

# KING COUNTY AGRICULTURE COMMISSION

## MEETING NOTICE

THURSDAY MARCH 10, 2022

6:00-8:00 P.M.

**ZOOM VIDEO CALL**

CALL IN:

**One tap mobile: +12532158782,,81839010367#,,,,\*908547#**

**Land line: +1 253 215 8782, Meeting ID: 818 3901 0367, Passcode: 908547**

OR

LOG IN FROM A COMPUTER OR SMARTPHONE:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81839010367?pwd=Qj9qekhBamNYWDkzSDY3eHpPSkVrZz09>

### MEETING AGENDA

<b>6:00</b>	<b>Call to Order</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>For the public record, please sign in via the chat feature or announce yourself by name and whether you are a commissioner, staff or member of the public</li><li>Approval of Agenda</li><li>Approval of Meeting Minutes: <i>February</i></li></ul>	Kevin Scott, Chair
<b>6:05</b>	<b>Public Comment</b> related to a specific agenda item <i>3 minutes/person</i>	Kevin Scott
<b>6:10</b>	<b>Old Business - Updates</b> (approx. 3 min each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Snoqualmie River Channel Migration Zone Analysis</li><li>Commission Details<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ag policy and events</li><li>Financial Disclosure Forms</li></ul></li><li>King County Ag Program</li><li>King Conservation District</li><li>Local Food Initiative</li><li>Washington State University CSANR</li><li>King-Pierce Farm Bureau</li><li>Farm Fish Flood</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teresa Lewis</li><li>Patrice Barrentine</li> <li>Richard Martin</li><li>Carrie King</li><li>Mike Lufkin</li><li>Jordan Jobe</li><li>Leann Krainick</li><li>Richard Martin</li></ul>
<b>6:30</b>	<b>Old Business</b> <b>Update on Recycled Water Project (Sammamish APD)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstration Garden Pilot Study and Public Outreach Results</li><li>Q&amp;A</li></ul>	Nicole Gutierrez, WA Water Trust and Jacque Klug, KC DNRP Recycled Water Project Manager
<b>7:00</b>	<b>Planning for 2022</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Topics calendar, brainstorm</li><li>Committees</li><li>Committee Mtg Schedule</li></ul>	Kevin Scott
<b>7:15</b>	<b>New Business</b> <b>FFF Ag Strategic Plan Update (Snoqualmie APD)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Overview</li><li>Make-up of Task Force</li><li>Progress to Date</li><li>Next Steps</li><li>Input from Commission</li></ul>	Patrice Barrentine, Ag Task Force Coordinator; Task Force Members: Jordan Jobe (WSU), Janet Keller (SVPA), Bobbi Lindemulder (farmer, IOC member and Farm Caucus Chair), Task Force contributor, Carrie King (KCD)
<b>7:50</b>	<b>General Public Comment</b> <i>3 minutes/person</i>	Kevin Scott
<b>7:55</b>	<b>Concerns of Commissioners</b>	Kevin Scott
<b>8:00</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>	Kevin Scott

**Next Meeting: April 14, 2022**



**King County**

**Water and Land Resources Division**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
King Street Center  
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 5600  
Seattle, WA 98104-3855  
**206-477-4800** Fax 206-296-0192  
TTY Relay: 711

**King County Agriculture Commission  
DRAFT Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, February 10, 2022 – 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
Zoom Video Conference Call**

<b>Commissioners Present (Y/N)</b>					
Kevin Scott-Vandenberg, Chair	Y	Roger Calhoon	Y	Janet Keller	Y
Darron Marzolf, Vice-Chair	Y	Andrew Ely	Y	Shelley Pasco	Y
Jessi Bloom	Y	Lily Gottlieb-McHale	Y	Henry Wong	Y
<b>Ex Officio Members Present (Y/N)</b>					
Fereshteh Dehkordi, DLS	N	Jordan Jobe, WSU	Y	Carrie King, KCD	Y
<b>County Staff/Representatives Present</b>					
Patrice Barrentine, DNRP	Chris Jensen, Executive’s Office		Megan Moore, DNRP		
Melissa Borsting, DNRP	Richard Martin, DNRP		Michael Murphy, DNRP		
<b>Guests Present</b>					
Kirsten Haugen, KCD Board	Lisa Kysar, SVPA		Kim Roeser, VIGA		
Leann Krainick, KPFB/dairy farmer	Janet Lee		Dane Scarimbolo, brewery owner		

**Meeting Summary**

- **Actions: Approvals of Agenda and January 2022 Meeting Minutes**
- **Old Business: Commission, Policy, County, & Agriculture Organization Updates; 2022 Planning**
- **Presentations: Introduction to KC Comp Plan; KC Farmland Leasing Program**
- **Discussions: KC Adult Beverage Ordinance Ruling**

**Meeting called to order by Chair Kevin Scott-Vandenberg at 6:02 pm**

**Roll Call/Announcement of Staff & Public (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)**

Roll call of Commissioners and announcement of staff and public guests was done via Zoom’s chat function.

