

KING COUNTY AGRICULTURE COMMISSION

MEETING NOTICE

THURSDAY AUGUST 10, 2023

6:00-7:00 P.M.

ZOOM VIDEO CALL

CALL IN:

One tap mobile: +12532158782,,84709738689#,,,,*515656#

Land line: +1 253 215 8782, Meeting ID: 847 0973 8689 OR

LOG IN FROM A COMPUTER OR SMARTPHONE:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84709738689?pwd=ZmJVeXhGdTUrcEtTKzZ4UFdTVU9YUT09>

MEETING AGENDA

The Commission's 2023 Focus is Farmland Preservation

6:00	Call to Order <ul style="list-style-type: none">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 publicApproval of AgendaApproval of Meeting Minutes: <i>May and July</i>	Kevin Scott, Chair
6:05	Public Comment related to a specific agenda item <i>3 minutes/person</i>	Kevin Scott
6:10	Old Business King County 2024 Comprehensive Plan Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft Letter for Discussion/ModificationMotion to adopt Letter to the ExecutiveVote	Patrice Barrentine Richard Martin, KC AFI
6:50	General Public Comment <i>3 minutes/person</i>	Kevin Scott
6:55	Concerns of Commissioners	Kevin Scott
7:00	Adjourn	Kevin Scott

Next Meeting: September 14, 2023



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, May 11, 2023 – 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Zoom Video Conference Call

Commissioners Present (Y/N)					
Kevin Scott-Vandenberg, Chair	Y	Andrew Ely	Y	Shelley Pasco	N
Darron Marzolf, Vice-Chair	Y	Janet Keller	Y	Henry Wong	Y
Jessi Bloom	Y	Nayab Khan	N		
Ex Officio Members Present (Y/N)					
Jordan Jobe, WSU	Y	Matt Mega, KCD	Y		
County Staff/Representatives Present					
Patrice Barrentine, DNRP		Richard Martin, DNRP		Megan Moore, DNRP	
Guests Present					
Erin Ericson		Carrie King		Andrew Stout	
Dave Glenn		Bobbi Lindemulder		Chenelle Tyack	
Daniel Horst		Libby Reed			
Henna Khan		Stacey Smith			

Meeting Summary

- **Action(s): Approval of Agenda**
- **Old Business: Commission, Policy, County, & Agriculture Organization Updates**
- **Presentation/Discussion: SVAPD Agriculture Strategic Plan Public Review Draft**

Meeting called to order by Chair Kevin Scott-Vandenberg at 6:03 pm (no quorum); quorum at 6:34 pm

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

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

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

Henry Wong motioned to approve tonight’s meeting agenda as-is. Janet Keller seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. No prior meeting minutes were available for Commission approval this evening.

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

There was no public comment during this period.

Old Business – Updates

- **Commission Details/Agriculture Policy & Events (Patrice Barrentine):**
 - All annual financial disclosure forms have been received from Commissioners.
 - In July the Commission will revisit a policy letter on large events held on APD farmland. Barrentine hopes to pull a committee together before then.
 - Richard Martin’s presentation to King County Council (KCC)’s Land Services and Land Use (LSLU) committee is May 23. It will focus on the Commission as well as King County’s agriculture programs.
 - A Commission field trip to Stacey Smith’s Harvold Berry Farm is scheduled for June 27. This will not be considered a public or official Commission meeting as no official Commission business will be conducted. WDFW has also been invited. The ongoing problem of elk predation on farm crops will be a featured topic.

- Commissioner nominations are ongoing, with three names put forth for DNRP approval this round. Another recruitment is planned for summer, and an intern will be sought to help with this.
- Public comment for the Snoqualmie Valley Agriculture Strategic Plan (tonight’s presentation) is until June 5.
- Per Carrie King, King Conservation District (KCD) is hosting an agriculture drainage tour at Remlinger Farm May 13. The tour will focus on projects for fish passage culverts, buffers, and drainage work.
- House Bill 1849, addressing elk damage to crops, was introduced late in the current legislative session and thus did not make much progress. However, there is potential for its early introduction in next year’s session.
- Per Richard Martin, King County and other municipalities recently tried to change the state’s constitution, which prohibits municipalities from raising property tax revenues more than one percent per year. Inflation in recent years has exceeded this rate and left many jurisdictions in a challenging budget position. About 25% of the King County agriculture program’s annual budget comes from the County general fund and supports three of the six agriculture program staff. Inability to lift the one percent cap has led the County to project a roughly \$100 million shortfall in general fund revenue for the biennium beginning in 2025. The County is looking at adjustments now to minimize drastic cuts when the new biennium begins. Martin suspects agriculture program funding will remain largely intact, as it takes a minimal percentage (about 0.03%) of the general fund and many program efforts are strongly supported by KCC and the Executive. Martin hopes for more details on program impacts by next Commission meeting. The program is also pursuing grant funding, to continue and expand efforts to meet increased demand.
- **King County Agriculture Program (Richard Martin):**
 - All County farms are now fully engaged, with farmers actively farming.
 - The County acquired 110 acres on Vashon Island near the end of last year, part of the former Misty Isle farm which is now called Wax Orchard. This includes 40 acres of pasture which the County wants to restore to at least hay production to help meet demand for forage on the island. Anyone with information or contacts on the island with hay baling equipment should contact Martin.
 - In the past, the Commission has provided guidance for the Farmland Leasing Program. The program is facing a question on general policy approach, on if the County should support livestock production on its farms. There are several concerns about this, which Martin would like to discuss with Commissioners to ensure they are addressed by appropriate measures before allowing animals onto the farms. This may be a topic for the Commission’s Land Use committee, or anyone with feedback can contact Martin.
- **King Conservation District (Matt Mega):**
 - The Landowner Incentive Program spends about \$250K yearly helping farmers implement best management practices and natural resource protections. The farm team has spent most of their \$250K for this year, but some additional funding was reallocated from cancelled projects from last year. Many projects are being covered this year, including waste storage facilities and buffer fencing. KCD’s board received a proposal to raise the cost-share limit for farmers who do waste storage, so they are looking at possibly raising this and other caps to allow farmers to receive more money from the cost-share program.
 - The Regional Food System grants program is undergoing a third-party evaluation, with data expected by year-end on the program’s progress and improvements to be made, and if it’s connecting to intents of the County’s Local Food Initiative (LFI). A refresh on the planning process for LFI synergizing efforts is expected soon.
 - KCD is undergoing a new strategic planning process; anyone with feedback can contact Mega or Carrie King.
 - Much of KCD’s funding is from tax dollars via interlocal agreement with King County, due for review soon.
 - In coming months Mega hopes to present more specific and comprehensive data on the programs KCD is working on to help farmland and other areas.
- **Local Food Initiative:** There was no update on this topic.
- **WSU CSANR (Jordan Jobe):** Updates will come soon, including WSU’s new King County Extension director.
- **Food Business Resource Center/BINW (Henry Wong):** Business Impact Northwest has received new support and funding from KCD. They’ve started an [incubator program](#) at 21 Acres Center for producers with value-added products, or packaged food products sourced from local producers. Participants are accepted on a rolling basis.
- **King-Pierce Farm Bureau:** There was no update on this topic.
- **Farm Fish Flood 2.0 (Richard Martin):** One of the task forces for FFF focused on riparian buffers. Its first phase focused on developing more flexible buffer width recommendations for voluntary plantings. The second phase, coordinated by King County’s Melissa Borsting, has focused on how to implement these recommendations. They are nearing the finish line of this work, and by August or September Borsting may present to the Commission a work summary and plans going forward. This phase is focused on better landowner communication and engagement, and incentivizing adoption of recommendations either financially or through regulatory means.

