060, which pertained to density bonus within rural residential/resource—1/5 district and derived from Ord. 11539 § 2, 1997: Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993.

20.30A.065 Reserved.

Editor's note(s)—Ord. No. 14524, § 11, adopted June 7, 2011, repealed § 20.30A.065, which pertained to density bonus within rural residential—1/2 district and derived from Ord. 11539 § 3, 1997: Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993.

20.30A.070 Development standards.

1. Minimum Lot Size. None, subject to compliance with applicable standards for sewage disposal and provision of water contained in Articles III and IV of the Thurston County Sanitary Code;
2. Setbacks. Setbacks from the exterior boundary of the site shall be the same as required in the underlying district. All other setback requirements shall be waived to allow flexibility in site design. However:
 - a. Individual buildings shall be separated by a minimum of ten feet, and

- b. The hearing examiner or administrator may establish setbacks not to exceed one hundred fifty feet, as necessary to buffer agricultural or forestry activities from residential uses;
- 3. Maximum Coverage. Individual lots shall not exceed the percentage permitted by the underlying zone.
- 4. Maximum Building Height. Same as underlying district;
- 5. Subdivision Design—Agricultural Resource Use Parcel.
 - a. Any prime farmland soils as identified in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and USDA Soil Survey for Thurston County present within the proposed residential development shall be contained within the resource use parcel unless the applicant demonstrates that the allowable density cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the proposed residential development; and
 - b. Agricultural resource use parcels shall, to the greatest extent possible, be a single contiguous parcel and shaped so as to accommodate a diverse range of agricultural uses; and
 - c. Agricultural resource parcels shall not be bisected by roads or easements where the physical conditions of the site would allow otherwise; and
 - d. Where consistent with other provisions of this chapter, agricultural resource parcels shall be contiguous with any abutting resource use parcel, open space, greenbelt, agricultural lands, commercial forestry lands, public preserves, parks, or schools. Wildlife corridors shall be linked with other wildlife corridors abutting the proposed subdivision; and
 - e. Any single-family residence and accessory uses within the agricultural resource parcel shall be sited to maximize agricultural use on the remainder of the parcel; and
 - f. To the maximum practicable extent, existing historic rural features shall be preserved as part of the residential development. These features include but are not limited to rock walls, fences, functional and structurally safe farm buildings, monuments, and landscape features.

56. Subdivision Design—General Resource Use Parcel.

- a. ~~Any prime agricultural soils (as identified in the Soil Survey of Thurston County) and Washington State Private Forest Land Grade 2 present within the proposed subdivision shall be contained within the resource use parcel unless the applicant demonstrates that:~~
 - i. ~~The allowable density cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the proposed subdivision; or~~
 - ii. ~~Within the rural residential/resource—1/5 district:~~
 - (A) ~~The size of the potential resource use parcel is not sufficient to sustain an economically viable resource use; or~~
 - (B) ~~The resource use is not compatible with surrounding land uses.~~

- ba. In order to retain large, undivided parcels of land that provide opportunities compatible to forestry uses and protection of sensitive environmental resources, the general resource use parcel shall, to the greatest extent possible, be a single contiguous parcel and shaped so as to be usable for resource uses. Where the resource use parcel is intended for other uses, more flexibility is allowed in the shape of the parcel; however, the resource use parcel may not be narrow strips or small interspersed parcels within the residential cluster(s).
 - be. General ~~r~~Resource use parcels that are used for ~~agriculture~~, forestry or sensitive resource protection shall not be bisected by roads or easements where the physical conditions of the site would allow otherwise.
 - cd. Where consistent with other provisions of this chapter, ~~the~~general resource use parcels shall be contiguous with any abutting resource use parcel, open space, greenbelt, agricultural lands, commercial forestry lands, public preserves, parks, or schools. Wildlife corridors shall be linked with other wildlife corridors abutting the proposed subdivision.
 - de. The subdivision shall be designed, to the extent consistent with other provisions of this chapter, to maximize the visibility of the general resource use parcel and open space areas from adjoining collector roads, arterials, or state highways.
 - ef. Native vegetation shall be retained in the general resource use parcel to the extent that it is compatible with the intended use of the parcel and does not pose a risk to public safety.
 - fg. Any single-family residence and accessory uses within the general resource use parcel shall be sited to maximize resource opportunities on the remainder of the parcel.
7. Subdivision Design—Residential Lots and Development.
- a. The configuration and size of residential lots shall~~may~~ be varied ~~and~~to blend with the natural features of the site and to retain the rural character, particularly as viewed from public roadways.~~in order to retain the natural, rural character of the site, particularly as viewed from public roadways.~~
 - b. The subdivision shall be landscaped to provide a filtered view of the development from public right(s)-of-way. Windfirm trees and other existing vegetation shall be retained where they would screen the residential development from collector roads, arterials or state highways, unless they would unduly impede site development, be incompatible with the intended use of the resource use parcel or pose a risk to public safety for motorists on those roadways and to private utilities.~~Windfirm trees shall be retained where they would screen residences from collector roads, arterials or state highways, unless they would unduly impede site development, be incompatible with the intended use of the resource use parcel, or pose a risk to public safety for motorists on those roadways and to private utilities.~~
 - c. A lot created for any existing residence on the property may be discontinuous from the remaining residential lots in the proposed subdivision

- d. Residential lots shall be grouped and not assembled in a linear configuration to minimize adverse impacts on agricultural or general resource use parcels. A linear configuration refers to a site design for the residential portion of a development which may be described as long and narrow. Exceptions shall be granted at the discretion of the approval authority where unusual site conditions, such as wetlands, steep slopes, shorelines, or very narrow lots, warrant a linear configuration. ~~Residential lots shall be grouped and not assembled in a linear configuration. A linear configuration refers to a site design for the residential portion of a development which may be described as long and narrow. Exceptions shall be granted at the discretion of the approval authority where unusual site conditions, such as wetlands, steep slopes, shorelines, or very narrow lots, warrant a linear configuration.~~

~~Explanatory note: The reasons for minimizing linear configurations are to promote the integrity of the resource use parcel by minimizing the extent of the residential cluster boundary or edge effect, and to retain the natural, rural character of the site, particularly as viewed from public roadways. Both farmers and foresters have long maintained that proximity of residences to their operations is one of the biggest threats to the continued viability of those industries in Thurston County. Impacts to critical areas are also reduced by minimizing residential boundary area.~~

(Ord. 11539 § 4, 1997; Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997; Ord. 11025 § 20, 1995; Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14524, § 12, 6-7-2011; Ord. No. 15355, 1(Att. A, § MM), 10-18-2016; Ord. No. 16151, § 1(Exh. A, § IV), 4-19-2022)

20.30A.080 Application and processing requirements.

Planned rural residential developments are subject to the application and processing requirements of Title 18, Thurston County Code.

1. The submission requirements specified in Title 18 TCC shall be supplemented with the information listed in Section 20.60.030.
2. Resubdivision.
 - a. Lands subject to a planned rural residential development may be further subdivided to the extent of the allowable density if in compliance with applicable provisions of the underlying district, this chapter, and Title 18 TCC.
 - b. Once the allowable density is used, the resource use parcel may not be further subdivided.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997; Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

20.30A.090 Administration and enforcement.

1. Building permits and other permits required for the construction or development of property under the provisions of this section shall be issued only when in the opinion of the director,

the work to be performed meets the requirements of the final plan of the planned rural residential development.

2. Minor and Major Adjustments.

- a. Minor adjustments may be made and approved by the director when a building permit is issued. Minor adjustments are those which may affect the precise dimensions or siting of buildings, but which do not affect the basic character or arrangement of buildings approved in the final plan, nor the density of the development or the resource use/open space parcel requirements.
- b. Major adjustments are those which, in the opinion of the director, substantially change the basic design, density, resource use/open space parcel or other requirements of the planned rural residential development. When, in the opinion of the director, a change constitutes a major adjustment, no building or other permit shall be issued for such an adjustment without prior review and approval by the original approval authority of the planned rural residential development.

3. If the provisions of this chapter and Title 18 TCC conflict, the provisions of this chapter shall apply.

4. Filing of Applications. See Chapter 20.60.

(Ord. 11398 § 3 (part), 1997: Ord. 10398 § 14 (part), 1993)

(Ord. No. 14773, § 10(Att. I), 7-24-2012)

VII. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.54 (SPECIAL USE) shall be amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20.54 SPECIAL USE*

Table 1

Special Uses—Distribution in County Zoning Districts

Uses listed below are prohibited unless specifically identified as allowable through special use review, or unless listed as a permitted or primary use within an individual zoning district chapter.

	USE	R 1/20	R 1/10	RRR 1/5	RR 1/5	UR 1/5	RL 1/2	RL 1/1	RL 2/1	R 3—6/1	R 4—16/1	LI	RRI	PI	NC	RCC	AC	HC	SL ¹	MGSA ²	LTA	NA	LTF	PP	MR	AOD	MEI
1.	Academic schools*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									X							
1. 5	Agritourism (see 20.08G TCC)																									X	
2.	Airfields and landing strips*	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X		A/ X																				
3.	Animal/bone black, rendering, bone distillations											X															
3. 1	Asphalt production (outside of a gravel mine)**			X								X	X												X		
3. 1	Asphalt production (with a gravel mine)		X	X	X							X	X												X		
3. 5	Athletic facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																
4.	Boat launch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									X			X				
5.	Camp or recreation ground	X	X	X																			X				X
6.	Cemeteries			X	X		X	X	X	X	X																
7.	Churches	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									X							X

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(Supp. No. 70, 2-23)

	USE	R 1/20	R 1/10	RRR 1/5	RR 1/5	UR 1/5	RL 1/2	RL 1/1	RL 2/1	R 3—6/1	R 4—16/1	LI	RRI	PI	NC	RCC	AC	HC	SL ¹	MGSA ²	LTA	NA	LTF	PP	MR	AOD	MEI
8.	Community center/community club	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									X							
9.3	Commercial Composting facilities	X	X	X	X							X	X								X	X	X				X
9.5	Country inns	X	X	X	X		X	X	X																		
10.	Day-care center	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X		X							
11.	Drive-in theaters																	X									
11.4	Family day care provider	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A				A	A	A	A		A	A	A	A				
11.5	Farm housing (five or more units)	X	X	X		X															X						
11.7	Farm stands (retail)	A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X									A/X	A/X	A/X	A/X				
12.	Feed lots	X	X	X	X		X	X													X						
12.2	Forest management activities	X	X	X																	X						X
12.5	Garages																		X								
13.	Golf facilities	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X																X
14.	Greenhouses—retail	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										X						A/X
14.5	Greenhouses—wholesale	A	A			X																X					X
15.	Home-based industry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X											X	X	X					

