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**WHO GOVERNS? WHO PLANS? IN KING COUNTY'S FARMLAND
RETENTION DECISIONMAKING PROCESS**

University of Washington

PH.D. 1982

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WHO GOVERNS? WHO PLANS?
IN KING COUNTY'S FARMLAND RETENTION DECISIONMAKING PROCESS

by

David Emil Grembowski

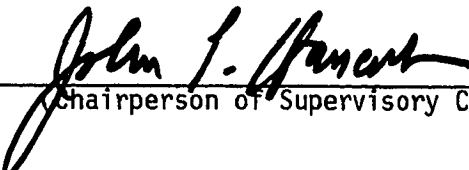
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Department of Urban Planning

Date

December 8, 1981

Doctoral Dissertation

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PART I: NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

CHAPTER 1
Planning and Decisionmaking in
American Urban Political Systems

Nature of the Problem

In American urban areas sundry problems abound; blight, poverty, overcrowding, environmental degradation and others are commonly mentioned in the urban planning literature. A major purpose of urban planning is to anticipate, recognize and develop solutions that resolve or reduce them (Bolan, 1974; Friedmann, 1969; Gans, 1970), and the rational application of the planning process is the planners' primary tool for accomplishing this task. While numerous definitions of the planning process exist in the literature, similarities between definitions may be identified. In general, planners first identify the problem and its causes (or the goals they wish to achieve), develop alternative plans that may eliminate these causes and resolve the problem, and evaluate their predicted consequences using one or more plan evaluation techniques. Together these three steps are a learning process in which problems and their solutions are repeatedly analyzed and refined until a definition of the problem and its solution are derived which are acceptable to planners. The results of the planning process are forwarded to decisionmakers who accept, modify or reject the planned solutions for implementation.

Thus, planning is a method of decisionmaking (Webber, 1963), and in the rational application of the planning process, analysis and reasoned judgement play key roles in determining solutions to urban problems.

While this planning approach remains the core of current urban planning theory and is a central element in urban planning education, planning rarely conforms to this model in practice (Bolan, 1967, 1980; Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Galloway and Mahayni, 1977; Hemmens, 1980; Rondinelli, 1973, 1975). In the United States, planning occurs within and is inseparable from the political process. American urban political processes are characterized by a number of interest groups and organizations, each having its own values, expectations and agendas, and - while there may be some overlap here - each having its own perception of the "common good" which it uses to define urban problems and to assess the "rationality" of proposed solutions. While practically all organizations work to effectuate their own problem definitions and solutions in the political process, few interest groups have sufficient power to carry out a course of action which other groups oppose. To achieve its purposes, an organization lacking sufficient power usually obtains the cooperation of other groups through negotiation and bargaining, often making concessions in its demands to gain their support. As a consequence, political processes often evolve into elaborate

compromises, if not stalemates, and consistent, coordinated effort directed toward resolving a problem is rarely achieved. The problem remains unresolved.¹ Thus, in practice, the political process thwarts the rational application of the planning process, supplanting it with the political process' own "disjointed incrementalism."²

Because of the gap between planning theory and planning practice, planners have developed a number of alternative planning approaches (such as innovative, allocative, transactive, advocacy, policy or radical planning), each generally evolving from criticisms raised against its predecessor (Galloway and Mahayni, 1977), and - like the rational model - planners generally presumed these approaches were effective methods of resolving urban problems (Dyckman, 1978; Moore, 1978). Although these alternative planning approaches have increased planning flexibility in the political process, no alternative has either supplanted the rational planning model in planning theory (Hemmens, 1980) or fulfilled urban planning's intended purposes in American urban political systems (Hudson, 1979; Kaufman, 1978; Warren, 1972).

In short, thwarted by the American political process, urban planning theory and its practice is in a state of quandry, if not crisis, and in need of new direction. The gap between planning theory and practice and the general ineffectiveness of alternative planning approaches indicate

that, in the United States, urban political systems dominate the planning process and usually determine how planning and decisionmaking occur within them. In these political systems, planning's effectiveness is determined more by how planners influence decisionmaking than by the merits of any given planning approach (Kaufman, 1978; Rondinelli, 1975). While planners often occupy important positions in local governments, few (if any) have sufficient power either to control decisionmaking or to carry out a plan which other groups oppose. Thus, if planners are to increase their effectiveness in American urban political systems - a goal which planners may easily embrace, they must understand how the planning process operates in these systems, and they must be equipped with theory which defines how they may perform effectively within them.

As planning's largely unsuccessful American history suggests, planners know very little about how planning is performed in urban political systems (Dyckman, 1978; Galloway, 1979; Kaufman, 1974, 1978, 1979; Mann, 1978; Rondinelli, 1975). Few empirical studies of how planning operates in political processes exist in the literature.³ Planners generally agree that such empirical studies are greatly needed to understand how planning operates in American urban political systems, to find out which planning methods do or do not work in them, and to develop future planning theory (Galloway and Mahayni, 1977;

Galloway, 1979; Kaufman, 1979). Thus, one new direction of planning theory is understanding the dynamics of power and decisionmaking in American urban political systems and learning how to plan effectively within them (Etzioni, 1978).

This empirical study, which examines power and decisionmaking in a metropolitan planning process spanning a fifteen-year period, represents just one step in this new direction. To perform such a study, two interrelated questions must be answered. First, because planning is performed within and is dominated by the political process, an understanding of planning activity cannot be achieved without first understanding power and decisionmaking in the political process, or "Who governs how and to what effect?" This question has been the major research question in the community power literature during the past thirty years, and different studies of community power and decisionmaking have answered it in very different ways. The major answers, or theories of community power, are reviewed in the next chapter.

The answer to the question, who governs?, will define the political process, or the context, within which planning is conducted. Following Gans (1968), to understand planning activity in such a context, a second question must be asked: Who plans with what ends and means for which interest groups? Together, these two questions serve as a framework for examining planning, power and decisionmaking in a

planning-political process. Although the answers to these questions will be time and location bound, they may nonetheless suggest fruitful avenues for further research and future development of new urban planning theory. At the very least they will improve our current understanding of how planning is performed in an American urban political system.

Methodology and Sources

The planning issue and site chosen is the agricultural land retention policy and program development process in King County, Washington, that spanned a ten-year period, 1969 to 1979, and culminated in a voter-approved \$50 million purchase of development rights (PDR) program to preserve local farmlands.⁴ In America, a "bundle of rights" normally accompany property ownership, and the right to develop the property is just one of these rights (subject to any regulations imposed by government). In the King County PDR program, local, voter-approved revenues were authorized to purchase the development rights on local agricultural land, leaving owners with rights to use the land for farming or other purposes (as well as the right to sell or bequeath it to others). Compared to public purchase of the land, the PDR technique ". . . reduces the initial costs of acquisition while the on-going maintenance costs and responsibilities are borne by the individual landowners, who also continue to pay property

taxes based on the remaining value of the land"¹¹ (Coughlin and Plaut, 1978: 453). Coughlin and Plaut (1978) conclude that the PDR method is an effective mechanism for controlling growth and preserving open space land.

This policy and program development process was chosen for a number of reasons. First, the process was convenient for the author to research and did not require a large amount of financial support. Second, the process was highly political. In King County, as in most American counties, a zoning and tax assessment system based on the "highest and best use" of land is in place. Any proposal to replace this traditional land use and tax assessment system with a new one will generate conflict between supporters having a vested interest in the new system and those having vested interests in the old one. Because resolving political conflict caused by changes in "who gets what and how" often involves the exercise of power, the PDR policy and program development process constitutes an important local issue well-suited for studying decisionmaking in the planning-political process. Third, few urban areas have attempted to retain local farmlands through a PDR program, and King County's was the first voter-approved PDR farmland retention program in America. Because such innovation is encouraged in planning but rarely appears in the political process, studying how an innovative PDR program was approved in King County may suggest planning strategies for developing and

implementing innovative planning programs in other contexts. Fourth, although to date the PDR program has not been implemented, it was formally approved by King County voters and, hence, constitutes a successful planning process, at least in part. Although voters had approved the bond measure at an 8% interest rate, court challenges blocked implementation when market bond interest rates exceeded that limit. High market interest rates still remain above 8%, and whether or not the program is ever implemented remains uncertain. In the end, the program's failure to be implemented may suggest additional factors which should be taken into account when planning in American urban political systems. Fifth, because the literature describes the PDR technique as an effective method of preserving open space from development, I may examine how an effective program was approved in a political process normally characterized by disjointed incrementalism - an uncommon event in American planning.

My study is based on information which I gathered between January, 1978, and December, 1980. Because King County newspapers contained frequent and detailed articles on the agricultural land retention process, they became my first major source of information. In addition to my own newspaper searches, I reviewed agricultural/PDR-related newspaper articles collected by the Save Our Local Farmlands Committee and the King County Executive Office.⁵ I used these newspaper

articles to construct two interrelated sets of information. First, a detailed description of events in the agricultural land retention policy and program development process was compiled. Although this exercise provided much information, discontinuities and gaps in the process appeared, and other sources of information were consulted to construct a complete history of the process. King County ordinances, motions, official documents, brochures and correspondence provided additional information. The Governmental Research Assistance Library (in Seattle City Hall), the Metro Library, and the Puget Sound Council of Governments Library were also important sources of information. Specific sources of information are cited throughout the text and in the bibliography.

The second set of information was a list of persons who were associated with the process and mentioned in the newspaper. I conducted personal interviews with these persons, who included experts in King County agriculture, government leaders and staff members, business representatives, civic leaders, realtors and others.⁶ These interviews usually provided further information about what happened during the process. Other persons associated with the process but not mentioned in newspapers were also identified in these interviews and subsequently interviewed by me. Although all interviews were unstructured, each interview provided more information about the history of the process, how each person

became involved in the process, what each person's role and activity in the process was, and each person's views concerning land use and farmland development in King County. Altogether fifty-six persons were interviewed, some more than once.

During the campaign the committees formed to promote and oppose the PDR program received contributions to finance their activities. While anti-PDR committees received relatively few and small contributions, the pro-PDR committee received thousands of dollars. Under Washington State Public Disclosure Law, the names of these contributors and their donations were readily available. I reviewed the list of contributors to the Save Our Local Farmlands Committee and noticed that the largest contributors (i.e., those contributing more than \$500) were business groups. Interviews were also scheduled with either the president or other top-ranking official in these businesses.

In summary, for this empirical study I used multiple data gathering techniques and sources of information. Throughout the study my overriding purpose was to describe events in the farmland retention policy and program development process as thoroughly and completely as possible, to identify the major participants in the process, and to determine how each participant (or group of participants) affected the course of events in the process.

In the succeeding chapters of the study I use the word "county" in different ways. When its first letter is capitalized, I am referring specifically to King County government. When it is not, I am referring to the geographical area known as King County. Other counties referred to throughout the study are addressed by their full name.

As previously described, the next chapter contains a review of the community power theory literature. The study begins in Part II with a historical analysis of the events leading up to the PDR policy and program development process, an analysis crucial for understanding events in the fifteen-year process itself. Analysis of the process begins in Part III and is organized around its major achievements, or milestones. In each of these milestones different actors and groups entered and exited the process, creating and continually changing the nature of political conflict. By examining the evolving process through its milestones, the single study essentially becomes a series of studies on the same subject. Thus, while the study is focused on a single process, comparative analysis within the process may be performed. In Part IV of the study I integrate the conclusions reached at each milestone, examines decisionmaking in the study's political process, and assesses the implications of the study for urban planning.

Chapter Notes -Chapter 1

¹Rogers (1971) supports the detrimental effects American political processes have on urban problem solving. In a comparative study of city service delivery in New York, Philadelphia and Cleveland, Rogers found that highly differentiated and uncoordinated organizations and interest groups competing for decisions in their favor resulted in poor service delivery.

²Bolan (1967) summarizes Braybrooke and Lindblom's disjointed incrementalism/planning/decisionmaking process. He (1967: 234) writes that ". . . decisionmaking is 1) incremental or tending toward relatively small changes, 2) remedial, in that decisions are made to move away from ills rather than goals, 3) serial, in that problems are not solved at one stroke but rather successively attacked, 4) exploratory, in that goals are continually being redefined or newly discovered, 5) fragmented or limited, in that problems are attacked by considering a limited number of alternatives rather than all possible alternatives, and 6) disjointed, in that there are many dispersed 'decision-points'."

³The most frequently cited studies of planning in urban areas include Altschuler (1965), Banfield (1961), Meyerson and Banfield (1955), the Needleman (1974), and Rabinovitz (1969). Very few recent studies exist.

⁴King County contains the bulk of the Seattle, Washington, metropolitan area.

⁵A local newspaper clipping agency, which regularly monitors all King County newspapers, supplied the two groups with these articles. Newspaper articles appearing in one group's collection were usually present in the other's collection.

⁶Before scheduling interviews, I mailed respondents an introductory letter explaining my purpose and describing my position at the Department of Urban Planning, University of Washington. Approximately eight percent of these persons refused to be interviewed.

CHAPTER 2

A Review of the Community Power Theory Literature

In this chapter three competing community power theories are reviewed, each offering a different interpretation of how decisions are made and how power is exercised in American communities.¹ The three theories were developed by sociologists and political scientists between 1953 and 1970, each arising largely from criticisms raised against its predecessor. The three are commonly known as the elitest, pluralist, and revisionist theories of community power.² Prior to 1953, sociologists, political scientists and the public generally agreed that elected officials and those occupying important public offices governed the American community (Bonjean and Olsen, 1966). With the publication of Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers, sociologist Floyd Hunter challenged this position, arguing instead that a power structure dominated by business leaders existed and effectively controlled community decisionmaking. Hunter's theory of community power, which created the current community power theory debate, is described first, followed by pluralist theory and, third, revisionist theory.

Elitest Theory

Elitest theory, a term which Hunter (1953) never used, is

commonly associated with the structure of power Hunter found in his study of political decisionmaking in "Regional City," or Atlanta, Georgia. The site of his study was not chosen at random. Hunter had lived in Atlanta for at least five years before his study, where he was employed as the Executive Director of the Community Planning Council for Atlanta. His long-term observation of and participation in Atlanta's decisionmaking processes no doubt influenced his choice of community and what he expected to find in his study (Bell and Newby, 1973: 223).

Hunter's study of power in Atlanta arose from contradictions which he perceived between "concepts of democracy" and how policies are developed in American cities (Hunter, 1953: 1).

It has been evident to the writer for some years that policies on vital matters affecting community life seem to appear suddenly. They are acted upon, but with no precise knowledge on the part of the majority of citizens as to how these policies originated or by whom they are really sponsored. Much is done, but much is left undone. Some of the things done appear to be manipulated to the advantage of relatively few.

There appears to be a tenuous line of communication between the governors of our society and the governed. This situation does not square with the concepts of democracy we have been taught to revere.

