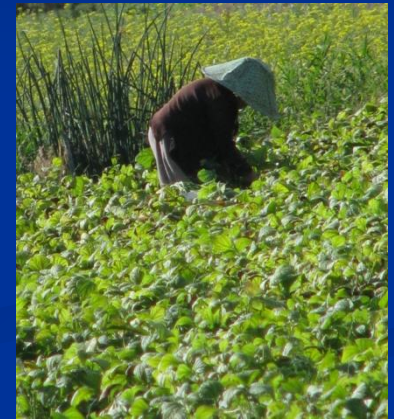


Planning for Agriculture in King County



Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division



King County

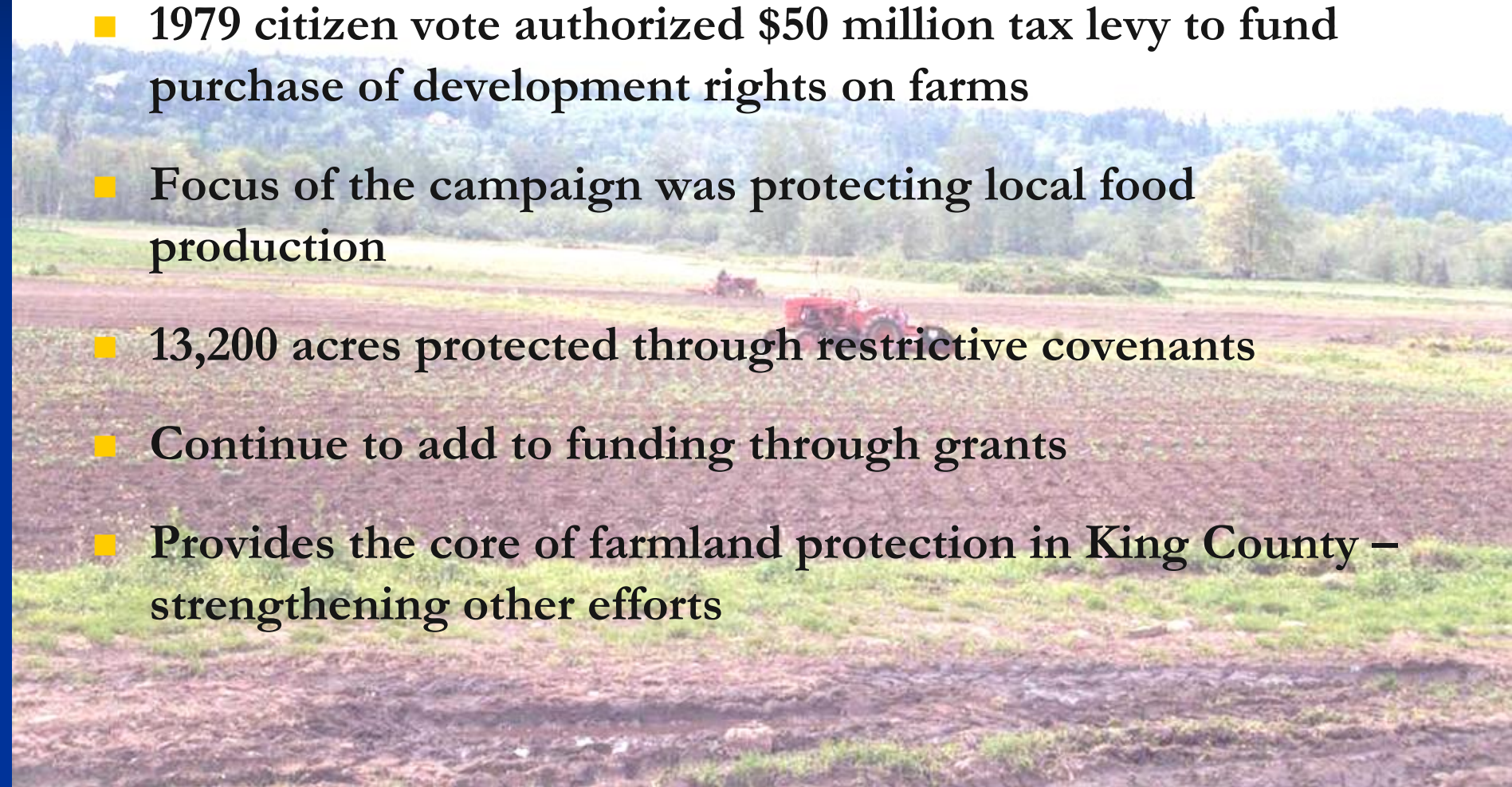
- Urban county – 39 cities
- Population 1.9 million, with 11% growth in last ten years
- Ranks 13th of 39 Washington counties in agriculture production
- Highest value production per acre
- Discerning and educated eaters
- Many organizations working to strengthen the food system
- Focus of this presentation is what King County is doing for agriculture



Successful campaign to save the Pike Place Market highlighted the need to save farmland.

