

2025 Year of the Rural

Presented by
Heather Cleveland



Agenda

2025 Year of the Rural

Kitsap Conservation District – Farmland Preservation

Growth Management Act

Rural Definitions

Project Timeline

Rural Comp Plan Comments Summary & Survey Summary

Outreach Update

Reclassification Requests

Chapter Update

Code Updates

Agriculture

Farmland Preservation and Economic Viability

Ad-Hoc Agriculture Working Group Steering Committee

Kitsap Conservation District

WSU Kitsap Extension

Kitsap Community & Agriculture Alliance

Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau Preservation Coalition



Non-regulatory organization working cooperatively with private landowners to address water and soil concerns. We collaborate with farmers, residents, and businesses to work toward conservation goals.

Farmland Preservation Presentation by
Diane Fish, Kitsap Conservation District



FARMING IN KITSAP

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE



Betsey Wittick



Dana Steege-Jackson



Megan Gordnier



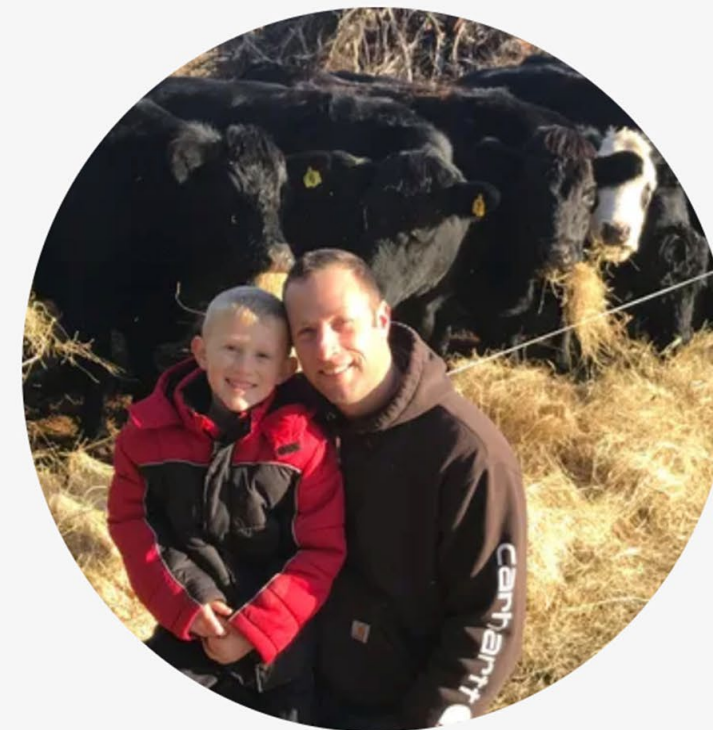
Hannah Orando Baldus



Alicia Houston



Stacy Marshall



Jeremy Anunson



Justin Domingus



Adrienne Domingus

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS



Kitsap Conservation
District



WSU Extension Kitsap,
Regional Small Farms
Program



Great Peninsula
Conservancy



American Farmland
Trust

PROTECT LOCAL FARMS

Join us as we work to preserve, protect, and revitalize the agricultural landscape of Kitsap County