New Business: SVAPD ASP Public Review Draft (Patrice Barrentine; Plan Task Force Members)

Bobbi Lindemulder led introductions of the Snoqualmie Valley APD Agriculture Strategic Plan's (ASP) task force members present tonight and reviewed a presentation on the ASP's newly completed Public Review Draft. Tonight's presentation can be viewed [here](#), and the completed ASP draft document is available [here](#).

Lindemulder's hope for the ASP is to have an agriculture-focused document equivalent to existing fish recovery and habitat management plans, and ideally have an ASP that validates and documents needs, desires, outcomes, and future planning efforts for agriculture as well as specifically defined details. Lindemulder is particularly interested in learning of anything the ASP may not have captured, so the plan can be as inclusive as possible.

Discussion points of note during the presentation included:

- The ASP was an asked deliverable by farm representatives on FFF's Implementation Oversight Committee (IOC).
- Gratitude was expressed to Patrice Barrentine and King County for critical support and funding of this effort.
- Development of the Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District (SVWID) is considered one of the most important products of the FFF 1.0 process, due to the WID's valuable expertise in drainage maintenance.
- The potential impact to agriculture from addressing drainage concerns is extremely important.
- Another significant issue is "front-loading" planned Agriculture Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP) projects over the next 10 years while being aware these projects will need to be maintained for the following 15 years.
- Farmland preservation efforts will be key to long-term agricultural success. Many counties outside King County have little to no policies in place addressing farmland preservation.

Follow-up questions and comments on the presentation included:

- **Jessi Bloom:** Explain in layman's terms what the ASP means for the public, how it will impact their lives.
Bobbi Lindemulder: The ASP outlines the needs, desires, goals, actions, and partnerships to maintain agricultural viability economically and culturally within the Snoqualmie Valley. The public would notice at farmers' markets and other venues that support farming endeavors. From a policy standpoint, a vetted standing agricultural plan sends a message to funders that this is important and is tied to other efforts and goals.
- **JB:** Has there been a deep dive into land access, how that might be more widely distributed in the future instead of multi-generational farmers holding onto much of the land?
Libby Reed: This has been an important facet of many of our conversations. Success of all farmers in the Valley, the approach from a plan perspective, was to increase access, sustainability, and productiveness of every point in which a farmer meets the land. The plan is not a deep dive into alternative land tenure models, or specific issues around equitable land access and hurdles faced by underserved farmer populations. But it does elevate those issues and creates strategies, incentives, and movement around conversations to improve equitable access. There are also organizations working on land access. There's not an issue paper on it, but it is called out in the plan.
Patrice Barrentine: The task force thought extensively about farmland preservation, and noted points like how it saves money and the educational/training strategies for farm employees to become farm managers. It talks about how to create the next generation of farmers and invest in the people we have. There are succession and acquisition strategies to get farms passed to interested farmers, and a few alternative tenure models. But I agree, it's not a super-deep dive. Keeping a farm as a working farm is key to farmland preservation.
- **JB:** How will this affect policy moving forward, be it zoning or compliance issues around what's in the plan?
LR: The acreage issue paper, and the acreage needed to preserve a commercial farm sector in the Valley, is a nice window into that. In FFF 1.0, there was much discussion around a need to define or limit productive, farmable acreage loss in the Valley. There was a lot to unpack around what that meant and how to define it, and we began to dig into current farmed/farmable acreage numbers, what the landscape was in the APD in terms of how farmland was being used, how much is unfarmable. We asked what an APD is, how it is defined. Language in the County comprehensive plan puts a qualifier on that, that the land must have a predominant agricultural use. This is a sort of guardrail, and through discussions and work we began to uncover more guardrails for agriculture in the APD.
PB: We have never specifically looked at data in this level of detail before in terms of farmable and unfarmable land. Sharing this with policymakers, showing how the land is used today, is revelatory. It's so powerful to them. The comprehensive plan specifies "predominant use" – this is the strongest information we've had on how to protect agriculture within the APD itself. Most other comp plan APD language is about protecting it as a whole and hasn't gotten into finer details of how to work with habitat, wetlands, forestry. The feedback we're getting is telling a picture that's been hard for farmers to tell for so long.
Darron Marzolf: Most people doing policy will likely look towards documents like this in developing it.
- **DM:** With drainage, it's easy to imagine more growing months, less flooding. But outside that, or excluding horse farms as agriculture, what's the metric or measure for increasing farm productivity?