In an apparent effort to make local decisionmaking more visible and accountable to citizens, a major purpose of his study was

to ". . . find out who our real leaders are." (Hunter, 1953: 1; italics added).

In his study Hunter (1953: 2) uses "power" to ". . . describe the acts of men going about the business of moving other men to act in relation to themselves or in relation to organic or inorganic things." Hunter writes further that "(p)ower is . . . a necessary function in the community, for it involves decision-making and it also involves the function of executing determined policies or seeing to it that things get done which have been deemed necessary to be done." Although Hunter recognizes that authority and influence are related concepts and that both are elements of power, he fails to provide explicit definitions, referring only to authority as "institutionalized power" and equating influence with a person's ability to affect policy development. His research technique for identifying Atlanta's decisionmakers is the reputational method, which uses a panel of "judges" - or persons who had lived in Atlanta for many years and had a knowledge of community affairs - to name the "top leaders" in the city. Once these persons are identified, their social relationships and effects on policy decisions are examined in depth.

Hunter's major focus was to describe the structure of power in Atlanta, which he named a "power pyramid." The members of the pyramid represented only a very small fraction

of Atlanta's population, and they were divided into four groups, or levels. Economic interests, the top level of the pyramid and the smallest of the four groups, were the most powerful and virtually controlled policy development in Atlanta. Industrial, commercial, and financial owners and top executives of large business were the main members of this group. The second level of the pyramid consisted of public officials, small businessmen (owners), bank vice-presidents and corporation attorneys, while the third level was composed of civic organization members, newspaper columnists and radio commentators. The fourth and largest (but least powerful) level of the pyramid consisted of professionals, such as ministers, teachers, social workers, planners and business managers. Although gaps existed between these levels, Hunter argued that Atlanta's economic interests were a social group, were conscious of the pyramid's structure, and used lower level members to execute their policies.

However, although Hunter identifies a power pyramid dominated by a set of power leaders, he speculates that large communities such as Atlanta probably have numerous power pyramids rather than a single, monolithic power structure. He reconciles this apparent contradiction when he states that while Atlanta's economic interests do not represent all power leaders, they are clearly the "center of power" in the city.

Hunter describes his power leaders as visible members of Atlanta who confine their efforts to policy development and delegate its execution to others in the pyramid. Some power leaders tend to be specialized, confining their interests to only specific policy areas or levels of government (e.g., local, regional, or state). Power leaders who comprise Atlanta's economic interests wield their power not just to develop policy but also to defeat opposition and prevent serious challenges to their policies and position in the power structure. Power leaders tend to favor the status quo and oppose changes which may threaten their position. When change is advocated, it tends to be incremental. Because economic interests dominate policy development and decisionmaking and effectively control what does or does not become a public issue, many nonbusiness group needs are not addressed. Although Hunter presents a multi-level power pyramid dominated by economic interests, he acknowledges that economic interests are not by definition superior to the interests of the other groups (Hunter, 1953: 166-167).³

The interests of economic power groups are often of necessity coincidental with larger interests of general community welfare. The men who hold the power structure intact through policy decisions are firmly convinced that their decisions are correct more times than incorrect, and that their decisions are made with the whole community and nation . . . in mind. That the system holds together and that the interests continue to dominate the political situation is the pragmatic test of the success of the policy-making

group's ability to meet the minimum requirement for satisfying all interests in the community.

In summary, in an effort to make power and decisionmaking more accountable to the public, Hunter challenged widely-held conceptions that policy decisionmaking was concentrated in elected officials and proposed an alternative pyramid structure of community power. His study of Atlanta, however, generated much criticism from political scientists, who eventually developed their own conception of community power, pluralist theory. The concepts of pluralist theory are presented in the next section.

Pluralist Theory

Robert Dahl, Nelson Polsby and Raymond Wolfinger, political scientists at Yale University during the late 1950s and early 1960s, perceived numerous weaknesses in elitist theory, and their publications during this period mark the creation of pluralist theory. Dahl's study (1961) of community power in New Haven, Connecticut, Who Governs?, is widely acclaimed as the definitive empirical work establishing and supporting a pluralist conception of power in the American community. Dahl's pluralist conception of community power and decisionmaking is summarized in this section.

Like elite theorists, Dahl acknowledged that wealth, knowledge, social position, and access to officials and

resources were unequally distributed among citizens in American cities. He reasoned that if such inequalities existed, great inequalities in the capacities of citizens to influence decisions must also exist. However, unlike Hunter, who was primarily concerned with making local decisionmaking more accountable and strengthening communication between citizens and policy decisionmakers, Dahl's central purpose was to define "who actually governs?" in New Haven.

As in Hunter's study, Dahl frequently used the concepts of power and influence to describe decisionmaking in New Haven, but his definitions of these terms are unclear. Although Dahl never explicitly defines power in Who Governs?, he appears to use power and influence interchangeably, and he defines ". . . the frequency which . . . [a person] successfully initiates an important policy over the opposition of others, or vetoes policies initiated by others, or initiates a policy where no opposition appears" as a "rough test" of a person's overt or covert influence (Dahl, 1961: 66).⁴ According to Dahl, the use of power and influence in decisionmaking can only be examined by studying concrete, public decisions, and his research method consisted of choosing a series of "key" political decisions for examination, identifying the persons and groups who actively participated in the decisionmaking process, empirically describing their behavior in resolving a

policy issue, and determining and analyzing specific outcomes of the conflict (Dahl, 1958, 1961).⁵

As in Hunter's study of Atlanta, Dahl (1961: 90) found that only a very small proportion of New Haven's population was highly involved in "political thought, discussion, and action," which he referred to as the "political stratum." However, unlike Hunter, Dahl (1961: 86, 91-93) characterized New Haven's political stratum as a heterogeneous group ". . . dominated by many different leaders, each having access to a different combination of political resources" but yet easily penetrated by those wishing to influence decisionmaking. Because political resources were varied and were widely distributed among the population, Dahl concluded that few people entirely lacked resources to influence decisionmaking in a political system having many access points. Thus, although political resources were not distributed equally, they were "noncumulative" across groups, creating a political system of "dispersed inequalities" (Dahl, 1961: 85).

Unlike elitest theory, public officials were not subordinate to economic interests and were the most important decisionmakers in political systems. Because elections and competitive parties determined who did and who did not hold public office, no position was completely secure, ". . . giving politicians a powerful motive for expanding their coalitions and increasing their electoral followings" (Dahl, 1961: 91).

Thus, no single person or group was able to dominate the political system and effectively control decisionmaking over long periods.

In summary, although decisionmaking is concentrated among a small proportion of New Haven's population, different small groups normally perform decisionmaking, each often specializing in different policy areas. They are elites but not an elite. Of all members of the political stratum, government officials are the most likely to overlap among policy areas and to wield the greatest influence in policy decisionmaking.

According to Dahl, political leaders have much direct influence; they normally formulate political demands, perceive political solutions to issues, and initiate and veto policy proposals in the political system. Although Dahl writes that political decisions ordinarily ". . . move along in an atmosphere of apathy, indifference, and general agreement" among the public (1961: 198), the choices which citizens make in elections have indirect influence on the decisions of leaders, for they interpret election returns as indicators of public preferences or acquiescence in policy matters. In addition, Dahl states that the ". . . decisions of leaders are also determined in part by what they think are, will be, or have been the preferences of their constituents" (Dahl, 1961: 89). Political stratum members commonly interpret a person's election or re-election as a vote in favor of some policy

advocated (or opposed) by a candidate for public office. If a politician perceives an issue will have no payoff or will have an adverse effect, particularly in terms of votes in his or her next election, he or she will avoid it when possible. A potential issue must be important and offer some benefit to political leaders before they will introduce it into the political system, where a sizable minority of the political stratum must sponsor it to gain credibility among other members.

However, Dahl notes that while leaders are normally responsive to the real or imagined preferences of their constituents, they also shape citizen preferences. He points out that if leadership is united on a particular issue, citizens become dependent on a single source of information about policies, and little information concerning alternative courses of action may be available to evaluate leadership policy recommendations. As a consequence, under these circumstances, citizen preferences may sway with the type of information leadership presents to the public.

Political leaders normally develop agreements among themselves through bargaining and compromise, or what some pluralists refer to as "mutual accomodation," producing an incremental decisionmaking process. In Dahl's study of New Haven, Lee, the mayor of the city, was the master of mutual accomodation not so much because he had more influence and

power than others but rather because he was at the center of intersecting circles of influence.

While members of the political stratum are aware that citizens are largely indifferent toward policy, they also are aware of "slack" in the political system which may be brought to bear against proposed policies. Dahl states that individuals having similar political resources may exert different degrees of influence because they use their resources in different ways. Although citizens possess political resources, they rarely exert them to influence policy decisions and, consequently, they have a great amount of "potential" influence. When citizens feel threatened, they "take up the slack," or reduce the gap between their actual and potential influence. Political leaders are aware of slack in the political system, and how it may negatively affect them, and they constantly try to anticipate possible sources of discontent and to avoid controversy.

In summary, pluralists maintain that the distribution of resources and the ways they are or are not used are a source of both stability and change in political systems. While both pluralists and elite theorists agree that only a small proportion of the population govern in American cities and that resources are unequally distributed among citizens, pluralists maintain that political influence is distributed among a number of heterogeneous groups (rather than concentrated in a power

elite), that power structures change over time (rather than remain relatively stable), that the politician is the most important leader in political systems (rather than economic interests), and that elections are the driving force preventing a "power elite" from emerging in political systems.

Soon after Dahl published Who Governs? weaknesses in pluralist concepts and methodology were voiced, which eventually culminated in a modified version of pluralist theory. Its successor, which I refer to as "revisionist theory," is described in the following section.

Revisionist Theory

Revisionist theory concepts and methodology for studying community power were largely developed by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962, 1970). While they accept pluralist criticisms of elitest theory, they raise two criticisms against pluralist theory. First, pluralist methodology which focuses on public decisionmaking in political systems, fails to consider that power may be, and often is, exercised to prevent issues from arising and to confine the scope of public decisionmaking to relatively "safe," non-controversial issues. According to Bachrach and Baratz (1962: 949), ". . . to the extent that a person or group - consciously or unconsciously - creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts, that person or group has power."

This second "face of power," which they refer to as the "nondecision-making process," produces a "mobilization of bias" in the political system (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970: 43-44).⁶

Political systems and sub-systems develop a "mobilization of bias," a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals, and institutional procedures ("rules of the game") that operate systematically and consistently to the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others. Those who benefit are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested interests. More often than not, the "status-quo defenders" are a minority or elite group within the population in question.

They cite non-decisionmaking as the primary method of sustaining a given mobilization of bias. Thus, unlike the pluralists, who argue that elections prevent an interest group or elected official from controlling decisionmaking over long periods, revisionists maintain that elections fail to prevent some interest groups from dominating decisionmaking.

Second, because pluralists fail to recognize the non-decisionmaking process in political systems, revisionists argue that pluralists have no objective criteria for distinguishing between important and unimportant issues in the political system. Pluralist studies commonly begin with selecting a number of "key" public decisions for examination on the assumption that power is empirically observable only in such decisions. According to Bachrach and Baratz (1962: 949-950), this methodology can only result in conclusions supporting pluralist theory.

. . . (B)y presupposing that in any community there are significant issues in the political arena, he takes for granted the very question which is in doubt. He accepts as issues what are reputed to be issues. For even if there is no "truly" significant issue in the community under study, there is every likelihood that . . . [pluralists] will find one or some and, after careful study, reach the appropriate pluralistic conclusions.

Thus, community studies must concern themselves not only with those who influence public decisions but also with those who decide what issues are to be raised, those who prevent some issues from becoming public, and those who decide what formal rules govern how the issue should be fought (Bell and Newby, 1973, summarizing Bachrach and Baratz). Revisionists argue that their approach, which incorporates the "two faces of power" in political systems, does not preclude observing either an elitest or a pluralist power structure in communities.

Unlike the elite theorists, who ask "Who runs this community?," and the pluralists, who ask "Does anyone at all run this community?," revisionists ask "Is the distribution of benefits and privileges in the political system highly unequal and, if so, why?" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970). In order to clearly understand decisionmaking and the distribution of benefits and privileges, Bachrach and Baratz (1970) first define the interrelated concepts of power, influence, force and authority. Similar to Dahl, they argue that power is not some entity to be possessed (like wealth) but rather a characteristic of relationships among two or more persons. For

a power relationship to exist, three elements must be present. First, there must be a conflict of interests, values or course of action between two or more persons or groups.⁷ Second, a power relationship exists only if a person (or group) B actually bows to person (or group) A's wishes. Third, a power relationship exists only if one of the parties can threaten to invoke sanctions (i.e., any promised reward or penalty an actor may use to maintain effective control over policy) against the other. Influence is similar to power, except threatened sanctions are absent. Force is also similar to power, except that the threatened sanctions are actually executed to achieve one's objectives in the face of another's noncompliance.⁸ If the threat of sanctions fails to cause the desired behavior and force is exercised, the execution of sanctions is an admission of defeat by the would-be wielder of power. Authority is also similar to power. However, while in power relationships B complies with A because he fears severe sanctions, in authority relationships B complies with A because A's command appears reasonable to B in terms of his own values.⁹ Together, power, influence, force and authority affect the outcomes of decisionmaking processes and non-decisionmaking processes.

Bachrach and Baratz (1970: 44) define the non-decisionmaking process as ". . . a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are

even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision-implementing stage of the policy process." They define four forms of non-decisionmaking. First is the exercise of force to prevent demands for change in the power structure from entering the political process, an example being white terrorism of civil-rights workers in the rural South during the 1960s. Second is the exercise of power through the threat of sanctions against those initiating demands which potentially threaten another person or group. Examples include the potential deprivation of valued things or events as well as cooptation.¹⁰ Third, an existing bias of the political system - a norm, precedent, rule or procedure - may be used to silence a threatening demand or issue, such as when a demand for change is labelled socialistic, unpatriotic, or in violation of established rules or procedures. Establishing commissions or committees to study an issue is also a means of diverting threatening demands. Fourth, the mobilization of bias in the political system may be strengthened or reshaped to block challenges raised against it, such as through the establishment of additional rules or procedures for processing demands for change.

In summary, as its name implies, revisionist theory is simply a modified version of both elitist and pluralist theory.

Its two major concepts, the mobilization of bias and the non-decisionmaking process, are its two major contributions to the community power literature. As the material presented in this chapter suggests, significant differences exist among the three community power theories, and students of community power have heatedly debated the merits of each theory since Hunter's Community Power Structure was published. A central element of this debate has been a series of studies that have re-examined community power in New Haven and Atlanta as well as the concepts developed by Bachrach and Baratz. The findings of these studies are the subject of the next section.

