## Schroader, Kathy

**From:** Tim Trohimovich <Tim@futurewise.org>
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2015 11:22 AM
**To:** Euler, Gordon; Cnty 2016 Comp Plan
**Subject:** RE: Comments on the proposed Rural Industrial Land Bank for PC Public Hearing
**Attachments:** FSCProposalDraft.pdf

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Here is the second enclosure.

**Tim Trohimovich, AICP**
**Futurewise | Director of Planning & Law**
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Building Communities & Protecting the Land

**From:** Tim Trohimovich
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2015 11:20 AM
**To:** 'gordon.euler@clark.wa.gov' <gordon.euler@clark.wa.gov>; 'comp.plan@clark.wa.gov' <comp.plan@clark.wa.gov>
**Subject:** Comments on the proposed Rural Industrial Land Bank for PC Public Hearing

Dear Sirs and Madams:

Enclosed please find Futurewise's comments on the proposed Rural Industrial Land Bank for the Planning Commission's December 17, 2015 public hearing. One of the referenced enclosures is enclosed with the letter. The other will be in a second e-mail. Please contact me if you need anything more.

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CLARK COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM COUNCIL

# Promoting Agricultural Food Production in Clark County

A proposal developed by the
Clark County Food System Council
November 2013

001607

# Clark County Food System Council

# Promoting Agricultural Food Production in Clark County

## Overview

The Food System Council proposes that Clark County support agricultural production by maintaining rural lands that are best suited for farming. The Council's analysis shows that Clark County has about 80,000 acres that comprise the best farming land, as shown on the map on the following pages. We have a responsibility to conserve this most valuable resource for agriculture production and for maintaining a local, thriving food system for future generations.

The recommendations in this proposal support many of the Growth Management Act's planning goals, namely: reducing sprawl, maintaining and enhancing natural resource industries, encouraging the retention of open spaces, and protecting the environment.

Our need to feed ourselves must be carefully considered before any of these lands are added to the Urban Growth Area.

## We all need to eat

Our food system has become increasingly complex, which has reduced local control related to food safety, food security and food economics. Community residents are demanding a stronger local food system with more choices. For example, in the past 5 years Clark County has seen an increase in the number of Community Supported Agriculture programs, growth in the number of farmers markets, and more interest in locally sourced and organically grown food. To achieve a sustainable, resilient, safe, and prosperous food system, it's critical that we examine our own ability to plan for and grow food.

The United States is not producing enough fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products for all U.S. consumption as recommended by the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (American Farmland Trust) To feed Clark County's population, we would need to produce about 4.5 pounds of food per person per day, but our western Washington food shed produces just 2 pounds. (Western Washington Food Shed Study) That means we're already vulnerable to disruptions in the food system, and it's time to evaluate how we can maintain our productive capacity.

There are three major issues in considering the value of preserving agriculture production:

**Employment and the Economy**

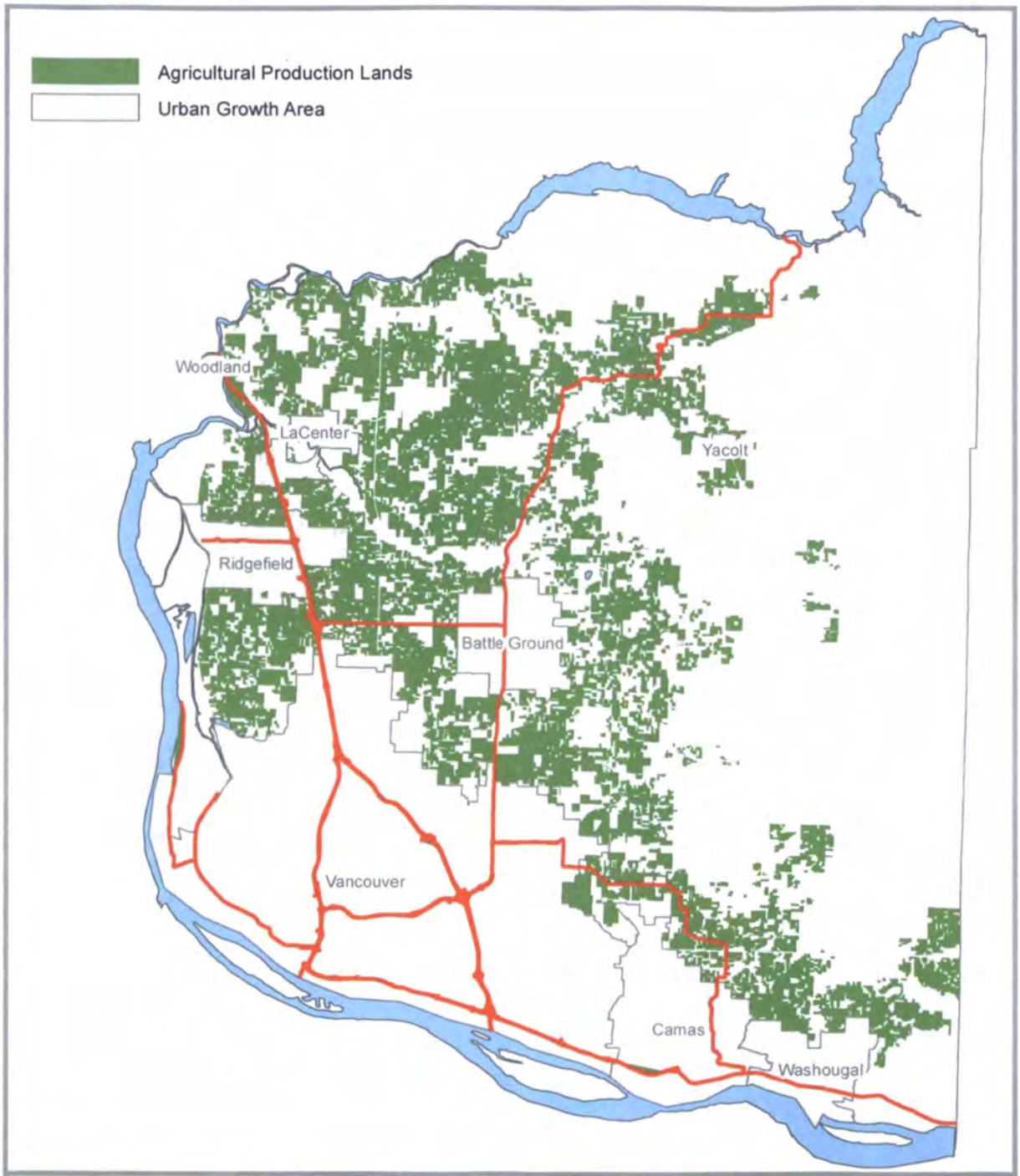
1. Farmland is not vacant, it is home to jobs. In Clark County, more than 4,000 people are employed on farms. (2007 USDA Agriculture Census) With the number of farms increasing and a desire for food grown using more labor-intensive, sustainable practices, we need to assure these jobs stay here.
2. Supporting local farms keeps our money circulating locally. Every pound of food produced locally reduces the need to import food and strengthens our own food system of processing, distributing and selling.
3. Local farm entrepreneurship and agri-tourism creates an environment to live, work and play, which helps make Clark County more business-friendly.
4. Locally produced food travels shorter distances, reducing transportation costs and carbon footprint while maintaining food quality.
5. Increasing the amount of food produced and made available to local consumers is part of economic development and contributes to environmental sustainability.
6. Privately-owned and managed agriculture land generates more local tax revenues than it costs in services. (Farmland Trust Center)

**Health**

1. Good farming practices can help preserve clean water and healthy soil. Almost all of Clark County's water comes from underground aquifers. (Clark Public Utilities) Preserving lands that provide natural buffers protects natural aquifers, and healthy aquifers are less costly to maintain than water treatment plants.
2. Fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet, and a diet rich in fresh produce helps prevent obesity and cardiovascular disease.
2. Encouraging the production, distribution, and procurement of food from local farms could increase the availability to and consumption of locally produced foods by community residents, enhance the ability of the food system to provide sufficient quantities of healthier foods, and increase the viability of local farms and food security for communities.
3. Maintaining the potential to grow more of our own food helps make us resilient in the event of major emergencies. Resiliency is an attribute of a healthy community.
4. Local food has a lower risk of causing food-borne illnesses because it spends less time in transit, doesn't change hands as often and is more apt to be processed in small batches.