Erin Ericson: Farmland productivity is something we can set the stage for, but ultimately it's not something I think we can enforce. It depends on who's farming the land.

BL: Drainage is a big issue, as is the issue of fallow/unfarmed land. Our committee discussed this, and it comes down to an individual landowner and what they do with the land. Part of the pushback on this was that the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) requires the owner to maintain agricultural activity on the land. There was a huge impetus looking at data on drainage being so key from the farmland productivity standpoint in terms of overall acreage. We couldn't figure out how to increase farmland productivity when someone's choosing not to farm their farm property. We'd like to see every farm enrolled in FPP farming effectively. It's a great question, how we are going to increase productivity if so much land is sitting unfarmed.

PB: We did not specifically define productivity. The task force worked hard to figure out at what level we make recommendations, but I'd argue every issue paper in the plan talks about productivity and increasing it in some way. The WID commissioned a study which estimates only 2,200 of the 8,668 farmable acres in the Valley have existing surface or ground water rights for irrigation. How do we maintain productivity in a warming climate? How do we provide water for that? We need at least 3,250 acre-feet (AF) to irrigate the remaining acres.

EE: It's intriguing for those of us who pay attention to water resources in general. It's already become so much drier in the last few decades. We have increasing fall and spring periods with immense precipitation. What is the potential to better store that water for when we need it most? Many impacts from stream flood events aren't just to farmland and housing, but fish and other wildlife. 3,250 AF is a relatively small amount. This is the only plan in our region where this kind of strategy shows up. It is not a King County plan. Farmers often see these needs first. We will continue to talk about and try to gain support on this, as there are many opportunities to access funds to do water storage. But unless we have support at a local level, it will be difficult to get there. There are also many small-scale storage opportunities outlined in the plan.

- **Andrew Ely:** What conversations happened around surrounding rural environments and cities, how they impact waterways that flow into the Valley and APD?

BL: Contributions to flood impacts from development, impervious surfaces like roads – the flashiness, the water quantity is one thing, but there's also water quality to consider, with the runoff from roads, lawns, etc. The key thing is to ask where we can expand the APD, perhaps onto farmable upland pieces. I'd love to see opportunities for expansion of farm grounds. A lot of farmland in the uplands is most at-risk for development issues. The plan touches on this, but this is still a conversation we should have more of.

- **AE:** What was the total cost of developing this plan, in human resource hours and dollars?

BL: 1,740 hours of committee time. This did not include King County paid staff or intern time, which was substantial. The hard work has been done, so now I'd love to see an opportunity for other APDs to cherry pick what they'd like to move forward with in their own APDs and engage in their own similar process.

Public Comment – General (Darron Marzolf)

There was no public comment during this period.

Concerns of Commissioners (Darron Marzolf)

- **Andrew Ely** said there may be an opportunity to stimulate engagement on feedback for the ASP. He noted two ways: meta-analysis of available data, which is already done, and then how citizen science and farmer-based data collection can engage with and support existing documentation and citations. He said these observations are valid and important. There are many individual judgments in the plan based on land experts and people working the land; Ely wanted to acknowledge and highlight their value.
- **Dave Glenn** suggested using LFI guidelines for farmland productivity. Their measurements include more locally produced value-added products sold, increased gross income, and more people working on farms. Glenn also suggested adding number of acres in production and amount of raw agricultural product produced per acre.
- **Darron Marzolf** praised the data in the plan, stating more data can be poured into the plan to define and flesh out what productivity means, including if there would be a weighted value on what is produced. There is a need to incentivize or create need for these people to produce and be a basis for food foundation in this area.
- **Patrice Barrentine** thanked Commissioners for their time tonight to delve into the plan, and the task force members for their years of fantastic work on it.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm

Next Meeting(s)

July 13, 2023, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm (Zoom Video Conference Call)



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, July 13, 2023 – 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Zoom Video Conference Call

Commissioners Present (Y/N)					
Kevin Scott-Vandenberg, Chair	Y	Andrew Ely	N	Shelley Pasco	N
Darron Marzolf, Vice-Chair	Y	Janet Keller	Y	Henry Wong	Y
Jessi Bloom	Y	Nayab Khan	Y		
Ex Officio Members Present (Y/N)					
Jordan Jobe, WSU	N	Matt Mega, KCD	N		
County Staff/Representatives Present					
Patrice Barrentine, DNRP	Richard Martin, DNRP		Michael Murphy, DNRP		
Chris Jensen, PSB Office	Megan Moore, DNRP				
Guests Present					
Alyssa Bowers	Stacey Smith				

Meeting Summary

- **Actions: Approvals of Agenda, March 2023 Minutes**
- **Old Business: Commission, Policy, County, & Organization Updates**
- **Presentation: King County 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update Review**

Meeting called to order by Chair Kevin Scott-Vandenberg at 6:03 pm

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

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

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

Janet Keller motioned to approve tonight’s meeting agenda as-is. Darron Marzolf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ACTION: Approval of March 2023 Meeting Minutes (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

Henry Wong motioned to approve the March 2023 meeting minutes as written. Darron Marzolf seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

There was no public comment during this period.