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(Supp. No. 70, 2-23)

	USE	R 1/20	R 1/10	RRR 1/5	RR 1/5	UR 1/5	RL 1/2	RL 1/1	RL 2/1	R 3—6/1	R 4—16/1	LI	RRI	PI	NC	RCC	AC	HC	SL ¹	MGSA ²	LTA	NA	LTF	PP	MR	AOD	MEI
16	Home occupations	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A									A	A	A	A				
17	Hospitals									X	X						X	X									X
17.5	Jails*			X	X							X		X		X	X										
18	Junk yards			X	X		X					X	X				X										
18.5	Juvenile detention facilities*			X	X							X		X		X											
19	Kennels—11 + dogs	X	X	X	X		X	X												X	X						
20	Major energy trans./generators*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X			X		X		X		
21	Mineral extraction	X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X			X					X	X	X		X		
21.3	Mobile or manufactured home parks (two—four mobile/manufactured homes per lot)			A	A		A	A	A	A	A						A										
21.6	Mobile or manufactured home parks (five or more mobile/manufactured homes)			X	X		X	X	X	X	X						X										
22	Neighborhood convenience commercial			X	X	X	X	X	X		X																
23	Nonprofit handicapped workshop	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																

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(Supp. No. 70, 2-23)

	USE	R 1/20	R 1/10	RRR 1/5	RR 1/5	UR 1/5	RL 1/2	RL 1/1	RL 2/1	R 3—6/1	R 4—16/1	LI	RRI	PI	NC	RCC	AC	HC	SL ¹	MGSA ²	LTA	NA	LTF	PP	MR	AOD	MEI
23 .5	Nonresidential use in rural area (expansion)	X	X	X	X	X	X																				
24 .	Nursing/convalescent home*	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X																
25 .	Off-site treatment and storage facility*												X		X												
25 .5	Parks, trails and preserves (public) ³	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					X			X	X ₃	X		
26 .	Petroleum products/processing storage											X															
27 .	Plastics, paints, commercial, chemical—manufacture											X															
27 .5	Prison/prerelease*	X	X	X	X																		X				
29 .	Public facilities (not schools)*		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					X			X	X	X		
30 .	Public utilities*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X					X	X	X	X		X		X
32 .	Railroad rights-of-way*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X			X					X		
32 .5	Recycling processing centers	X	X	X	X								X														
33 .	RV/boat storage—com.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																			
34 .	Residential care facilities*			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																
34 .3	Resorts and retreat facilities			X																							

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(Supp. No. 70, 2-23)

	USE	R 1/20	R 1/10	RRR 1/5	RR 1/5	UR 1/5	RL 1/2	RL 1/1	RL 2/1	R 3—6/1	R 4—16/1	LI	RRI	PI	NC	RCC	AC	HC	SL ¹	MGSA ²	LTA	NA	LTF	PP	MR	AOD	MEI
35	Riding arena/event facility/stables/arenas/academies	X	X	X	X		X	X													X						X
36	Rifle/pistol/archery ranges	X	X	X	X		X	X												X							
37	Sawmills, lumber/planing mills, molding plants											X									X		X				
38	Sawmills—large																						X				
39	Sawmills—temporary on-site	X	X	X	X	X	X	X													X						X
39.5	Secure Community Transition Facilities*	X	X	X	X							X	X	X		X	X						X		X		X
40	Slaughterhouses											X	X														
40.5	Smokehouse, commercial	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X						
41	Solid waste disposal facilities*	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X														
41.5	Temporary uses	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X		A/ X	A/ X		A/ X	A/ X	A/ X					A/ X
42	Travel trailer parks/commercial campgrounds	X	X	X	X		X																				
43	Veterinary clinics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X																	X
44.3	Wireless communication facilities (WCFs)—attached or co-located	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X		A/ X		A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X		A/ X	A/ X	A/ X	A/ X			A/ X		A/ X

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(Supp. No. 70, 2-23)

	USE	R 1/20	R 1/10	RRR 1/5	RR 1/5	UR 1/5	RL 1/2	RL 1/1	RL 2/1	R 3—6/1	R 4—16/1	LI	RRI	PI	NC	RCC	AC	HC	SL ¹	MGSA ²	LTA	NA	LTF	PP	MR	AOD	MEI
44.4	WCFs/antenna support structures-remote freestanding*																					A/ X			A/ X		
44.6	(WCFs)/antenna support structures-freestanding*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X
45.	Work release*	X	X	X									X														

X = Special use permit (approval authority is hearing examiner)

A = Administrative special use permit (approval authority is staff)

1 = Summit Lake overlay zone, Chapter 20.30

2 = Except as prohibited or limited in Chapter 20.23

3 = Applies to uses related to public parks, trails and preserves and not otherwise permitted in Chapter 20.08E

* May qualify as an essential public facility; refer to TCC 20.54.065

** = Asphalt batch plants are allowed in these zones only when they have an asphalt plant special use permit.

20.54.070 Use—Specific standards.

The following standards apply to specific special uses and are in addition to those established in other sections of this chapter. The zoning districts in which a special use is authorized are identified in Table 1.

...

9.3 Commercial Composting Facilities.

- a. Purpose. To allow facilities which import, process, package, and distribute products derived from composting yard wastes, other biosolids, and organic waste;
- b. Standards.
 1. Minimum lot size—twenty acres,
 2. Maximum building site coverage—ten percent,
 3. Minimum structural setback—one hundred feet from property line,
 4. Direct access to the operation shall be from a collector or arterial road,
 5. The entire composting operation must be conducted under a roof,
 6. The operation shall be effectively screened from view by using a solid screen six feet high. Screening may include fences, walls, vegetation, berms with vegetation, combinations of these, or other methods, all of which must provide a permanent solid screen barrier to prohibit visibility from rights-of-way and adjacent and nearby properties. Vegetation used for screening must be of sizes, types, numbers, and siting adequate to achieve one hundred percent opacity within three years. All vegetation used for screening shall be maintained in a healthy condition. Vegetation used for screening that dies shall be replaced within six months. Fences and walls over six feet high require a building permit,
 7. The operation shall meet all state noise and air quality control standards,
 8. The operation shall obtain and maintain a solid waste permit from Thurston County environmental health.

...

35. ~~Riding Stables, Arenas or Academies~~ Riding Arena and Event Facility.

- a. A lot area of not less than ten acres shall be required.
- b. Visual screening, increased setback, increased lot size, and other conditions may be required taking into account safety, noise, and odor factors.
- c. If the facility is to contain food service facilities or is intended to be used for exhibitions or shows, additional parking shall be provided as required.

IX. Thurston County Code Chapter 20.60 (ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES) shall be amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20.60 - ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

20.60.030 - Contents of application.

For an application to be deemed complete for purposes of beginning the formal project review and starting the review clock, the following basic submittal information shall be provided. During project review, additional information or studies may be requested in writing by the department if needed to address particular aspects of the project or site. While the project review clock will formally stop during the time that the additional information is being assembled, department review of other aspects of the project will continue.

If the application is deemed incomplete or if additional information is required, the applicant shall have one hundred eighty calendar days to submit the required information to the department. The department shall notify the applicant as to when the one-hundred-eighty-day period will end. If the applicant does not submit the required information within the one-hundred-eighty-day period, the application shall lapse. Prior to the expiration date, the applicant may request in writing an extension of time. The director may grant an extension if the required studies or information warrant additional time.

...

3. Type II and III Applications. Each application for a Type II or III permit shall contain the following in clear and intelligible form (with exceptions as provided in Section 20.60.030(3)(p) and (q) below):

...

- n. In addition to the information listed in subsections (3)(a) through (l) above, for planned rural residential developments, the following information is required:
 - i. For residential developments with an agricultural resource parcel, the location of prime farmland soils as defined by the identified in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan and USDA Soil Survey of for Thurston County; Washington, and Washington State's Private Forest Land Grade 2 areas, or as identified in a site-specific soil survey developed in accordance with the National Resource Conservation Services Soil Survey Manual.
 - ii. For residential developments with an agricultural resource parcel, a farm management plan identifying the following:
 - A. Location of existing and ongoing agricultural activities and facilities, including water conveyance systems; and
 - B. Proposed long-term management of the agricultural resource parcel so that it maintains agricultural functions; and
 - C. Provision of water to sustain long-term agricultural functions on the agricultural resource parcel.
 - iii. The approximate location of trees, with the location of any windfirm trees that would screen residences from public roadways specifically identified, and other native vegetation;

- iv. General land uses adjoining the proposed subdivision;
- v. The approximate location of any agricultural or general ~~designated~~ resource use parcels, designated long-term commercially significant agriculture or forest areas, identified critical areas, designated open space, greenbelts, parks, and wildlife corridors adjoining the proposed subdivision;
- vi. Intended use of the resource use parcel, including the siting of any residence, accessory structures, related appurtenances, agricultural facilities, and historic rural features;
- vii. If not all of the allowable density is used, the number of lots which may be created in the future shall also be noted on the plat. The limitations on the use and subdivision of the resource use parcel, as provided in Sections 20.30A.040(3) and 20.30A.080(2), shall be noted on the plat. These limitations shall be effective until such time as the property is annexed into a city or town;
- viii. Proposed ownership of the agricultural or general resource use parcel and open space areas; and;
- ix. Provisions to assure permanence and maintenance of any commonly owned open space through homeowners association formation or other means acceptable;



Current Agriculture Zoning

Location and Spacing




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THURSTON COUNTY LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE

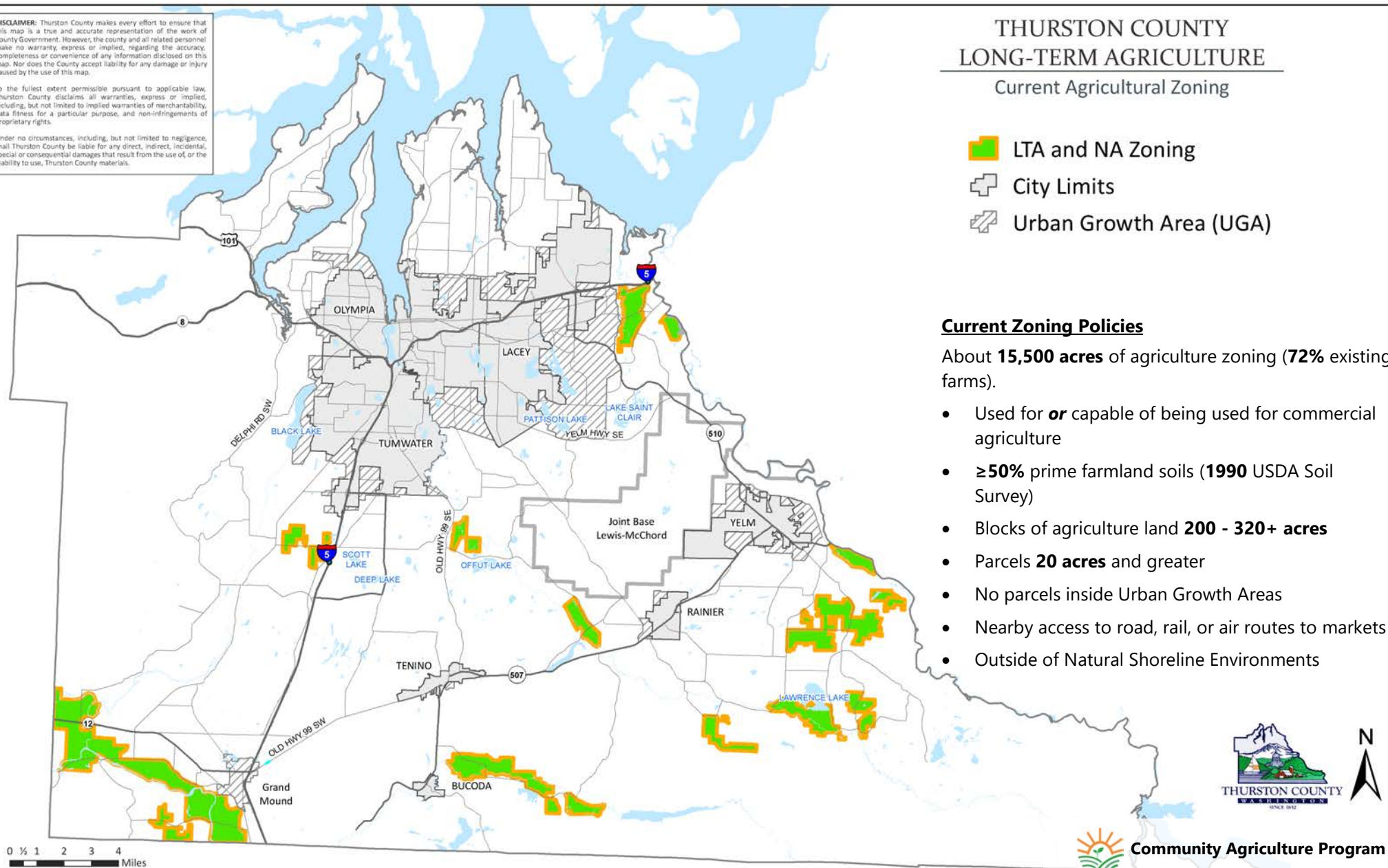
Current Agricultural Zoning

-  LTA and NA Zoning
-  City Limits
-  Urban Growth Area (UGA)

Current Zoning Policies

About **15,500 acres** of agriculture zoning (**72%** existing farms).

- Used for **or** capable of being used for commercial agriculture
- **≥50%** prime farmland soils (**1990** USDA Soil Survey)
- Blocks of agriculture land **200 - 320+ acres**
- Parcels **20 acres** and greater
- No parcels inside Urban Growth Areas
- Nearby access to road, rail, or air routes to markets
- Outside of Natural Shoreline Environments



 **Community Agriculture Program**
Community Planning & Economic Development

Planning Commission Draft—May 3, 2023

PC Packet 05-03-2023 - Agriculture Zoning Update

Draft for Discussion Purposes Only

ATTACHMENT D

Date: 3/30/2023 by EP

Document Path: S:\Projects\Agriculture\MXD\2023_Feb\LTA\Designation_Current_11x17_v2.mxd



Thurston County Prime Farmland Soils

Data from United States Dept. of Agriculture, 2022

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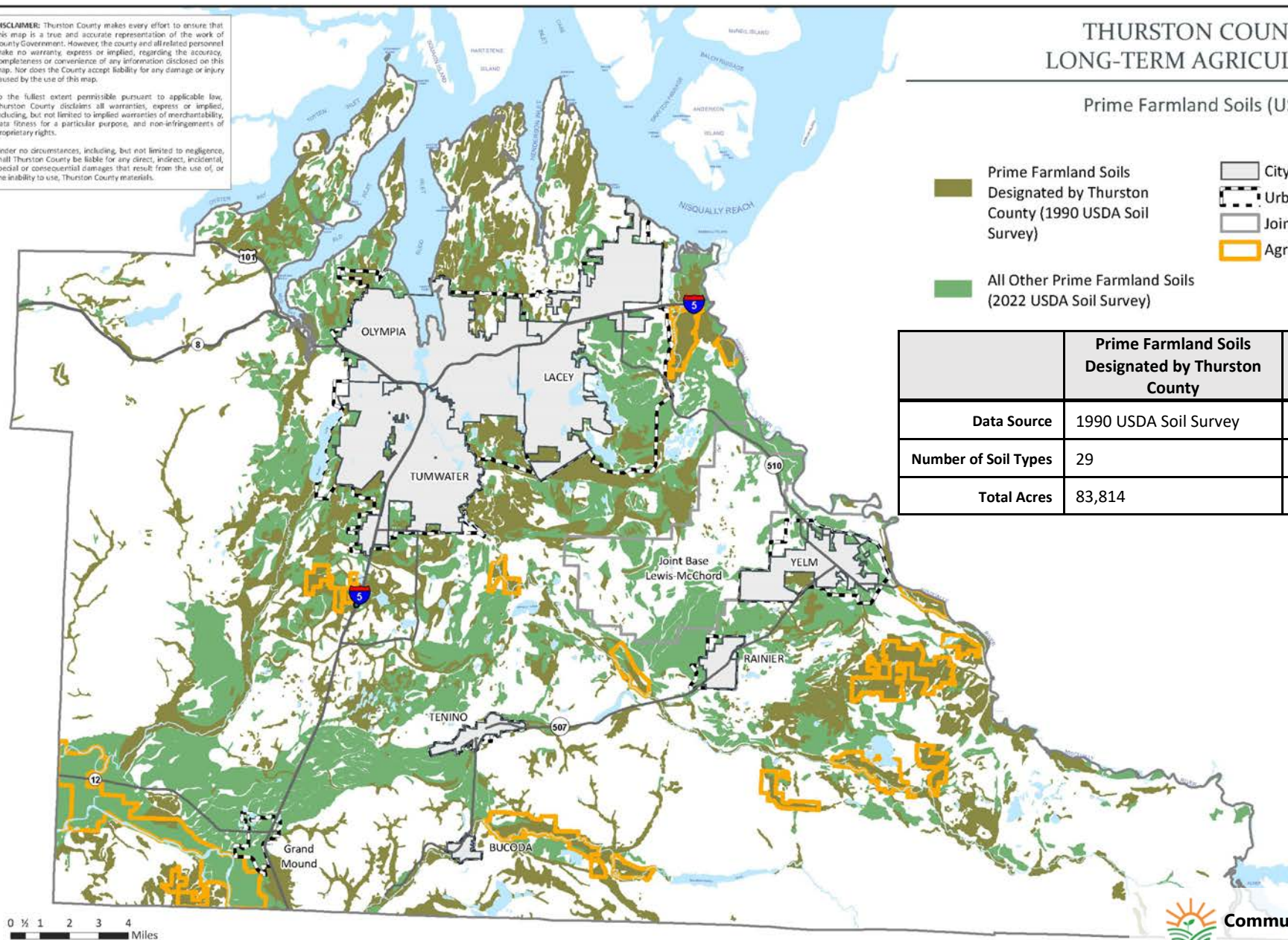
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THURSTON COUNTY LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE

Prime Farmland Soils (USDA)

- Prime Farmland Soils Designated by Thurston County (1990 USDA Soil Survey)
- All Other Prime Farmland Soils (2022 USDA Soil Survey)
- City Limits
- Urban Growth Area (UGA)
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Agriculture Zoning (LTA or NA)

	Prime Farmland Soils Designated by Thurston County	All Other Prime Farmland Soils
Data Source	1990 USDA Soil Survey	2022 USDA Soil Survey
Number of Soil Types	29	29
Total Acres	83,814	183,452



 **Community Agriculture Program**
Community Planning & Economic Development



Baseline for Agriculture Zoning Expansion Based on Appeal





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THURSTON COUNTY LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE

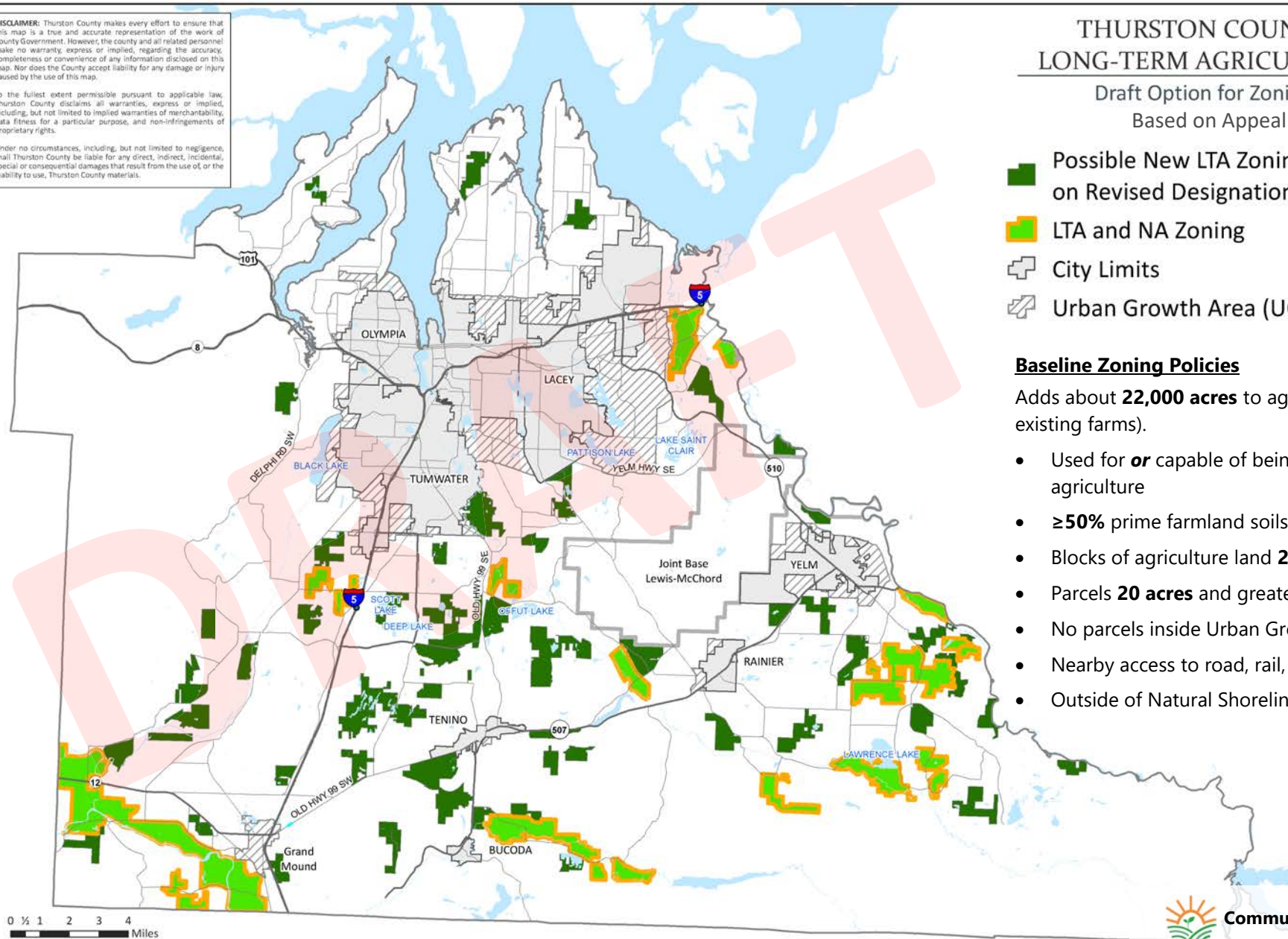
Draft Option for Zoning
Based on Appeal

-  Possible New LTA Zoning based on Revised Designation Criteria
-  LTA and NA Zoning
-  City Limits
-  Urban Growth Area (UGA)

Baseline Zoning Policies

Adds about **22,000 acres** to agriculture zoning (**45%** existing farms).

- Used for **or** capable of being used for commercial agriculture
- **≥50%** prime farmland soils (**2022** USDA Soil Survey)
- Blocks of agriculture land **200 - 320+ acres**
- Parcels **20 acres** and greater
- No parcels inside Urban Growth Areas
- Nearby access to road, rail, or air routes to markets
- Outside of Natural Shoreline Environments



Community Agriculture Program
Community Planning & Economic Development



Scenario 1 for Agriculture Zoning Expansion

Based on Stakeholder Group Themes





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THURSTON COUNTY LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE

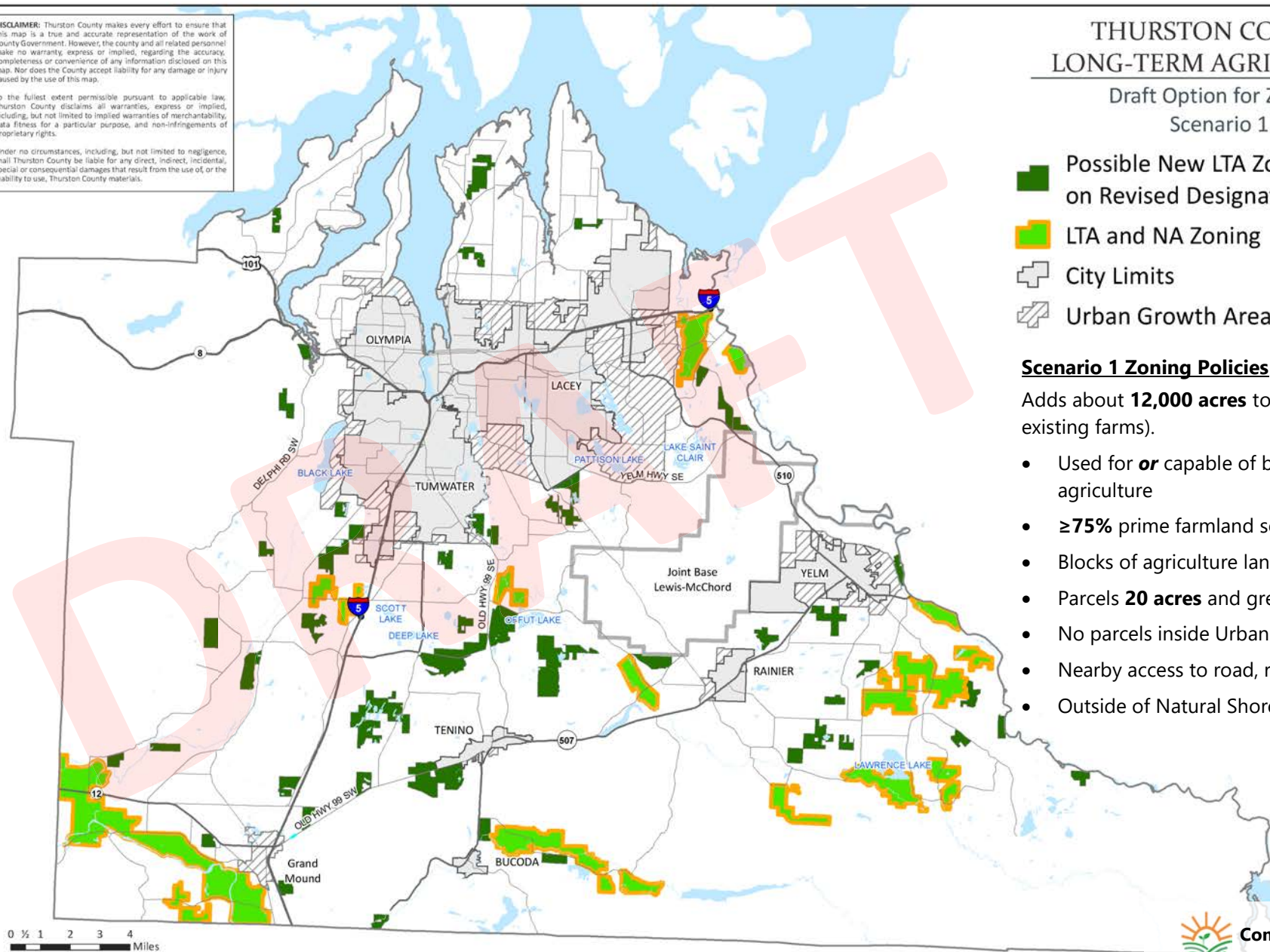
Draft Option for Zoning Scenario 1

-  Possible New LTA Zoning based on Revised Designation Criteria
-  LTA and NA Zoning
-  City Limits
-  Urban Growth Area (UGA)

Scenario 1 Zoning Policies

Adds about **12,000 acres** to agriculture zoning (29% existing farms).

- Used for **or** capable of being used for commercial agriculture
- **≥75%** prime farmland soils (2022 USDA Soil Survey)
- Blocks of agriculture land **100+ acres**
- Parcels **20 acres** and greater
- No parcels inside Urban Growth Areas
- Nearby access to road, rail, or air routes to markets
- Outside of Natural Shoreline Environments



Community Agriculture Program
Community Planning & Economic Development

Planning Commission Draft—May 3, 2023

PC Packet 05-03-2023 - Agriculture Zoning Update

Draft for Discussion Purposes Only

ATTACHMENT D

Date: 3/29/2023 by EP



Scenario 2 for Agriculture Zoning Expansion Based on Stakeholder Group Themes





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THURSTON COUNTY LONG-TERM AGRICULTURE

