

Clark County APAC Draft Farmlands Preservation Strategies Survey

June 17, 2008

By Jeanne Lawson Associates, Inc.

1. Strategy 1: Acquire additional development rights for key farmlands.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	57.1%	8
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	35.7%	5
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.1%	1

Comments:

- Concern Funds to acquire: The Development community opposes and only banks funding the developers can force movement
- Would like to look at what area we would put into this area
- What is considered 'key' farmlands?
- Look at Pierce County's TDR program, one with teeth
- Don't know of enough large blocks of farmable land available - haven't seen a plan that would be favorable to a farmer to sell his development rights.
- Additional development rights as an enticement to participate may back fire. It depends on the wording and the binding nature used in the language.

2. Strategy 2: Use existing publicly owned land or acquire farmland to create a lease-back program to farmers.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	57.1%	8
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	35.7%	5
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.1%	1

Comments:

- How? Would the land be suitable? Funding of acquisition unless part of a flood plain protection scheme?
- How much land does the County/City own?
- If this would help young farmers get into farming I'm all for it
- Exactly, we are at a juncture whereby available land, possibly public will need to utilized. The land should be leased in about five year periods with option to review the use of the land within the five year period with no assumed renewal options. Each period should be re-negotiated.

3. Strategy 3: Develop a Farm Link program matching retiring farmers with current farmers or new farmers.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	57.1%	8
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	42.9%	6
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Would like to hear more feedback from farmers
- This is a great idea, but given the current number of active farmers in Clark County, I am not certain how effective it would be.
- In general, the cost of a young person taking over an existing farm would be very cost prohibitive, unless he won the lottery he could farm until his money was gone.
- Yes, environmental easements and other estate planning tools should be used to preserve what remains of good farmland in perpetuity.
- This can be a strategy linked to current statewide program (<http://www.cascadeharvest.org/>)

4. Strategy 4: Utilize clustering, transfer of development rights, and density bonuses to encourage landowners to keep their lands in agricultural use.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	50.0%	7
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	50.0%	7
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- I question the bundling of choices. TDR are an elusive concept'
- At the same time, provide incentives to developers to decrease sprawl
- Too big a question to answer in this space.
- Just like the 'Sound to Greenway' strategy near Seattle, society needs a 'Farmway' - a network of farmland linked to create contiguous farming operations in a region or county. transfer of development rights? Meaning to make it easier to buy those rights? Unfortunately, neither the state nor county can offer the kind of money developers can...

5. Strategy 5: 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.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	50.0%	7
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	42.9%	6
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.1%	1

Comments:

- Has the economy pre-empted getting funds?
- Need more information. Do we have an agriculture commission?
- At what cost? What would be have to give up in order to accomplish this?
- I don't think enough funds could be raised to accomplish this.
- ok to acquire the d. rights, but then what??? someone has to manage the properties. Will the landowners continue to do so? What about the land on 78th St./WSU? What about all

the Conservation Futures and other public lands that are sitting idle?? Many are thought to be only open space/habitats for fish and wildlife but have ag values also?

- See comment above...not sure how government can really compete with wealthy developers.
- This will somewhat depend on the overall strategy.

6. Strategy 6: Allow greater flexibility with regard to farming related commercial uses.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	57.1%	8
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	42.9%	6
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Would like to get more details about the local environmental regulations
- This is a positive direction and should be investigated further.
- For example, farm tourism...however, usually those activities are associated with non-profit entities...not necessarily, for profit. Any provision like this must be subject to review in order to avoid abuses.
- concerned about creating "loopholes" which could lead to development not actually related to agriculture.

7. Strategy 7: Expand the existing tax incentive programs to provide further benefit to farmers

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	71.4%	10
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	21.4%	3
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.1%	1

Comments:

- Details ?
- In Clark County as well? I am wondering if the discussion step in the "next steps" has happened and if so can we see the report?
- Reform to the current use tax structure.
- Current land use tax relief seems unfair
- This is another positive step - put at the top of the list.
- Tax incentives for Farm/Ag lands... the longer they are kept in the bigger the incentives/tax breaks?
- This may be the single most important strategy...size of the farm / land used should not be determinative.
- look at tax breaks for plots under an acre

8. Strategy 8: Develop a cost sharing program to help farmers meet environmental regulatory requirements.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	50.0%	7
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<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	50.0%	7
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Make the regulators fill out the forms!
- Another positive step.
- Environmental regulatory requirements are not the evil oft made out to be...business strategies can be changed to avoid costly environmental compliance issues...doing no or reduce till and no petroleum based inorganic fertilizers (well composted manure)...changing business strategy in these ways should provide benefits. Unlike if the owner complains about environmental protection and continues doing harmful practices that impact water quality, for example.