Old Business – Updates

- **Commission Details/Agriculture Policy & Events (Patrice Barrentine):**
 - Acknowledging the current busy farm season, Barrentine thanked all producers for their important work.
 - Nominations for new Commissioners have moved on to the Executive’s office. The Executive will review the nominations, and if approved will move them on to King County Council (KCC). KCC confirmation is the final step in this process.
 - Richard Martin recently briefed KCC’s Land Services and Land Use (LSLU) committee on the Commission, acknowledgment of which was noted in Councilmember Sarah Perry’s recent briefing. Martin’s full LSLU presentation is available in today’s meeting packet. Martin noted this had been a good opportunity to brief

- KCC on agriculture and the Commission’s work, and a good example of the investment some Councilmembers have in agriculture. Councilmember Perry also asked several detailed follow-up questions at the briefing.
- Barrentine will reach out to the Commission’s Land Use and Policy committee to schedule a meeting in August or September to draft a policy letter in response to King County DLS Permitting’s presentation to the Commission earlier this year, regarding large events held in APDs.
 - The Commission recently hosted a field trip to Stacey Smith’s berry farm in the Snoqualmie Valley to address the ongoing problem of elk predation of farm crops in the Valley. Eight representatives from WDFW were also in attendance. WDFW offered ideas for abatement and explained what is covered in their crop reimbursement program. They discussed similar elk problems in Skagit County, and their volunteer Master Hunter program. WDFW will collaborate with King County on the issue of market value of affected agricultural products, especially regarding direct marketing. Richard Martin noted the highlighted issue of gaps in what is covered by WDFW’s reimbursement program. WDFW was unable to offer any ideas around this problem, and Martin suggested the Commission look at this in detail to possibly recommend changes. It was also noted WDFW has a limited fund for these reimbursements. Multiple Commissioners observed that electric fencing as an elk deterrent is impractical due to their farmland often being susceptible to flooding. Patrice Barrentine said the Enumclaw and Green APDs are experiencing elk problems as well and that the County wants to help.
 - The King County Fair opened today.
 - WSU’s King County Extension has a new director, Alyssa Bowers. Bowers will alternate with Jordan Jobe in providing WSU updates to the Commission in the coming year.
 - A letter from Chenelle Tyack on farmland preservation in the Sammamish Valley is in today’s meeting packet.
 - The Commission will have a special meeting in August to vote on proposed comp plan language to be transmitted to the Executive.
- **King County Agriculture Program (Richard Martin):**
 - The agriculture program in coming years is facing a 50% reduction in funding received from King County’s general fund. However, program staff have been pursuing grants; the program was recently awarded \$2.5 million through a USDA four-year grant. Other grant proposals are pending response.
 - DNRP’s Open Space Acquisitions unit has hired a new manager for the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, Nick Bratton. Martin said having a dedicated TDR manager is critical to matching Conservations Futures (CFT) dollars which are used to expand the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP).
 - **King Conservation District (Patrice Barrentine):** Matt Mega reported that KCD’s landowner incentive program, which provides cost-share funds to cooperators to implement best management practices (BMPs) on their properties, has \$511K total in new money available for 2023. \$410K has already been committed in more than 37 projects. Three teams at KCD implement various BMPs. The riparian team has \$112K available and has committed \$60k of that so far this year. The forest team has \$150K available and has committed \$12K so far this year. The agriculture team has \$243K available and has committed \$340K this year; this amount is due to leftover funds from last year that were re-allocated to this year.
 - **Local Food Initiative:** There was no update on this topic.
 - **WSU CSANR (Alyssa Bowers):** Alyssa Bowers, WSU Extension’s new King County director, was welcomed.
 - **Food Business Resource Center/BINW (Henry Wong):** The incubator kitchen at 21 Acres Farm is in progress, with more outreach coming soon.
 - **King-Pierce Farm Bureau:** There was no update on this topic.
 - **Farm Fish Flood 2.0:** There was no update on this topic.

New Business: King County 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update Review (Chris Jensen, PSB Office; Michael Murphy, DNRP)

Chris Jensen, Performance, Strategy, and Budget (PSB) Office’s project manager for the 2024 Comp Plan Update, presented with Michael Murphy a general orientation to the update. Murphy is supervisor of DNRP’s Open Space Acquisitions unit, which handles areas such as open space, CFT, the in-lieu fee mitigation program, and carbon credit program. Murphy is also a DNRP liaison for the comp plan update. Their presentation is available to view [here](#).

There were no follow-up questions or comments on the presentation. Patrice Barrentine led the Commission through review of two agriculture-specific policies in the comp plan update: R-602, which addresses the Commission, and R-649, which addresses Fish Farm Flood (FFF).

Barrentine said R-602’s proposed changes are not substantial, largely removing dated references to the Commission’s role and adding a paragraph describing the Commission’s scope to replace prior language that was copied verbatim

from the original legislative code creating the Commission. There were no questions or discussion from the Commission on the proposed R-602 changes.

Regarding R-649, Barrentine noted the comp plan includes very strong language supporting and protecting King County agriculture, stronger than that of many surrounding counties. She highlighted specific language in R-649 addressing how to protect, incentivize, and provide long-term support for commercial agriculture. She asked the Commission if a reference to “working farms” should be revised to “commercial agriculture.” Darron Marzolf suggested changing the term “working farms” to specify “working commercial farms” or “working agriculture farms.” There were no other Commission comments or questions on R-649. Murphy and Jensen were thanked for their time tonight and reminded Commissioners that they are available for any comments or questions.

Public Comment – General (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

There was no public comment during this period.

Concerns of Commissioners (Kevin Scott-Vandenberg)

Patrice Barrentine will be out of the office for the next three weeks, but Richard Martin will be available if anything is needed during this absence. Barrentine will prepare the materials for August’s meeting upon her return.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm

Next Meeting(s)

Special Meeting on August 10, 2023, 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm (Zoom Video Conference Call)



King County
Agriculture Commission
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

August 10, 2023

The Honorable Dow Constantine
Executive, King County
401 5th Ave # 800,
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Constantine:

I am writing on behalf of the King County Agriculture Commission (Commission) regarding King County's 2024 Comprehensive Plan Public Review Draft.