Willow & Mabel Garden Co.
photo by Jess Vallance

In Our Hands

The Future of Farming in Kitsap County



Farmland
Preservation
Strategies:
Analysis and
Recommendations

Kitsap Farmland
Preservation
Working Group

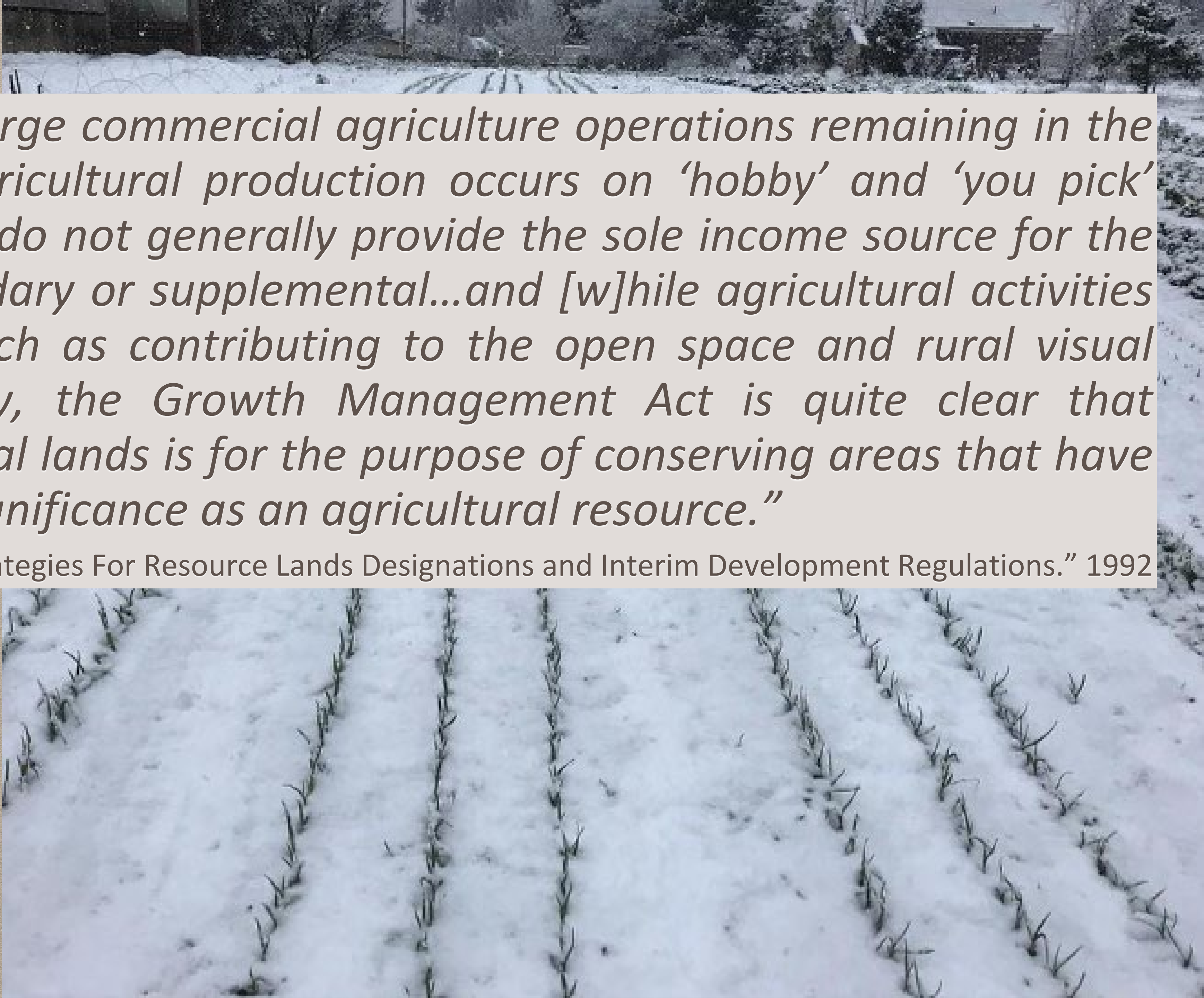
April 2023



FARMLAND LOSS

BETWEEN 1997 AND 2017 KITSAP COUNTY LOST AN ASTONISHING 61% OF ITS FARMLAND. THIS IS APPROXIMATELY THREE TIMES THE RATE OF FARMLAND LOSS IN THE GREATER PUGET SOUND REGION.





“.... there are very few large commercial agriculture operations remaining in the county. Much of the agricultural production occurs on ‘hobby’ and ‘you pick’ farms. These operations do not generally provide the sole income source for the operators but are secondary or supplemental...and [w]hile agricultural activities serve other purposes such as contributing to the open space and rural visual character of the county, the Growth Management Act is quite clear that designation of agricultural lands is for the purpose of conserving areas that have long-term commercial significance as an agricultural resource.”

Kitsap County, “Strategies For Resource Lands Designations and Interim Development Regulations.” 1992