Farmland Preservation Program

- 1979 citizen vote authorized \$50 million tax levy to fund purchase of development rights on farms
- Focus of the campaign was protecting local food production
- 13,200 acres protected through restrictive covenants
- Continue to add to funding through grants
- Provides the core of farmland protection in King County – strengthening other efforts



Comprehensive Planning

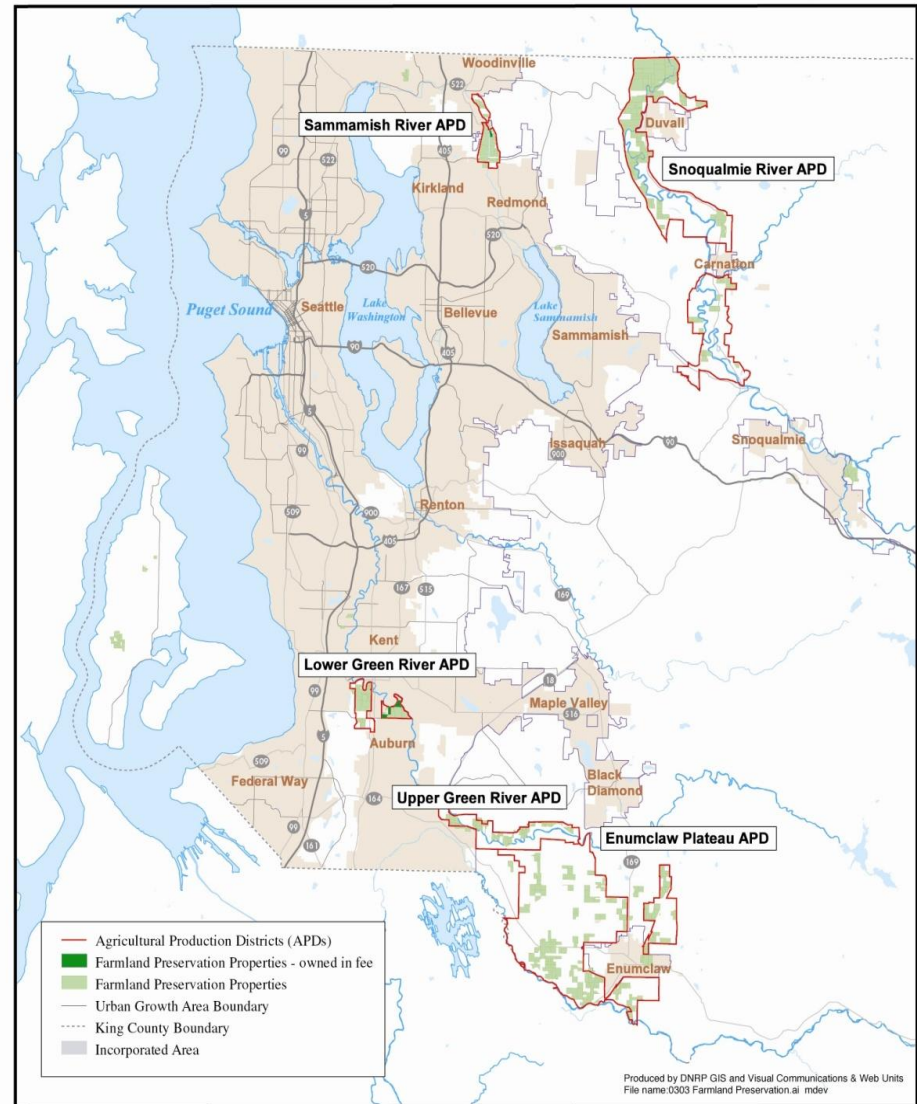
1985 designation of APDs – 42,000 acres

1994 GMA resource lands of long-term commercial significance

Recognition of need to do more than protect land base – need to keep farmers farming

1996 Farm and Forest Report: agriculture program, Puget Sound Fresh, Farmlink, support to farmers markets

Protected Farmlands in King County, Washington



Department of
Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98104

The information included on this map has been compiled from a variety of sources and is subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or quality of the use of such information. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, lost revenues or lost profits, resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.