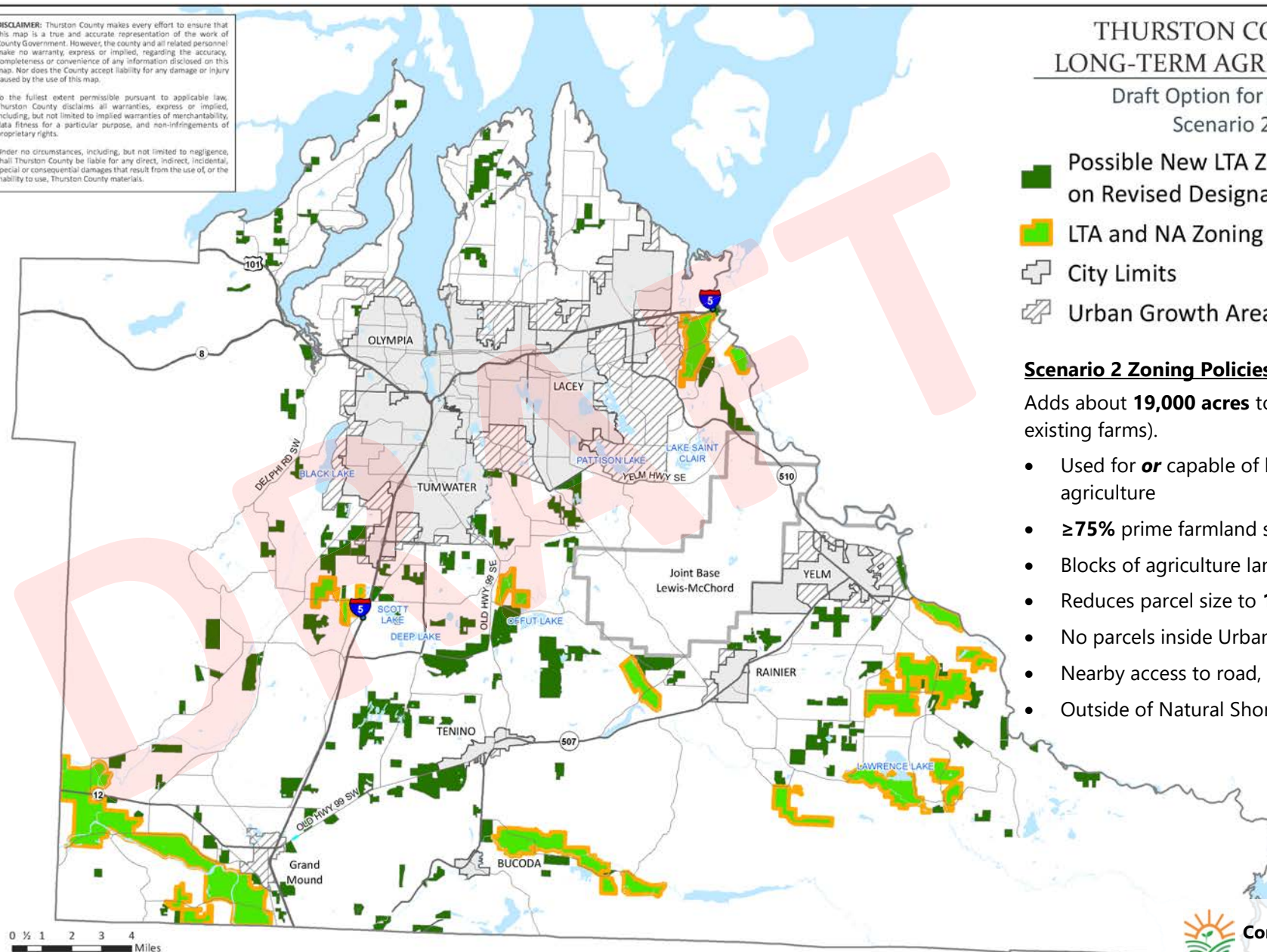
Draft Option for Zoning Scenario 2

-  Possible New LTA Zoning based on Revised Designation Criteria
-  LTA and NA Zoning
-  City Limits
-  Urban Growth Area (UGA)

Scenario 2 Zoning Policies

Adds about **19,000 acres** to agriculture zoning (32% existing farms).

- Used for **or** capable of being used for commercial agriculture
- **≥75%** prime farmland soils (2022 USDA Soil Survey)
- Blocks of agriculture land **40+ acres**
- Reduces parcel size to **15+ acres**
- No parcels inside Urban Growth Areas
- Nearby access to road, rail, or air routes to markets
- Outside of Natural Shoreline Environments



 **Community Agriculture Program**
Community Planning & Economic Development

Planning Commission Draft—May 3, 2023

PC Packet 05-03-2023 - Agriculture Zoning Update

Draft for Discussion Purposes Only

ATTACHMENT D

Date: 3/30/2023 by EP



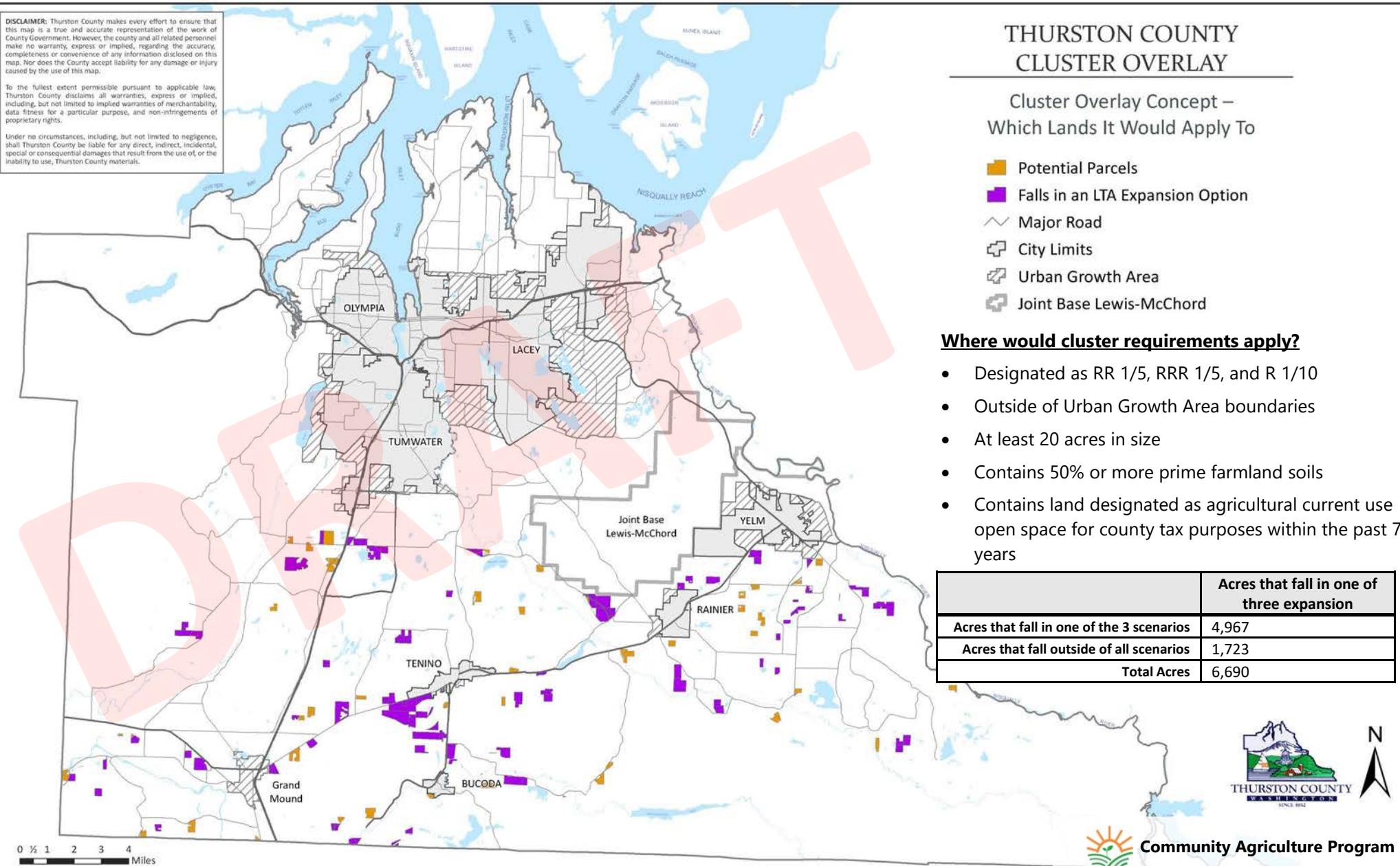
Cluster Overlay Concept

Potential Areas Affected

DISCLAIMER: Thurston County makes every effort to ensure that this map is a true and accurate representation of the work of County Government. However, the county and all related personnel make no warranty, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness or convenience of any information disclosed on this map. Nor does the County accept liability for any damage or injury caused by the use of this map.

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Agriculture Zoning Update

Community-Driven Review of Agricultural Policies and Programs

Thurston County is currently reviewing which lands are protected for agriculture of long-term commercial significance through Long-Term Agriculture (LTA) zoning and designation.

Outreach Actions

Communication	Reach	Stakeholders
• 7 Stakeholder Meetings	12 people regularly attended, 31 people regularly invited	Farmers, land trusts, building community, Tribes, technical agencies
• Community Agriculture Program webpage	Data unavailable due to website migration.	All
• Online Storymap	391 visits	All
• 4 Community Road Show Open Houses	Over 58 individuals across 3 in-person and one zoom meeting	Rural Landowners, General Public
• Targeted Outreach	Varies	Agritourism Committee (1), Voluntary Stewardship Program (3), Agriculture Advisory Committee (8), Community Farmland Trust, Thurston Conservation District, WSU Ext. Olympia Master Builders, Thurston Chamber of Commerce, Thurston Realtors Association, Thurston Economic Development Council

Links

- Agriculture Update Storymap <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/0b76ffc94c304f648803ffd03d1b6594>
- Community Agriculture Program webpage www.ThurstonAg.org

Outreach Actions Timeline



Unique ID	Date	Commenter Name	Type of Comment	Topic	Summary
1	11/5/2021	Alice Grendon	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, TDR, Regenerative Farming	I would like to see an incentive program that offers tax breaks or financial incentives to landowners who lease their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who agree to regenerative agricultural practices. Additionally I'd like to see expansion of TDR program
2	11/5/2021	Marianne Tompkins	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, TDR, Regenerative Farming	Small farms are dying off to become warehouses, developments or mini mansions with manicured yards. We need to keep local farms. We need an incentive program that offers tax breaks or other incentives to landowners who lease (or sell) their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who agree to regenerative agricultural practices. I'd also like to see expansion of the TDR program.
3	11/5/2021	Diana Moore	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, TDR, Regenerative Farming	We need an incentive program that offers tax breaks or other incentives to landowners who lease (or sell) their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who agree to regenerative agricultural practices. I'd also like to see expansion of the TDR program.
4	11/6/2021	Lisa Ceazan	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, TDR, Regenerative Farming	We need an incentive program that offers tax breaks or other incentives to landowners who lease (or sell) their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who agree to regenerative agricultural practices. I'd also like to see expansion of the TDR program.
5	11/6/2021	Diane Dakin	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, TDR, Regenerative Farming, Urban Farming	Please incentivize farms that use regenerative agriculture practices. Incentivize to keep agricultural land from development, and look at changes to zoning in urban areas to make it easier for urban farmers to grow food on small parcels.
6	11/6/2021	Sally Vogel	Change Requested	Regenerative Farming	Put policies in place the encourage regenerative farming techniques.
7	11/6/2021	Cathy Visser	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, TDR, Regenerative Farming	I'd like to see an incentive program that offers tax breaks or other incentives to landowners who lease (or sell) their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who agree to regenerative agricultural practices. I'd also like to see expansion of the TDR program.
8	11/5/2021	Gordon Wheat	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, Regenerative Farming	We need an incentive program for young farmers who can't afford to lease farmland in exchange for their commitment to use regenerative practices. We need to change zoning to permit regenerative practices.
9	11/14/2021	Lisa Johnson	Change Requested	Financial Incentives, Regenerative Farming	I'd like to see an incentive program that offers tax breaks or other incentives to landowners who lease (or sell) their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who agree to regenerative agricultural practices.
10	4/26/2022	Vince Cottone	Change Requested	Open Space Tax Program	Fee for the program should be collected when and if an application is approved by the County. Net revenue to the county is the same regardless, but applications state fee is refunded if an application is denied.
11	7/12/2022	Vince Cottone	Change Requested	Open Space Tax Program	Application fee is out of line with other western WA jurisdictions, and is a disincentive. As is the delay in realizing the tax savings.
12	9/1/2022	Sam Payne	Support	Zoning	Provided a link to American Farmland Trusts land access discussion
13	9/5/2022	Sam Payne	Support	Zoning	We are on track to lose significant farmland in the next 10 to 15 years and this will result in difficulty in producing enough food to feed people.
14	4/3/2023	Susan Goff	Change Requested	Zoning	Interested in seeing a connection between ag viability and historic barn preservations and provided a grant resource for funding.
15	4/10/2023	Cindy Gorgas	Information Requested	Open Space Tax Program	Interested in applying for Open Space, but unsure of which program to use. Confused about which program has which process.