Total Value of Poultry and Poultry Products Sold
in 1954 - \$799,000 **

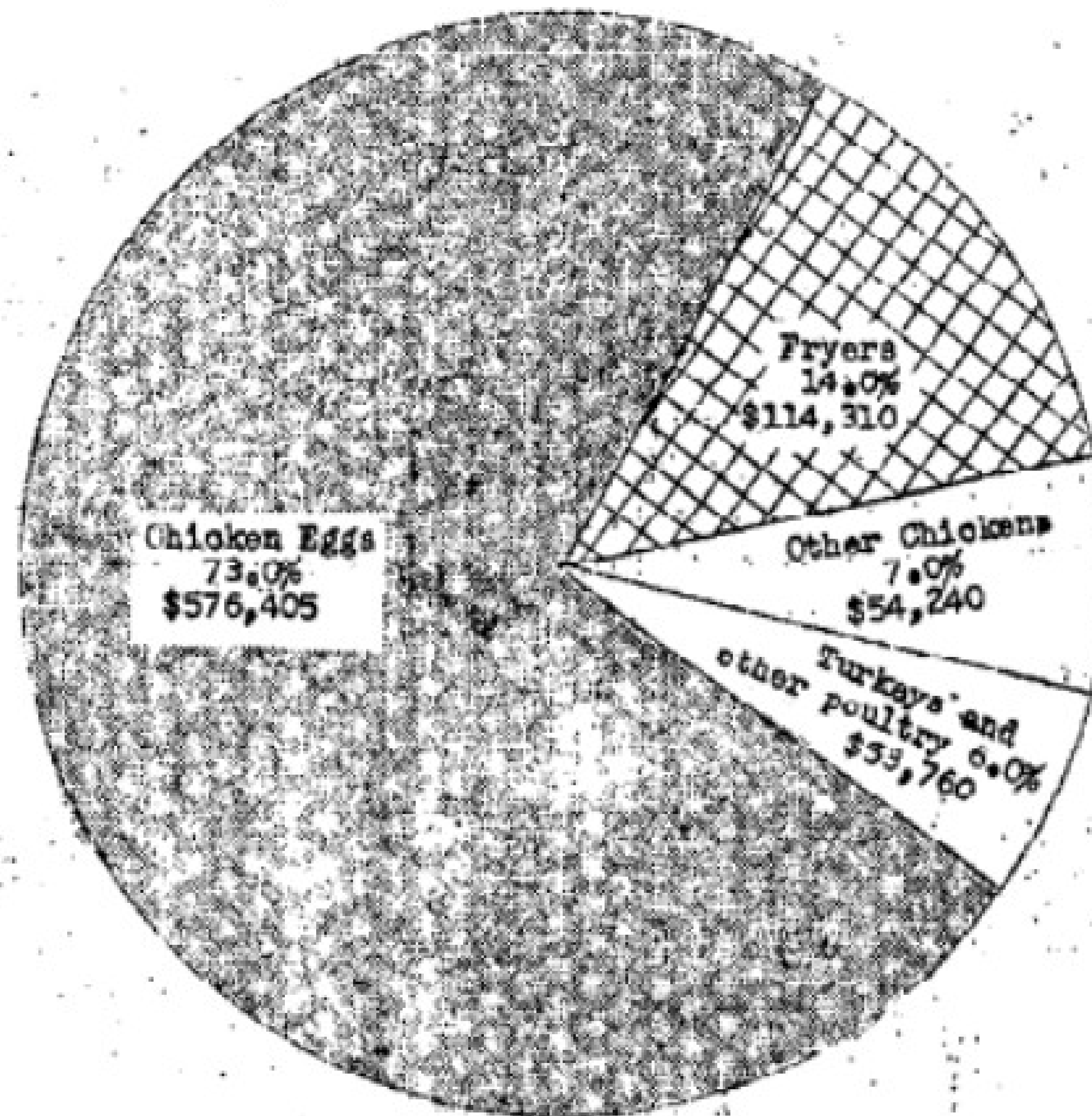


Figure 12.- Divisions of Kitsap County Poultry Industry
By Products Sold off Farms in 1954.
(Based on U.S. Census, Agriculture)

**\$9,470,863

According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture:

- Market value of production for Kitsap farmers in 2022 was \$13,573,000 – a 105% increase over 2017.
- Market value of production per farm increased 151% in five years.
- Farms with sales over \$25,000 increased 300% between 2017 and 2022.
- Forty-nine farms reported sales up to \$100,000 – a whopping 700% increase over 2017 when only six farms had sales at this level.

BUT....

- Kitsap has lost 14,670 acres of farmland since 1997 - 61% of its total agricultural land.
- Only 18 farms over 50 acres remain in Kitsap – down from 57 large farms in 1997.

Appendix A – Kitsap County Census of Agriculture: A 20-Year Retrospective

	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	20-year change
Number of Farms	641	587	664	706	698	+ 9%
Land in Farms (acres)	24,209	16,094	15,294	10,070	9,391	- 61%
Average size of Farm (acres)	38	27	23	14	13	-66%
Percent total acreage in farmland*	9.6%	6.4%	6%	4%	3.7%	-61%
Market Value of Production	\$13,253,000	\$30,713,000	\$6,985,000	\$5,304,000	\$6,605,000	-50%
Market Value of Production per Farm	\$20,675	\$52,322	\$10,520	\$7,513	\$9,463	-54%
Average Farm Size						
1-9 Acres		290 / 49%	311 / 47%	448 / 63%	444 / 64%	+53%
10-49 Acres		240 / 41%	298 / 45%	220 / 32%	228 / 33%	-5%
> 50 Acres		57 / 10%	55 / 8%	38 / 5%	26 / 4%	-54%

