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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Joshua Cummings, Director

Creating Solutions for Our Future

August 7, 2019

Thurston County Board of Commissioners
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98502

**SUBJECT: Planning Commission Recommendation to Add an In-Depth Review of
Agriculture to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket**

Dear Commissioners,

The Thurston County Planning Commission has recently completed their review of the core elements of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. Agriculture is one topic covered within Chapter 3 – Natural Resources of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission received 60 written public comments on the Comprehensive Plan Update. Roughly half of the comments received were related to agriculture. Based on significant written and oral testimony from citizens requesting 1) in-depth review of agriculture, 2) a cost-study analysis for agricultural lands, 3) review of the long-term agricultural designation, 4) more in depth review of other policy and conservation measures to protect agriculture and 5) review and improvement of existing conservation tools such as Transfer and Purchase of Development Rights programs, the Planning Commission produces the following recommendation:

The Planning Commission recommends that the Board add a review of agricultural lands, including a review of prime farmland soils, of agricultural policies, and of conservation programs such as Transfer and Purchase of Development Rights, to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket for 2020.

On August 7, 2019, the Planning Commission voted unanimously (8-0) in favor of the recommendation, with Planning Commissioner Raul de Leon absent. This recommendation acknowledges that an in-depth review of agriculture is not part of the existing scope of work for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, and honors the significant written and oral testimony requesting more detailed review and updates of this element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Thurston County Planning Commission
Further Agricultural Review - Recommendation

Thank you for the opportunity to review proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Scott Nelson, Chair

CC: Thurston County Planning Commission Members
Ramiro Chavez, County Manager
Joshua Cummings, Director
Travis Burns, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney