



AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES CRITICAL AREAS UPDATE

Planning Commission

July 20, 2022 Concept Discussion

EXISTING AGRICULTURAL USES



EXISTING INCLUDES

- Ag activities & facilities in existence before July 22, 2011

VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Voluntary enrollment
- Balances critical areas protection and agricultural viability
- Subject to Individual Stewardship Plan
- Administered by Thurston Conservation District
- ‘No net loss’ measured at watershed basin level

NEW AGRICULTURAL USES



NEW INCLUDES

- Lands converted to Ag after July 22, 2011
- New / expanded facilities built after July 22, 2011

CHAPTERS 17.15 AND TITLE 24

- New ag activities fall under 17.15
- New Ag facilities fall under Title 24, CAO
- ‘No net loss’ measured at site level

2021 AG SURVEY RESULTS

- Part of County's Community Driven Review of Agriculture Policies and Programs (Docket Item CPA-16)
- 420 people surveyed; 164 current / prospective farmers
- 66% of farmers concerned about:
 - 'Lack of integration of habitat protection and protecting working farmlands'*
- Respondents identified *'Making permit process easier for beneficial conservation enhancement Projects'* as Priority #2 Permitting Action Item



WHAT DO OTHER COUNTIES DO FOR NEW AG?

FLEXIBLE

Leverage partnerships

- Allowed subject to Conservation Plan; prepared by TSP and approved by County
- Default option-comply with CAO

Pierce, Walla Walla, Yakima, Grays Harbor, Mason, Kitsap, Snohomish

MID

Prescriptive flexibility

- Special buffer mitigation provisions for new Ag uses and facilities

INFLEXIBLE

No special provisions

- CAO applies to new Ag uses and facilities

Skagit, Lewis, Whatcom

AG CRITICAL AREAS UPDATE GOALS

- Maintain and improve Long-Term Agriculture viability
- Build on strong foundation of partnerships
- Clarify distinction btwn existing and new Ag uses
- Provide consistent approach for new Ag activities and facilities
- Incentivize ag practices that support conservation and climate mitigation

CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO NEW AG

- Multiple pathways to CAO compliance – conservation plan *or* Title 24
- Balances protection of critical areas and working farmlands
- Provides more flexibility and opportunities to incentivize beneficial conservation projects and climate mitigation practices
- Builds on VSP program

CONSERVATION PLAN APPROACH

- **PROCESS:**
 - Prepared by TSP; reviewed and approved by county
 - Identify benchmarks and mitigation measures for impacts--ensuring site-specific 'no net loss'
 - Farmers to participate in monitoring and adaptive mgmt. as prescribed in plan; county to enforce
- **ADDRESSES:**
 - Farm size
 - Critical areas, soil types and slope of land
 - Waste and manure piles
 - Surface water, water flow controls, water treatment & mgmt
 - Type of crops or livestock
 - Machinery and ag buildings
- **INCLUDES:**
 - Goals
 - Maps, Scope, and Timeline
 - Implementation Plan
 - Monitoring & Compliance



ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC PROCESS

- STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH (MAY / JUNE)
 - TCD CHECK-IN
 - AAC BRIEFING (JUNE 16)
 - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
- PLANNING COMMISSION (JULY - SEPT)
- BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (OCT / NOV)