**ACTION: Approval of Meeting Agenda (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)**

Andrew Ely motioned to amend the agenda to add 10 minutes to discuss the County adult beverage ordinance and its most recent developments. Ely agreed with Patrice Barrentine to have this occur at 7:50 pm. Henry Wong seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**ACTION: Approval of January 2022 Meeting Minutes (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)**

Darron Marzolf motioned to accept the minutes as-is. Andrew Ely seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**Public Comment – Related to Specific Agenda Item (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)**

There was no public comment given during this period.

**Old Business – Updates**

- **Commission Details/Agriculture Policy & Events (Patrice Barrentine):**
  - Barrentine reminded Commissioners that mandatory annual financial disclosure forms were emailed to them yesterday and should be returned to Barrentine or Rick Ybarra as soon as possible.
  - Regarding the King County adult beverage ordinance, the County’s Growth Management Board ruled on January 3 that the SEPA review conducted by the County was insufficient. On January 31, the County filed an appeal of this decision. This contains language on accessory uses of these establishments in agricultural zones,

and plain language on the Growth Management Act (GMA). The next legal decision will come from the courts. The County is asking for an expedited review, but there is a backlog of cases due to the pandemic.

- On January 27, Governor Inslee paused implementation of the WA Cares program for 18 months, pending determination of the details of this legislation.
- House Bill 1838, proposed to mandate fixed buffer widths, died in both House and Senate committees. Two hearings included major input from agriculture and other interests. A revised version of the bill is pending.
- Senate Bill 5300, which would prohibit feeding of garbage to swine, also died in committee.
- WSDA now offers meat processing grants for small projects up to \$150K, and for larger projects up to \$750K. Anyone interested should contact Patrice Barrentine.
- For those raising specialty crops, a long-awaited proposed agricultural water rule will be covered at a March 2 webinar.
- Business Impact NW's Food Biz Week is February 22-25, and will be held both live and in virtual formats. Admission is free. Each day will include two morning panels and one afternoon panel.
- WSU's Farming on the Urban Edge conference is ongoing.
- The Local Food Initiative's February newsletter is available; subscription link is in today's meeting packet.
- **Green River PEIS Letter Committee (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg):** Chair Scott-Vandenberg thanked the committee and praised the resulting letter, for Commissioners to review in today's meeting packet. The letter addresses concerns raised by the Commission at last month's meeting. DNRP Director Christie True has also complimented the Commission on the letter. Richard Martin reminded all to stress the letter's central message, that the Commission should be involved early on in this decision process, not just at the end.
- **King County Agriculture Program (Richard Martin):** The Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) is entering its next round of CFT program proposals requesting additional funding. FPP's goal is to add 475 acres of farmable land in King County each year, and so far 100+ acres have been added this year. There is a good amount of funding already in place, and many projects lined up. Up to 1100 acres may be added this year, which would make this the most successful of recent years. Martin also suggested restarting the Commission's Land Committee for deep dives into FPP and where the County should focus its acquisition efforts.
- **King Conservation District (Carrie King):**
  - Kirsten Haugen won the #2 seat in the recent KCD board election, with over 10,000 votes. Haugen plans to regularly attend Commission meetings. There is hope that KCD's future elections will be on the regular voter ballot; KCD is working with authorities in Olympia on this.
  - Four species remain in this year's native plant sale, with 10,000 orders placed so far. Pickup is in March at the Tukwila Community Center.
  - The Community Agriculture Coordinator position is still recruiting. If internal recruitment goals are not met soon, the position will begin recruiting external candidates and information will be brought to the Commission.
  - The agriculture drainage field season will need to be scaled back, due to KCD not receiving FCD grant funding yet this year. This was due to KCD's budget not being finalized in time for the initial application window; they will re-apply in May.
- **Local Food Initiative:** There was no update on this item.
- **WSU CSANR (Jordan Jobe):**
  - Jobe is project manager for WSU's "AI in Agriculture" project, and will contact individuals in King and Pierce counties monthly for updates.
  - Chris Benedict is putting on a free virtual soil conference in two weeks.
  - Doug Collins' recycled water project in the Woodinville area is continuing via outreach and data analysis. A public presentation is being rescheduled. Collins is also working on a compost project, the findings of which will be brought to the Commission when ready.
- **King-Pierce Farm Bureau (Leann Krainick):**
  - State Representative Kim Schrier visited Krainick Dairy on January 13 to listen to concerns; these included supply chain issues, particularly exporting, and livestock farmers' difficulty in obtaining pharmaceuticals for their animals. Schrier is also passionate about nutrition. Anyone who would like to get in touch with Schrier is advised to contact Leann Krainick.
  - House Bill 1750, addressing overtime for agriculture workers, is also dead; there is hope of bringing it back next legislative session.
  - House Bill 1652, if passed, would allow conservation districts to operate elections on the general ballot instead of special ballots.

