



Community Agriculture

Long-Term Agriculture Designation & Zoning Review

**Part of the Community-Driven Review of
Agriculture project**

Work Session # 3 – June 21, 2023

Today's Work Session: Public Hearing Follow Up

- ▶ Comments/Major Themes
- ▶ Follow Up Items
 - ▶ GMHB 20-2-0001 Case Summary
 - ▶ "Test-Out" Option
 - ▶ Soils Discussion

Summary of Comments

- ▶ 31 comments received
- ▶ Major Themes
 - ▶ Questions about specific property
 - ▶ Concern over soils: mines, woodland soils; soils that need irrigation; soils that must be drained
 - ▶ Concerns over primarily wooded properties; designated forest land; wetland properties
 - ▶ Consider smaller parcels when adjacent to LTA blocks
 - ▶ Consider farmlands of statewide significance
 - ▶ Consider option for landowners to “opt-in” and voluntarily protect parcel from subdivision
 - ▶ Consider if exclusion of ag soils in MGSA is appropriate
 - ▶ Consider funding for lost development rights
 - ▶ Suggestions to clarify chapter 3 language around de-designation, parcel size, and more

Additional Outreach

- ▶ Olympia Master Builders
 - ▶ Concerns about soils that need irrigation; competing water rights
 - ▶ Open to cluster requirement; limited flexibility in lot sizes without community water system
- ▶ Washington Farm Forestry Association
 - ▶ Interested in offering landowners “Opt-out” and “Opt-in” provisions for LTA zoning
 - ▶ Request staff look at how many parcels are in Assessor’s Current Use Tax Program for Timber/Forestry
 - ▶ Felt including “prime if irrigated” and “prime if drained” soils doesn’t make sense given their limitations
 - ▶ Agree compensation is key for lost development rights

Current Use Timber/Forestry

- Acres of possible new LTA that are forested:

Type of Forestland	Acres		
	Baseline Based on Appeal	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Designated Forest Land (88)	7,047	4,263	5,679
Non-Commercial Forestland (92)	0	0	0
Timberland (95)	36	36	113
Total	7,083 (31% of new)	4,299 (34% of new)	5,792 (30% of new)

GMHB Case No. 20-2-0001 Summary

- ▶ 2019 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update
 - ▶ Appealed in early 2020
 - ▶ Alleged county 1) failed to designate and conserve lands meeting criteria for agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance, 2) failed to review comp plan and dev code to achieve variety of rural densities and protect rural character, 3) failed to review and revise capital facility plan
- ▶ Item 3 dismissed
- ▶ Currently under settlement extension

GMHB Case No. 20-2-0001 Summary

- ▶ 2019 Futurewise comment letter
 - ▶ County uses 1990 USDA soil survey to inform designation
 - ▶ New Web Soil Survey includes 29+ prime farmland soils not listed in County Comp plan
 - ▶ County must consider new prime farmland soils

Test-Out Option

- ▶ Last LTA update (2008), County provided one-time opportunity for landowners new to LTA designation to file a request for reconsideration
 - ▶ County hired consultant to develop “test-out” field methodology
 - ▶ Landowners had opportunity to hire soil scientists and experts to produce soil report, submit to county
 - ▶ County hired consultant to peer review soil reports and verify consistency with methodology, recommended which properties be retained as LTA or removed
- ▶ Staff will present as an option to BoCC for consideration
 - ▶ Could impact timing of project; budget considerations

Soils Discussion

- ▶ 11 new soil types listed 'prime if irrigated'; 8 'prime if drained'
- ▶ Since water is a dynamic and diminishing resource, Ag Advisory Committee (AAC) advised not considering water access for LTA zoning; similarly noted that draining land wouldn't be permitted
- ▶ AAC and WSU Ext. indicated NRCS's Land Capability Classification System provides more refined analysis of a soil's agricultural capability ***without*** irrigation or drainage
- ▶ Preliminary research finds 10 of 11 'prime if irrigated' and 7 of 8 'prime if drained' soils are classified as 'very severely limited and/or requiring very careful management' for agricultural production
- ▶ Staff preparing summary memo for PC's consideration that details agricultural capability of all new prime farmland soils



Next Steps

Project Timeline

May–July

Planning Commission Review and
Public Hearing, Open House

Nov.–Dec.

Final Action on LTA Designation

Aug.–Nov.

Board of County Commissioner
Review

Planning Commission Review Schedule

- ▶ **May 3** – work session
- ▶ **May 17** – work session 2, request public hearing
- ▶ **June 21** – public hearing, work session 3
- ▶ **July 5** – work session 4, (possible recommendation)
- ▶ **July 19** – work session 5, recommendation (if needed)

Next Steps

- ▶ Discussion, questions or comments?
- ▶ Next work session –
 - ▶ New draft option based on public comments and Ag Committee direction to use Land Capability Classification for soils analysis
 - ▶ Any final follow up; option for recommendation



Thank you!

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