Staff with the Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget have assisted the Commission over the years to review proposed Comprehensive Plans and we appreciate the support they have provided during this update.

In this cycle, the Commission has reviewed proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan that potentially affect King County's food system, including proposals focused on agricultural production, land use, marketing, natural resource conservation, and preparing for climate change impacts. While the Commission continues to appreciate the County's strong support for agriculture, as reflected in the many important narrative statements and policies included in the Comprehensive Plan, the Commission would like you to consider the following recommendations: .

Regarding narrative in Chapter 3: Rural and Resource Areas, Section II. Rural Area Designation, Subsection B: Forestry and Agriculture in the Rural Area Geography, 2. Farming (p. 3-13):

- The Commission suggests the inclusion of additional King County initiatives and plans that align with this vision, including the
 - Land Conservation Initiative (LCI) *to protect additional farmland*
 - Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) *to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance potential for carbon sequestration, and be more resilient to the effects of climate change*
 - Fish, Farm, Flood (FFF) Watershed Plan, and future plans guided by R-649, 650, 650a and 650b, as well as the Snoqualmie Valley Agriculture Production District Agriculture Land Resource Strategic Plan, which was developed through FFF, *to conserve and sustain farmland*

Regarding R-602:

- The Commission is pleased with several proposed changes in this policy and proposes a word change from “support farmland access for traditionally underserved communities” to “support farmland access for traditionally underserved farmers” to add precision that farmland access for underserved populations for the activity of commercial farming is the vision.

Regarding narrative in Chapter 3: Rural and Resource Areas, Section VI. Natural Resource Lands, Subsection D: Agriculture (p. 3-61):

- The Commission suggests a word change to update previous language “which will be” to the current actuality of “has been” in reference to the “Tall Chief Golf Course in the Snoqualmie Valley has been returned to agricultural use.” And by a current Ag Commissioner, at that! The previous sentence could also be updated.

Regarding R-649:

- The Commission suggests a word change in the new proposed text to replace “working farms” with “commercial farms” as defined in code.

Regarding R-650, R-650a and R-650b:

- The Commission has long supported the Fish, Farm, Flood (FFF) process. These revised polices establish a new, balanced approach to managing natural resource lands within the Snoqualmie Valley APD while ensuring protections for agriculture. We are pleased to see that the predominant use of farming remains as a principle in Agriculture Production Districts.

Regarding critical areas regulations using best available science:

- While this information is still in development and will be coming before the Commission from Executive staff in September, we acknowledge that the best available science process will inform additional proposed revisions to the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and that we look forward to reviewing the recommendations through a lens of supporting agriculture while also protecting sensitive critical areas.

Thank you for your consideration,



Kevin Scott-Vandenberg, Chair
King County Agriculture Commission

cc: King County Councilmembers
King County Agriculture Commission Members
Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
(DNRP)
Josh Baldi, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD),

DNRP

Chris Jensen, Comprehensive Planning Manager, King County Executive Department,
Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget

Richard Martin, Manager, AFI, WLRD, DNRP

Michael Murphy, Supervisor, Open Space Acquisitions Unit, WLRD, DNRP

Patrice Barrentine, Staff Liaison, Agriculture Commission, WLRD, DNRP

Draft

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2024 UPDATE

BACKGROUND





In Washington state, the Growth Management Act was adopted in 1990 as a response to rapid and uncoordinated development