- House Bill 1799, sponsored by House member Fitzgibbons of Kirkland, would require packaging and produce stickers in stores to be compostable/biodegradable, including on imported produce. Farm Bureau currently opposes this bill not due to its ideas, but some of its language. The bill is now in House Appropriations; Krainick requested to speak with County staff on this.
- Graduating high school seniors and those pursuing a bachelor’s degree, who are also associate members of KPFB, may qualify for KPFB scholarships.
- The next in-person meeting for KPFB members will be at Knudsen’s Farm in Sumner.
- **Farm Fish Flood 2.0 (Richard Martin):**
  - The next meeting of FFF’s Implementation Oversight Committee (IOC) is scheduled for February 28.
  - The FFF annual report for 2021 is complete and will be sent to Commissioners when available.
  - Beth leDoux, King County project manager for FFF, has taken a temporary position elsewhere in the County; it remains uncertain whether leDoux will return to the FFF position. In the meantime, other DNRP staff are trying to “keep things together” for FFF until it is known what will happen with this position.
  - Foundational to FFF’s work is consideration of multiple benefits of projects regarding salmon recovery, farming, and flood issues. One issue is waterways not covered by ADAP; these will be covered by the Comprehensive Drainage Program, which will look at ways to optimize project benefits. One such project is on Griffin Creek. Martin suggested in the next month or so, regulatory/permitting specialist Eric Beach should present on this to the Commission, to show how the County has taken to heart this approach to FFF work.

### **Presentation: King County Comprehensive Plan Introduction (Michael Murphy, Chris Jensen)**

Chris Jensen with the King County Executive’s Office presented to the Commission an overview of the ongoing 2024 update process for the King County Comprehensive (“Comp”) Plan. This included a background of the comp plan, the timeline for the update, chances for input, and informational resources. It was noted that Commission questions on the comp plan update should be routed through Patrice Barrentine to Michael Murphy, who is acting as liaison between KC DNRP and the Executive’s Office on this update. The presentation is available [here](#).

There were several follow-up questions and comments to the presentation:

- The Executive’s Office is developing a priority topics list to send to King County Council (KCC) at end of March, which KCC will review and adopt a final version of in April/May. This will be a baseline for what the comp plan should address, not its upper limits. The topics will be high-level “umbrellas” encompassing multiple sub-topics. After KCC adopts the list, the Executive branch will research/form plans for policy/zoning code changes.
- The main question for the Commission is to determine if there are any high-level items relating to agriculture not currently in the comp plan that should be included. Jensen noted many topics the Commission may find relevant can be found in Chapter 3 of the plan.
- Murphy will be available to assist in “crosswalking” specific policies to the County code behind them.
- Identifying regulatory and permitting barriers was noted as a concern to address.
- The Commission was encouraged to form a committee to address the comp plan update.
- There was some confusion about the comp plan and Flood Control District (FCD) being seemingly at odds in regards to agriculture. It was noted this contention is at the heart of the Farm Fish Flood (FFF) work, and that it’s likely there will be a placeholder in the comp plan scoping document for FFF work.
- The comp plan is the “high level” vision for the County, but code changes are where actual changes occur.
- Education should be explicitly incorporated as a specific comp plan category.

### **Old Business: Commission Planning for 2022 (Darron Marzolf)**

Vice-chair Marzolf called attention to a draft list of topics for the Commission to address in 2022, and asked Commissioners for recommendations on additions to the list. Marzolf then reviewed a list of possible Commission committees and asked for volunteers to serve on these committees:

- **Field Trip:** This is to plan two trips, one for the Commission and one for KCC members/staff. This group will work with the Policy Committee to create the purpose and key goals for the trips. Interested in serving were: Andrew Ely, Lisa Kysar of SVPA, and Henry Wong. Kysar suggested a field trip focusing on Floodzilla.
- **Land Use:** This group provides guidance on new fee and easement acquisitions by the County and recommendations for future Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) priorities. Interested in serving were: Shelley Pasco, Jessi Bloom, Janet Keller, Andrew Ely, Lily Gottlieb-McHale, and citizen Dane Scrimbolo.
- **Selection:** This group is responsible for recruiting/selecting new Commissioners. Interested in serving were: Janet Keller and Chair Scott-Vandenberg.

- **Policy:** This group’s workload will address the comp plan, DNRP-WLRD’s budget, the flood management plan, FFF, and code changes, among other issues. It would need to be able to meet on short notice to address legislative issues that pop up. Interested in serving were: Vice-chair Marzolf, Chair Scott-Vandenberg, Lisa Kysar of SVPA, Andrew Ely, and citizen Dane Scarimbolo.

**Presentation: King County Farmland Leasing Program (Melissa Borsting)**

Borsting is agricultural land use coordinator for King County DNRP, focusing on farmland access and utilization. She presented on the Farmland Leasing Program (FLP), reviewing its focus and history. This included a 2016 Commission review of FLP, a 2019 assessment of immigrant and refugee farmer needs, FLP’s aim to increase farmland access, and an overview of FLP’s five core farms which represent most of its workload. The presentation is available [here](#).

Follow-up comments and questions from the Commission included:

- Patrice Barrentine will send Commissioners the report on the County’s landowner lease rates survey results.
- There is a video about one of FLP’s core farms, Horseneck Farm, available [here](#).
- Commission input is welcome, especially if it involves experience with pole barns, alternate energy sources, unique crops, markets, and production techniques. Feedback is also sought on potential lease term limits, working with farmers at transition time, whether to allow livestock on County-owned farmland, and what bounding level of support the County should provide to individual farmers.
- Concern was raised about parts of Horseneck Farm that are sitting unused, and if the County has considered reducing lease rates to draw leasers in for unused land. Borsting agreed this is important and the County’s responsibility; Chair Scott-Vandenberg noted these issues would be good for the Land Committee to address.

