

May 13, 2016

To the Kitsap County Planning Commission,

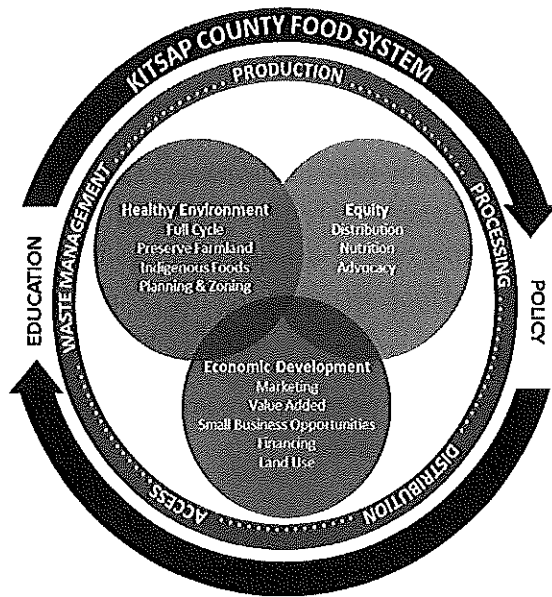
I am writing to you today to request that you take into consideration my suggested edits to the comprehensive plan. It is my feeling that the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan is incohesive and does not clearly lay out a plan for the future of Kitsap County. I have focused my energy on edits to food related topics within the Comprehensive Plan. Access to healthy foods is critical to the well-being of all residents in Kitsap County. Current data from across the United States suggest that the way Americans produce, distribute, and consume food is creating an epidemic of obesity and related diseases, as well as degradation to the natural environment. It is my hope that you will recognize the important role a strong local food system plays within our community and support the related additions to the Comprehensive Plan.

Erika Anderson
Kitsap County Food Policy Intern

Economic Development

Recommendation that all food system related Goals and Policies move into their own section within Economic Development.

Kitsap County's Food System



Defined as the path that food travels from field to fork or from farm to table, a food system is a network, typically comprising food production, processing, distribution, access and waste management. These integrated elements enhance the community's livability.

Regional food networks can increase access to healthy and nutritious foods. As seen in the figure above, a functioning food system provides the education necessary to create supportive policies. A coordinated food system supports the three tiers

of sustainability: a healthy environment, equitable access, and economic viability. This path will increase Kitsap County's self-sufficiency now and into the future.

Through support and promotion of the local food system Kitsap County can strengthen and stimulate the economic growth of the food sector.

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| Economic Development Policy 1. | Expand the county's capacity to produce, process, distribute and access local foods. |
| Economic Development Policy 2. | Support agricultural tourism and value-added programs that will stimulate economic growth. |
| Economic Development Policy 3. | Encourage locally based food production, distribution, and choice through the support of community gardens, school gardens, farm-to-school programs, farmers or public markets, and other small-scale, collaborative initiatives. |

Kitsap County is committed to promoting food security, food systems, food economy, and public health by encouraging locally based food production, distribution, and choice through urban agriculture, community gardens, farmers markets, and food access initiatives.

- Economic Development Policy 6.** Promote inter-agency and intergovernmental cooperation to expand community gardening opportunities.
- Economic Development Policy 7.** Support the development and adoption of joint-use agreements on publicly-owned sites or institutional facilities to allow gardens, distribution and sales.
- Strategy 12.** Prioritize underserved communities, including communities with “food deserts” e.g. lack of grocery stores, as areas for potential locations for community gardens, farmers markets, and local food access programs.
- Strategy 13.** Consider allowing alternative retail models including pop-ups and mobile markets.
- Strategy 14.** Assess and plan for community-supported agriculture programs, local food processing, wholesaling, and distribution facilities to connect local agriculture to markets such as retailers, restaurants, schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

Lack of food related processing and distribution has created many gaps in Kitsap County’s food system. In order to improve the food sectors economic viability Kitsap County will enhance local and regional aggregation and distribution networks by increase, and where necessary creating, food processing infrastructure.