9. Strategy 9: Assist farmers in securing health insurance.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	69.2%	9
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	23.1%	3
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.7%	1

Comments:

- to determine eligibility do they take into account assets? If so then I question if farmers would be eligible.
- A positive step - need insurance for workers as well
- Here is an area I would like to see a farmers' cooperative created to assist...farmers' then buy insurance through the cooperative....

10. Strategy 10: Continue to work with the Cooperative Extension Service to make sure Clark County farmers have dedicated agents for horticulture and livestock, and sufficient resources from a statewide dairy team.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	78.6%	11
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	21.4%	3
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Research money is being continually taken away and every year for the last 20 yrs. Cooperative Extension's budget has been cut. The way it is continuing Cooperative Extension and Research will not have the money or the resources to continue helping the professional farmers. The Resarch Unit in Clark County has already been closed for lack of funds and the Cooperative Extension is having to serve 100 times more people with less personnel than they had 20 yrs ago.
- Unfortunately there are only four FFA programs left in the county and just about that many active dairies.

- Typically, the Cooperative Extension Service will try to find a remedy to the latest disease to inflict a predominately pushed variety of wheat, for example but the Service doesn't necessary stress the use of a variety of crops or variety within a certain kind of crop to reduce the spread of disease. This is not just my opinion...
- Correct name is WSU Clark County Extension / this should be done within the context of sustainability and the 78th street responsibilities for Extension
- need more input for very small farms and nurseries

11. Strategy 11: Fund an endowment that would provide grants to conduct specific research, technical assistance and education programs that would benefit local farmers.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	42.9%	6
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	50.0%	7
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.1%	1

Comments:

- Positive step.
- Need to visit about this one more? Who would fund it? How? How many would benefit?
- There is a national organization (ATTRA) which is very user friendly already. Would locally derived be any more useful?

12. Strategy 12: Develop a mentoring program (as part of farm link activities) which would provide an opportunity for experienced farmers to share their knowledge and resources with new farmers.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	71.4%	10
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	28.6%	4
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- My observation is that (serious) new farmers seek out experienced farmers on there own.
- If there are any new farmers.
- Definitely...perhaps, paying the farmer or assist in the creation of an internship program through the county but the farmer benefits.

13. Strategy 13: Work with the Cooperative Extension service, local community colleges, and existing high school vocational programs to create training programs for new farmers.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	84.6%	11
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	15.4%	2
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Some of this is already being done; we should assure continued support toward this effort.

- Those programs have been phased out of the existing curriculum in most of the high schools in Clark County. Clark College agricultural classes are geared mostly toward landscape, hobby farming and greenhouse operations
- My organization, Take the Farm Home could be a venue, too.

14. Strategy 14: Establish a revolving loan fund to assist farmers.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	64.3%	9
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	35.7%	5
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Details
- I am familiar with another private revolving loan fund which guarantees investors a 4-5% return and loans are made at a 6% interest rate. The model is self sustaining for loaning purposes and secure guaranteed rate of return investing for investors.
- I like tax strategies to assist farmers...but loans?
- low interest loans

15. Strategy 15: Establish position(s) within Clark County to serve as a friend of the farmer or "farmbudsman" to help farmers receive better, more efficient service from Clark County.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	85.7%	12
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	14.3%	2
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- policy makers need a consistent reminder of where their food comes from
- Don't really understand the full meaning of the question.
- Educating the people we are trying to help is necessary...lots of information out there and the farmsbudsman would play the role of a filter.
- I think an Agriculture Commission to advise the BOCC (and appointed by the BOCC) on ag related issues might be an option or complement a Farmbudsman

16. Strategy 16: 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.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	84.6%	11
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	15.4%	2
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Although I like the educational aspect of this for the general public, I am not certain that it will have a direct positive impact on sustaining and preserving the current farmers.

- A good 78th Street project
- Positive step.
- Isn't this what the 78th St. Farm was/is????!
- Take the Farm Home has a similar if not the same mission.