Community Power Theory Reexamined

Given the disparities among the elitist, pluralist, and revisionist theories, social scientists eventually returned to Atlanta and New Haven to reexamine their respective decisionmaking processes and reassess the findings of Hunter (1953) and Dahl (1961). The most significant studies in this category are Polsby (1963, 1980), Jennings (1964), Domhoff (1978), and Hunter (1980).

In 1957, when Polsby was a graduate student in Yale University's political science department, he reviewed the community power literature and concluded that its evidence did not support its conclusions, which generally endorsed an elite model. On the basis of his literature review, Polsby began his

own study of community power using the data reported in eight previous studies, including Hunter's. His methodology was strictly pluralist; it examined actual decisions and "who participates, who gains and loses and who prevails" within them (Polsby, 1963: 5). Using Hunter's own data, but Dahl's methodology, Polsby concluded that different groups were active in different issues, that occasional conflict existed among Hunter's power leaders, and that no homogeneous, discrete, top leadership group controlled policy decisionmaking in Atlanta. While Polsby states that insufficient data existed to formulate an alternative description of power, he writes that Hunter's data did not suggest that an elite group controlled decisionmaking in Atlanta.

Unlike Polsby, Jennings's study of Atlanta was not an explicit attempt to support or refute Hunter's conclusions but rather to determine whether or not those in different "political status groups" performed similar, dissimilar or mixed "political roles" (Jennings, 1964: vii, 193). Using a reputational methodology similar to Hunter's, Jennings examined whether or not a ruling elite dominated by economic interests existed in Atlanta. On the basis of data collected eight years after Hunter's study was published, Jennings rejected Hunter's conclusion that a ruling elite dominates decisionmaking, arguing instead that ". . . Atlanta has a more pluralistic power structure than the one Hunter attributed to it. Economic

dominants, elective and appointive government officials, lay and professional civic leaders, and minority group leaders - especially from the Negro community - all have some say in who rules and what is decided in Atlanta" (Jennings, 1964: 168).

Twenty-seven years after his first study and fifteen years after Jennings's study, Hunter (1980) also reexamined decisionmaking in Atlanta, and he again concluded that an elite group dominates decisionmaking in the city. Thus, of the four Atlanta community power studies, two (by Hunter) have found elitest power structures while the other two (by Polsby and Jennings) have found pluralist structures.

Dahl's 1961 study of New Haven was not seriously challenged until 1978 when William Domhoff published Who Really Rules? Domhoff's (1978: 3) explicit purpose was to demonstrate empirically that ". . . Who Governs? is wrong about who really rules in New Haven" using not only research material collected by Dahl but also new information Domhoff and his associates collected through personal interviews, extensive searches through historical archives, and discussions with historian A. Tappan Wilder. Using a "network" technique designed to identify and establish connections among New Haven's power leaders, Domhoff concludes that New Haven - and the United States as well - is governed by a ruling elite dominated by business leaders.

However, in the second edition of his 1963 study, Polsby (1980) challenges Domhoff's conclusions and research methods. Polsby notes that while Dahl and his associates spent months observing decisionmaking in New Haven, Domhoff spent only eleven days in the city. According to Polsby, Domhoff's brief visit was insufficient to arrive at valid conclusions regarding New Haven's power structure, and he places greater reliance on Dahl's long-term observations of New Haven decisionmaking. In addition to criticisms raised against Domhoff's "network" technique, Polsby argues that Domhoff's conclusions are not supported by the historical evidence, which still describes a pluralist decisionmaking process and power structure in New Haven. In short, contradictory findings also exist among the New Haven community power literature.

After challenging Domhoff's conclusions, Polsby (1980) also challenges revisionist criticisms of pluralist theory, but he generally concedes that the non-decisionmaking process is a dimension of community power worth investigating. However, noting that while non-decisions are, in principle, non-events and are, therefore, not empirically observable, Polsby argues that Bachrach and Baratz (1970) have redefined a nondecision as ". . . any observable act which has as its goal the suppression of conflict in the community" (Polsby, 1980: 210), or a specific type of observable decision which pluralists (such as Dahl) have addressed in the past. Thus, he believes, in

practice their definition and method of examining non-decisions become identical to pluralist definitions and methods. Polsby concludes that revisionist findings about the second face of power (the non-decisionmaking process) do not erase findings of the first face (the decisionmaking process), but they may qualify, supplement or amend them.

In summary, the findings of Hunter (1953), Dahl (1961) and Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1970) have been reexamined and challenged in a number of studies. After nearly thirty years of research, community power theorists remain divided into three separate camps, each vigorously defending and aggressively promoting its own conception of community power and decisionmaking.

Conclusions

In this chapter major studies in the community power literature were described, each supporting an elitest or a pluralist or revisionist conception of how decisionmaking occurs in the American community. Although few in number, similarities do exist among these three theories of community power. First, although Hunter (1953), Dahl (1961), and Bachrach and Baratz (1970), asked different research questions, they all shared a common interest in defining "Who governs how and to what effect?" in the communities they studied. Second, although pluralists, elitests, and revisionists define

different community power structures, all three suggest that only a small number of persons in a community dominate the political decisionmaking process. Similarly, in all three theories those having power tend to favor the status quo and actively work to protect and maintain their positions in the power structure. Lastly, community power theorists generally agree that when change does occur, it tends to be incremental.

Beyond these generalizations, substantial differences exist among the three theories. Over the past thirty years, different researchers studying the same communities at different times have arrived at opposite conclusions concerning how decisions are made in American communities. While common concepts exist among the three theories (e.g., power, influence, authority, etc.), they are defined differently in each theory. In short, the community power literature generally consists of contradictory and inconclusive evidence, and no widely-accepted theory of community power exists in the literature.

As community power theory varies, so does its methods. In general, when sociologists study community power, they frequently use the reputational method and find elitest power structures. When political scientists study the community, they tend to use the decisional approach and find pluralist power structures. Walton (1966) and Curtis and Petras (1977) have argued that differences in elitest and pluralist theory

stem mainly from systematic differences in the methods which sociologists and political scientists choose to study community power. Polsby (1980), however, disagrees with these authors. He contends that some of the studies which they examined were not community power studies, and in those that were, it was not easy to identify their key findings. Further, because several of the studies contained conclusions which were not supported by their evidence, they could not be classified reliably as either pluralist or elitest. Thus, in Polsby's view, the community power literature does not support the findings of Walton (1966) and Curtis and Petras (1977), and alternative explanations may account for the relationship between theory and method. According to Polsby, in previous community power studies investigators (mostly elitest, he contends) most likely held unquestioned assumptions concerning community power, which predisposed them to adopting a given theory in the face of inadequate or contradictory evidence and produced the reported correlation between method and theory.

In any case, whether or not differences in community power theory are the result of differences in the methods investigators choose is not always clear. However, it is clear that, while multiple methods of studying community power exist, no single method is widely accepted among community power investigators.

In summary, over the past thirty years, no single, widely-accepted theory or method of studying community power has emerged. Polsby (1980: ix) summarizes scholarly progress in the field during this period.

The literature on community power, no exemplar of clarity or intelligence when I first wrote this book [in 1963], has since its publication become even more dense with misunderstandings of all kinds, while burgeoning in nearly every direction - every direction, that is, except toward the resolution of empirical problems about the shape and scope of power in American communities.

Although this study will not resolve the present community power theory debate, it will determine, based on the study's evidence, how power is exercised in one decisionmaking process and how planning is performed within it. Joint answers to the questions "Who governs?" and "Who plans?" will help support, refute or suggest modifications of community power theory, will help define the relationship between planners and decisionmakers, and may suggest ways of planning effectively in American political processes.

Chapter 2 - Chapter Notes

¹Definitions of community vary among social scientists, but most refer to social interaction in a local area. One representative definition of community is ". . . the configuration or organization of activities and interests in a given locale" (H. Kaufman, 1977: 399).

²These three "theories" mainly consist of a set of concepts which describe how power is structured and exercised in American communities. They are also commonly labeled "paradigms," "models," and "approaches" in the literature.

³Because, as Hunter notes, power leaders often fail to address nonbusiness group needs, his conclusion that the power leaders have minimally satisfied all interests in the community appears inconsistent if not erroneous. A plausible, alternative explanation might be that economic interests are skilled in maintaining their power position and preventing certain needs and issues from becoming public.

⁴In Appendix B, Dahl (1961) writes that "more rigorous formulations of the concept of influence" appear in a 1957 publication. In that paper Dahl explicitly states that he uses power and influence interchangeably, but he (1957: 202-203) defines power in relational terms as follows: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do." Although this definition of power differs from his interchangeable definition of influence in Who Governs?, it appears that influence is simply an operational definition of power. Dahl (1957) notes that formal definitions of power are normally ignored in research and replaced by more usable operational definitions.

⁵This methodology originated with Laswell and Kaplan (1950: 75), who equated the concept of power with "participation in decision-making." Dahl (1960: 26) defines a decision as ". . . a set of actions related to and including the choice of one alternative rather than an other."

⁶Bachrach and Baratz's concept of "mobilization of bias" is based on Schattschneider (1960: 71), who writes, "All forms of political organization have a bias in favor of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organization is the mobilization of bias. Some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out."

⁷Bachrach and Baratz (1970: 24) define "value" according to Laswell and Kaplan (1950: 16), who define it as ". . . a desired event - a goal event. That X values Y means that X acts so as to bring about the consummation of Y."

⁸For example, ". . . if A's demand for B's money or his life prompts B to surrender his wallet, A has exercised power - he has won B's compliance by threat of even more severe deprivations. But if A must kill B to get the money, A has to resort to force - he must actually invoke the threatened sanction" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970: 27). Thus, in power relationships B decides the outcome, while in force relationships A decides the outcome.

⁹For example, if a policeman demands entry into A's house and A complies, A does so because the policeman's demand appears supportable by reason.

¹⁰According to Selznick (1966), cooptation occurs when a leader at least partially meets the political pressure of an individual or group, who are in a position to enforce their demands, as a means of averting threats to leadership and/or a proposed course of action.

PART II: EARLY FARMLAND, CITIZEN ACTIVISM AND
LEADERSHIP TRENDS IN KING COUNTY

CHAPTER 3

Agricultural Land in King County

King County's policy and program development process to preserve farmlands has its roots in the past. The growth and decline of farmlands in the 1900s, efforts to preserve open space in the 1960s and early 1970s, and the emergence of citizen activism and a metropolitan leader between 1950 and 1960 spawned local interest in farmland retention and significantly influenced the dynamics of the process in the 1970s. In Part II, I review these past events and describe how they are related to the farmland retention process, which is described in Part III. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the study's setting and the growth and decline in county farmlands.

The Setting

King County is located in the western half of Washington State. Puget Sound forms the county's western border, while the crest of the scenic Cascade Mountain Range forms its eastern border. King County also contains Vashon-Maury Island, which is located in the southwestern corner of the county in Puget Sound and is connected to the mainland by ferry service. Political boundaries separate King County from its northern and