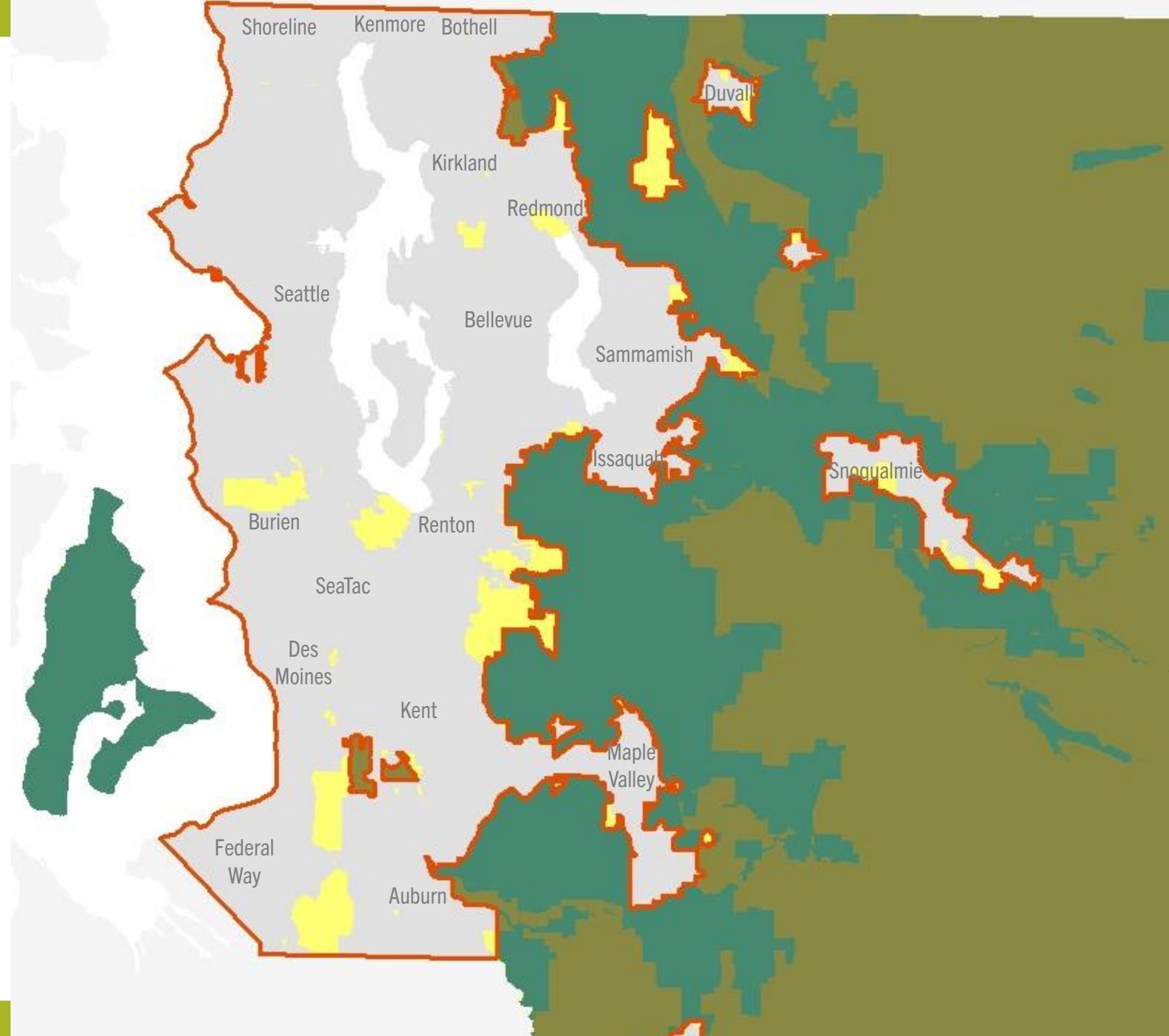
Key geographic areas

 **Urban Growth Area** Housing and job growth is focused in the Urban Growth Area to protect rural and resource lands and deliver efficient services, characterized by higher density development

 **Urban Unincorporated Area** Portions of the Urban Growth Area outside of city limits

 **Rural Area** Outside the Urban Growth Area and Resource Lands, characterized by small-scale farming and forestry and low-density residential development

 **Natural Resource Lands** Designated for agriculture, forestry, or mining





Regionally, **96%** of permitted housing units are in cities and urban areas, helping keep our working lands working

King County's Comprehensive Plan

- The Comprehensive Plan is unincorporated King County's **local land use plan**.
- Unincorporated King County also has **a key ecological role** in the Puget Sound region. Most of the region's farm, forest, and mineral production areas are located here, as are critical environmental conservation areas.
- The plan also guides how **local and regional services** are provided by the County, such as roads, parks, buses and ferries, wastewater, and solid waste.

Scoping & public feedback themes

Social Equity	Housing	Climate Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address racially discriminatory policies• Address housing, cultural, and economic displacement• Improving health disparities by race and place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan for and accommodate housing for all incomes• Expand housing choices• Improve housing equity, access, and stability<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ especially for those earning less than 80 percent of the area median income and those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance Strategic Climate Action Plan and greenhouse gas reduction goals• Reduce climate-related impacts for frontline communities• Heat islands and urban green spaces

Schedule

2022				2023				2024
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1-Q4
Create scope	Public input on scope Scope approved	Public survey to inform plan development	Develop early plan proposal concepts	Public input on early concepts (Comment period in February)	Develop and issue Public Review Draft plan for public input (45-day comment period from June - July)	Refine & report back	Final Executive-Recommended Plan (Submitted Dec 2023)	Council Review, Amendment, & Adoption (Adopt by Dec 2024)



Opportunities to meaningfully shape Plan content

Implementing the Plan

After King County Council adoption, the Plan is **implemented** and **reflected** through a variety of ways:

- ✓ King County Code > Review and approval of development proposals
- ✓ Subarea plans
- ✓ Topic-specific functional and implementation plans > Planning for new or updated facilities, programs, and services
- ✓ King County Budget > Community needs lists
- ✓ Public information materials and engagement activities
- ✓ Work with other jurisdictions and service providers

PROPOSALS



<https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/2024-KCCP-Update/PubRevDraft/01-2024-KCCP-PRD-060123.ashx?la=en>

Key Equity Scope Topics



- Integrate a **pro-equity and anti-racist policy framework** into the Comprehensive Plan.
- Reduce **housing displacement**.
- Improve **health equity outcomes** in communities with the greatest and most acute needs.

Key Housing Scope Topics



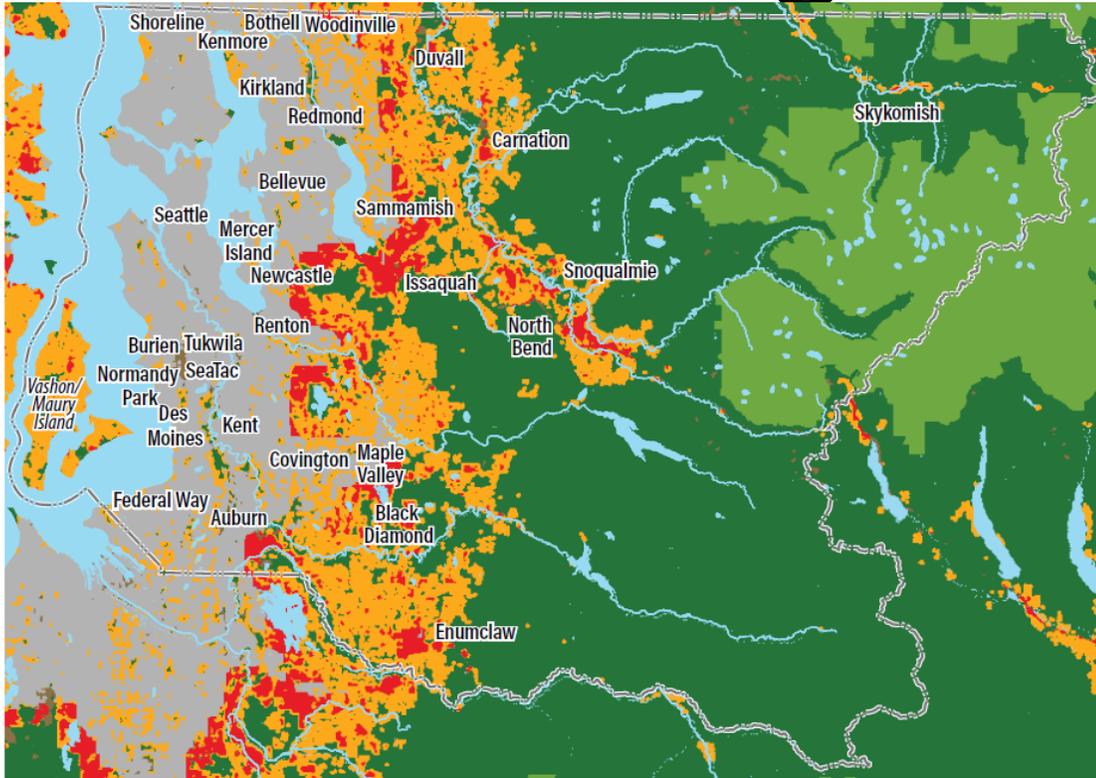
- **Improve affordable housing supply**, especially for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees and that earn less than 80 percent of the area median income.
- **Expand range of housing options** available at all income levels.