**Discussion: King County Adult Beverage Ordinance (Andrew Ely)**

Andrew Ely sits on a group involved with this issue, Friends of the Sammamish Valley, and offered to self-recuse from any related Commission vote. Ely stressed this issue should not “die out” in Commission conversations, as it is important to agriculture across King County. Ely advised setting aside time for in-depth discussion on the policy changes, particularly given the County’s appeal of the Growth Management Board’s decision, and that this warrants significant Commission input. More information on the ordinance is at [Friends of Sammamish Valley’s website](#), and [King County’s website](#).

**Public Comment – General (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)**

Dane Scarimbolo, local brewery owner, spoke further on impacts of the County’s adult beverage ordinance on small brewery/business owners under 2.5 acres. Scarimbolo stressed that when the County implements policy, impacts to small business should be considered, especially as many of their ingredients and products come from farms. Retail sales in rural areas are also crucial to maintaining those areas’ infrastructure.

**Concerns of Commissioners (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)**

There were no concerns voiced by Commissioners during this period.

***Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm***

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**Next Meeting(s)**

March 10, 2022, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm (Zoom Video Conference Call)



# Legislation, Conferences, Events and Key Dates

REGARDING KING COUNTY  
*AGRICULTURE*

MARCH 2022

Financial Disclosure  
Forms  
2022

received

Kevin

Andrew

Jessi

Roger

Henry

need

Janet

Shelley

Darron

Lily

Nayab

# Ag Commission

- Financial Disclosure Forms
  - Farmland Lease Report
  - Recruitment 2021/2022

# King County Events and Public Meetings



- <https://www.kingcounty.gov/about/news/events.aspx>
- Covid-19 Vaccination Pop-ups around the County
  - <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/vaccine/schedule.aspx>
- Household Hazardous Wastemobile
  - <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/facilities/hazardous-waste/schedule.aspx>
- Metropolitan King County Council Meetings every Tuesday





King County

Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy



Join us for

## VSHSL COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL) is partnering with community partners from across King County to host a series of Community Conversations to receive YOUR input on issues related to the VSHSL.



March 15 - June 30

For more information contact: [VSHSL@kingcounty.gov](mailto:VSHSL@kingcounty.gov)

# 2022 Session Calendar

Month	Day	Weekday	Day Number
February	1	T	23
	2	W	24
	3	Th	25
	4	F	26
	5	S	27
	6	Su	28
	7	M	29
	8	T	30
	9	W	31
	10	Th	32
	11	F	33
	12	S	34
	13	Su	35
	14	M	36
	15	T	37
	16	W	38
	17	Th	39
	18	F	40
	19	S	41
	20	Su	42
	21	M	43
	22	T	44
	23	W	45
	24	Th	46
	25	F	47
	26	S	48
	27	Su	49
	28	M	50
March	1	T	51
	2	W	52
	3	Th	53
	4	F	54
	5	S	55
	6	Su	56
	7	M	57
	8	T	58
	9	W	59
	10	Th	60

— Last day to re  
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and Transport

— Last day to re  
committees a  
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— Last day to re  
except House  
and Transport

— Last day to re  
House fiscal c  
Transportation

— Last day to co  
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to implement  
amendments,  
or closing the

— Last day allow

**FEB 3** LAST DAY FOR COMM REPORTS IN HOUSE OF ORIGIN (EXCEPT HOUSE FISCAL, SENATE WAYS & MEANS, TRANSPORTATION)

**FEB 7** LAST DAY FOR COMM REPORTS IN HOUSE FISCAL, SENATE WAYS & MEANS, TRANSPORTATION

**FEB 15** LAST DAY TO CONSIDER BILLS IN HOUSE OF ORIGIN

**FEB 24** LAST DAY FOR COMM REPORTS FROM OPPOSITE HOUSE (EXCEPT HOUSE FISCAL, SENATE WAYS & MEANS, TRANSPORTATION)

**FEB 28** LAST DAY FOR COMM REPORTS FROM OPPOSITE HOUSE FOR HOUSE FISCAL, SENATE WAYS & MEANS, TRANSPORTATION

**MAR 5** Last day to consider opposite house bills (except initiatives and alternatives to initiatives, matters necessary to implement budgets, matters that affect state revenue, amendments, differences, and business related to the interim or closing the session).\*

\* After 5:00p.m. initiatives to implement



March 4  
Both [SB 5505](#) and [HB 1967](#) have passed their respective chambers!

WA State Farmers Market Association has advocated for this change that supports several King County Farmers Markets!

This means that nonprofit churches and public assembly halls can host farmers markets for up to 53 days a year without losing their property tax exemption. The bill does not have a sunset clause and is retroactive to 2021. **Bellevue FM**, Poulsbo FM, Salmon Creek FM, Friday Harbor FM, as well as **Redmond FM** will not need to scramble for a new location; and the **U-District FM** will be able to park their vans at the neighboring church.

The background of the slide is a faded, grayscale image of the Washington State Capitol building, showing its iconic dome and classical architectural details. The building is partially obscured by an orange banner and a dark gray curved shape on the right side.