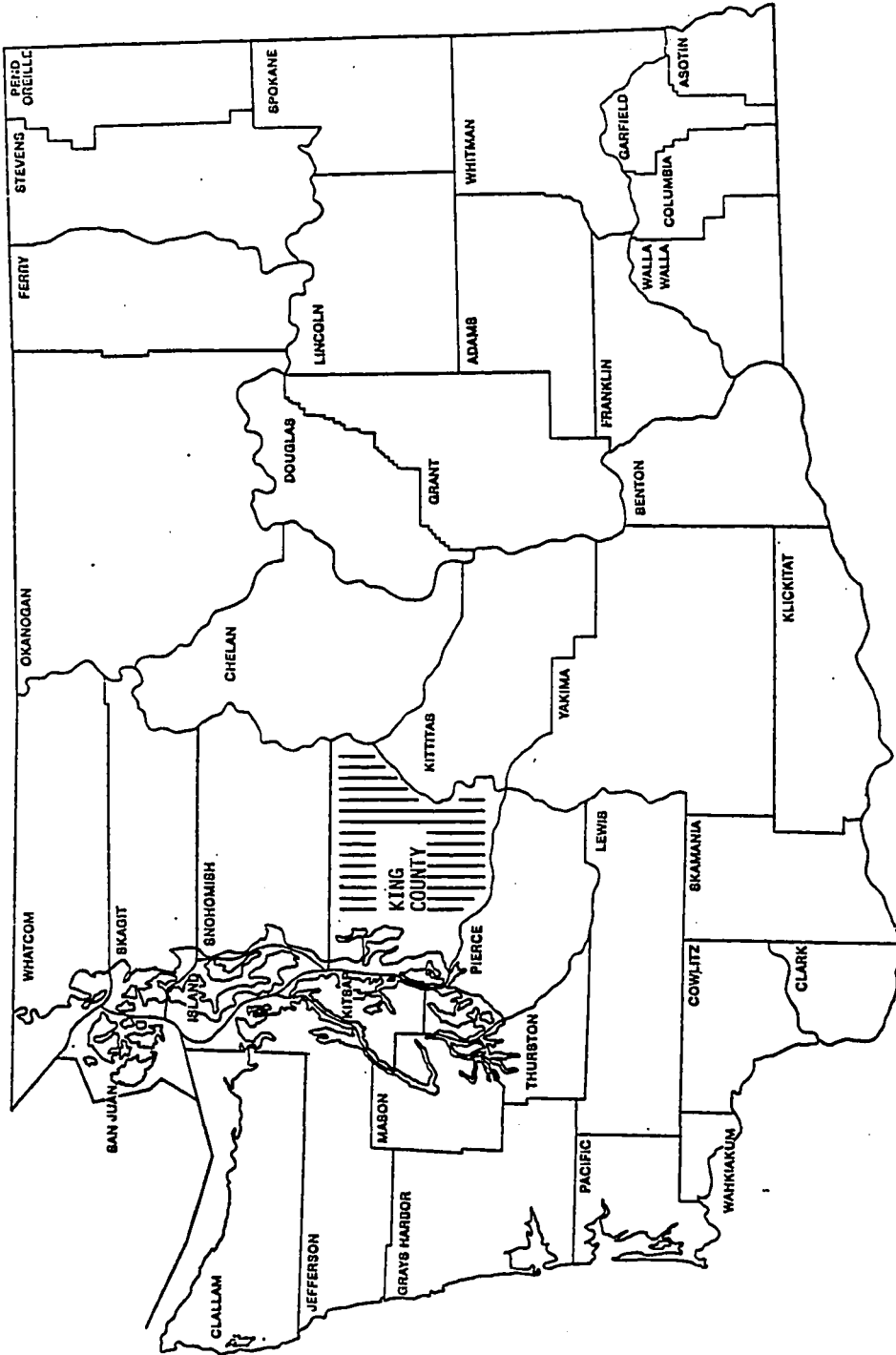


FIGURE 1: Map of Washington State Counties

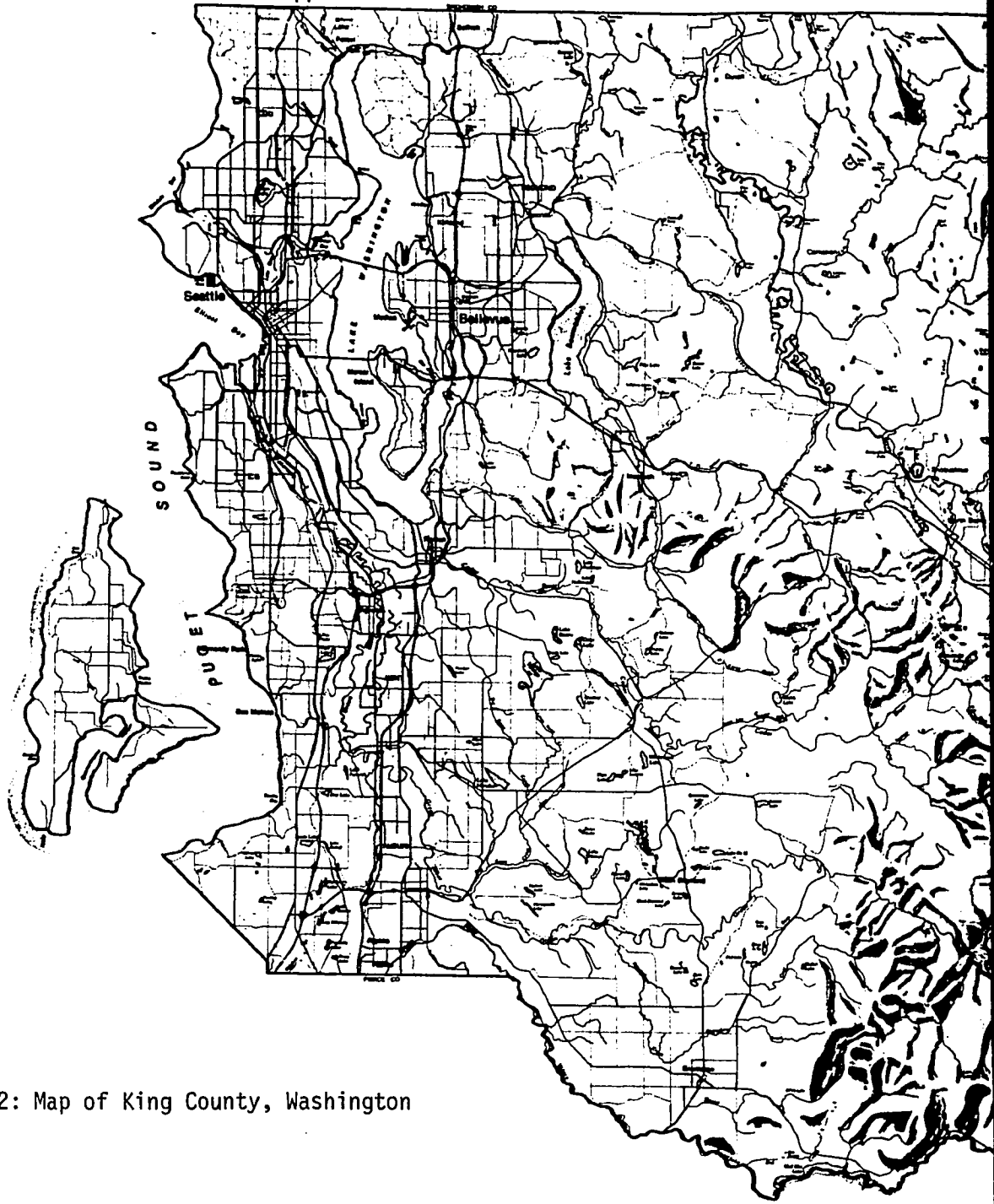
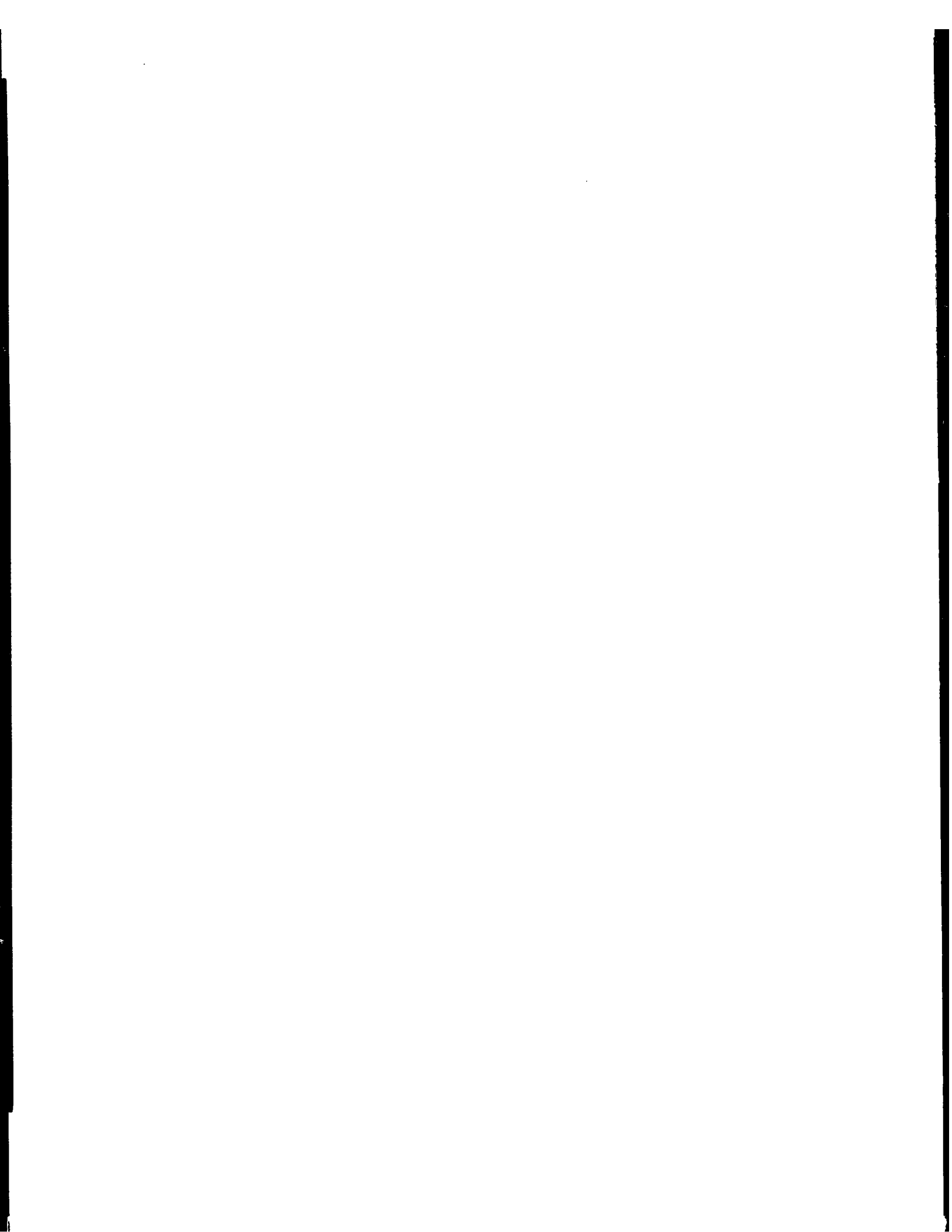


FIGURE 2: Map of King County, Washington





southern neighbors, Snohomish and Pierce Counties, respectively. The three counties, Pierce, King, and Snohomish, anchored by their major cities, Tacoma, Seattle, and Everett, respectively, form a continuous belt of urban population along Puget Sound's eastern shore.

King County is the eleventh largest county in the state, consisting of 2,128 square miles. The county contained 1,164,400 persons in 1977 (State of Washington, 1977: 190). Seattle, the largest city in the State, had a population of approximately 500,000 or 43% of this amount. The population of other incorporated cities within the county was 240,750 or 21% of the total population. The 423,640 persons living in unincorporated areas of the county accounted for the other 36% of the total population. Geographically, the county's population may be divided into three vertical belts according to population density. The highest population densities exist in the areas around Seattle and its suburbs between Puget Sound and the eastern edge of Lake Sammamish. A second belt of lower density, rural land, exists between Lake Sammamish and the foothills of the Cascades. Eastward from the foothills rugged mountain terrain exists, and population densities are extremely low in this third belt of county land. In 1977 the county's population density, based on total area, was 547.18 persons per square mile. However, if the county's forest land is excluded from the calculation, the population density of the

urban and rural areas of the county increases to 1,276.54 persons per square mile, an increase of 133%.¹ In short, King County residents share a heterogeneous physical environment that blends urban, rural and forest elements in a progressively eastward moving sequence.²

In addition to a diverse environment, King County residents also enjoy a high quality environment containing an abundance of natural resources. The county's topography is broken up by numerous lakes. Lake Washington, the largest of its fresh water lakes, is a long, narrow body of water extending about 17 miles in a north-south direction. A meandering water channel containing a set of locks for boat traffic connects Lake Washington with Puget Sound. Lake Sammamish, almost a twin of Lake Washington in shape, lies four miles east of the large lake and is 6.5 miles long. Green Lake and Lake Union, smaller lakes by comparison, are in Seattle, the heart of the most heavily populated area of the county. Numerous smaller lakes also exist in other parts of the county. King County's water resources serve as natural, aquatic open space mechanisms that have prevented continuous urban development from occurring across its landscape while also enhancing the scenic beauty of the Puget Sound region.

The quality of life is also enhanced by two mountain ranges, the Cascades in the East and the Olympics in the West. An abundance of rainfall (approximately 40 inches per year)

provides the necessary moisture for the area's evergreen landscape and helps to keep air pollution levels low.

Because of its environmental qualities, the region has received national publicity in such magazines as Time, Harper's and Atlantic Monthly. Seattle has been named repeatedly as "America's Most Livable City" and county residents in general are conscious of the attributes of their environment and its established history of environmental protection.

The Development and Decline of King County Agriculture

King County agricultural land, another form of open space, has also enhanced the area's aesthetic qualities. In general, its agricultural land is located in the county's major river valleys, which are supplied by snow and rainfall collected within their watersheds in the Cascade Mountains. The primary river valley agricultural areas are as follows: 1. Upper

1. Upper Snoqualmie River Valley, which includes Snoqualmie and North Bend;
 2. Lower Snoqualmie River Valley, which includes Carnation and Duvall;
 3. Sammamish River Valley, which includes Redmond;
 4. Lower Green River Valley, which includes Kent and Auburn;
- and

5. Upper Green River Valley, which is southeast of Auburn. Two other important areas of agricultural activity that are not located in river valleys are the Enumclaw Plateau, which includes the City of Enumclaw, and Vashon-Maury Island.

In the county's early history, the river valleys flooded every year and severely damaged agricultural production.³ The worst of these early floods occurred in December, 1867, when the White, Duwamish, Black, and Cedar Rivers overflowed their banks. The four river valleys were covered with water seven feet deep and severe damage to farms and other property was sustained. Although seasonal rain patterns contributed to the flooding, a primary cause of the floods was the drainage pattern of Lake Washington. Since the arrival of the settlers, Lake Washington and Lake Union were separated by a narrow neck of land. Barred from draining westward into Lake Union, Lake Washington had only a single, southern outlet through the Cedar and Black Rivers, which eventually exited into the Sound. The settlers reasoned that if a channel could be constructed to connect the two lakes, Lake Washington would drain primarily through its new western outlet and substantially reduce flooding in the Black, Green, and Cedar Rivers.

The concept of connecting the two lakes had been proposed as early as 1854 by Thomas Mercer. Early attempts to connect the two lakes were unsuccessful (King County, 1939: 163),

In the 1860s Harvey Pike (son of the pioneer John Pike after whom Pike Street is named), who took up a claim which included the portage, proceeded to dig a canal [between the two lakes] using pick, shovel and wheelbarrow. Though doomed to failure, this was the first attempt ever made to connect the two lakes.

In the following year, local officials petitioned Congress for funds to construct a canal between the lakes. Although an 1867 report by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed the feasibility of the project (which was reconfirmed in another federal survey in 1871), the Federal government refused to assist the county. Therefore, in 1879 Seattle citizens held a mass meeting in Yesler Hall for the purpose of raising funds for the project. The effort was unsuccessful. However, in 1883 Congress reversed its previous decision and appropriated sufficient funds to build a canal to connect the two lakes and connect Lake Union with Puget Sound. A year later the two lakes were connected and flooding in the county's southern river valleys was substantially reduced.

The prospects for lowering Lake Washington increased even further in 1910 when the county received \$2,275,000 in federal funds to construct a set of locks between Lake Union and Puget Sound, contingent on local sponsorship of the channel connecting the two bodies of water. The project was completed in 1916, and Lake Washington was lowered to the level of Lake Union (King County, 1939).

The second important flood control measure was the diversion of the White River around 1912. Before 1912, the White River flowed from the County's southeastern corner in a northwest direction until it met the Black River near Renton. However, in 1912 King and Pierce Counties formed a joint agreement to divert the White River into the Stuck River near Auburn, which forced the White River to flow into the Puyallup River and eventually into Puget Sound through Tacoma. The agreement represented an early form of inter-governmental coordination necessary to prevent flooding in both counties. Under the terms of the agreement, Pierce County would absorb the White River's discharge, while King County would maintain flood controls on the White River for 99 years. Both parties benefited: by maintaining flood controls, Pierce County acquired additional, safe water resources; and by diverting the White River into Pierce County, King County reduced the threat of flooding within its territory. After 1912 the Green River flowed through the old channel of the White between Auburn and the Duwamish (King County, 1964a: 10; Seidel, 1979).

The diversion of the White River had a significant effect on the Green River Valley. One report (King County, 1964a: 12) states that:

The diversion of the White River southerly in the Puyallup about the year of 1912 provided a substantial measure of relief to the Valley from floods which prior to that time occasionally inundated the valley floor from side to side.

With the construction of the Mud Mountain Dam on the White River in 1943, the threat of the White overflowing its new channel and entering the valley floor was virtually eliminated.

With the flood threat reduced, agriculture became a profitable enterprise, and by 1945 over 165,000 acres (12% of the county's total land) were devoted to farming. However, since that time agriculture has gradually declined, and today less than 55,000 acres (or about 4% of total county land) is devoted to agriculture. The table below summarizes this decline.