Key Climate Change & Environment Scope Topics



- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support sustainable and resilient communities, and prepare for **climate change**.
- Integrate and implement **Clean Water, Healthy Habitat** goals.
- Increase **land conservation**.

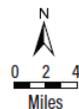
Climate Change & Environment



Require the County to take steps to **plan for and reduce wildfire impacts** in the wildland-urban interface in unincorporated King County.

King County Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)

- Long-term Non-Buildable Areas
- WUI - Interface
- WUI - Intermix
- Non-Vegetated Inhabited
- Non-Vegetated Uninhabited
- Vegetated Uninhabited



220720_12894m_WUIRisk_Map.apr
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Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife Division, Forest Health Division

The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at www.kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Climate Change & Environment



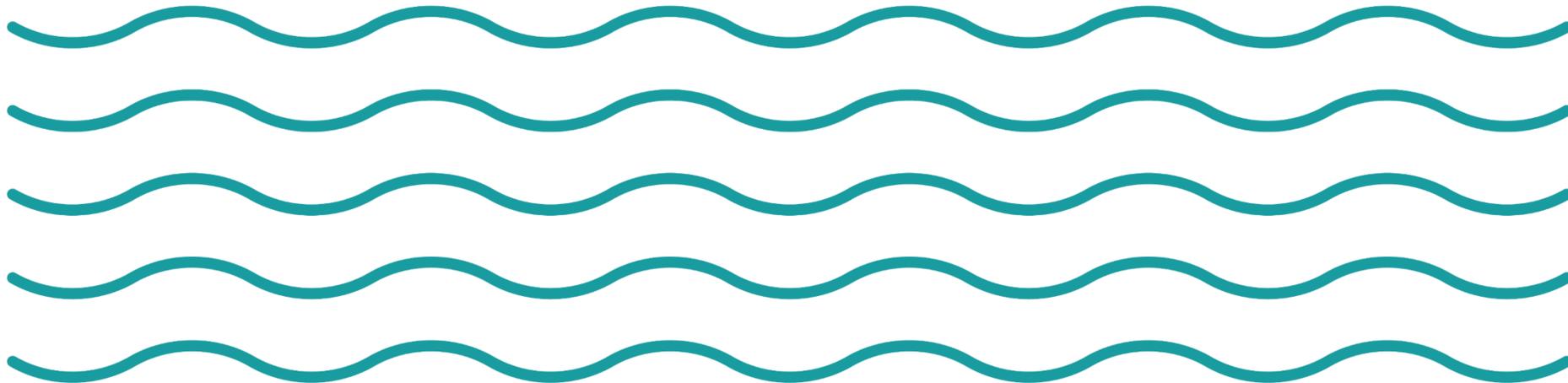
Review and update of the County's **critical areas regulations** using best available science.

Climate Change & Environment



Update **Transfer of Development Rights program** regulations to support conservation goals.

Continue to work on **clean water, healthy habitat,** and **land conservation goals**



King County Strategic Climate Action Plan

Act fast to reduce emissions

How much climate changes depends on how quickly we slow emissions. We are nearing critical thresholds for irreversible changes.

Address climate change equitably

Place those most impacted by climate change at the center of our decision-making.

Prepare for climate impacts

Past and ongoing emissions have locked in change – a question of how much, not if.

Key General Planning Scope Topics



- Update **transportation policies**
- Review **rural and natural resources** regulations
- **Subarea Planning** program actions
- **Land Use and Zoning** studies

General Planning



Adopt the **Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County** Community Service Area Subarea Plan, as well as implementing land use and zoning changes and development regulations. Topics covered include:

- land use and zoning, housing and human services, transportation, environment, open space and parks, services and utilities, and economic development.

Learn more at: <https://publicinput.com/SnoValleyNEKC>



KING COUNTY AGRICULTURE POLICIES IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



How to access, navigate, and interpret changes to the public review draft

<https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/2024-KCCP-Update/PubRevDraft/01-2024-KCCP-PRD-060123.ashx?la=en>

Narrative →

Ctrl + f = search

Underlined text = proposed new language

Policy

Comments provide rationale / background

Chapter and page

((Double parentheses and strikethrough)) = proposed deletion

((R-640)) R-641e

Regional Collaboration on Wildfire Risk Reduction
Wildfire risk reduction benefits from ongoing opportunities to leverage resources and partnerships that support action around shared priorities and promote learning between organizations and subject matter experts. Partners includes local planners, first responders, natural resource managers, emergency management officials, and researchers.

