Thurston County Planning Commission
Open Space Public Hearing

Thurston County Planning
July 19, 2017
Background & Overview

Open Space Tax Program: incentive for keeping land in “open space” state

Assessor’s Office and Resource Stewardship both have programs
  – Assessor has designated forest land and farm/agriculture open space
  – RS has timber land and open space/open space

Properties no longer meeting Assessor criteria can apply for Resource Stewardship Open Space-Open Space
Background & Overview

The Board of County Commissioners is the legislative authority pursuant to RCW 84.34 to approve application for open space.

Program applies to timber and agricultural lands, and other significant open spaces.

Home sites and other non-resource lands typically ineligible for current use classification.
Criteria

Applicants must meet the criteria outlined in RCW 84.34 and the Thurston County Open Space Tax Program.

A property tax reduction results from open space classification because the land is valued (for tax assessment purposes) at a percentage of market value based on a Public Benefit Rating System.
Public Benefit Rating System

Criteria

- Priority resources (such as farm/ag land or wildlife habitat) are given a point value: 3 for high, 2 for medium, 1 for low.

- Points also awarded for public access or historic/conservation easement

- Removal of a minimum of a 1-acre site for existing residential structures and uses.
  - Contiguous area of 20 acres or more results in homesite allowance
2017 Process

- No annual Assessor’s audit to date
- Two applications for open space classification
  - Being removed from Assessor’s program
Jordan Trust Property
Jordan Trust Property

- Property is 7.99 acres in size
  - 6.99 acres proposed for open space with 1 acre proposed as homesite
  - Single family home and shop onsite

- Property located in northwestern Thurston County

- Zoned RRR 1/5, so are all surrounding sites

- Parcel is presently in current use classification with Assessor’s office
Jordan Trust Property

- Proposed use: Continued grazing use – Evergreen Sheep Club

- If classified as Open Space based on the public benefit rating of 3 points for Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land, and 1 point for public access, there would be a 50% reduction in market value on the land.

- Tax shift: going forward, smaller tax shift for Thurston County residents as property owner will pay higher taxes
Jordan Trust Property
Jordan Trust Property
Jordan Trust Property
Paterson Property
Paterson Property

- Property is 18.54 acres in size
  - 17.54 acres proposed for open space with 1 acre homesite allowance
  - Property contains residence and shop
- Located in central Thurston County (Northwest of Offut Lake)
- Rural Residential / Resource 1/5 (RRR 1/5); surrounding land also RRR 1/5
- Parcel currently in Assessor’s current use classification
Paterson Property

- Proposed use: Residence, open space
- If classified as Open Space based on the public benefit rating of 3 points for Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land, there would be a 50% reduction in market value on the land.
- Tax shift: going forward, smaller tax shift for Thurston County residents as property owner will pay higher taxes
Paterson Property
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Paterson Property
Next Steps

- Planning Commission Work Session
- BoCC Work Session and Public Hearing to follow
Questions?