TABLE 1

Acreage and Number of Farms in King County, 1945-1974

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acres of Farmland</u> ¹	<u>Number of Farms</u> ²
1945	165,635	6,495
1949	153,338	5,496
1954	149,213	5,181
1959	114,719	2,952
1964	82,355	1,825
1969	61,107	1,212
1974	55,513	1,327

Source: Census of Agriculture in Sanger (1978: V-51)

^{1,2}The Census of Agriculture changed the definition of "farm" in 1950, 1959, and 1974. The 1950 change in definition had an unknown effect on the figures. The 1959 change excluded 1,074 farms under 10 acres in size. Although the exact acreage impact is unknown, it could not have exceeded 10,740 acres. The 1974 change in definition excluded 306 operations encompassing 4,145 acres. The 1974 excluded acreage is included in the table. (King County Office of Agriculture, 1978: 54).

Three major factors, operating almost concurrently between 1945 and 1974, caused the downward trend in county agricultural activity. First, the economy of the region changed in the 1940s. Following the arrival of the first settlers in the mid-1800s until the outbreak of World War II, the region's economy was dominated by fishing, forest products, coal mining and agriculture (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 1). When the war began, a huge demand for high-technology military equipment arose, and the Seattle-based Boeing Company became a major supplier of aircraft and other technical equipment. Boeing soon became the region's major employer, and, as other industries and businesses were attracted to the region, a technological economy largely independent of the area's natural resources emerged. In this new economy, King County's agricultural valleys - particularly the Green River Valley - possessed physical characteristics which business and industry normally require: easily developed, flat land, serviced by flood control, and close to utilities and rail and freeway transportation. Business and industry became major competitors for agricultural land in King County's land market.

Although business and industry, possessing great wealth relative to King County's farming population, had sufficient resources to buy and develop farmland which they needed, a change in Washington State land use valuation methods facilitated their land acquisitions. Before World War II, land

in King County was valued according to its agricultural productivity. However, after the war ended and the local economy became characterized by industry and technological development, a new form of land valuation was instituted in the state called "highest and best use."⁶ Under this new method of land valuation, land became valued according to what form of development it could best support. Instead of the natural, physical characteristics of the land, the location of a parcel of land with respect to existing development, transportation systems and utilities became the major criterion for determining land values.

The actual value which a parcel of farmland assumed under this new method of valuation was dependent on its location and capability to accommodate development. If the location of a parcel of farmland was suitable for alternative land uses (e.g., industry, residence, etc.) and the physical characteristics of the farmland did not prohibit development (e.g., because of periodic flooding or steep terrain), the farmland became valued according to the alternative land use or form of development it could best support. The table below documents how the average per acre value of King County farmland was increased since World War II under highest and best use valuation procedures.

TABLE 2

Average Per Acre Value of King County Farmland, 1945-1974

	<u>Current Value</u>	<u>Constant Value</u> ¹
1945	290	549
1949	456	658
1954	720	916
1959	1,037	1,195
1964	1,407	1,894
1969	2,068	1,894
1974	2,613	1,847

¹All constant dollars for 1967, based on the Consumer Price Index, Seattle.

Source: Sanger (1978: V-51), and Puget Sound Council of Governments (1974: 54).

The table indicates that the value of farmland was nine times higher in 1974 than it was in 1945 but only three and a third times higher in constant dollars. However, the average values reported in the table have disguised the range of farmland values observed in the river valleys. As one report (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 54) states,

Specific tracts of farm land in close proximity to the major urban centers of the region are currently being taxed on assessed valuations in excess of \$10,000 per acre and may be priced for sale, market value, in excess of \$15,000 per acre.

More recent articles in local newspapers have stated that certain parcels of ideally located farmland currently have market values in excess of \$20,000 per acre.

When the high valuations of farmland are used in property assessment procedures, the high valuations cause a tremendous increase in the property taxes of farmland, making agriculture virtually impossible in the long-run. Arpke's account (1942: 476-477) of property assessment procedures and their negative impacts is still highly relevant today,

. . . The urban fringe is characterized by a great variety of land uses of almost every degree of intensity. The value of land for [development] purposes is, of course, much higher than its agricultural value. Sales of land at the higher [development] figure take place throughout the entire fringe area all of which has become a potential [development] district. The natural result of a situation such as this is a strong tendency on the part of assessors to appraise property on the basis of its potential value, which is arrived at by reason of proximity to other parcels that have recently been sold and for which the consideration is known. The reasoning here is that if one particular piece of property can sell for 700 dollars an acre, then other properties in the immediate vicinity, and with presumably all of the same advantages, should be worth as much. Since [development] use, as described above, is pretty well dispersed throughout the area, this upping of assessed values is also widespread. As a result the relation between assessed value and the actual use value breaks down completely for large areas of the urban fringe.

Normally the increase in property tax is not offset by parallel increases in farm income through increased production. In

certain instances the annual property tax for a parcel of farmland in King County has exceeded the annual income earned by the owner of the farm (Puget Sound Council of Government, 1974: 54). Because a large majority of King County farms are family owned and have few alternative sources of income, the large tax burden is an economic disincentive to continue farming and may cause the farmer to sell his land for development.

In summary, World War II spawned a technology-oriented economy that was largely independent of local natural resources and needed flat, easily developed land for business and industry uses. Aided by "highest and best use" land valuation practices, business and industry have purchased and developed agricultural land and have caused adjacent farmland values and tax assessments to escalate, threatening the economic viability of farming in the area.

The second major factor causing the decline of county agriculture is the construction of the Howard Hansen Dam on the Green River. Even after the early flood control measures were installed in the Green River, the threat of flooding in the Green River Valley remained significant. One early report indicated that over \$900,000 of flood damages occurred in the Green River Valley in 1933 alone (King County, 1933: 168). The continuing threat of floods created parallel demands for improved flood control. One early advocate of improved Green

River flood control was Howard Hanson, chairman of the Rivers and Harbors Sub-committee of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. At a meeting of the Associated Improvement Clubs of South King County on May 9, 1928, Hansen launched a widespread campaign promoting the construction of a dam on the Green River. This campaign became a top priority of the Chamber (Seattle Business, December 22, 1975).

The rationale supporting the construction of a Green River dam was simple. Previous flood control measures could not capture all of the water during periods of peak flooding. If a dam was constructed above the Green River Valley that captured the flood water and released it gradually, flooding would not occur (King County, 1964a: 12).

Hansen's initial appeals for the dam were not heeded. The earlier diversion of the White River and the proposed construction of the Mud Mountain Dam had reduced the threat of flood sufficiently to make the Green River Dam economically unjustified at that time (King County, 1964a: 12).⁷ However, during the next decade, federal support for the project emerged, and in 1936 site selection for the dam was begun by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, although an acceptable site was not located until 1949. Construction of the dam was delayed still another six years, until July, 1955, when Congress appropriated the first million dollars for the project. Initially named the Eagle Gorge Dam, and renamed the

Howard Hansen Dam in 1958, it was completed six months "ahead of schedule" on March 31, 1962 (Seattle Business, December 22, 1975).

While it significantly reduced floods in the valley and increased farm production, the dam also spurred development. The following excerpt documents the Seattle Chamber of Commerce view of the dam's impact on development (Seattle Business, December 22, 1975),

With the assurance that farmland in the valley would no longer be inundated on a regular basis, more intensive farming efforts were made possible, with the resulting increased production. Even more significant to the area's economic well-being, the ability to hold back the waters opened up more than 10,000 acres of level land for homes, shopping centers, commercial enterprises, and both light and heavy industry. The valley had long been considered a natural area for industrial development, it seems, but flood conditions had previously confined such activity to the southerly district bordering the Duwamish River. Today, the burgeoning transportation-distribution center that the Green River Valley has become is its own testimonial to the value of the dam . . .

Although the first major building in the valley was constructed by the Container Corporation of America, development did not increase sharply until the Boeing Company located a large plant (known today as the Boeing Space Center) between Kent and Auburn during the mid 1950s. Choosing a site on the western side of the river, the Boeing Company removed a massive amount of dirt from the valley's highlands which they used as landfill on the valley floor. Sufficient soil was dragged down from the valley's upper reaches to form a

platform, or miniature plateau, eight feet higher than the valley floor. While it caused the permanent removal of agriculturally productive soil from the valley floor, this landfill also significantly reduced the probability that the plant would ever be subject to the Green River's floods in the future.

Once Boeing had demonstrated the viability of constructing large industrial plants on the valley floor, other businesses followed.⁸ The practice of placing landfill over agriculturally productive soils to reduce the danger of flooding and to improve soil drainage became a standard operating procedure for Green River Valley business development. As more businesses moved to the valley, the demand and competition for valley land increased, causing land prices to increase dramatically. Just prior to the construction of the Boeing plant, the price of agricultural land in the valley was between \$500-\$750 an acre. The price soon increased to \$3,000 an acre, later rose to \$10,000 an acre, and is currently selling for over \$20,000 per acre in locations most suited for development. The sharp increase in land values, in conjunction with land assessment practices employed over the past thirty years, increased taxes beyond affordable levels for many farmers, who were forced to sell their land (Seidel, 1979).⁹ The widespread occurrence of this process in agricultural areas which business and industry

selected for development is a major reason for the incremental development of county agricultural land.

The third major factor contributing to the decline of county agriculture is population growth. In 1940, King County's population stood at 504,980 (State of Washington, 1972: 255). At that time, the east side of Lake Washington (locally referred to as the "Eastside"), for example, was primarily agricultural land and was not considered a part of the Seattle metropolitan area by local residents (Seattle Times, February, 25, 1979). In 1950, when the county's population had increased by 45.2% to 732,992, the Eastside still consisted of small villages, and suburban development was just beginning. In 1960, however, the county population jumped to 935,014, a 27.6% increase over the 1950 level, and by 1970 total population was up to 1,156,633, a 23.7% increase over the 1960 county population. Between 1950 and 1975 Bellevue, the Eastside's largest city, had increased from 6,000 total population to approximately 70,000, an increase of 1066.7%. Similarly, between 1940 and 1970 King County's population had increased by 129%.

The thirty-year period of population growth came to an abrupt halt in the early 1970s when the nation's aerospace industry entered a recession. The Boeing Company, which employed 20.2% of the work force in King County in 1967 (Seattle Times, February 25, 1979), laid off workers by the

thousands. In 1971 the unemployment rate in Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties exceeded 12%. The economy of the entire state declined, and in 1971 and 1972 King County lost population.

However, since 1972 the region has rebounded from its economic recession. The number of registered businesses in King County has grown by 28.7% between 1970 and 1977 (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1977: 4). The Council of Governments (1977: 5) has projected that the Puget Sound region will gain 409,000 jobs between 1975 and 2000. The areas of the economy expected to grow most are secondary export and support sectors, which includes such industries as transportation services, machinery, retail trades, finance, insurance, real estate, education, personal and business services and construction (Seattle Times, March 26, 1978). In short, the regional economy is becoming more diversified and stronger. The Boeing Company, which dominated the employment sector before the recession, currently accounts for only 9% of the King-Snohomish County work force. The economy's new diversity and strength have brought economic growth, stability and jobs to the region, evidenced by local newspaper headlines (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1977: 1),

"Pacific Northwest - the Promised Land"

"This area growing fast, fast, fast . . ."

"Employment Booming - State Population Rebounds . . ."

"1.6 Million More in State by 2005?"

"The boom goes on!"

Since 1971-1972 when the State and King County population declined, each succeeding year has witnessed bigger population increases. Washington State's population grew by 46,000 in 1975, 77,000 in 1976, and 90,000 in 1977 (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1977: 4). State officials forecast 5,051,200 people in Washington for the year 2000, up 33% from its current population of 3.8 million (Seattle Times, February 25, 1979). King County's population is expected to reach 1,628,000 (Seattle Times, February 25, 1979). The population increase is roughly equivalent to adding another City of Seattle to King County's population by the year 2000.

Local indicators suggest that most of this future growth will occur in the suburban and rural areas of King County. In Seattle, the number of housing units increased 1.3% between 1970 and 1977 (King County Department of Planning and Community Development, 1977), while in the area of King County outside of Seattle, the number of housing units increased by 19.9%. Approximately one-third of this increase occurred in the suburban Eastside of Lake Washington. Further, 28% of the Eastside's increase occurred in the one year period between 1976-1977. King County's Department of Planning and Community Development forecasts that by 1990 100,000 new homes will be constructed, and the number of households in the county will increase 20%, mostly in areas outside of Seattle (Seattle Times, May 9, 1979). The Puget Sound Council of Governments

forecasts 91,300 new jobs in King County by 1990, two-thirds of that amount in the suburbs, attracting more population and development in the county's rural and suburban areas (Seattle Times, February 25, 1979).

If these trends and forecasts are realized, local public officials, businessmen and environmentalists predict that by the year 2000 the suburban Eastside will closely resemble today's urban Seattle (Seattle Times, February 25, 1979). In any case, the population and employment growth occurring between Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish are creating and will continue to create pressures for housing, business and other forms of development in the traditionally rural areas of the county. Most importantly, the county's supply of agricultural land would most likely decline significantly as developmental pressures increased. Indeed, developmental pressures in the county are currently greatest in the Green River Valley near Kent and Auburn, and agricultural activity within this area has continually declined over the past thirty years. Agricultural activity in the Sammamish Valley is also disappearing. Although development pressures decline with increasing distance from Seattle within the agricultural areas of the county, one report projects that if current trends continue the county's supply of agricultural land will decline 60% between 1974 and 1990 (Sanger, 1978: VI-20).

In summary, changes in the local economy, the construction of Howard Hansen Dam, and population growth between 1945 and 1970 initiated the decline of agricultural activity and farmland in King County. These three factors, which reflect increasing county urbanization, precipitated other changes in farming areas that contributed to the decline, as documented in Appendix A. Public policies and proposals to save agriculture must address and nullify the causes of its decline. This issue will be addressed in later chapters where county farmland preservation policies and programs are examined.

Between 1945 and 1974 King County lost 110,112 acres, or 66% of its farmland to development. While most of this farmland was not prime agricultural land, future losses probably will be (Sanger, 1978: V-44). This twenty-nine year history of decline and chances for more losses in the future have created much concern among local residents, a large number of whom wish to control the distribution of population growth and preserve King County's remaining agricultural land, about 55,500 acres in 1974. For many local residents the possible future elimination of agricultural land is an unacceptable scenario and a major reason for their interest in saving farmland in King County.

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¹Approximately 57% or 780,000 acres of the county is forest (King County Assessor's Office, 1979).

²The obvious exception to this sequence is predominately rural Vashon-Maury Island in Puget Sound.

³On December 22, 1852, the Oregon Territorial Government founded King County, named after the running mate of President Franklin Pierce, Vice President Rufus King of Alabama (King County, 1939: 18).

⁴Because the Black River flows into the Green River, floods in the Green River Valley would also be reduced.

⁵During this period, local authorities also installed a Black River Flood Control Dam. The Black River absorbed the drainage from surrounding hills, which repeatedly backed up the Green River. The dam helped to alleviate this condition (Seidel, 1979).

⁶Most states require that land be assessed at its fair market value. This requirement was originally instituted in states to avoid penal and discriminatory tax assessments (Delafons, 1969: 58).