**NEWS March 8**

Washington lawmakers nix forced buffers, embrace conservation

• **Capital Press**

## Washington state legislative session

- OLYMPIA — Washington legislators, who rejected mandatory riparian buffers, are moving to significantly increase spending on voluntary conservation programs.
- While House and Senate budget proposals differ in details, both chambers support new funding for incentive-based programs that rely on cooperative farmers to plant and maintain strips of vegetation along rivers and streams.
- **Voluntary Stewardship Program:** House \$6 million; Senate \$3 million
- **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program:** House \$7 million; Senate \$4 million
- **New program to compensate farmers who set aside buffers:** House \$8 million\*; Senate \$15 million; \*House version calls for compensation to be based on the income farmers would make by keeping land in production, a potentially bigger payoff than through CREP.
- **Governor to convene a work group\* on riparian habitat** to finish a report by Nov. 1. The report could include recommendations for new regulations.: H&S \$300,000. \*The group would include farmers, tribal officials, lawmakers, recreation and commercial fishermen, environmental groups, forestry organizations and local governments.



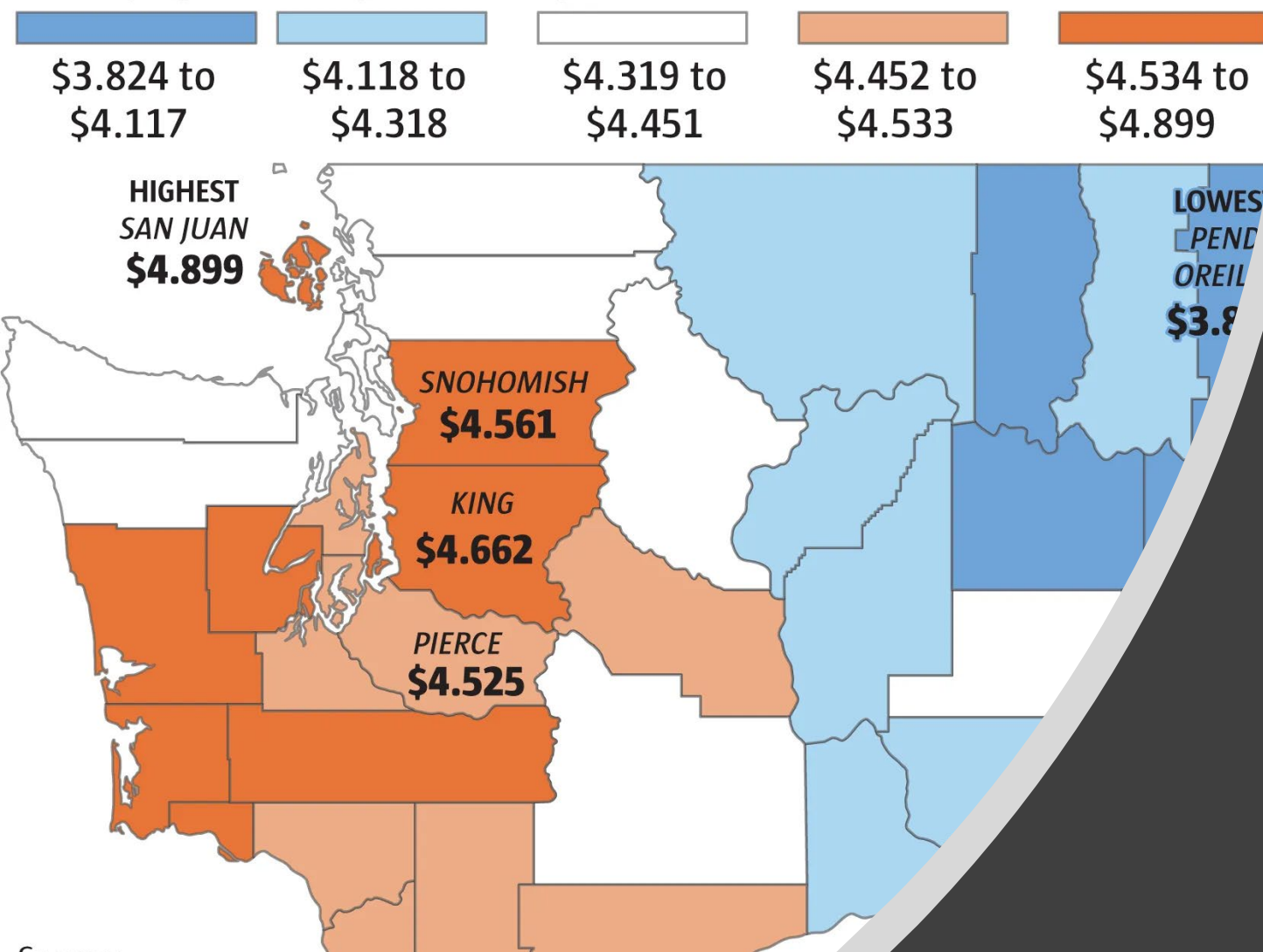
March 7

Seattle's record high gas prices leave drivers, gas stations with tough choices *Seattle Times*

Impacts of Russia's war on Ukraine  
*Seattle Times*

The average statewide price for a gallon of regular unleaded gas hit \$4.449 in Washington state on Monday, AAA reports. That's the highest recorded price, up from \$3.955 a month ago and \$3.169 a year ago.

