



To: Historic Preservation Commission

From: Jacqui Kamp, Planner III, Community Planning

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Subject: Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) categories

Background

In the fall of 2017, the county council tasked the Assessor's office with studying the proposition of developing a Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) to update the county's Current Use - Open Space program. This initiative would update the Open Space classification under Current Use. The county has four total [Current Use designations](#).

- **Open Space** ([Link to Open Space webpage](#))
 - **Soil Conservation**
 - **Conservation and Enhancement of Natural Resources**
 - **Stream Protection**
 - **Enhancement of Recreational Opportunities**
 - **Historic Preservation**
- Farm and Agricultural Land
- Timberland
- Designated Forest Land

Currently, properties listed on any one of the historic registers (National, State, Clark County Heritage Register) are eligible for the Current Use-Open Space classification. If approved, the subject property receives the benefit. The benefit is the same across all sub categories under "Open Space".

As Historic Preservation is one of the current eligibilities for the program, the county is seeking input from the Historic Preservation program and the Historic Preservation Commission on potential historic preservation categories for a new county Public Benefit Rating System.

What is a PBRs?

A PBRs is a tool for evaluating the benefits to the general welfare of the community, the 'public benefit', as well as the 'value' of those benefits as determined through application of a rating system. PBRs is typically based on a point system which equates to a reduction in land assessed value.

Why study a PBRs?

Based on challenges the citizens brought forward in 2017, it was suggested that a PBRs Committee be formed to see if establishing a PBRs is right for Clark County. Benefits of a PBRs are that it:

- Allows flexibility to address unique land situations
- Provides tax options for those who no longer qualify for other programs
- Empowers the community to further conserve

Who has a PBRs?

Currently, 17 of the 39 counties in the state have a PBRs, including, Cowlitz, King, Pierce and Spokane counties.

PBRs committee

The PBRs committee consists of staff from various county departments, agriculture/forestry property owners and the Columbia Land Trust. The committee began by researching various PBRs programs in the state and then narrowed the focus to counties that are similar to Clark, including Spokane, King, Pierce, Cowlitz, and Lewis. The committee has chosen to utilize King County's established criteria and see how it compares to programs that Clark County has in place.

PBRs committee request for feedback

The PBRs committee has been learning about county programs that are related to the King County categories, such as Wildlife and Habitat; Parks and Recreation; and the Historic Preservation program. They are asking that the program staff provide input on potential categories for a Clark County program. The PBRs committee is requesting feedback and comment from the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the historic categories, using King County's as a starting point.

The attached Public Benefit Rating System Resource Information for King County provides an explanation of their program and defines their 19 resource categories, in addition to 6 bonus categories. Categories 8, 9 and 10 are related to historic properties. They are:

8. Historic landmark or archaeological site: buffer to designated site – three points

For the purposes of this subsection B.8, "historic landmark or archaeological site: buffer to a designated site" means property adjacent to land constituting or containing a designated county or local historic landmark or archeological site, as determined by the historic preservation officer of King County or other jurisdiction in which the property is located that manages a certified local government program. To be eligible as a historic landmark or archeological site: buffer to a designated site, a property must have a plant community in which native plants are dominant and be adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of and provide a significant buffer for a designated landmark or archeological site listed on the county or other certified local government list or register of historic places or landmarks. For the purposes of this subsection B.8, "significant buffer" means land and plant communities that provide physical, visual, noise or other barriers and separation from adverse effects to the historic resources due to adjacent land use;

9. Historic landmark or archeological site: designated site - five points.

For the purposes of this subsection B.9, "historic landmark or archaeological site: designated site" means land that constitutes or upon which is situated a historic landmark designated by King County or other certified local government program. Historic landmarks include buildings, structures, districts or sites of significance in the county's historic or prehistoric heritage, such as Native American settlements, trails, pioneer settlements, farmsteads, roads, industrial works, bridges, burial sites, prehistoric and historic archaeological sites or traditional cultural properties. To be eligible as a historic landmark or archeological site: designated site, a property must be listed on a county or other certified local government list or register of historic places or landmarks for which there is local regulatory protection. Eligible property may include property that contributes to the historic character within designated historic districts, as defined by the historic preservation officer of King County or other certified local government jurisdiction. The King County historic preservation officer shall make the determination on eligibility;

10. Historic landmark or archeological site: eligible site - three points.

For the purposes of this subsection B.10, "historic landmark or archaeological site: eligible site" means land that constitutes or upon which is situated a historic property that has the potential of being designated by a certified local government jurisdiction, including buildings, structures, districts or sites of significance in the county's historic or prehistoric heritage, such as Native American settlements, pioneer settlements, farmsteads, roads, industrial works, bridges, burial sites, prehistoric and historic archaeological sites or traditional cultural properties. An eligible

property must be determined by the historic preservation officer of King County or other certified local government program in the jurisdiction in which the property is located to be eligible for designation and listing on the county or other local register of historic places or landmarks for which there is local regulatory protection. Eligible property may include contributing property within designated historic districts. Property listed on the state or national Registers of Historic Places may qualify under this category.

Historic Preservation Commission review

The PBRS committee's goal is to draft category topics that are similar to King County's. They are asking that the county's subject matter experts review the King County categories and propose language for each category for Clark County. The next PBRS committee meeting is Sept. 20. We would like to provide feedback regarding the historic categories for the committee's Sept. 20 meeting; therefore we are requesting all comments by Wed., Sept. 12.

Homework

Review King County's categories and think about whether Clark County should have similar priorities for reductions for properties related to historic sites. We will discuss at the Sept. 5 meeting and then you will have a week to provide staff your comments.

Here are some questions to consider, after reviewing the King County historic categories:

- What do you think works well or doesn't work well for King County categories 8, 9, and 10
- Should properties on all three registers (National, State, and CCHR) receive the same point value for each category? Or should only CCHR properties receive points since that is the only register that has regulatory protection here in Clark County? King County specifies that the registered or designated site must have local regulatory protection.
- For category 10, how will we define "eligible site"? Our code does not define what "eligible to be listed" means. Who would determine eligibility and what criteria would be used? Could we use the current inventory?
- Would you propose a different category?
- How do we provide property owners the benefit for an archaeological site under category 10 if those sites are to be protected and classified? (Because most archaeological site locations are not publicly known.)

Attachment

King County Public Benefit Rating System Resource Information