⁷For an example of how the economic justification for dams is derived by local flood control authorities, see King County (1939: 168). In general, these early flood control justifications simply compare flood damage costs with flood control costs over an extended period of time. If the cost of a flood control project is less than the cost of flood damages, the project is "economically justified." Thus, because economic, environmental and social impacts of the dam are not considered within the cost comparison, public officials often approved flood control projects on the basis of incomplete analyses of their future impacts.

⁸Andover Industrial Park and Southcenter in the City of Tukwila are representative of this development.

⁹The Boeing Company's decision to build a plant in the Green River Valley followed by the subsequent development of the valley resembles a similar company decision in the 1940s. One local historian writes that: "One factor which, more than any other, changed Renton from a small mining town of approximately 4,000 population to a congested and busy industrial center, six times as large, was the decision in 1940 of the Boeing Airplane Co. to build a new plant at the south end of Lake Washington (Slauson, 1976: 1969). The company selected Renton as the site to build, test, and manufacture a long range patrol flying boat for the military (for later use in World War II).

CHAPTER 4

Early Efforts to Restrict Development, 1959-1973

How did public support for saving farmlands - eventually strong enough to secure voter approval of a \$50 million purchase of development rights agricultural land retention program - originate in King County? Public support for farmland retention first appeared in the mid-1950s and grew incrementally through the 1960s and early 1970s. My purpose in this chapter is to discuss three major events in this history which fostered this support and created local momentum toward implementing an agricultural land preservation program in the late 1970s.

The 1964 Comprehensive Plan

Although the first advocate for farmland preservation cannot be identified with certainty, Bill Moshier, farm writer for the Seattle Times and an early farmland preservation advocate, noted in the mid-1950s that almost 200,000 acres of agricultural land had vanished from the Puget Sound area between 1942 and 1955, and he predicted significant losses of farmland in the future. Moshier advocated a land use method that could permanently protect agricultural land from development near urban areas, but his plea appeared outlandish and unwarranted at the time and went unheeded.

The first serious step toward agricultural land preservation occurred in the late 1950s. The influx of new residents sharply increased the area's needs for sewage treatment, housing, public transportation and other public services. Following the creation of Metro, metropolitan institution responsible for regional sewage treatment and water quality in 1958 (which will be discussed further in the next chapter), King County officials began to reassess their own capability of resolving regional problems and service needs. Although most county services were concentrated in the predominately rural, unincorporated areas of the county in accordance with state law, the County did possess legal authority to perform general planning for the entire jurisdiction, and County officials decided to embark on a region-wide planning program as a means for identifying regional needs and problems and resolving them, encouraging orderly physical development, coordinating programs and services, and promoting a desirable environment.

In June, 1959, the King County Commissioners reorganized the County's Planning Agency and provided it with sufficient funds to develop a county-wide comprehensive plan (King County, 1964b: 3). The development of the plan was guided by the Planning Enabling Act of the State of Washington (R.C.W. 36.70), which required that the plan include a map (or maps), a descriptive text covering objectives, principles and standards

used to develop the map, and a land use element that outlined the proposed distribution and location of agriculture and other land uses. Following a three-year planning effort involving the Planning Commission and the Planning Department, a comprehensive plan was formally adopted on October 13, 1964 (King County, 1964b).

King County's Comprehensive plan was unique in two ways. First, the plan was designed to serve a growing population - approximately 1,663,000 by 1985. Second, the plan was specifically designed as a decisionmaking guide for an era and area characterized by constantly changing growth patterns (King County, 1964b: 3),

The plan . . . is not an inflexible blueprint of the future, but is intended to serve as a means for evaluating proposed programs in relation to the total County development and to incorporate those which represent desirable improvements, while discarding current practices which experience and research have indicated are not effective.

To accomplish this objective, the Comprehensive Plan outlined policies for agricultural and other forms of land use. Each policy, however, was formed around the plan's "urban center development" concept, which encouraged future development in Seattle and its suburban communities. As stated in the plan (King County, 1964b: 27),

. . . with increasing population growth in the urban area surrounding Seattle, these suburban areas can change from their traditional functions of being the bedrooms for Seattle and providing agricultural commodities for the region.

Thus, under the urban center development concept, suburban communities (such as those located in the Lower Green River Valley) could freely develop agricultural land. However, agricultural lands located in less populated or outlying areas of the county were designated as open space (King County, 1964b: 30),

When possible, large segments of the urban area would be separated by elements of the open space system, such as the river valleys and steep slope areas.

In order to discourage urban sprawl, the remainder of the non-urban area would be retained in its present form of agriculture, suburban farm, forest, or recreation area . . .

Thus, the plan reserved most of the remaining river valleys in the county (e.g., Upper Green, Sammamish, Snoqualmie, etc.) as open space, much of it agricultural. In addition, the following open space policies were established in support of agricultural preservation (King County, 1964b: 135-136),¹

1. Open space should be distributed throughout the urban area to insure a relief within the urban environment, provide sufficient space for passive and active recreation, and help curb the spread of urban blight and deterioration.
2. Where possible, open space elements should be combined to form a visual and sometimes physical separation between major sectors of the urbanized area in order to discourage continuous urban sprawl, and preserve many of the natural features of the land.
3. Areas designated for open space purposes should be held inviolate against diversion to non-open space uses, and should not be considered as a reserve for such uses. If an overriding public purpose by another governmental agency requires

the taking of open space land, compensation should be made for the area taken by the provision of equal or better area and facilities.

The first and second policies clearly supported the preservation of agricultural land as a form of passive open space. The third policy treated open space as a public resource that should never decline below present quantities, particularly in a period of population growth.²

The planners also attempted to avoid conflicts between its open space and industrial land use policies, stipulating that (King County, 1964b: 101),

Industrial areas shall be encouraged to develop primarily on large level sites. Prime level agricultural land shall be subject to special analysis to determine proper timing of use change in order to avoid premature curtailment of agricultural production and loss of permanent open space.

The policy appeared to provide tenuous support to the conversion of agricultural land for industrial purposes. However, because the land market, in conjunction with the annexation and rezoning practices of local municipalities, controlled the timing of development, the policy had little force in preserving agricultural land from development.

The plan designated zoning as a primary mechanism for implementing the plan's policies, but because zoning is a weak method of controlling land use, the County was unsuccessful in preventing agricultural land from being developed after 1964.³

As a statement of formal policy supporting the preservation of agricultural land as open space, the 1964 Comprehensive Plan is a critical precedent and foundation for developing stronger policies and programs for preserving farmland in the future. However, while the plan contained agricultural/open space preservation policies, it consigned the Lower Green River Valley, the farming area most threatened by development in King County, to further development. When the plan was adopted, development pressures in outlying farm areas (e.g., the Snoqualmie River Valley, the Upper Green River Valley, the Enumclaw Plateau) were much less than the Lower Green River Valley and did not need land use controls to protect them from rapid development. In short, although the planners advocated agriculture/open space preservation in the 1964 Comprehensive Plan, they did not control development where it was needed most.

The Pike Place Market Initiative

In the early 1900s, the Pike Place Market, an open produce market where local farmers could sell their crops, was built near Seattle's waterfront. Although the Market thrived in its early years, the number of Market farmers began to decline following World War II as the region began to urbanize and supermarkets became the primary source of produce. The open-air buildings of the Market also began to wear and decay,

and in the late 1960s Seattle's Urban Renewal Authority began to develop plans for replacing the Market with a high-rise housing complex. However, the plan to overhaul the Market area of downtown Seattle was strongly opposed by a group of native Seattle residents, and after a significant lobbying effort by those interested in saving the Market, the City of Seattle gave up its Urban Renewal plans to revamp the landmark, replacing them with a massive repair and "facelifting" preservation program. However, the Market advocates were not satisfied with these actions, and they formed a special group, called "Friends of the Market," to sponsor an initiative to establish the Pike Place Market area as a historical district. Appearing on the City ballot in the November, 1971 election, the measure passed with ease. During the 1970s the City would invest over \$30 million in upgrading the Market area (Sale, 1976: 225-226).

Voter approval of the initiative had a number of important impacts. First, the success of the initiative demonstrated that citizen activism can affect how urban areas change.⁴ Second, the initiative created public awareness about the area's agricultural community and those who depend on the Market for their livelihood. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the success of the initiative assured that the Market would be preserved, thereby providing an urban focal point for developing public support for an agricultural land preservation program in the future.

The Mercer Island Open Space Ballot Measure

While City residents were deciding the fate of the Pike Place Market in 1971, Mercer Island residents were concerned with development within their own community. Mercer Island residents, who comprise the state's wealthiest incorporated entity, were becoming increasingly concerned about the effects of continued development within their small territory. A number of residents believed that continued development would eventually eliminate all of the island's open space land and harm the "quality of life" currently shared by all island residents. Therefore, Mercer Island leaders placed a \$2 million bond issue on the ballot to purchase 160 acres of undeveloped land as part of a two-phase 400 acre, \$5 million open space land acquisition program. However, while a majority of voters favored the measure (3,512 to 2,841), it failed to garner 60% of the votes (Seattle Times, March 26, 1978) and a scaled-down version of the plan resubmitted in 1973 received less than a 50 percent affirmative vote (Lundin, 1976: Part I, 12). Nonetheless, because the Mercer Island bond measures were the first local attempts to preserve an area's "quality of life" by purchasing open space land with voter-approved tax dollars, it is an important precedent toward eventually sanctioning the public purchase of land as an acceptable means of preserving locally-valued features of the environment, such as agricultural land.

Conclusion

Although the outcomes differed, a common theme exists in the 1964 King County Comprehensive Plan and the Pike Place Market and Mercer Island elections: each represents an attempt by either local government or citizens to control how their communities would change in the future. Cumulatively, the three events created public awareness about King County agriculture and generated interest in preserving what agricultural land it had left. Agriculture and open space preservation had become an important public issue.

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¹The plan specifically defines agricultural land as a form of open space.

²Existing evidence indicates that the third policy was never practiced.

³Between 1964 and 1974 King County farm acreage declined from 82,355 to 55,513 acres (Sanger, 1978: V-51). Zoning's effectiveness in preserving agricultural land is discussed further in later chapters.

⁴The Pike Place Market Initiative was not the first instance of citizen activism following World War II. The first case, the creation of Metro (a county-wide sewage treatment agency) in the mid-1950s, is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Citizen Leadership in King County

The disappearance of agricultural land was just one of several metropolitan problems which King County residents attempted to resolve between the end of World War II and 1980. During the war and the early 1950s, federal defense contracts and commercial airplane sales produced large increases in Boeing business activity, and, in turn, parallel sharp increases in the region's population as the company expanded its work force. Most of this regional growth was absorbed through decentralization and, by the early fifties, the Lake Washington Floating Bridge, although regarded as a "marvel of modernity" when it opened in 1939, was clogged both morning and night by daily commuters to Seattle as the suburbs began to grow both in population and numbers (Sale, 1976: 197).

The concomitant trends toward increasing population growth and decentralization had three major consequences. First, lacking an overall region government authority, the number of governmental units in the suburban areas of the county increased markedly to supply the new residents and businesses with the necessary urban comforts. By 1953 over 180 separate special districts (e.g., water, sewer, fire, etc.) and municipalities existed in King County, and the number was

increasing by nearly a dozen each year (Ellis, 1955). Sale (1976: 198) characterizes the situation:

Before the war, the cities around the lake were Seattle, Renton to the south, Kirkland to the east, Bothell to the north; shortly after the war Seattle had suddenly expanded five miles farther north, and there were Mercer Island, Bryn Mawr, Newport, Bellevue, Clyde Hill, Hunt's Point, Medina, Juanita, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Lake Hills. Some of these had their own sewers, or police or fire departments, or schools; those who did not either banded together or else relied on King County. Thus boundary lines went everywhere, through and across other boundary lines for other governments, all of which had the right to ask for taxes, and to acquire public land. They were all jerry-built very quickly, and with an almost shocking confidence.

Coordination of these diverse units to address growing regional problems was almost nonexistent.

Second, although Seattle had a sewer system of sufficient size to fulfill all of its sewage treatment needs, the new municipalities did not. Consequently, while Seattle disposed of treated sewage safely into Puget Sound, most of the new suburban communities around Lake Washington carelessly poured tons of raw and treated sewage into the lake. Because most of the sewer districts in the area followed this practice, the lake quickly became extremely polluted.

Third, the region's 1950 transportation system could not absorb the increased demands which the growing, automobile-oriented population required. Because the Eisenhower administration supported the construction of freeway networks with strong federal funding policies, new freeways

were selected as the solution to the region's transportation problems. Rapid rail transportation, which had been recommended for Seattle as early as 1911 because of its sprawl, hills and numerous bodies of water, was never a serious contender. Soon a plethora of freeway proposals were in the works, and the region was on its way toward becoming another Los Angeles (Sale, 1976: 196-198).

In short, Seattle was experiencing rapid change following the end of World War II and the emergence of the Boeing Company as a leader in the aerospace industry. The shift from an economy based on natural resources to an economy based on advanced technology created significant physical and social change in the region. Previous systems and methods of resolving problems were no longer adequate for the area's growing urban crises. Walton (1971: 195), summarizing the previous work of Norton Long, characterized the situation facing metropolitan areas like Seattle,

What is characteristic of metropolitan areas is the lack of overall decisionmaking institutions. This does not mean that there are not institutions with power in metropolitan areas. It does mean that there are no institutions with sufficient power and overall responsibility to make decisions settling metropolitan issues and solving metropolitan problems.

At this point in the region's development, enter James Ellis, who was to play the leading role in defining and implementing solutions to King County's population growth problems. Once referred to as a "civic visionary," Ellis was

described by one local newspaper as ". . . indispensable in conceiving and activating civic projects in Seattle over the last 20 years" (Seattle Times, February 10, 1980). While Ellis' projects have involved hundreds of county residents - the result of a "team effort," according to Ellis, he has consistently played a key leadership role in identifying and resolving problems caused by rapid population growth. Listed as one of the ten most powerful persons in the state in an Associated Press poll conducted in the mid-1970s (Seattle Times, February 10, 1980), Ellis would play a key leadership role in forming and implementing a farmland preservation program. A brief review of Ellis' emergence as a metropolitan leader follows.

Metro

As previously noted, solutions to King County's problems could not be developed when local government was fragmented and uncoordinated, and shortly after World War II several different attempts were made to establish a metropolitan authority having jurisdiction over the entire King County metropolitan area. Ellis, who was and still is an attorney in a Seattle law firm, initially was an advocate for city-county integration as a method of addressing the area's growing problems.¹ In 1948 state voters had approved a constitutional amendment permitting city-county consolidation for counties of over 300,000

population, but before any such consolidation could occur, the state legislature had to approve enabling legislation required to place consolidation measures on local ballots.² Two attempts to secure enabling legislation for a Seattle-King County consolidation in 1949 and 1951 failed, primarily because the 1949 effort antagonized non-Seattle residents while the 1951 measure irritated Seattle residents (Municipal News, April 17, 1954).