Average gas prices for Washington state counties



March 8

[Seattle's record high gas prices leave drivers, gas stations with tough choices](#) *Seattle Times*

[Biden banning U.S. imports of Russian oil](#) *Seattle Times*



# FBRC

FOOD BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER

## Finance Training for Food Business Supporters

### IN-DEPTH TRAINING FOR FOOD SYSTEM ADVOCATES

<https://businessimpactnw.org/food-business-resource-center/food-finance-training/>

### FOOD FINANCE BOOT CAMP

Information:

<https://businessimpactnw.org/food-business-resource-center/food-finance-boot-camp/>

Registration:

<https://businessimpactnw.ecenterdirect.com/events/7575>

**Registration deadline is March 18, 2022.**



# LOCAL FOOD

Initiative News



KING COUNTY Department of Natural Resources and Parks

*Celebrating Black History Month*

[Seattle Black Panther Party Free Breakfast Program](#)

[Seattle Good Business Network: Restaurants step up to address food insecurity in their communities](#)

[Sign up now for a Community Supported Agriculture box](#)



Sign up  
for our  
newsletter





# AG COMMISSION (DRAFT) PLANNING FOR 2022

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

Farming and Wildlife: Beavers

Green River PEIS letter

Planning for 2022

Flood Management Plan

Agricultural Drainage (ADAP) and Integrated Drainage Program

Farm Fish Flood Agriculture Land Resource Strategic Plan: Update and Feedback

Doug Collins, WSU Compost Trial Green River and Sammamish Farms

Reconnecting in 2022; Farmer Outreach on Behalf of Commission

Working Farmland Partnership

KC Comprehensive Plan: Policy Update

KC Farmland Leasing Program

Planning for 2022

FFF: Griffin Creek Multi-benefit Project

Farm Practices Illustrated

X

Ag Commission Communications Plan

Farming and Wildlife: Waterfowl

Recycled Water Project (WA Water Trust; Research and Trial)

Planning for 2022

Farm Fish Flood Agriculture Land Resource Strategic Plan: Update and Next Steps

Commission Field Trip: Sammamish APD

- Doug Collins, WSU Compost Trial Green River and Sammamish Farms
- See Recycled Water Project
- Viva Farms
- KC's Sammamish Farm
- Friends of Sammamish Valley

Policy Field Trip: Snoqualmie APD

X



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# 2022 COMMITTEES

- Field Trip
- Land Use
- Selection
- Policy/ Farm, Fish, Flood

# FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE

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*Andrew Ely, Henry Wong, Lisa Kysar: SVPA, technician Floodzilla*

*Plan for 2 field trips*

Establish purpose, key goals, and itinerary

*Commission field trip and*

*Policy field trip for Council members and staff*

- Work with Policy Committee to create purpose and key goals*

# LAND USE COMMITTEE

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- *Jessi Bloom, Shelley Pasco, Lily G-M, Dane Scarimbolo*

*Farmland Preservation Program, Leasing Program*

- Guidance on new acquisitions (Fee and easement)
- Recommendation on future program priorities (i.e., rural area farms)

*Also some items from*

- *Farm, Fish, Flood*
- *Code Changes*
- *Comprehensive Plan*
- *Land Conservation Initiative*

# SELECTION COMMITTEE

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- Janet Keller, Kevin Scott

*Recruiting and Selecting new Members to the Commission*

- Conduct recruitment by end of May*
- Select Commission Priorities*
- Review applications/interviews*
- Make recommendations to DNRP for 2023 seats*

# POLICY COMMITTEE

## DARRON, KEVIN, SVPA – LISA, ANDREW ELY

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- Darron Marzolf, Kevin Scott, Andrew Ely, Janet Keller, SVPA – Lisa Kysar, Dane Scarimbolo
- King County Comprehensive Plan
- King County WLRD Budget Priorities (FFF Pilot Project continued Support + Local Food Initiative Support)
- King County Flood Management Plan
- Farm, Fish, Flood
- Code Changes
- Make recommendations for presentations to full Commission on these topics*
- Review policy recommendations*
- Make recommendations to commission for action in the form of letters and/or testimony*
- Make recommendations for policy-related purpose and key goals to Field Trip Committee*

# AG COMMISSION COMMITTEE CALENDAR FOR 2022

Q1

Q2

Q3

Q4

Ad Hoc Committee: Green River PEIS letter

Policy Committee (Flood Management, Budget, Comp Plan, FFF)

Field Trip Committee

Field Trip Committee

Selection Committee

Policy Committee (Flood Management, Budget, Comp Plan, FFF)

Land Committee

Field Trip Committee

Land Committee

X

Policy Committee (Flood Management, Budget, Comp Plan, FFF)

Selection Committee

Policy Committee (Flood Management, Budget, Comp Plan, FFF)

Field Trip Committee – Commission Field Trip Sammamish APD

Field Trip Committee - Policy Field Trip: Snoqualmie APD

Policy Committee (Flood Management, Budget, Comp Plan, FFF)

X





**King County**

**Water and Land Resources Division**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
King Street Center  
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600  
Seattle, WA 98104-3855  
**206-477-4800** Fax 206-296-0192  
TTY Relay: 711

MEMORANDUM

March 3, 2020

TO: Farmland Lease Program  
FM: Bee Cha, Farm Land Lease Manager  
  
RE: Fair Market Value Lease Rate Study

=====

The purpose of this memorandum is to document our approach to determining current market rate for leased agricultural land in King County. Since at least 2001, King County has been leasing County-owned farmland for \$50/acre/year for pasture land, \$150/acre/year for non-irrigated cropland, and \$250/acre/year for irrigated cropland. Those lease rates reflected market value at the time they were established, but there has not been recent confirmation that our rates continue to represent what is currently being charged on the open market. King County is required to charge private farm tenants market rate for farmland that reflects amenities provided on the property and any in-kind services provided by the tenant. A recalibration of lease rates reflecting the open market will be incorporated into the revision of the County's farmland lease program.

**METHODS**

There are limited channels to gather lease rate data for this unique market and lease terms are not always shared freely. We initially identified three sources for farmland lease rate data that were considered for this market assessment:

- USDA National Agricultural Statistics Services (NASS), which collects and analyzes a wide range of agricultural data via bi-annual surveys and comprehensive censuses conducted on a 5-year cycle (<https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>)
- Local USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices, which work directly with individual landowners and producers and maintain farm-scale data
- Data collection from farmers and farmland owners, which is gathered through direct communication with owners/landlords, farmers, and special farm business incubator projects run by non-profits.



**NASS Data:**

The 2008 Farm Bill mandated that NASS provide mean rental rates for all counties with 20,000 acres of cropland plus pasture (approximately 40,000 acres of farmed land in King County). NASS conducts the county-level Cash Rents Survey every other year and the most recent survey was conducted in 2019. The target population is all farms and ranches that have historically rented land on a cash basis for any of the three land use categories. The Cash Rents Survey provides the basis for county estimates of the cash rent paid for three land use classes: irrigated cropland, non-irrigated cropland, and pasture. The value of annual versus multi-year leases or the influence of acreage leased were not reported.

Data collection for the Cash Rents Survey is conducted by mail and telephone and follows a statistically rigorous sampling protocol. The initial mail-out occurs in mid-February followed by a second mailing in mid-March. Non-response phone follow-up is conducted from April to July from NASS' Data Collection Centers. Some field follow up is conducted to insure adequate response rates for the survey. Over 35 percent of the survey is collected by mail. Although 4,125 farmers in Washington were contacted in 2019 and the survey response rate was nearly 70%, it is not known how many farmers in King County responded. However, since the survey was sent to about 10% of the farmers in Washington in 2019 and we assume that King County participation is reflective of the state as a whole, it is estimated that 175-200 farmers in King County were contacted as part of the survey and 125-150 individual farmers responded.

**FSA and NRCS Data:**

We contacted the local FSA and NRCS offices in fall of 2019. However, the agency has a policy to not share their data to respect client confidentiality.

**Direct Data Collection:**

We attempted to gather lease rate data from as many individual farmers and farm landowners as practicable. Between fall 2018 and early summer 2019, we communicated with 62 farmers and farmland owners in or near the five Agricultural Production Districts in King County. Thirty-eight of those responded and provided information on land type, acreage, available infrastructure, and lease terms. For the purposes of our market analysis, we only compared lease data from farms that are similar to those in the County's portfolio (e.g., did not include farms with homes or significant farm infrastructure).

**RESULTS****NASS Data:**

The 2019 NASS Cash Rents Survey indicated that the mean annual rental rate for irrigated cropland in King County was \$300/acre (Table 1). Reported lease rates for non-irrigated farmland and pastureland were significantly lower, with each leasing for approximately \$85/acre/year. With the exception of non-irrigated cropland, King County lease rates are similar to the Western Washington averages. NASS data indicate that over the past ten years there has been a general upward trend in lease rates for irrigated cropland, but a slight decrease in lease rates for non-irrigated cropland and pastureland. However, data gaps and significant variance in the data make regional comparisons and trend assessments challenging.

Table 1. NASS 2019 farmland lease rate data (mean \$/ac/yr) for the state of Washington, the western Washington agricultural region, and King County.

Land Type	Washington	Western Washington	King County
Irrigated cropland	\$360	\$284	\$300
Non-irrigated cropland	\$75	\$152	\$85
Pasture/hay	\$8	\$57	\$85

**Direct Data Collection:**

We gathered current lease rate data from 38 farmers and farmland owners who were operating in one of the County’s five Agricultural Production Districts. Although our sample size was relatively small in comparison to the total number of farms in King County (approximately 1,800 farms), from what we know by working with farmers and farmland owners across the county, we have a good cross-section of farm size, location and land use. Data collected are summarized in the following tables.

**Table 2.** Summary of individually reported agricultural lease rates for the Snoqualmie APD, 2018-19 (\$/acre/year). Thirty-eight farm owners or tenants were contacted; 19 responded.