From: [Alice Grendon](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Friday, November 5, 2021 10:20:35 AM

Name: Alice Grendon

Email: alice@thurstonclimateaction.org

Message: I would like to see an incentive program in thurston county program which offers tax-breaks or other financial incentives (a subsidy perhaps) to landowners who lease their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who sign an agreement to observe a set of regenerative agriculture practices. Such a program would both protect farmland and aid in generational transition, as well as incentivize regenerative growing techniques. This is needed in order to further the carbon sequestration and regenerative agriculture goals listed in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan.

Additionally I would like to see expansion of the use of TDR's (Transfer of Development Rights) in our county to protect agricultural land.

Time: November 5, 2021 at 5:20 pm
IP Address: 73.225.3.213
Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Marianne Tompkins](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Friday, November 5, 2021 12:00:44 PM

Name: Marianne Tompkins

Email: marianned.tompkins@gmail.com

Message: I have acreage in Thurston County. Next door to me is a 5 acre parcel that was a small farm at one time. The owner passed, and his children will soon put it up for sale. This parcel is the ideal dream opportunity for a small scale farmer. As a member of Community Supported Agriculture in Thurston County, I know how much the small farmer struggles to put food on our tables, and their heads above water. I often hear the stories of how difficult owning, or leasing farmland can be. Farmers work every day with little recognition of their efforts, and not a lot of money for their product. We can help them, and show our support with opportunity. The small farms are dyeing off to become warehouses, developments or mini mansions with manicured yards. Warehouses are not going to feed our families, and we can not continue to cover our fertile soils with the built environment. We need our local farms. They not only feed us, they support a better climate by having a small footprint and keeping transportation to a minimum. We need an incentive program in Thurston County that will offer tax breaks, or other financial incentives to landowners who lease (or sell) their land at a lower market rate to new and young farmers that are committed to using regenerative agriculture practices. A program that protects farmland, as well as incentivize regenerative growing techniques is a win win for all of us in the County. Who doesn't love a farm! Additionally, I would like to see expansion of the use of TDR's (Transfer of Development Rights) in our County to further protect agricultural land.
Thank you! Marianne Tompkins

Time: November 5, 2021 at 7:00 pm
IP Address: 73.42.235.195
Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Diana Moore](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Friday, November 5, 2021 2:10:52 PM

Name: Diana Moore

Email: dianamoore1814@gmail.com

Message: I urge you to begin to offer tax-breaks and other financial incentives in the county to landowners who lease their land at a lower than market rate to new farmers who sign an agreement to abide by regenerative agriculture practices. This would protect farmland and also help in a generational transition. It would also promote the use of regenerative farming practices. The result would be much needed carbon sequestration in addition to helping to meet regenerative agriculture goals, which are outlined in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan.

Thank you.

Time: November 5, 2021 at 9:10 pm
IP Address: 97.113.48.43
Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Lisa Ceazan](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Saturday, November 6, 2021 6:21:34 PM

Name: Lisa Ceazan

Email: lisajonc@gmail.com

Message: I urge Thurston County to institute a program which offers tax-breaks or other financial incentives to landowners who lease their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who sign an agreement to observe a set of regenerative agriculture practices. Such a program would both protect farmland and aid in generational transition (a concern as many farmers age with less ability to pass on their farms), as well as incentivize regenerative growing techniques. Additionally I would like to see expansion of the use of TDR's (Transfer of Development Rights) in our county to protect agricultural land. These measures are needed in order to further the carbon sequestration and regenerative agriculture goals listed in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. They also would serve as an adjunct to the Sustainable Fields and Farms law, which provides grants to farmers to grow food in a way that mitigates carbon emissions.

This law passed the state legislature in 2020, and at that time, Carbon Washington reported that, "With farmers on the front lines of climate-related events such as wildfire, flooding, drought, pests, and other threats to both natural resources and farm business, investing in practices that increase the natural and economic resilience of our farmland is critical.

Farmers have been leading the way on land stewardship and soil health for decades. However, the economics of a highly trade-exposed industry, in which producers cannot set their prices, demand this investment now, and at a scale that enables meaningful impact."

Now, more than ever, we must do whatever we can to reverse carbon emissions, to increase soil health for growing nutritious food, and to preserve a way of life for farmers, whose valuable contribution of an important, local source of food cannot be underestimated.

Time: November 7, 2021 at 1:21 am

IP Address: 73.221.224.197

Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Diane Dakin](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Saturday, November 6, 2021 2:06:18 PM

Name: Diane Dakin

Email: diane.e.dakin@gmail.com

Message: I have lived in Thurston Co for 37 years.

My concern about climate issues has increased over time. As a family physician, I can see both individual and global health issues growing. Regenerative agriculture appears to be one method to help heal ourselves and our planet.

Locally we can help by :

- *Incentives for farmers using regenerative agriculture techniques that build soil health and store carbon

- *Incentives to keep agricultural land from development (possibly through expansion of TDR's)

- *Changes to zoning in urban areas that make it easier for urban farmers to grow food on smaller parcels

Thank you,

Diane Dakin, MD

Time: November 6, 2021 at 9:06 pm

IP Address: 73.225.107.148

Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Sally Vogel](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Saturday, November 6, 2021 9:51:02 AM

Name: Sally Vogel

Email: sallyvogel@comcast.net

Message: I urge you to put into place policies that will encourage regenerative farming techniques. This kind of farming will sequester carbon and is essential to save us from the worst effects of climate change.

We need a new generation of farmers, so encouraging young people is critical. Please put into place policies that will do so.

Sincerely,

Sally Vogel

Time: November 6, 2021 at 4:50 pm
IP Address: 73.42.183.136
Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Cathy Visser](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Saturday, November 6, 2021 6:22:48 AM

Name: Cathy Visser

Email: cathyv63@gmail.com

Message: In view of climate change and supply chain threats, it's more important than ever to build a strong local food supply. I would like to see an incentive program in Thurston county program which offers tax-breaks or other financial incentives (a subsidy perhaps) to landowners who lease their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who sign an agreement to observe a set of regenerative agriculture practices. Such a program would both protect farmland and aid in generational transition, as well as incentivize regenerative growing techniques. This is needed in order to further the carbon sequestration and regenerative agriculture goals listed in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. Additionally I would like to see expansion of the use of TDR's (Transfer of Development Rights) in our county to protect agricultural land.

Time: November 6, 2021 at 1:22 pm

IP Address: 24.18.104.83

Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Gordon Wheat MD](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Friday, November 5, 2021 8:01:09 PM

Name: Gordon Wheat MD

Email: gwheat12@gmail.com

Message: As a physician I am greatly concerned about the public health risks of climate change right here in the Northwest. It is very troubling that the June heat dome event resulted in more than 1,000 deaths in the Northwest, and wildfire smoke is another climate related health problem we are all experiencing much more frequently. Regenerative agriculture can sequester huge amounts of carbon, and while Thurston County cannot sequester enough carbon to "move the needle" globally, we can set an important example and at the same time improve the livability of our community.

Incentives to young farmers who cannot afford to lease vacant farmland in exchange for commitments to use regenerative practices would solve several problems.

First it would demonstrate the benefit of incentivising regenerative agriculture, turning farmland from a carbon generator to a carbon sequester. In fact regenerative techniques turn farmland into one of the most potent and cost effective forms of carbon sequestration while greatly improving the health of the soil and reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and genetically altered crops.

Second, incentives to young farmers can help develop a badly needed new generation of farmers and make productive unused potential farmland in our county.

Third, incentives to young farmers, together with TDRs and growth management zoning can help to preserve farmland, and make our cities more livable and compact.

Fourth, zoning to permit regenerative gardening practices in urban areas could provide healthy and useful greenspace that should be used to educate the public about the value of regenerative agriculture. The Food and Agriculture Committee of the Thurston Climate Action Team could help produce evidence based educational exhibits for the public.

Fifth, this is all a low cost way to fulfill the goals of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan while improving the beauty and livability of our cities and the productive capacity and rural character of the remainder of Thurston County.

Time: November 6, 2021 at 3:00 am

IP Address: 177.242.197.47

Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [LISA JOHNSON](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project
Date: Sunday, November 14, 2021 2:31:32 PM

Name: LISA JOHNSON

Email: LISAAJWA@COMCAST.NET

Message: Regenerative agriculture is good for health, farmers and the climate. I would like to see an incentive program in Thurston County which offers tax-breaks or other financial incentives (a subsidy perhaps) to landowners who lease their land at a lower than market rate to new and young farmers who sign an agreement to observe a set of regenerative agriculture practices. Such a program would both protect farmland and aid in generational transition, as well as incentivize regenerative growing techniques. This is needed in order to further the carbon sequestration and regenerative agriculture goals listed in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan.

Time: November 14, 2021 at 10:31 pm
IP Address: 73.221.224.66
Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Christina Chaput](#)
To: [Thomasina Cooper](#); [Vince Cottone](#)
Cc: [Maya Teeple](#); [Andrew Deffobis](#)
Subject: RE: Follow-up from Comm. Menser's office
Date: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 1:20:48 PM

Mr. Cottone:

Thank you for your input on a potential process change. It has been added to the record. As part of the Community-Driven Agricultural Program and Policies review, staff and the stakeholder groups will be looking at Program administrative fees in addition to the other policy review work. Your proposals will be part of the information presented.

