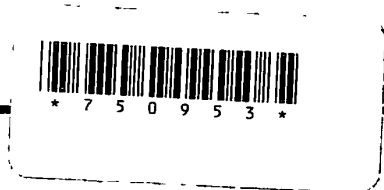


Schroader, Kathy



From: Kate Delavan <kdelavan@farmland.org>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2015 3:50 PM
To: Cnty 2016 Comp Plan, Cnty Board of County Councilors General Delivery
Subject: Comments on the preferred alternative for the growth management plan update
Attachments: American Farmland Trust Letter to Clark County BOCC 11 23 15 pdf

Dear Councilors Mielke, Madore, and Stewart,

Please see the attached letter from American Farmland Trust regarding the preferred alternative for the Comprehensive Plan Update. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,
Kate

Kate Delavan
American Farmland Trust
Saving the Land that Sustains Us
1402 3rd Avenue #1325, Seattle, WA 98101
Office: 206-860-4222 | Mobile: 208-659-7004



www.farmland.org
New look; Same commitment to protecting farmland





American Farmland Trust

November 23, 2015

The Honorable Tom Mielke
The Honorable David Madore
The Honorable Jeanne E. Stewart
Clark County Board of County Councilors
PO Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666-5000

Subject: Comments on the preferred alternative for the growth management plan update.

Dear Councilors Mielke, Madore, and Stewart,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update. We support the Planning Commission's recommendations relating to agricultural lands for the preferred alternative which was readopted on November 19th, 2015.

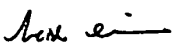
We lose almost an acre of farmland every minute in the United States. American Farmland Trust works to prevent conversion of this precious resource by supporting policies to protect farmland from development. Maintaining our agricultural land base is critical to feeding our growing population and to providing the ecosystem services required for a healthy environment. Once farmland is paved over for development, we can never get it back.

The agricultural economy is significant in Clark County. In 2012, the market value exceeded \$50 million. However, we are seeing a decrease in the number of farms and the land in farms (decrease of 8% and 5% respectively from 2007 to 2012).¹ It is crucial that the Comprehensive Plan includes policies which support a continued and viable agricultural industry in Clark County.

American Farmland Trust supports the Planning Commission's recommendation to **maintain the 20 acre minimum lot size for parcels zoned AG-20**. Large minimum lot sizes and lower residential densities encourage a more viable and contiguous farm landscape. A large minimum lot size ensures parcels will remain large enough to allow for commercial agriculture in the future, helps prevent residential development of farmland, and keeps the per-acre land values down to a level affordable for farmers.² At 39 acres, the average farm size exceeds the current minimum zoning. **We do not see a need to decrease the minimum lot size for AG-20 and we respectfully urge you to maintain the current standards.**

Lastly, **we urge you to not expand the urban growth areas (UGAs)**. The UGA's have room to accommodate the County's housing and employment projections.³ We agree with the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny the La Center and Ridgefield UGA expansions.

Sincerely,


Heidi Eisenhour
Regional Director


Kate Delavan
Policy and Planning Manager

¹ USDA (2012) *2012 Census of Agriculture County Profile Clark County Washington*

² Carty, Martinsons, Kumar (2012) American Farmland Trust, *Losing Ground: Farmland Protection in the Puget Sound Region*

³ Clark County (2015) *Clark County Buildable Lands Report*