Viewing city-county consolidation as an unfeasible approach for constructing a governmental unit capable of remedying the region's problems, Ellis then became involved in a local campaign to establish a county charter in 1952, which would allow the county to change from its three commissioner form of government to a legislative-executive government format and would give the county more independence in defining its own solutions to its growing problems. Again, the proposal failed at the polls.

Undaunted, Ellis became involved in the city's Municipal League and in 1953 gave his first speech on the crisis confronting metropolitan Seattle. The theme of his speech - as it would be for the next 25 years - was growth. Following the end of World War II, Seattle's metropolitan area had grown sharply in both size and population, and the provision of essential public services (e.g., water, sewers, public safety, transportation, etc.) had become increasingly more complex and

costly. While America's older cities had succumbed to growth pressures and begun to deteriorate, Seattle, according to Ellis (1955: 2), was ". . . a young city with a chance to lick its metropolitan problems before being swallowed up by them. It is axiomatic that if we are to do so, we must recognize the symptoms [of our problems] early and deal with them promptly and effectively."

Ellis' (1955: 3) solution to the area's problems reflected his previous interest in consolidation,

Today we find ourselves with a spreading area of population concentration governed by a hodgepodge of existing cities, towns, special districts and counties. The demands and needs for services in all portions of this great metropolitan concentration are not always the same, but their common problems are numerous and important. Efficient governmental machinery must be developed to cope with the great common problems confronting the area.

The basis for the development of "efficient governmental machinery" rested on a simple action that ". . . what is one city physically, socially and economically should be one city governmentally" (Ellis, 1955: 3). However, while Ellis supported a metropolitan government having a parallel metropolitan jurisdiction, he (Ellis, 1955: 3) also wished to preserve community self determination,

Local community spirit and a desire to control one's own environment are powerful forces for good government. The answers that we give to the problems confronting us should seek to give a measure of community self determination as well as produce efficient solutions for the most pressing area-wide problems.

Ellis proposed and systematically reviewed the following seven alternative governmental arrangements for solving Seattle's metropolitan problems:

1. A continuation of the present system (do nothing);
2. Direct annexation of substantially all of the metropolitan area by the City of Seattle;
3. Performance of metropolitan functions and services by the City of Seattle throughout the metropolitan area;
4. Creation of a series of metropolitan special districts to handle certain problems common to the metropolitan area;
5. Creation of a single metropolitan government (charged with handling only common problems within the area);
6. Consolidation of the city and county governments; and
7. Performance of a limited number of functions by combined city-county agencies.

While not recommending the adoption of any alternative, Ellis (1955: 9) suggested that,

It is . . . not possible to formulate a sound program without obtaining a representative sampling of the desires and needs of persons in the area. For this reason, I propose that a metropolitan advisory council be formed to prepare a plan for the unified government of the metropolitan area for presentation to the 1955 [state] Legislature.³

Ellis' council was formed in 1956 when Mayor Gordon Clinton and the County commissioners appointed a forty-eight member committee chaired by Ellis to prepare enabling legislation for the creation of a metropolitan government to deal with area-wide problems. The committee drafted legislation approved by the state legislature in 1957 that authorized the creation of metropolitan municipal corporations

which could perform any or all of six functions: sewage disposal, transportation, comprehensive planning, park administration, water supply, and garbage disposal. Voter approval was required before a municipal corporation could be established.

In March, 1958, a proposal was placed on the ballot to establish a "Metro" with three of these functions: sewage disposal, the development of a rapid transit system, and the establishment of area-wide planning. Metro would be governed by a council of fifteen members, eight from Seattle and seven from the suburbs. The measure, which required majority approval in both Seattle and the suburbs, failed to gain approval by voters outside of Seattle again primarily because they distrusted their larger neighbor, Seattle, and preferred local control (Sale, 1976: 198-199; Metro, 1970: 7).

Ellis and his committee went back to work and developed a revised measure for submission to the voters. Because the water quality of Lake Washington was declining rapidly, transportation problems could be solved more cheaply by more freeways than a rapid transit system, the tax burden of a tri-functional Metro would be high, and distrust for planning existed among county voters, the committee decided only to place the sewer measure on the ballot and to exclude communities in south King County between Seattle and Tacoma from the measure. Although a handful of opponents rebuked the

ballot measure because they believed it would increase socialism in government, all public officials supported the measure, and in September, 1958, Metro was approved with an even larger majority in the suburbs than in Seattle (Sale, 1976: 200).

The success of the measure was due in part to a large citizen campaign effort. A speaker's bureau scheduled more than 300 local meetings on the issue within a six week period. Both major political parties endorsed the measure. The Municipal League and League of Women Voters supported the measure and supplied campaign help, and altogether over 200 civic organizations supported the measure. Further, just prior to the vote, 5,000 citizens volunteered for a "Metro March" to ring doorbells and deliver pamphlets in support of the measure. Thus, Metro represented a citizen-created, voter-approved metropolitan government initiated by Ellis and his citizen committee with the single function of sewage disposal and pollution (Metro, 1970).

In conclusion, the 1950s were characterized by three precedents that would significantly affect King County's future. First, Jim Ellis established himself as an important leader in the Seattle metropolitan community. Without holding a public office, Ellis provided the leadership which directed a citizen committee effort that systematically identified, analyzed, and developed solutions for the region's most

pressing growth problems.⁴ Second, citizen activism emerged as an effective mechanism for analyzing and solving important regional problems. Third, a regional perspective emerged for solving the area's problems.

During this time, community leaders did not define the development of open space and/or agricultural land as an important issue; Ellis, for example, believed that zoning, the land use regulation technique used throughout King County at the time, was capable of protecting open space from development (Ellis, 1979). Further, because most of the property owners in the Green River Valley supported zoning, few incentives existed to develop alternative methods of controlling land use. In short, so long as public perception and support for farmland and open space preservation was weak, the loss of agricultural land could never become an important problem requiring resolution. Thus, more substantial losses of agricultural land would have to occur before it could become defined as a critical problem requiring immediate attention.

Forward Thrust

Although the single-purpose Metro resolved a critical problem, most of the region's problems articulated by Ellis during the 1950s remained to be solved. As already noted, the region's population had continued to grow, fed largely by a growing aircraft industry. Two new freeways, the second Lake

Washington floating bridge and the I-5 freeway in 1963 and 1965, respectively, had encouraged decentralization and suburban growth. Community growth and service delivery remained on an incremental and uncoordinated basis. Metro performed a limited function (sewage disposal); King County's commissioner form of government focused primarily on the needs of unincorporated areas of the county; municipal governments were responsive to needs in their respective jurisdictions; and no institutionalized mechanism existed for addressing the metropolitan area's problems on a comprehensive basis.

As population growth continued and the area's needs steadily increased in the 1960s, a renewal of the 1950s citizen activism emerged as a means of analyzing and developing solutions to the area's problems. Since the defeat of the rapid rail transit bond issue in the 1950s, Jim Ellis had been searching for a second opportunity to establish a metropolitan transit system. Further, Ellis was also becoming increasingly disillusioned with zoning as a method of preserving open space. Witnessing the gradual loss of farmland and other open space territory throughout the region, Ellis realized that the economics associated with the development of open space land over-powered zoning as an instrument for preserving it. Unless the trend could be halted, urban sprawl would soon overtake the Puget Sound basin, and he believed the quality of life for local residents would decline seriously. Therefore, Ellis

became convinced that a massive plan for public acquisition of open space - along with other county-wide capital improvements - was needed to break-up future urban sprawl (Ellis, 1979).

Ellis launched his new ideas in a speech delivered to the Seattle Rotary Club in 1965. His themes were strikingly similar to the themes of the Metro campaign: King County's population would grow by 750,000 by 1985, and a major capital improvement drive was needed to accommodate the needs of the region's future metropolis. His campaign, which he called Forward Thrust, recruited several hundred citizens from throughout the county, each pledging to devote five hours per week to Forward Thrust work. The citizens were divided into committees, each committee having a specific capital improvement topic (e.g., open space, mass transit, etc.). The goal of each committee was to formulate a set of recommendations for capital improvement expenditures. In 1966, the Open Space Committee recommended,

. . . the acquisition of a multi-purpose green belt of 70,000 acres forming an arc between Tacoma and Everett, several miles wide . . . The bulk of the land within the green belt would remain in private ownership, with the public acquiring development rights or conservation easements. The green belt would preserve the agricultural use of the farmland within it. The green belt was estimated to cost \$105 million, with 3/4 of the 70,000 acres being purchased at \$2,000 per acre by outright purchase and leaseback, or purchase of easements (52,500 acres). (Lundin, 1976: Part I, 12-13)

However, the Committee's recommendations were not accepted by

Forward Thrust members because of ". . . the high cost of the program, compared to the limited resources available, and a perceived greater public interest in more practical, less visionary proposals" (Lundin, 1976: Part I, 13). Later that year, Forward Thrust released its metropolitan capital improvement plan, which called for over \$600 million in expenditures for a rapid rail transit system (\$358 million), open space, highways, a domed stadium, and other services.

However, just before the election in February 1968, the local economy began to decline because of shrinking Boeing airplane sales. The region's population projections were revised downwards, which reduced the area's needs for capital improvements. Consequently, some of the bond measures were reduced in size, although none were removed from the ballot. After receiving an almost unanimous endorsement from all sectors of King County, voters approved \$333.9 million in bond issues for parks, highways, sewers, and a domed stadium. Thus, while rail transit had lost, over \$100 million was approved for parks-open space acquisition and development.⁵

The creators of Forward Thrust had originally intended that a substantial portion of the parks and open space bond money be allocated to purchase open space land in valleys and on hillsides to separate urban development. However, most of the Forward Thrust parks and open space bond money was used to acquire small parks or open space land over a number of years

within the county's numerous local governments, leaving the county's farmlands largely unprotected from future development.

Conclusion

While Metro and Forward Thrust were widely praised by most county residents, neither was aimed primarily at preserving farmland, and naturally each failed to reduce farmland development. In the 1958 Metro election, county voters failed to grant the institution metropolitan land use planning authority, which could have played a critical role in preventing agricultural land from being developed and may have mitigated the current need for stricter land use controls for preserving farmland. The appropriation of Forward Thrust funds for large, open space farmlands instead of community parks could have reduced the current need for agricultural land preservation. Because land was significantly less expensive in King County in the late 1960s than during the late 1970s, more land could have been preserved as open space than a decade later, assuming similar levels of funding.

Despite the outcomes regarding farmland preservation, Forward Thrust reaffirmed the precedent established by Metro a decade earlier: local citizen activism is a feasible and appropriate approach for analyzing regional problems and needs, formulating solutions that resolve them, and obtaining county-wide support for their implementation. While the Metro

and Forward Thrust citizen planning processes culminated in a number of proposals, King County voters were more likely to approve those measures having immediate benefits than those which postponed benefits into the distant future (Sale, 1976: 232).

However, citizen activism becomes an appropriate mechanism for resolving local problems only when leadership is present to coordinate its participants toward accomplishing some purpose. Both Metro and Forward Thrust were addressed to county-wide, metropolitan problems that impacted sundry municipalities, special districts, and other organizations and interest groups in the area. By gathering representatives from these groups into citizen committees, Ellis, with the cooperation and sanction of local government, created a public forum - or citizen planning process - for analyzing metropolitan problems, coordinating the diverse interests in the committee, and creating solutions which virtually all members of the committee could support. Because coordination is both a means of gaining influence and, once achieved, of influencing the outcomes of social action (H. Kaufman, 1977), Ellis acquired local influence through his successful "coordinator-leader" role in Metro and Forward Thrust, which in turn increased his influence, or power, in formulating solutions acceptable to most committee members. In short, Ellis became a powerful metropolitan leader in King County through his success in

developing solutions to perceived urban problems that were acceptable to most jurisdictions and interest groups. Based on Ellis' leadership history, his support of a farmland preservation program appeared necessary if King County residents were to halt the development of agricultural land, and he became a key local figure to watch in the County's efforts to save farmland.

Reviewing events in this part, fueled by a changing economy, the construction of Howard Hansen Dam and population growth following World War II, the demand for flat, agricultural land increased sharply, and King County's supply of farmland declined from 165,635 acres in 1945 to 55,513 acres in 1974. Although the efforts of local government and the public to halt the loss of farmland during this period were unsuccessful, other events fundamental for developing a farmlands retention program in the future occurred. First, reasons - in the form of county-wide land use policies - for preserving farmland were formally adopted by King County in its 1964 Comprehensive Plan, and programs to implement these policies could be created at any time during the plan's tenure. Thus, the 1964 Comprehensive Plan's open space policies represented a crucial, necessary first step toward establishing a farmland preservation program.

Second, Jim Ellis' leadership and an active citizenry, created in the 1950s through the Metro ballot measure and

rekindled in the 1960s by Forward Thrust, became virtual "metropolitan institutions" in resolving problems that transcended the boundaries of King County's numerous local governments. Because the loss of farmlands was defined as a county-wide problem by the 1964 Comprehensive Plan, its solution must also be county-wide, and based on history, it appeared Ellis could play an important leadership role in resolving it.

Third, although Mercer Island's bond issues failed, they established a local precedent for using voter-approved bonds as a means of preserving open space land, a precedent which could encourage its usage in a farmlands retention program.

Fourth, the Pike Place Market ballot measure increased voter awareness about local agriculture and popularized the idea of preserving this element of King County's agricultural industry. Voter captivation with local agriculture could be crucial in developing support for a future farmlands retention program, especially if such a program requires voter approval.

In short, a balanced, critically important historical formulation for building a future farmlands retention program was in place by the early 1970s. In the next section King County's agricultural land retention policy and program development process that culminated in a voter-approved \$50 million PDR program is described.

Chapter 5 - Chapter Notes

¹Ellis noted with alarm that members of city and county governments, which were located in the same building in 1950, rarely even talked to each other.

²M. B. Mitchell, Seattle city councilman, initiated and directed the campaign for the amendment (Municipal News, April 17, 1954).

³Enabling legislation for a metropolitan government was required before such a reorganization could take place.

⁴Although Ellis was a member of one of Seattle's two law firms capable of selling local government bonds, his dedication discounted public suspicion of a conflict of interest between his occupation and his activity in local issues. See the Seattle Times, February 10, 1980, for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

⁵Ellis tried to obtain voter approval for a rail transit system in a resubmitted Forward Thrust package in 1970, but it also failed because of the Boeing recession, the declining economy, and the out-migration of county residents (Sale, 1976: 229).