WHAT WE KNOW



Farmland is under threat

Economic factors and land use policies contribute to farmland losses

Despite efforts to stop conversion to non-farm uses, losses continue

Preservation goals, policies and strategies slow down/stop loss of farmland

New farmers need help with land access

EFFECTIVE FARMLAND PRESERVATION STRATEGIES



Land use planning and zoning

Conservation easements

Purchase / transfer of development rights programs

Tax policies to support agriculture

Economic support for farmers

Commitment

WHY PRESERVE FARMLAND?

- Food Security
- Economic Development
 - Creates Jobs
 - Keeps Money in Local Communities
 - Provides Tax Revenue; Requires Little Back
- Ecosystem Goods and Services
 - Clean air and water
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Ecological biodiversity
 - Pollinator and wildlife habitat



WE INVITE YOU TO...

- Buy at Farmer's Markets & meet farmers
- Purchase a CSA from a local farm
- Attend the 3rd Annual Kitsap Farm Tour Sunday, August 10th 2025 from 10 – 4
- Evaluate land-use planning and policy decisions through the lens of preservation of working landscapes, open spaces, and forests during the Year of the Rural and beyond



Growth Management Act

Core Concepts

Three main types of land

- Urban
 - Growth focused
 - Dense housing, shopping, jobs
- Rural
 - Protected from growth
 - Large properties, rural jobs, limited commercial
- Resource
 - Protected from all development
 - Timber, agriculture, mining

Urban services

- Sewer, sidewalks, multi-family housing) limited to urban boundaries (UGAs)
- Generally prohibited in rural and resource lands (e.g., sewer).

Growth Management Act

Kitsap County's History

Many small lots (< 5 acres) in rural areas including dense housing developments (urban sprawl)

Lower density development in urban areas without access to urban services (sewer)

Heavily subdivided shorelines

Undesignated resource lands

Strong public interest in maintaining these historic development patterns

Invalid plans. Three different plans in the 1990's.

Growth Management Act

Today in Kitsap County

Urban Areas

Cities, city-adjacent, Silverdale, Kingston

Generally, 5 homes per acre min development

Predominantly single-family development

Rural Areas

5-, 10-, and 20-acre property sizes

Limited existing denser communities

- Manchester, Suquamish, Keyport, and rural job areas

Resource Lands

Time limited to state lands

No commercial agriculture

Mining limited to existing gravel and other pits

Definitions

Rural Zones

KCC Chapter 17.130
Rural Residential (RR)

1 du/5 Acres

Purpose: This zone promotes low-density residential development and agricultural activities that are consistent with rural character. It is applied to areas that are relatively unconstrained by environmentally sensitive areas or other significant landscape features. These areas are provided with limited public services.

KCC Chapter 17.140
Rural Protection

(RP)

1du/10 Acres

Purpose: This zone promotes low-density rural development and agricultural activities that are consistent with rural character and protects environmental features such as significant visual, historical and natural features, wildlife corridors, steep slopes, wetlands, streams and adjacent critical areas.