**Quality of Life**

1. The rural character of farm land enhances the quality of life, and is attractive to employers wanting to locate in Clark County.
2. Agricultural land provides habitat for wildlife and allows natural water filtration.
3. Strengthening our ability and the potential to grow and produce more of our own food helps make us more secure and less vulnerable in the event of a major emergency that disrupts the food system.
4. Food grown closer to consumers uses less fossil fuels which contribute to pollution and greenhouse gases emissions, the ultimate results of which are deteriorating air quality, extreme heat days, flooding and drought, and other impacts to human health. (Growing Healthier Report)




# Clark County's Best Farm Land

Source: Clark County GIS

For further information contact Clark County
Public Health Assessment & Evaluation
brendon.haggerty@clark.wa.gov or (360) 397-8000 ext. 7281

# How we got here

We developed this proposal by looking at characteristics of the land that make it suitable for food production. These include:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Soil** | We included lands that have good to moderate agricultural soils, classified as type I-IV by the National Resource Conservation Service. |
| **Slope** | We included lands that are flat or rolling. |
| **Size** | We included lands that have at least 4 acres outside the buffers around critical stream habitat. |
| **Zoning** | We included lands that are currently zoned for agriculture or rural residences. |
| **Tax status** | We excluded lands that are tax exempt because they are owned by churches, land trusts, or governments. |

# Next steps

The Clark County Food System Council suggests that the Board of County Commissioners, during the current update of the comprehensive plan consider voluntary measures to protect and maintain agriculturally productive lands. Various tools are available to do this, all of which would be voluntary on the part of the landowner. According to the American Farmland Trust, land use policies and zoning are the most important factors in maintaining agriculture production and a healthy local food system. In addition to determining where our agriculture production lands are, we need to develop tools and systems in order to maintain and expand our food production. The Food System Council is ready to help the County assess, discuss and develop tools appropriate for our community, and how best to respect property rights while offering land owners alternatives and choice in setting aside land for agricultural purposes. We welcome feedback on the content of this document.



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The Clark County Food System Council is a citizen advisory board comprised of individuals from many sectors of the community food system. These constituents come together around common interests and beliefs about a healthy, sustainable food system for Clark County. Support is coordinated by Clark County Public Health.

**2013-14 Clark County Food System Council**

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Terri Brodie
Sandy Brown
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Warren Neth
Tammy Rodriguez
Larry Scherer
George Vartanian
Bill Zimmerman

CLARK COUNTY FOOD SYSTEM COUNCIL

Theresa Cross, staff to the Food System Council
Theresa.Cross@clark.wa.gov, (360) 397-8000 ext.7378

# Community Support

Members of the Clark County Food System Council met with representatives or the boards of these organizations to share this proposal and garner support. These organizations agree with the recommendations contained in this proposal. The Food System Council is currently engaged with other groups interested in lending their support to this proposal, and we continue to seek additional partners in this work.

Clark County Public Health Advisory Council

Slow Food Southwest Washington

Hazel Dell Public Market

Urban Abundance

Friends of Clark County

Camas Farmers Market

Salmon Creek Farmers Market

Vancouver Farmers Market

Neighborhood Associations Council

Garden Delights Farm

Yacolt Mountain Farm

Clark Conservation District

New Seasons Market (pending)

Hunters Greens Farm

Clark County Commission on Aging

Inspiration Plantation

April Joy Farm

Coyote Ridge Farm

Friendly Haven Rise Farm

NW Organics Farm

Preserving the Harvest



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