Collaboration with small forest landowners and residents is also important. King County works in partnership with King Conservation District and Washington State University Extension Forestry to provide technical assistance to small forest landowners and residents related to wildfire mitigation. This includes providing education and technical training about forest management, working with forest landowners to develop and implement forest stewardship plans that account for climate change and wildfire risk, increasing access to cost-share programs that incentivize forest management, and hosting neighborhood-based workshops focused on identifying and acting on wildfire risks and community wildfire planning.

King County ~~((should continue to))~~ shall collaborate with key partners, such as the University of Washington, Washington State University including Extension, state and federal agencies, cities, first responders, and ~~((forest))~~ landowners, to improve forest resilience and reduce wildfire risks by:

a. ~~((monitor))~~ monitoring and ~~((evaluate))~~ evaluating impacts of climate change on forests and wildfire potential in King County

b. promoting species and structural diversity within and across forest stands in King County:

Commented [JC131]: Strengthens the policy while creating flexibility to work with partners beyond the listed partners.

Commented [JC132]: Updated to reflect current policy goals related to wildfire risk reduction

Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands – Page 3-58



KC Comprehensive Plan agriculture policies

Chapter 3: Rural and Resource Areas

Section II. Rural Area Designation

Subsection B: Forestry and Agriculture in the Rural Area Geography

2. Farming

- Narrative revisions for brevity and clarity
- Adds language creating nexus with the King County Local Food Initiative
- *Should it also include in the narrative as a nexus with the*
 - *Land Conservation Initiative (LCI)*
 - *Strategic Climate Action Plan*
 - *And other Plans, such as Watershed Plans- FFF SVAPD Ag Land Resource Strategic Plan*
- R-209: proposed edit to clarify and reflect existing intent to "develop incentives to encourage agricultural activities on prime farmlands", not just "in the remaining prime farmlands."



KC Comprehensive Plan agriculture policies

Chapter 3: Rural and Resource Areas

Section VI. Natural Resource Lands

Subsection A. Ensuring Conservation and Sustainable Use of Resource Lands

- Narrative updates streamlining dated references
- R-602 [Agriculture Commission] updated to reflect current scope
- *See discussion slide if today's time allows*



KC Comprehensive Plan agriculture policies

Chapter 3: Rural and Resource Areas Section VI. Natural Resource Lands Subsection D. Agriculture

- Narrative updating data for acreage, eliminating redundancies, outdated text, technical corrections, matching existing intent and changes in terminology adopted in 2017 code
- Adds language creating nexus with the Land Conservation Initiative



KC Comprehensive Plan Ag policies

Chapter 3: Rural and Resource Areas Section VI. Natural Resource Lands Subsection D. Agriculture

- FFF policies
- Narrative: Suite of changes to address current status and future plans for Fish, Farm, Flood based on lessons learned coming out of the Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood work.
- R-649: Updated with new balance of Fish, Farm, Flood needs based on planning processes and lessons learned to date. More details on how this will be implemented are in the updated R-650 below.
- R-650 New, required project review process that would be implemented with the adoption of the 2024 update
- R-650a Replaced with streamlined Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood policy
- R-650b New policy about planning in other geographies



Best Available Science Updates

State law requires periodic review of Best available Science (BAS) to support Comprehensive Plan policies and implementing codes. Current BAS guidance strengthens requirements for “no net loss” of critical areas functions and values, and includes guidance related to protection of wetland and riparian areas.

KC is reviewing and updating BAS now and developing draft policy and code recommendations.

Anticipate that the county will be proposing code updates to reflect updated science, but that we also intend to sustain long-standing policy support for existing commercial agriculture. Plan to come back to Agriculture Commission soon with more information.

What's next? (Agriculture Commission)

- **Approximately 4 weeks for Agriculture Commission review; Patrice will coordinate review process and comment development.**
- **Formal comments to be discussed and approved during August 10 meeting.**
- **Comments must be submitted no later than August 25 for consideration of edits to the Executive Proposed Comp Plan.**



DISCUSSION and QUESTIONS...

Michael Murphy

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For Discussion: R-602, Ag Commission

~~((In 1994, the Agriculture Commission was established as a forum for farmers to take an active role in land use decisions, policies and regulations affecting commercial agriculture. The commission solicits input from agricultural agency technical advisors and others with land use and technical expertise, as well as other affected groups.))~~

Commented [JC91]: Streamlining dated references.

R-602

The Agriculture Commission shall advise the King County Executive and Council on ~~((agricultural issues and programs, including, but not limited to:~~

- a. ~~Existing and proposed legislation and regulations affecting commercial agriculture;~~
- b. ~~Land use issues that affect agriculture; and~~
- c. ~~Ways to maintain, enhance and promote agriculture and agricultural products in the region.))~~ programs, policies, regulations, and land use issues that affect agriculture, encourage retention of farmland, support farmland access for traditionally underserved communities, and contribute to a strong local food system. King County shall continue to support the Agriculture Commission with staff and other resources.

Commented [JC92]: Updated to reflect current scope



For Discussion: R-649, FFF

- Agriculture must remain the predominant use in any Agricultural Production District and aquatic habitat or floodplain restoration projects, as well as, King County mitigation reserves program projects shall not reduce the ability to farm in the Agricultural Production District.
- King County, through implementation of projects and programs, shall ensure sufficient land within Agricultural Production Districts remains available to support long term viability of **commercial agriculture** and that its programmatic and project actions support the maintenance or improvement of drainage and other agricultural support infrastructure. To the maximum extent practicable, King County should tailor measures to protect threatened or endangered species to support continued operation of **working farms** within the Agricultural Production Districts and should strive for outcomes consistent with goals King County may establish for optimal area of productive agricultural lands within the Agricultural Production Districts.