King County Agriculture Commission



Commission advises the King County Executive and Council on legislation, policy and programs that affect farming in the County

Planning and implementation is an ongoing process with constant feedback: 4-year Comprehensive Planning Cycle, annual priorities, response to emergencies, subcommittees, task forces, FARMS Report

2009 FARMS Report

Future of Agriculture, Realize Meaningful Solutions



Data Gathering

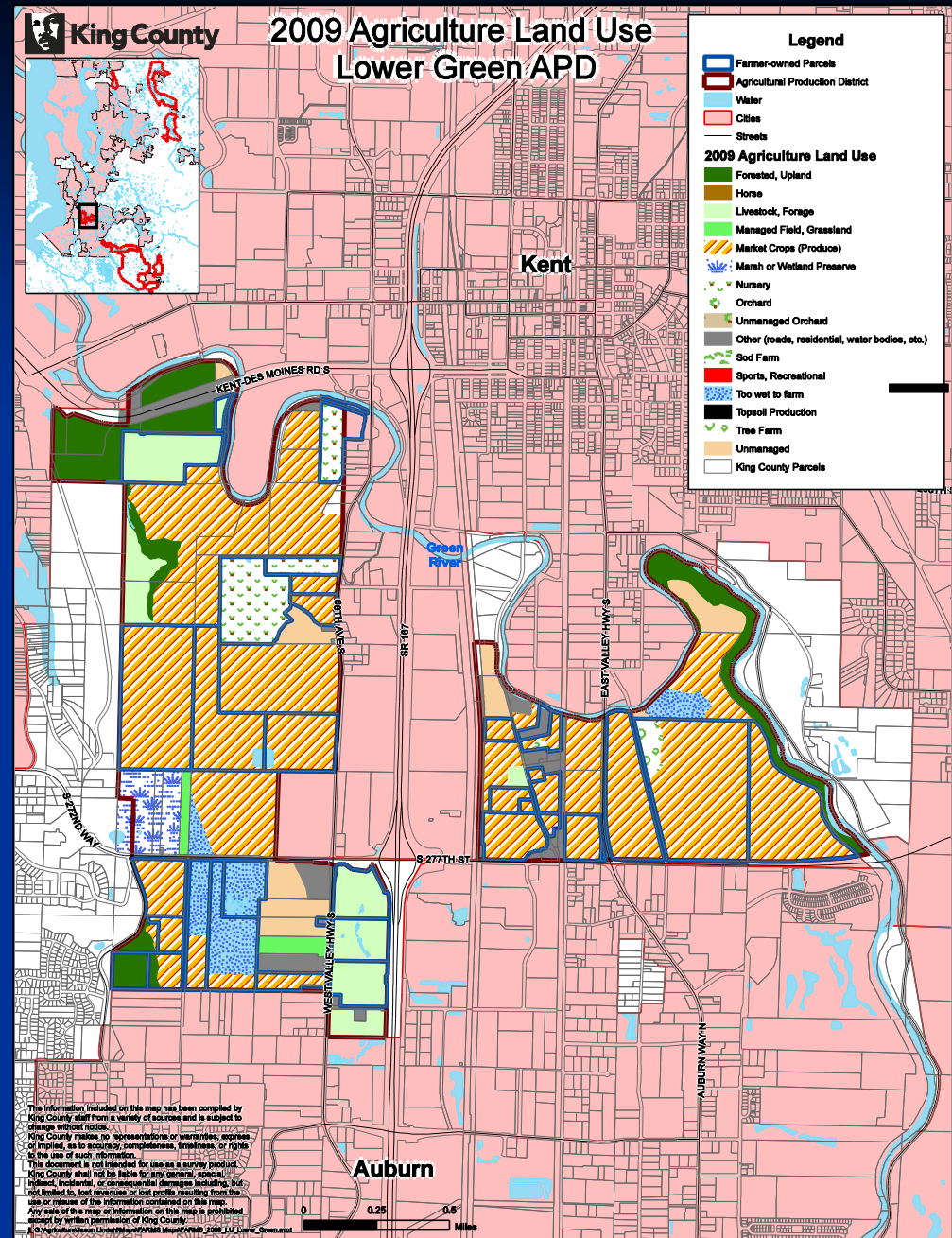
Farmer meetings and surveys

Mapped what was being produced in each of the APDs

Evaluated census data

Meetings with partner organizations

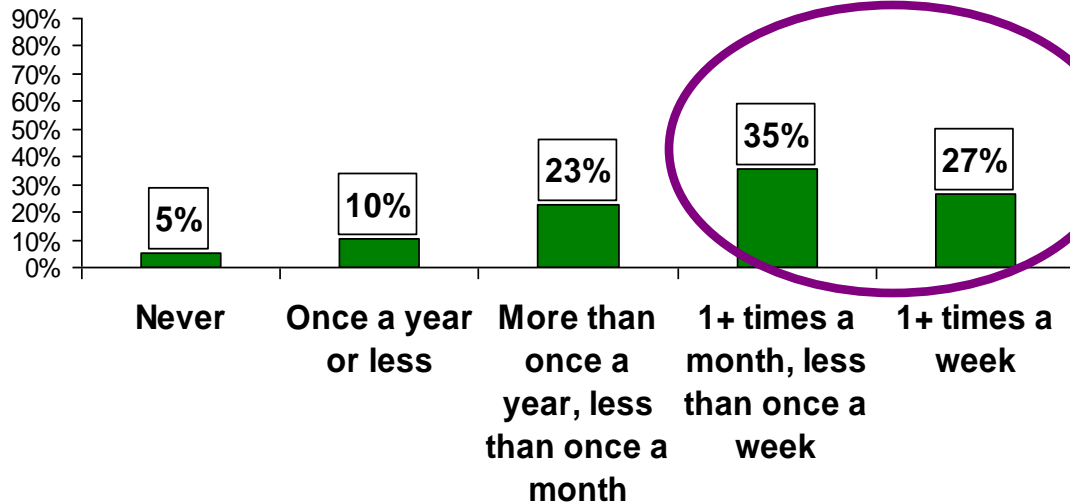
Public opinion survey



King County Residents Want Local Food

62% buy local food regularly

How often do you purchase food produced on farms in King County?
(N=389)



FARMS Report - Major Issues

- Flood and drainage losses
- Land affordability and farm succession
- Regulatory issues
- Water availability
- Marketing and economic development
- Need for infrastructure
- Long term sustainability of agriculture program and related services (funding)

Conflicts with other goals

- King County has protective environmental and floodplain management regulations
- APDs located in floodplains of major river valleys
- Endangered salmon use rivers and hundreds of miles of streams in APDs
- ESA salmon recovery plans call for habitat enhancement projects that may affect agriculture land
- Much of the APDs are drained wetlands
- Wetland mitigation projects proposed on agriculture land
- Multiple agencies at federal, state and local level are involved
- Need to collaborate with other county agencies – building and health departments, wastewater treatment division, roads
- Even within one division at the county, we have conflicting mandates

Drainage



The ditches that drain agriculture areas are often used by endangered salmon and other fish; maintenance is highly regulated to protect fish and water quality

Required multi-jurisdictional effort to simplify permitting and standardize requirements

Developed easy to use manual

County will provide engineering assistance, fish relocation, and cost share for mitigation plantings

Expense is still limiting

Floodplain Issues



Recent flooding highlighted issues

Flood regs minimize new fill in floodplains – zero rise standard

Farms need reduction of flood risk

Farms need to expand infrastructure

Code changes and financial assistance have allowed farmers to build farm pads, elevate houses and barns