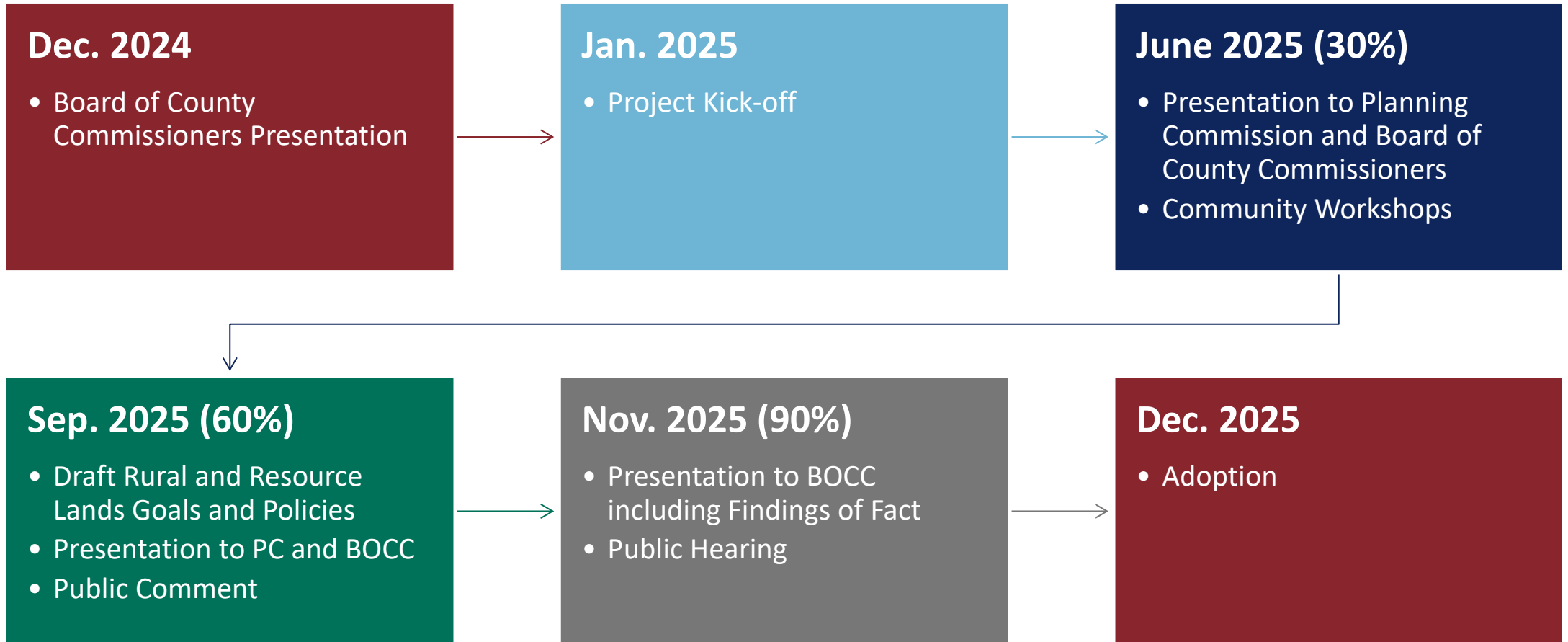
KCC Chapter 17.150
Rural Wooded

(RW)

1du/20 Acres

Purpose: This zone is intended to encourage the preservation of forest uses and agricultural activities, retain an area's rural character and conserve the natural resources while providing for some rural residential use. This zone is further intended to discourage activities and facilities that can be considered detrimental to the maintenance of timber production. Residents of rural wooded (RW) residential tracts shall recognize that they can be subject to normal and accepted farming and forestry practices on adjacent parcels.

Timeline



Outreach

Rural Comp Plan Comments Summary

Rural Comp Plan Comments Summary

- Overview
- Environmental Concerns
- Zoning and Land Use
- Traffic and Transportation
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Public Services and Facilities
- Procedural and Legals Issues
- Housing and Growth
- General Opposition or Support

Outreach

Survey Summary

Rural and Resource Lands Survey Summary

- Overview
- Preserving Rural Character
- Restricting Growth to Rural Areas
- Improving Rural Transportation and Safety
- Support for Rural-Compatible Economic Development
- Rural Environmental Stewardship
- Government and Communication with Rural Communities
- Action Items & Potential Next Steps

Outreach

Overview

Work Groups/Interviews/Presentations

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Rural Businesses
- Water and Environment
- Childcare
- Energy Siting
- KAPO, North Kitsap Rotary, Tribal Partners

June Workshops

- South Kitsap. Date and Location TBD
- Central Kitsap. Wednesday, June 25, 5:30pm-7:30pm, Eagle's Nest Community Building
- North Kitsap. Thursday, June 26, 5:30pm-7:30pm, Location TBD

September Presentations

- Manchester CAC
 - Tuesday, September 2
- Central Kitsap CAC
 - Wednesday, September 3
- Suquamish CAC
 - Thursday, September 4
- Kingston CAC
 - Wednesday, September 10

Reclassification Requests

17 Rural to Rural Reclassification Requests Deferred from the 2024 Comprehensive Plan

Two reclassification requests included in Alternative 2 (most like the Preferred Alternative)

- One Current Rural Protection - Proposed Rural Commercial
- One Current Rural Wooded – Proposed Rural Industrial