17. Strategy 17: Work with local farmers to create an independent farm marketing association.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	78.6%	11
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	21.4%	3
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Love this!
- This route has possibilities.
- Farm to schools program?
- YES! May be serve to help create a group processing kitchen...to help local farmers get the produce ready for market...?

18. Strategy 18: Create a "Clark County Fresh" logo and marketing efforts.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	92.9%	13
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	7.1%	1
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Love this too...could incorporate with Strategy #17
- Positive step.
- Marketing is everything...or a significant part of business.
- I would like to see how well others have worked vis-a-vis the investment

19. Strategy 19: Work with local electronic and print media outlets to develop a regular "farm report".

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	50.0%	7
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	50.0%	7
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Are we talking about a 'farm fresh' newspaper featuring local farmers/Farmers Markets?
Could this also be part of 17 & 18?
- YES!!
- A step in the right direction.
- and up to date!

20. Strategy 20: Develop a base of information about the regional and national use of farmers' cooperatives and associations.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	57.1%	8
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	42.9%	6
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- If we get the appropriate support for Extension, this could be part of Extension. Some of this is already done through Extension.
- Could this mean resurrecting the grange system?
- Lots of questions need answering. A lot of the commissions (Strawberry, Raspberry, Apple, Pear, etc) have been limited because of governmental intervention - most cooperatives have failed because farmers weren't keeping on top of hired management.

21. Strategy 21: Assist in establishing permanent sites for local farmers' markets. Strategies may include use of county land, acquisition of sites, or negotiation assistance with other public and private landowners.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	64.3%	9
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	21.4%	3
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	14.3%	2

Comments:

- This has lots of potential if it was done correctly - not in downtown Vancouver.
- I have a similar idea...making it easier through the county to have strategically placed "road side" stands...as part of the TTFH food security network system! :)
- Might need to make contingent of FM's being limited to a certain % of non-farm related vendors
- I am willing to help on this issue

22. Strategy 22: Provide support for community supported agriculture (CSA) and subscription farming.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	57.1%	8
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	35.7%	5
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.1%	1

Comments:

- What type of support? Should this be incorporated into strategy #17, 18, & 19
- This has a very limited market and is usually only adapted to small farm operations with the owners doing most all of the work themselves. Doesn't produce enough income for hired workers.

- Support? I think CSAs have their role but so do farmers' markets / road side stands...not every family can afford to plunk out up to \$600 for a subscription (and take the risk of crop failures)...
- I think CSA should be just one of the many options promoted and supported; local ag depends on diversity

23. Strategy 23: 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.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	78.6%	11
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	21.4%	3
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Very positive step. This would relate to buildings that the public may be inside (ie. on farm markets, greenhouse operations, on farm kitchen or restaurant). Agricultural buildings do not currently require permits unless the public is entering them.
- Subject to review...no blind eye...obviously, the easier building of structures may not have anything to do with farm related activities...
- ties in with an Ag Commission and Farmbudsman

24. Strategy 24: Allow temporary housing for farm workers.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	64.3%	9
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	35.7%	5
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- Necessary, however I think this would apply to a very small number of existing farms in Clark County.
- Much needed in some cases in order to retain workers.
- May help out the people who want to volunteer or accept minimum pay to get an internship for the summer, too!
- included in regulatory arena

25. Strategy 25: Provide opportunities for the farming community to review and provide input on proposed policies and regulations that have substantial impact on farmers prior to adoption.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	85.7%	12
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	7.1%	1
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	7.1%	1

Comments:

- This is an absolute must!!

- This is part of the regulatory process already - no reason to give special status to any member of the public.
- This would best be done with an Agriculture Commission (Council)

26. Strategy 26: Revise the County's Right-to-Farm ordinance.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	76.9%	10
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	23.1%	3
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0

Comments:

- The new suburban neighbor assumes that farms or timber acreage are public resources. They do not want to pay. They want no noise, no logging, but no taxes.
- Need to read it more before I comment
- To further include those properties that are not currently in Ag zoning.
- I don't know what this is
- Look at the City of Vancouver's Right to Farm Bill as a building block.
- Probably...would need to review the ordinance to determine what if anything needs revision.
- as long as it gets stronger protection of farmers rights to pursue normal farming practices.

27. Strategy 27: Develop a farm tour program.

<i>Like, keep for further consideration</i>	35.7%	5
<i>Uncertain, need more discussion</i>	64.3%	9
<i>Dislike, remove from consideration</i>	0.0%	0