More work needed – buildings on farm pads, farm roads, temporary farmworker housing

Farm-City Connection



Although most of the farmland is in unincorporated King County, where the county has land use jurisdiction, it is affected by decisions made in cities

Cities provide the market for local products

The FARMS Report recommends strengthening farm-city connections

Agriculture Commission engaging cities in conversation

King County looking to cities to support some marketing and infrastructure needs

Farms need cities - Cities need farms.

Threats to Local Agriculture

flooding/poor drainage/
landslides
lack of water
for crops/livestock
complex
regulations
increased
development
high cost
of farmland

distribution system
favors large scale ag
more roads
& traffic
loss of
state agricultural
funding staff
loss of support industries
like food processing and
equipment repair
housing and
other non-farm
land uses

Opportunities

close to
urban markets
ability to leverage funding

growing interest
in local food

stronger partnership network

public support
for agriculture

lots of interest in
becoming a farmer

Benefits of Local Agriculture

fresh local
food
clean water
and air
better food
access
fish and
wildlife habitat
recreation
contributes \$\$
to local economy
farmers markets help
revitalize neighborhoods
job creation
scenic vistas
better health
family outings
knowing where
your food comes from

Partners in Local Agriculture

Agriculture Commissions Cascade Harvest Coalition Cities Conservation Districts Counties Farm Support Organizations Farmers Farmers Markets Puget Sound Regional Food Policy Council Restaurants Washington State University County Extensions

Funding provided by



King County



Multi-county planning

- King County is a member of the Regional Food Policy Council: its mission is to promote health, sustain and strengthen the local and regional food system, and engage and partner with agriculture, business, communities and governments in the four-county region
- Planning an Agriculture Commission Summit with other Puget Sound counties to address cross-county issues
- Many of the community organizations we partner with work across counties

Thank You

- King County Agriculture Commission
- Citizens of this region who had the foresight to preserve agricultural land
- Many organizations and volunteers who have helped keep our agricultural policies in place and have supported farming in so many ways
- Farmers who keep on farming