- Economic Development Policy 8.** Strengthen the food value chain by supporting new congregation and distribution opportunities such as farm stands, farmer’s markets, and food hubs.
- Economic Development Policy 9.** Increase market opportunities for producers including the use of community gathering places as venues for local food sales.
- Economic Development Policy 10.** Encourage establishment of sustainable community processing centers.
- Strategy 15.** Expand distribution to retail and wholesale buyers to improve consistency in food quantity, quality and availability (e.g., food hubs).
- Strategy 16.** Encourage partnerships that support opportunities for local and regional marketing, distribution and sales.

Land Use

Recommendation that all agriculturally related Land Use goals and policies move to a new section under Resource Lands.

Agricultural Lands

Kitsap County has a rich and diverse agricultural heritage that dates back to the early 1900's. As commerce changed from timber to naval ship making, cleared lands shifted into agricultural uses. Mostly congregating around cities, towns or other places with population density, early farms took advantage of the maritime climate and lush valleys created by glacial activity, producing such products as: fruit and vegetable crops, dairy, meat, poultry, Christmas trees, and holly. Farmers began using the Mosquito Fleet ferry system to transport goods to Seattle and other metropolitan areas, making Kitsap County a leader in local food distribution. With the onset of World War II agriculture flourished with the addition of victory gardens and 4H gardens helping to create a sustainable culture in Kitsap County. After the war, agriculture continued to grow in the area, but by the 1940's the economy shifted yet again, this time from resource dependent industries to technology based industry. This change created an influx of population growth, transferring prime agricultural lands into non agricultural uses.

To meet requirements of the Growth Management Act to maintain and enhance agriculture, RCW 36.70A.177, Kitsap County will recognize the diverse nature of farms and the cultural value that farms bring to our community through their preservation of open space, environmental benefits, economic growth and access to healthy lifestyle . Farmlands are an irreplaceable resource. The Kitsap County Agricultural Strategic Plan and Inventory shall be the basis for Kitsap's food system, including agriculture, policies and programs developed by the County. Agricultural mapping detailed in the plan shall be maintained and refined. Kitsap County will retain, preserve and expand land suitable for agricultural production and encourage the continued practice of diversified agricultural activities through regulatory and non-regulatory means.

Land use Policy 1. Allow agricultural activities and practices from cultivation to harvest as well as on-farm value-added processing within the Rural Wooded, Rural Protection and Rural Residential zoning districts or the Farming Focus Areas identified in the Agricultural Strategic Plan and Inventory.

Land Use Policy 2. Foster agriculture opportunities by promoting flexibility in development regulations.

Strategy 1. Re-examine and, if appropriate, adopt or amend criteria used to determine if land meeting Growth Management Act designation criteria as Agricultural Resource Land exists within the county.

Strategy 2. Continue regulatory and non-regulatory preservation of historic or working farm land, particularly through tax policy, conservation easements, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), innovative

Strategy 12. Review and amend development regulations to consider impacts of non-farm-related commercial or industrial uses to the Farming Areas identified in the Agricultural Strategic Plan and Inventory.

Strategy 13. Develop and promote incentives for continued agricultural uses.

In order to maintain and operate their farms, farmers need assistance to sustain viability in the face of increasing urbanization, soil degradation, increased flooding and water scarcity. Kitsap County will develop and maintain adequate rural and urban facilities and services that support agriculture.

Land Use Policy 3. Pursue new innovations that are supportive of agricultural resource management.

Strategy 14. Partner with appropriate local, county, tribal and state agencies to promote viable coordinated water resources for greater accessibility to water rights for agriculture usage.

Strategy 15. Develop strategies for water collection, storage and reuse.

Strategy 16. Develop and promote incentives for continued resource uses, including but not limited to a Transfer of Development Rights program, an expedited agricultural activity permit review program, and educational and agritourism activities.