All others included in Alternative 3

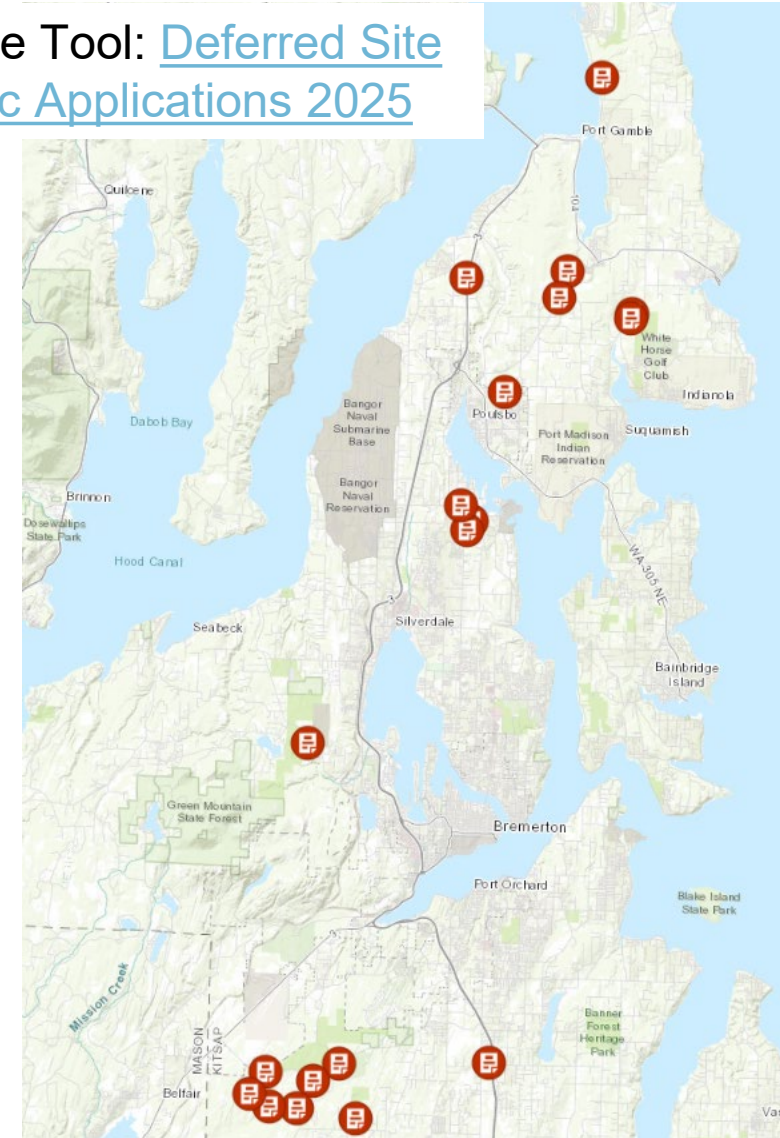
- One Rural Residential to Rural Industrial
- Fourteen Upzone Reclassification Requests

Applications assessments in progress

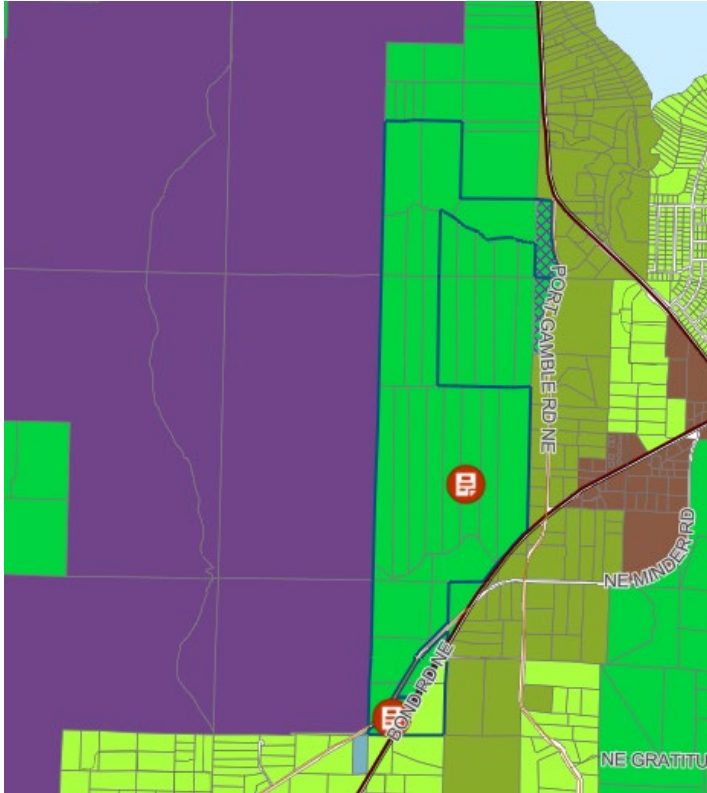
- KCC 21.08. 070 Criteria for recommendation or decision
 - E.g. “The proposed amendment is consistent with the GMA, Kitsap County-wide Planning Policy, state and local laws and other applicable inter-jurisdictional policies or agreements.”

