

Clark County APAC Draft Farmlands Preservation Strategies

1. Establish position(s) within Clark County to serve as a friend of the farmer or "farmbudsman" to provide support for commercial farming, community supported agriculture (CSA) and subscription farming and help farmers receive better, more efficient service from Clark County that would include development, coordination and oversight of:
 - an independent farm marketing association in conjunction with local farmers.
 - a "Lower Columbia Fresh" logo and marketing efforts.
 - a regular "farm report" distributed to local electronic and print media outlets.
 - training programs for new farmers through the WSU Clark County Extension service, local community colleges, and existing high school vocational programs.
 - Develop a demonstration farm (or several farms on smaller sites) to serve as testing sites for research and technical assistance on high intensity urban fringe farming. The farm(s) would also provide public education to teach citizens about farming.
 - Facilitate securing health insurance for farmers through the state of Washington.
 - Develop a base of information about the regional and national use of farmers' cooperatives and associations.
2. Expand the existing tax incentive programs to provide further benefit to farmers.
3. Continue to work with the WSU Clark County Extension Service to make sure Clark County farmers have dedicated agents for horticulture and livestock.
4. Acquire additional development rights for key farmlands.
5. Use existing publicly owned land or acquire farmland to create a lease-back program to farmers.
6. Utilize transfer of development rights, and density bonuses to encourage landowners to keep their lands in agricultural use.
7. Provide opportunities for the farming community, through the creation of an Agricultural Commission, to review and provide input on proposed policies and regulations that have substantial impact on farmers prior to adoption.
8. Establish a revolving loan fund and an endowment fund through a local community foundation to provide farmers with financial assistance and grants to conduct specific research, technical assistance and education programs.
9. Assist in establishing permanent sites and schedules for local, agriculturally based seasonal farmers' markets. Strategies may include use of county land, acquisition of sites, or negotiation assistance to establish sites on other public and private land.
10. Pursue regulatory reform, with a particular emphasis on the cost of building permit fees and the time it takes to acquire building permits for farm-related structures.

11. Allow temporary and permanent housing for farm workers.
12. Revise the County's Right-to-Farm ordinance.
13. The next major funding initiative for the purpose of acquiring open space or resource lands, should include a sizable amount of funds to acquire additional development rights in Clark County.
14. Allow greater flexibility and establish criteria for farming related commercial uses.
15. Develop a cost sharing program to help farmers meet environmental regulatory requirements.