To stay up to date on the project, please continue to check the website at [Thurston County | Planning | CPA-16: Community-Driven Review of Agriculture Policies and Programs \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](#)

Thank you,
Chris

Christina Chaput | Community Planning Manager
Thurston County Community Planning & Economic Development
Community Planning Division
2000 Lakeridge Dr. SW, Bldg 1, Olympia, Washington 98502
Cell: (360) 522-2559
Office (Tue, Wed): (360) 786-5486
Christina.Chaput@co.thurston.wa.us | www.thurstonplanning.org

From: Thomasina Cooper <thomasina.cooper@co.thurston.wa.us>
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 8:53 AM
To: Vince Cottone <vincecottone@gmail.com>; Christina Chaput <christina.chaput@co.thurston.wa.us>
Subject: RE: Follow-up from Comm. Menser's office

Hi Vince and Chris,
Vince, thank you for your note. I've included Christina Chaput, Long Range Planning Manager, on this reply, as this topic is in her bailiwick. I will also ensure Commissioner Menser sees it as well.

Chris, please see Vince's email below about when the application fee for Open Space Tax program is collected.

Thanks,
Thomasina

From: Vince Cottone <vincecottone@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 3:25 PM
To: Thomasina Cooper <thomasina.cooper@co.thurston.wa.us>
Subject: Re: Follow-up from Comm. Menser's office

Hi Thomasina,

I would like to propose an interim workaround concerning the the Open Space Tax Program fees. Since it is stated in the documentation that the application fee would be refunded in the event the application is denied, I think it is reasonable and proper that the fee should instead be collected when the application is approved rather than when it is first submitted. The Open Space program is different than, say, a construction permit or similar, in that the benefits of inclusion benefit the whole county as opposed to one owner. The net revenue result of a successful application is the same either way insofar as the county is concerned. Further, it is no secret that the county is, uh, not hurting for money right now. In this scenario I would expect that the fee schedule in effect as of the application approval/due date would apply. Perhaps other related public benefit programs should also be treated in this way.

I reiterate that I consider the presently set fee to be onerous and excessive, and a strong disincentive to many property owners who might want to enter the program. This is especially so given that once an application reaches successful completion, it is a minimum of two years before any tax savings are realized, and at the present fee level the first years' tax reduction is mostly or entirely offset in many cases.

Sincerely,

Vince Cottone

On 4/22/22 12:41 PM, Thomasina Cooper wrote:

Hi Vince,

It was nice to speak with you earlier. Thank you for reaching out and sharing your frustration about the cost of the Open Space Tax program application.

As we chatted about, the board is undertaking a review of our agricultural policies and programs, which includes open space tax program. It's a significant sized project, and I encourage you to check out this webpage to learn more. You will see that there is also a link to submit comments, and you are welcome to do so.

[Thurston County | Planning | CPA-16: Community-Driven Review of Agriculture Policies and Programs \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/CPA-16-Community-Driven-Review-of-Agriculture-Policies-and-Programs)

If there I can help you further, or you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Warmly,
Thomasina

Thomasina Cooper

Executive Aide to Tye Menser

Thurston County Commissioner, District #3

360-786-5414

360-490-2243 (cell)

[Follow Tye on Facebook!](#)

From: [Christina Chaput](#)
To: [Andrew Deffobis](#)
Subject: FW: Open Space/Open Space Current Use Tax Program Application Fee
Date: Tuesday, July 12, 2022 1:04:58 PM

FYI and for file

-----Original Message-----

From: Vince Cottone <vincecotton@gmail.com>
 Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2022 1:00 PM
 To: County_Commissioners <County.Commissioners@co.thurston.wa.us>; Thomasina Cooper <thomasina.cooper@co.thurston.wa.us>; Christina Chaput <christina.chaput@co.thurston.wa.us>; Marisa Whisman <marisa.whisman@co.thurston.wa.us>
 Subject: Open Space/Open Space Current Use Tax Program Application Fee

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

I am writing to again protest the amount demanded by Thurston County as application fee for the Open Space tax program. I was told by the person coordinating the program, Marisa Whisman, that the current fee is \$1,616.00. Doing a little research, I have learned just how far out of line Thurston's fee is. It's much higher than nearly every other Western Washington county charges for their programs. Below are the fees I was able to determine from the responsible departments in other counties:

King \$620.00

Pierce \$1200.00

Snohomish \$500.00

Whatcom \$575.00

Lewis \$350.00

Clark \$400.00

Grays Harbor \$450.00

Skagit \$500.00

The average of the above county fees is \$574.38, even including the outlier among the above list, Pierce. In every other case besides Pierce, the fees are fair and reasonable.

Thurston's exorbitant application fee to enter a program designed by the legislature to provide public benefit and incentives to preserve habitat and resources is so ridiculously out of line that it constitutes a powerful disincentive (really, an active discouragement) to enter the program. Couple that with the long delay (the year following the assessment year, itself following the application year) in actually realizing any meaningful tax savings, and the program becomes a no-starter.

I am 75 years old and retired, have a 10 acre forested property with priority species present and a conservation easement with Capitol Land Trust, and the current application fee will effectively cancel the tax benefit I'd realize in the first year it becomes operative, assuming the application is approved. I have been told that the fee structure is under review. I would like to know, what is the likelihood is that this fee might be brought into line some time before I become compost?

Vince Cottone

9529 Brooks Lane SE

98501

From: [Sam Yellowbird](#)
To: [Maya Teeple](#)
Subject: Fwd: Land Access Lunch & Learn Follow Up
Date: Thursday, September 1, 2022 11:14:57 AM
Attachments: [Land Access QA.081722 Live Links.pdf](#)

Ms. Teeple

I am forwarding this to you in the hopes this may be shared with other interested parties. I am well aware that the actions at the local planning and zoning committees is where the actions taken are vital to our agricultural interests. I am looking forward to the time to attend in person the committee meetings.

Thank You Sam Payne

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Emily Manke** <emily@agbizcenter.org>
Date: Thu, Sep 1, 2022 at 9:46 AM
Subject: RE: Land Access Lunch & Learn Follow Up
To:

Hi there,

Please find the revised Q&A sheet from the Land Access Lunch & Learn attached. The links on this .pdf are all live, the one sent prior was missing links. Sorry for the inconvenience, and please let me know if you have any other questions.

Best,

Emily

From: Emily Manke <emily@agbizcenter.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2022 9:43 AM
Subject: Land Access Lunch & Learn Follow Up

Hi there,

Thank you to everyone who attended the Lunch & Learn presentation on August 17! Addie Candib, American Farmland Trust's Pacific Northwest Regional Director, talked about many issues that make land access for farmers complicated, and resources to help growers seeking land. The attached Q&A document includes a list of these excellent resources, as well as questions and responses offered during the session.

Addie's presentation slides are attached and here is a [link to the recording](#) of the session. If you have further questions, contact Addie at acandib@farmland.org.

If you would like to learn more about land access issues in Washington, AFT and Viva Farms are offering a series of four workshops in September. **For more information and to register, [click here](#).**

Stay tuned for news of upcoming Lunch & Learn sessions. If you have suggestions for future topics/presenters, please let us know.

- Mike Peroni, Mardi Solomon, Emily Manke

Emily Manke

SW WA Region Administrative Coordinator
Northwest Agriculture Business Center

www.agbizcenter.org

Office: [360-336-3727](tel:360-336-3727)

Cell: [360-223-2008](tel:360-223-2008)

Fax: [360-336-3751](tel:360-336-3751)

Western WA Food Systems Partnership Lunch and Learn Q & A

Responses by Addie Candib,

American Farmland Trust

August 17, 2022

American Farmland Trust Report: [Farms Under Threat 2040: Choosing an Abundant Future](#)

Resources for Financial Readiness:

- [National Young Farmers Coalition](#) (Finding Farmland Calculator)
- [Northwest Farm Credit AgVision](#)

Resources for Finding Land:

- [Farm to Farmer](#) (statewide land-linking program)

Resources for Assessing Land:

- [USDA](#) (Web Soil Survey)
- [State of WA Dept. of Ecology](#) (water rights search guidance)

Resources for Leasing Land:

- [Land for Good](#), (Build-a-Lease Tool)

Resources for Legal Concerns:

- [Farm Commons](#) (developing lease and purchase agreements)

Policy Resources:

- Article: [Anti-Corporate Farming Legislation](#), Center for Rural Affairs
- [The National Agricultural Law Center](#), (overview of corporate farming laws)
- 2023 Farm Bill Advocacy
 - [National Young Farmers Coalition](#)
 - [American Farmland Trust](#)

Questions & Answers

Q: Clarifying question: Are you saying only a quarter of FARMLAND changes hands on the open market, or a quarter of ALL land transactions?

A: This is from a USDA survey of farmland ownership and tenure (TOTAL survey) done in 2014. It specifically refers to agricultural land, not all land transactions.

Q: How much do incubator farms really improve land access for new/beginning/continuing farmers?

A: Ten to twenty years ago when farm incubators took off, it was an innovative concept that we could use to facilitate access to farmland by providing farmers with land for a couple of years. We have seen that, while incubators are helpful in getting people onto land and gaining experience growing food and running a business, there is a “cliff” that happens when people’s term on the incubator farm is over. We are starting to see incubators around the country thinking about how to make a long-term commitment to help people stay on land. Not all folks running incubators have the funding or capacity to keep acquiring land and making it available for beginning farmers.

Q: I would like to see the landholder have the capability to place their land in farmland reserve status making it economically feasible for the land to be preserved as farmland.

A: There are different ways this can happen; either through zoning the land so it can't be used for anything other than agricultural purposes, or partnering with a land trust to establish an agricultural conservation easement to keep the land in farmland in perpetuity. There are upsides and downsides to both of these options.

Comment: Many ports own properties and some of those properties have agricultural value for different types of growers/producers (e.g., Port of Chehalis, Port of Skagit).

Q: Do you know of any legislation that would dis-incentivize the speculative purchase of farmland by non-farming groups?

A: There are nine states that have anti-corporate farming legislation on the books. The laws put conditions on whether corporations can own land. Some research from Center for Rural Affairs shows that states with this legislation have less poverty in rural communities and farms show greater returns on their taxes. We don't have these laws on the books in WA State or anywhere in the Pacific Northwest. Because of political polarization, and how the agricultural landscape has changed in terms of corporate consolidation, it may be politically unfeasible to pass such laws in this state.

Q: Is there any tribal involvement in the agricultural land access conversation?

Comment: Chehalis Tribe leases land to a grain farmer.