Considering a recommendation to update the docket in June/July.

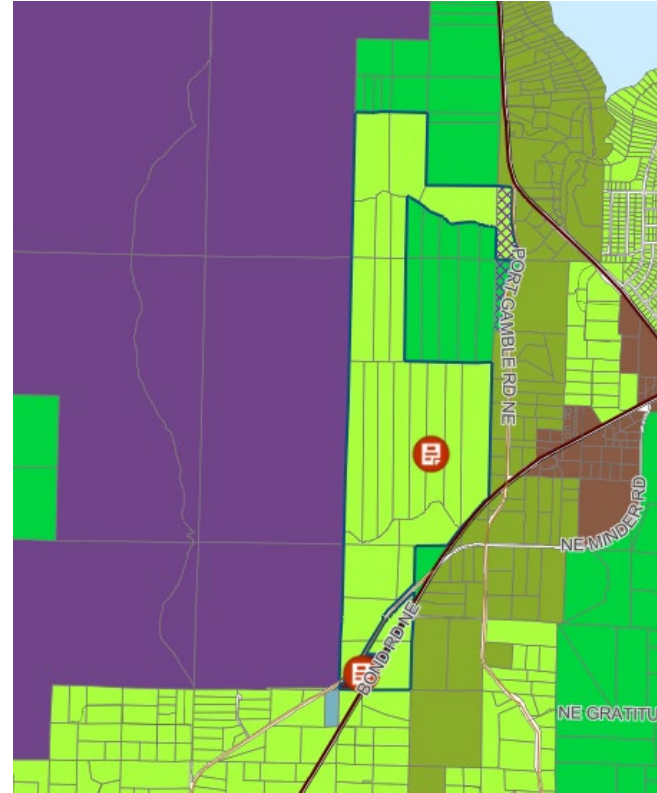
Website Tool: [Deferred Site Specific Applications 2025](#)