<i>Land Type</i>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Irrigated cropland (n=15)	\$500	\$300	\$412	\$400
Non-irrigated cropland (n=6)	\$500	\$308	\$396	\$384
Combined (n=19)	\$500	\$300	\$407	\$400

The Snoqualmie APD encompasses over 13,600 acres of river floodplain and is the second largest APD in the County; however, it is the most diverse in that significant acreage is devoted to both crop and livestock/dairy feed production. Although there are several dairies and large properties devoted to pasture/hay management, most dairy and livestock producers farm their own land, thus lease rates for pasture were not readily available. Lease rates in this APD are generally reflective of the County at large as there are no overriding issues that would inflate or depress land lease values. King County currently owns four farms and leases to five tenants in this APD.

**Table 3.** Summary of individually reported agricultural lease rates for the Sammamish APD, 2018-19 (\$/acre/year). Twelve farm owners or tenants were contacted; 9 responded.

<i>Sammamish APD</i>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Irrigated cropland (n=2)	\$550	\$541	\$546	\$546
Non-irrigated cropland (n=7)	\$1,333	\$350	\$512	350
Combined (n=9)	\$1,333	\$300	\$519	\$350

At approximately 1,000 acres in size, the Sammamish APD is the smallest of the County’s five APDs. Although small, the soils are high quality, many of the farms have access to irrigation water, and it is close to densely populated urban areas (i.e. markets), all of which contribute to relatively high demand for limited farm acreage and puts unusual upward pressure on lease rates. The high lease (\$1,333) is charged by a non-profit that provides not only land, but equipment/tools, and technical services as well - their objective and success is as an incubator farming operation. King County owns one farm and leases to 5 tenants in this APD.

**Table 4.** Summary of individually reported agricultural lease rates for the Upper and Lower Green River APDs, 2018-19 (\$/acre/year). Eight farm owners or tenants were contacted; 6 responded.

<b>Upper/Lower Green River APDs</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Irrigated cropland (n=3)	\$350	\$300	\$333	\$350
Non-irrigated cropland (n=4)	\$1,000	\$250	\$525	\$425
Combine (n=7)	\$1,000	\$250	\$502	\$350

Opportunities to gather lease data for farming operations in the two Green River APDs were limited. Those two APDs comprise a total of nearly 4,600 acres of former floodplain, most of which is cut off from the Green River by levees and other hardened structures that control flooding. Two large farm operators (Carpinito Brothers and Mosby Farms) own or lease nearly half of combined farmable APD acreage. We were able to get leasing information from Mosby Farms but not from Carpinito Brothers. The high lease (\$1000) is charged by a non-profit that provides not only land, but equipment/tools, and technical services as well. These two APDs include high-quality farm soils and most farms focus on row crop production; there are few farms leased and managed for pasture or hay. King County owns 2 farms and leases to 10 tenants in the Lower Green River APD.

**Table 5.** Summary of individually reported agricultural lease rates for the Enumclaw APD, 2018-19 (\$/acre/year). Four farm owners or tenants were contacted; 4 responded.

<b>Enumclaw APD</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Grazing (n=3)	\$298	\$80	\$153	\$80
Irrigated cropland (n=1)	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450
Non-irrigated cropland (n=1)	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450

Unlike the other APDs that contain well-drained soils that are primarily of alluvial origin, the Enumclaw APD soils are mostly of volcanic lahar origin (most recently from the Osceola Mudflow), which tend to be poorly drained and primarily support pasture/hay lands. Limited row crop potential and isolation from major population centers put downward pressure on farmland lease prices in this APD. King County owns 2 farms and leases to 2 tenants in this APD, but is in the process of surplus the properties because they do not contribute significantly to the County’s agriculture program objectives.

Table 6. Aggregated summary of individually reported agricultural lease rates for all APDs combined, 2018-19 (\$/acre/year). Sixty-two farm owners or tenants were contacted; 38 responded.

<b>All APDs</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>
Irrigated cropland (n=21)	\$550	\$300	\$413	\$400
Non-irrigated cropland (n=18)	\$1,333	\$250	\$473	\$359
Pastureland (n=3)	\$298	\$80	\$153	\$80
Combined(n=38)	\$1,333	\$250	\$409	\$400

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Initially we considered establishing different lease rates for each APD. But since we had a small sample size in some APD’s and the fact that the median lease rates were not greatly different among APDs, we used the median of our interview data across all APD’s. Because the NASS data is already summarized, and we were not able to get the raw data, it would not make sense to average the NASS numbers with our interview data. Instead, based on a visual inspection of the data, we identified rates that bridge the two data sources and reflect fair market value county-wide. In the table below we propose new rates for each type of farmland that the King County Agriculture program currently manages and leases.

<b>Farmland Type</b>	<b>NASS Data weighted mean/acre</b>	<b>Interview Data median/acre</b>	<b>Proposed New Rate</b>
Irrigated cropland	\$300	\$450	<b>\$450</b>
Non-irrigated cropland	\$85	\$359	<b>\$350</b>
Pastureland	\$85.5	\$80	<b>\$80</b>

**Cited Resources**

1. <https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/results/E0F5EB36-3313-3D7B-9E7F-E56A3365CF2B#9A9F55D7-E267-38C6-ACB9-DF106291B5A7>
2. Phone and in person interview by Bee Cha (KC Staff).