A: This is not a neutral topic. Tribal communities in this region were not traditionally agriculturalists but depended on hunting and gathering. Part of the colonization of tribal communities was it forced them into places where they couldn't rely on their traditional foodways and had to grow food under a colonial agricultural system. So, the assumption that tribes would be interested in leasing land for agriculture in a conventional way is complicated and we have to tread carefully and with a lot of curiosity. There are exciting examples of Northwest tribes doing work around food sovereignty. The Yakama nation is [one example](#), and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation is another; they are doing [interesting work around agrivoltaics](#) (growing food alongside solar panels).

Comments: The Dept. of Ecology Office of Chehalis Basin doesn't own farmland but we are extremely interested in farmland preservation as ag land and open space. That achieves our objectives of preventing flood damage and preserving and protecting the rural character of the land for the benefit of aquatic species and riparian habitat.

There is helpful guidance from the DOE for people who want to investigate the availability of water for agriculture in different parts of the state.

Q: Can you say more about the Farmland Protection and Affordability Investment Program?

A: There are two new programs in WA. The Housing Finance Commission has a new revolving loan program for land trusts that want to act quickly to protect high-value farmland and take it off the open market. It is called the [Farmland Protection and Affordability Investment Program](#). The timeline for loan repayment is flexible from 1-7 years.

As a companion to that program, the WA State Conservation Commission has a funded account called the [Farmland Protection and Land Access Account](#). The two programs are paired together to

offer a tool to allow land trusts to be nimble and act quickly to access a loan to purchase farmland, and then the FPLA covers costs to place an easement before selling the land to another farmer.

Q: Has anyone had success working with local county assessors in identifying land that is in danger of losing Ag Open Space tax status to connect them with farmers looking for land?

A: Note: No one in the session knew an answer to this question. Information about the Open Space Taxation Act can be found here: <https://dor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/OpenSpace.pdf>

Q: Do you know of any models of cooperative farmland ownership?

A: Yes, Land for Good put out a new guide on cooperative land tenure: [Accessing Farmland Together: A Decision Tool for Farmers](#). There is a lot of interest, but the technical assistance community needs to grow our base of knowledge and skills to be able to point people interested in this option in the right direction. After you figure out the financial piece, there is a soft skills component to making those relationships work when people go into farming land together. The hardest part is the social piece. We need to do some work to be able to provide more support for people to be successful in these cooperative arrangements.

Q: There is a lot of development pressure in the Puget Sound area. Are there areas in the tri-state region you cover where there is more affordable property and available farmland, or is this an issue throughout our whole region?

A: This is a common issue. The price of land is higher in Puget Sound than Eastern WA, but the price is going up everywhere. There is a trend of older farmland owners who want to pass their land to the next generation but don't have someone identified. They want their land to stay in farming but can't afford to give their land away. There is a huge opportunity there. [Farm to Farmer](#) is providing technical assistance to those folks. There are opportunities for creativity, and again, it comes down to those soft skills of facilitating those relationships, partnerships, and the transition of knowledge.

Maya Teeple

From: Sam Payne <donotreply@wordpress.com>
Sent: Monday, September 5, 2022 11:46 AM
To: Maya Teeple
Subject: Incoming Comment Ag Project

Name: Sam Payne

Email: rvmgr01@gmail.com

Message: By introduction my name is Sam Payne and I am the registered agent for Resilient Veterans a 501c3 non-profit registered in the state of Washington. Our mission statement is Feeding the People. Everything we do stems from that statement.

I am also a member of the Farmers Veteran Coalition which is a national group of farmer veterans. We engage in training, education and assisting veterans who wish to farm. Our number one issue is farmland access and are constantly on the hunt for suitable lands to farm. What we would like to know is what is currently being done to preserve farmland in Thurston County. Once we know that then we can provide meaningful comments on what to do going forward.

I recently attended a meeting with Farmland Trust and if we do nothing then we are on track to lose somewhere in the vicinity of 200,000 acres of farmland in the State of Washington in the next 10 to 15 years. This will result in difficulty in producing enough food to feed the people in this state.

Food security is national security. Our activities are interesting to the highest levels of DOD and the Dept of Agriculture.

In 1942, roughly 15 million families planted victory gardens; by 1944, an estimated 20 million victory gardens produced roughly 8 million tons of food—which was the equivalent of more than 40 percent of all the fresh fruits and vegetables consumed in the United States.

Citation: <https://tellus.ars.usda.gov/stories/articles/time-for-victory-gardens-again/>

Thank you for your time
 Sam Payne
 Resilient Veterans Farms

Time: September 5, 2022 at 6:46 pm

IP Address: 76.135.31.137

Contact Form URL: <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-ag-project/>

Sent by an unverified visitor to your site.

From: [Ashley Arai](#)
To: [Dana Bowers](#)
Subject: FW: Friday's Olympian article on farming
Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 8:43:55 AM

For the LTA outreach report

Ashley Arai | Agriculture Community Program Manager
Thurston County Community Planning & Economic Development
Community Planning Division
3000 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia, Washington 98501
Cell (Primary): (360) 280-9298
Ashley.Arai@co.thurston.wa.us | www.thurstonplanning.org

From: Ashley Arai
Sent: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 8:44 AM
To: 'SUSAN GOFF' <scdgoff@comcast.net>
Subject: RE: Friday's Olympian article on farming

Good morning Susan,

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts on farmland preservation here in Thurston County! Having grown up in New York's Finger Lakes Region where historic barns dot the landscape, I agree they play an important role in supporting the long-term economic viability of farms. I will be sure to look into the program you reference and research whether there are any additional provisions we can integrate at a local level to support this kind of adaptive use.

We appreciate all you are doing to support the next generation of farmers—please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any additional insights or questions.

Kindly,

Ashley

Ashley Arai | Agriculture Community Program Manager
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From: SUSAN GOFF <scdgoff@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 2:44 PM
To: Ashley Arai <ashley.arai@co.thurston.wa.us>
Subject: Friday's Olympian article on farming

Ashley --

My husband and I attended the informative meeting last Monday night at the South Union Grange.

Last Friday, the Olympian had their front page article (and video) "Vendors prepare for new season at Olympia Farmers Market" highlighting Skipping Stone Garden with owners Gabriel and Sarah Baisan. The Baisans are leasing from us beginning this year and represent why my husband and I have the opportunity to support new farmers which Gabe expressed so excellently in the article -- getting a start, finding land and the wish to own their own farm.

We are always interested in being a resource as part of the complex issue of farmland preservation. With my long-time connection to historic preservation, I would suggest that the very successful program through the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's Heritage Barn Grant program which provides matching grants to preserve historic barns (50 years and older) statewide. To aid farm land, adaptive use of barns and other agricultural buildings (as a milk house as a welcoming room) can assist economically.

Susan Goff
Thunder Mountain Farm
Olympia

From: [Ashley Arai](#)
To: [Dana Bowers](#)
Subject: FW: Ag Zoning update Yelm meeting 4/4/23
Date: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 9:16:12 AM

Here's the email response

Ashley Arai | Agriculture Community Program Manager
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From: Ashley Arai
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 9:13 AM
To: Roland Gorgas <astrofreak03@yahoo.com>
Subject: RE: Ag Zoning update Yelm meeting 4/4/23

Hi Cindy,

I am happy to hear you're interested in enrolling in one of the County's Open Space Tax Programs! There are two different programs you may be eligible for based on the info you shared about your property last week—the Assessor's office Farm and Agriculture Current Use Open Space Program and the Board's Open Space Program for Farm and Agricultural Conservation Lands. Here's a quick breakdown of the application and eligibility criteria for each:

Assessor's Open Space Program:

No application fee, must demonstrate the land is primarily in agriculture use and meets the following income requirements:

- a. 20 acres or more + housing if integral – proof of commercial income
- b. 5-20 acre = \$200 per acre per year for 3 of last 5 years. (gross income)
- c. less than 5 acres = \$1,500 income per year for 3 of last 5 years.

Board's Open Space Program:

\$1,728 Application Fee and required public review process with hearings before the Planning Commission and Board. Current eligibility is limited to:

- a. properties no longer eligible for the assessor's program
- b. farmed properties zoned LTA and a minimum of 20 acres in size if a house is present.

NOTE: The Board is currently considering updates to the eligibility criteria that would open the program up to farms in all zones and parcels a minimum of 1 acre in size.

Here are some links to additional info and I'm happy to answer any other questions you have:

[Assessor's Office Current Use Program](#) (scroll to the bottom where you will find application documents for Farm and Agriculture Current Use)

[Board's Open Space Program](#) (scroll to the bottom where you will find application documents)

[Summary sheet of all Open Space Programs](#)

Thanks!

Ashley

Ashley Arai | Agriculture Community Program Manager
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From: Roland Gorgas <astrofreak03@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 3:21 PM
To: Ashley Arai <ashley.arai@co.thurston.wa.us>
Subject: Re: Ag Zoning update Yelm meeting 4/4/23

Thank you, Ashley,

You and Dana did a great job informing the public about the Ag. zoning issues and proposals at the meeting in Yelm. Very nice work.

I'm looking for information about the current use/open space application through the County Board of Commissioners. Is there a process by which to apply for Open Space through the Thurston County Board of County Commissioner's (BOCC) office(s), as opposed to a Department?

I have found all the paperwork to apply through the Community, Planning and Economic Development Department but I think this may be one of two ways to apply - the other being through the BOCC. Please let me know if that is accurate.

I found the presentation from staff to the BOCCC of the George property open space application on YouTube and will try to watch that sometime this week.

Thanks so much for your help.

Cindy Gorgas

On Sunday, April 9, 2023 at 03:57:30 PM PDT, Ashley Arai <ashley.arai@co.thurston.wa.us> wrote:

Hi Cindy,

Yes indeed, you have the right person and I am happy to answer any follow up questions. My colleague's name is Dana Bowers.

Please feel free to email or give me a ring this week.

Thanks!

Ashley

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 9, 2023, at 7:02 AM, Roland Gorgas <astrofreak03@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hello,

I attended this meeting (starting at 6 pm - outside). Checking to make sure that you (Ashley) were leading that meeting?? Am I writing to the correct person? Also in attendance was another County staffer from Alberta CA; What is that woman's name?

I have a couple of follow up questions but want to make sure I'm communicating with the right person. You two did a great job at the meeting on the 4th.

Cindy Gorgas