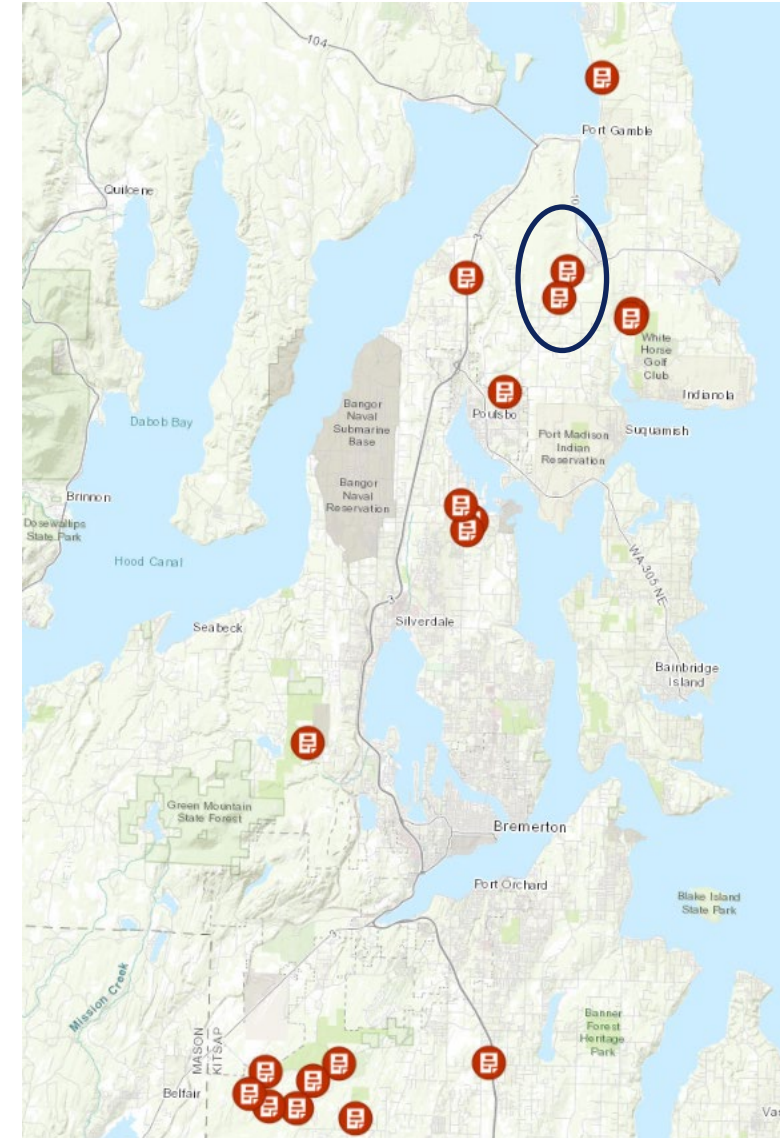
Reclassification Requests

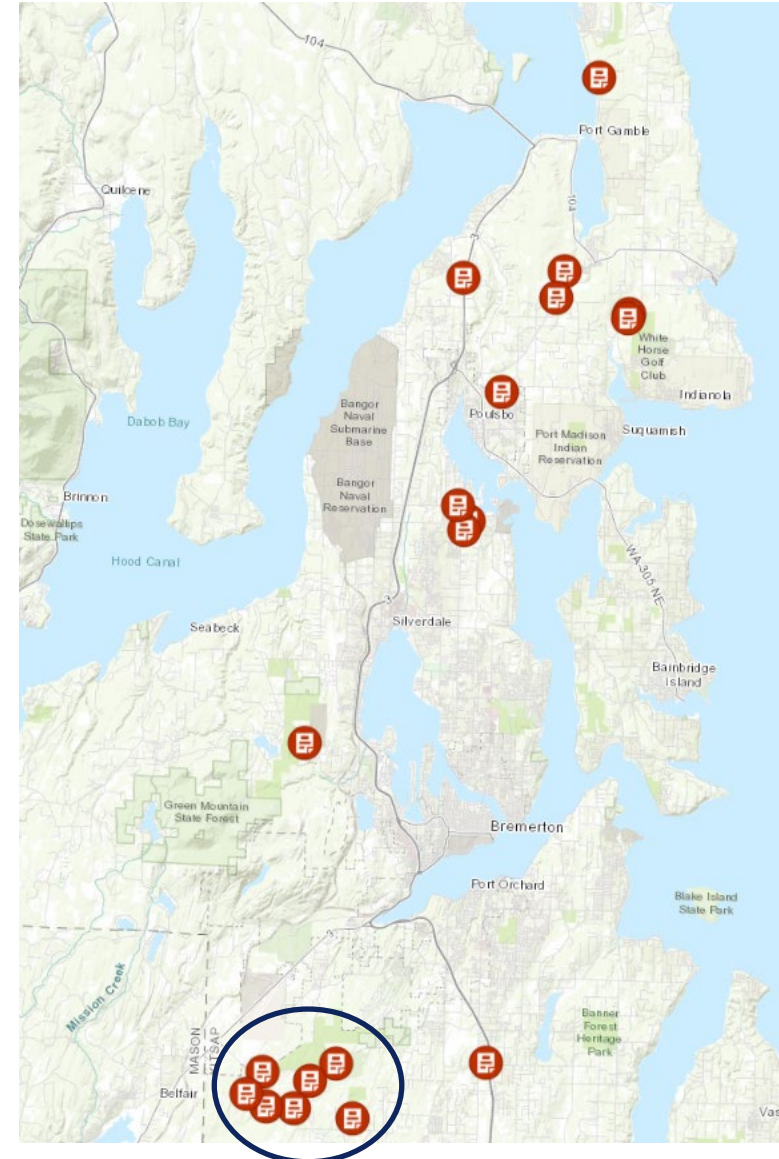


Current Zoning: RW 1DU/20Ac



Proposed Zoning: Rr 1DU/5Ac





Chapter Update

Background

- Prior to adoption of the 2016 comp plan, the Rural and Resource Lands (RRL) chapter was a standalone element. In 2016, the goals and policies of the RRL chapter were incorporated into the Land Use (LU) element. At the direction of the KC BOCC, a new RRL chapter will be developed and added to the 2024 comprehensive plan.

Approach

- 2010/12, 2016, 2024 Chapter and Plan Review
- Community and Subject Matter Expert Engagement
- Gap Analysis/Research/Analysis
- Iterative drafts for review and comment

Chapter 9 / Rural and Resource Lands Element

VISION

Kitsap County's vision is for the protection of rural areas and natural resource lands, including preservation of places of natural beauty, working agriculture and timber lands, and community identity and rural character. As defined in the Growth Management Act (GMA), "rural character" generally refers to the following patterns of land use and development:

- (a) In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- (b) That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
- (c) That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;

Potential Code Updates

Agriculture

In-home Childcare

Rural Events

Rural Small Business/Land Use Compatibility

What's next?

- Continued engagement
- Gap analysis
- Research
- Work
- 30% Draft Presentation Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Questions/Comments