**PART III: KING COUNTY'S FARMLAND RETENTION
POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

CHAPTER 6

Old Policies: Preserving Farmland Through a Current Use Tax Program and Zoning

Between the adoption of the 1964 Comprehensive Plan and the end of the decade, little was done to preserve farmlands. In 1967 King County's Board of Commissioners adopted a ten year program for open-space acquisition (K. C. Resolution 33165), but the focus of the resolution was recreational open space (parks and facilities), intentionally excluding ". . . those portions of corridors of open space (so-called greenbelts) which will be controlled primarily through purchase of development rights, subdivision control, zoning, or tax policy." While the resolution was the first King County document sanctioning the possible use of PDR as a method of open space, or farmland, acquisition, the resolution had no impact on agricultural land retention in King County.

Despite these superficial efforts to preserve agricultural land during this period, King County government was changing in a manner that would have lasting impacts on agricultural land preservation. Although Ellis' attempt to establish a home rule charter in County government failed in the early 1950s, local interest was growing to reorganize county government to meet the new demands of the county's growing, urban-oriented population. In November, 1967, during

the Forward Thrust era King County voters elected fifteen freeholders to develop a Home Rule Charter under the authority of the twenty-first amendment of the State's constitution.¹ In 1968, King County voters approved a charter that replaced the three county commissioners with a county executive-council form of government, similar to the "strong mayor," mayor-council form of government in cities. An elected executive controls all of the County's administrative departments and is responsible directly to the people for his or her performance, while the council's primary functions are policy development and enacting laws through the passage of ordinances.² Because county citizens or their elected council representatives may propose and implement local solutions to local problems, home rule can be more responsive to local needs and problems than the three commissioner form of county government. Theoretically, under home rule, open space and agricultural preservation issues and policies could be more systematically and comprehensively addressed than ever before within County government (Board of King County Freeholders, 1969; King County, 1976a, 1978).

The first County Executive elected in 1969 was John Spellman, a former county commissioner, who served as the County's only executive throughout the period covered by this study. The County Council consisted of nine members representing citizens in nine county districts. Of the nine

council members elected in 1969, Bill Reams, Tracy Owen, Bob Dunn, and Bernice Stern retained their positions throughout the next decade, and the latter became the Council's leading advocate of farmland preservation.

The Council's first substantive farmland retention legislation was enacted two years later when it authorized local implementation of the Washington Current Use Program (King County Ordinance 1076, December 29, 1971).³ Under this program, agricultural land may be assessed and taxed at its current agricultural use rather than its highest and best use, significantly reducing the farmer's tax burden. However, farmers who apply for the program must sign a contract with the local government (i.e., King County) to maintain their land in its current use for at least ten years. If a farmer withdraws from the program before the ten-year period is over, he or she must pay a deferred tax equal to the difference between open space assessment and the highest and best use assessment, plus interest, plus a penalty amounting to 20% of the deferred tax. Because of the program's strong penalty clauses and the perceived uncertain future of agriculture in King County by local farmers, only a handful of King County farmers have enrolled in the program. Lundin (1976, Part II: 134-135) reports that the program has been unsuccessful in preserving open space and agricultural land both in King County and throughout the state.

In a second effort to preserve agricultural land from development, on January 10, 1972, the Council adopted policies designating farmlands as an important category of open space in King County. Specifically, the Council decreed that (Ordinance 1096),

(F)armlands must be included in the open space system because they provide products for consumption; serve as buffers between urbanizing areas; and provide beautiful and natural scenery. These land areas will be lost to industrial development, subdivision, and to highway development unless they are included in the system . . .

Class II and Class III soils having agricultural potential and other classified or unclassified land presently being farmed shall be reserved [in the open space system] for current and anticipated needs.

This 1972 farmland policy amended the open space policies established earlier in the 1964 Comprehensive Plan and represented the first public statement of Council intent to save farmlands.⁶

The County's open space and farmland policies were further strengthened by recommendations developed by the newly created Environment Development Commission (EDC). With the new Council-Executive form of government installed in the King County Courthouse in downtown Seattle, one of the first orders of government was the creation of a new planning process that would overcome the shortcomings of its Planning Department-Planning Commissioner organizational structure and maintain the county's environment and quality of life. A key

element of the reorganization was the creation of new techniques and procedures for citizen involvement in planning. In June, 1969, the County Executive and the Council created a task force to define a formal mechanism for obtaining citizen recommendations during the formative stages of the County's planning, budgeting and programming processes. On the basis of the task force's recommendations, an Environmental Development Commission, consisting of 194 volunteer citizens, was created in 1969 to assist and advise the Council in planning and policy development (King County, 1978a).⁷

In November, 1972, the Council instructed the EDC to develop more specific County open space policies concerning agricultural land preservation. In March, 1973, the EDC produced a special report on agricultural lands as open space. Following a brief review and analysis of the declining trend of agriculture in King County, the EDC reconfirmed the farmland preservation policies in the 1972 Amendment to the 1964 Comprehensive Plan and recommended agricultural zoning as the chief method of preserving farmland. The EDC also recommended that the Council ". . . investigate purchase-leaseback, acquisition of development rights, and other means for preserving agricultural lands in open space . . ." (King County, 1973: 20). The EDC report represented the first official County document to recommend a method of land use

regulation to accomplish the County's farmland preservation policies.

During the Fall of 1973, Bernice Stern's Community and Environmental Development Committee proposed an ordinance to adopt the EDC's recommendations as official County policy: all agricultural land parcels in the County at least 160 acres in size and having Class II and/or Class III soils would be preserved permanently as open space through agricultural zoning.⁸ Thus, while previous agricultural preservation ordinances had merely endorsed the concept of farmland preservation, the proposed ordinance, in its initial form, represented a permanent method of implementing agricultural land preservation. Further, by proposing a policy implementation methodology based on zoning, the ordinance also represented a regulatory means of protecting farmland from development that not only was locally ineffective but also did not compensate landowners for the loss of their rights to develop their own land.⁹

Public opposition was strong, dramatic and quick. In the most heated testimonies that the Council would receive throughout all of its public hearings on agriculture preservation, real/estate developer interests and the owners of land affected by the ordinance voiced their opposition to the measure. The Seattle, Bellevue and Kent Chambers of Commerce also opposed the ordinance, especially if it applied to the

Sammamish and Green River Valleys (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 6, 1973). Because the ordinance would also have a direct impact on the business community, the Board of Trustees of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce developed and submitted a formal resolution to the Council opposing the proposed ordinance. Recognizing that zoning regulations were normally applied in a flexible manner, the Chamber opposed the measure because,

1. participation in the open space program was not voluntary (unlike the State's current use tax laws);
2. it ignored the importance of economic development in the local community;
3. the economic impacts of the ordinance were not analyzed;
4. agricultural zoning cannot preserve agriculture (farming must be an economically viable enterprise for it to survive); and
5. the County lacked a large supply of flat land for business development.

Although the Chamber favored open space as a means of preserving and enhancing the environment, the Chamber strongly recommended that the Council reject the proposed ordinance and develop alternative proposals that economically benefit local

citizens (Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1973; Stern, 1978; Jones, 1979).

Faced with this opposition, the Council balked at applying the controls within the more populated farm areas of the County, replacing the original ordinance with a weaker version that limited the geographic scope of the EDC's agricultural policies. Scott Wallace, dairy farmer and former King County Commissioner, and Christine Foulks, Pike Place Market representative (but speaking in her own behalf), endorsed the compromise legislation, while real estate/developer and business groups opposed it. The Council proposed and subsequently (and unanimously) passed Ordinance 1839 in November, 1973, which implemented the EDC's agriculture-open space policies only in those county areas within or east of Range 6, a vertical band of land encompassing the Snoqualmie River. All of the agricultural river valleys in the developed areas of the county were exempt from the ordinance.¹⁰ The Council ordered that an environmental impact statement (EIS) concerning the effects of the proposed ordinance on the western, developed half of the county be performed by County planners (Ordinance 1839; Dearborn, 1978; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 6, 1973; Seattle Times, November 6, 1973).

In short, Council approval of Ordinance 1839 in its final version did not alter the County's existing open space

policies. The 1964 Comprehensive Plan, which had slated the Green River Valley for development, was still in effect.¹¹ In the Snoqualmie Valley and other outlying agricultural areas where development pressures were less intense, Ordinance 1839's mandatory agricultural zoning had virtually no impact.

By the fall of 1974, County planners had completed a draft of Ordinance 1839's promised EIS, which covered the entire county. The Puget Sound Land Use Committee of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, chaired by Robert Waller, conducted a formal review of the draft environmental impact statement's findings and found them deficient in a number of respects:¹²

1. Although the EIS was a review of alternative methods of preserving open space, such as outright purchase or PDR, the EIS authors had endorsed zoning as the proper method of preserving farmlands without recommending any plan to compensate landowners for loss of market value. Acquisition of land or PDR should be the implementation policy recommended by the EIS.
2. While County officials had stated in the EIS that reduced property values caused by mandatory zoning would likely result in individual or class action suits against the County, the EIS did not include the fiscal impact of these damage suits.

3. The EIS did not include crucial economic and supportive factors necessary to sustain agriculture's viability in the county.
4. Because Ordinance 1839 and the EIS did not include a method of preserving agricultural activity in western King County, the main intent of the ordinance was to create and preserve open space, not to create and preserve agricultural operations (as its sponsors claimed).
5. Although the County asserted that a surplus of industrial and commercial-zoned property existed, the EIS had no documentation to support this assertion.

In short, the Chamber had reiterated its earlier opposition to extending mandatory zoning into western King County, but its comments concerning the draft EIS had little impact on County government (Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1974).

By the spring of 1975, the final version of the EIS was ready for formal Council consideration, and a new ordinance proposal was drafted to extend the mandatory zoning policies of Ordinance 1839 into western King County. Before the two were presented before the full Council, the proposed ordinance was reviewed by two Council committees -- by the Planning and Community Development Committee, chaired by Bernice Stern, which had recommended that the Council implement the agricultural policies in western King County, and by the

Finance, Audit and Budget Committee, chaired by Tracy Owen, which had made no recommendations regarding the EIS and the ordinance's economic impacts. When the new ordinance was presented before the full Council for consideration, the business community was present to testify against the measure.

On May 5, 1975, Ralph James, a former King County dairy farmer, a current member of the Board of Directors of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce and head of agricultural considerations for the Puget Sound Land Use Committee of the Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce, spoke before the Council concerning the issue. James was a qualified spokesperson for the task. In 1946 he purchased a dilapidated, 240 acre dairy farm in the Sammamish Valley. Over the next fifteen years, James expanded the farm to 500 acres and transformed the run-down property into an award-winning, showcase dairy farm. However, in the early 1960s flood control measures were introduced into the valley (see Appendix A for further details) and land speculation and development soon followed. James' property taxes increased from \$1,200 to \$25,000 in one year. When the City of Redmond annexed James' land, he received an initial LID sewer assessment of \$66,000. Although he applied to the County for assistance and tax assessment relief, current use tax laws did not exist to reduce his tax burden, and he was forced to sell the farm in the mid 1960s.¹³ Following his failure to secure the County's help in reducing his taxes

(which he perceived as being the creation of government), he swore that a time would come when he would get even. When Ordinance 1839 was created, that time had come (Seattle Times, May 27, 1971; Bellevue American, December 11, 1975; James, 1979).

Representing both farming and business concerns, the primary message of James' (1975) presentation was that,

You cannot legislate agriculture in these Valleys by land use regulations and tax laws alone. The farming that you see is not economically viable, even though it is beautiful.

In other words, farming must be economically viable, or profitable, to survive as a local industry, and while agricultural zoning, as a method of land use regulation, may be validly used to preserve agricultural land, it cannot and should not be used to preserve the county's agriculture industry. According to James and the King County business community, the Council was confounding the two policy objectives and incorrectly implying that agricultural zoning could achieve both.

Further, James (1975) stated that the business community objected to,

. . . the process outlined in this ordinance of taking value from a few [farmers] by these unAmerican methods [permanent zoning] and giving benefits to the welfare of the general public.

Local business groups believed agricultural zoning would reduce the value of farmland from market to current use levels,

thereby depriving farmers of their land wealth without public compensation. Furthermore, they believed it also infringed on basic American values and law protecting the rights of private property owners.¹⁴ However, stating that ". . . (i)t is good environmental practice to preserve open space and we [the business community] support this" James (1975) repeated the Chamber's previous position supporting a public purchase of an open space land program that fairly distributes the cost of the purchase among the public.

As a direct result of James' testimony, the proposed ordinance and its EIS were referred back to committee for further study (Sammamish Valley News, June 11, 1975). James had thwarted the Council's attempts to retain farmlands through zoning and apparently avenged the earlier loss of his farm. Thus, in the summer of 1975, the Council had no meaningful implementation policies for preserving agricultural land. Further, the battle over Ordinance 1839 in 1974, the EIS and the proposed agricultural zoning ordinance in 1975 had polarized the council members into two, opposite factions: a minority who favored agriculture/open space preservation and a majority who opposed the concept.¹⁵ Because the two camps were strongly divided and the majority opposition controlled debate on the measure, discussion on the subject halted. Because the vast majority of King County residents were silent on the subject, council members had few incentives to develop a

consensus supporting agricultural land and/or agriculture industry preservation (Dearborn, 1978).¹⁶

Analysis and Conclusion

As King County's population continued to grow and decentralize during the 1960s and early 1970s, the county's supply of farmland dwindled, and a minority of King County Council members attempted to erect programs to reverse the trend. Their efforts to regulate county population growth and thereby save farmlands through a current use tax program and zoning may be assessed using growth management planning principles. As an urban planning technique, growth management is designed to control or influence the rate, amount or geographic pattern of growth within one or more local jurisdictions (Gleeson, 1975: iv). Growth is usually controlled or influenced through the construction and implementation of a growth management system, which may be defined as a bundle of land use techniques linked together in a complimentary manner to achieve specific planning objectives. Unlike traditional land use techniques which simply attempt to regulate population densities and assure compatible land uses, growth management systems employ highly innovative techniques designed to accomodate and guide growth into suitable areas. If properly constructed, growth management can be an appropriate method for directing suburban development and

preserving agricultural land. Article II, Section II of the Washington State Constitution authorizes local jurisdictions, such as municipalities and counties, to develop and implement land use regulations, including growth management systems.

Although a large number of growth management techniques for preserving agricultural land exist, most of the techniques fall into four categories, tax programs, zoning, direct support to farmers and the farming infrastructure, and public acquisition of land or interest in land.¹⁷ As described previously, the first category, tax programs such as King County's current use tax program, have not been effective in preserving agricultural land (Gray, 1975: 2; Lundin, 1976: Part II, 130). The tax incentives and/or penalties imposed by current use programs are small compared to the profits from selling farmland for development in urban fringe areas, and they do not deter either farmers or speculators from participating in current use programs and later converting their property to more intensive uses. Further, current use programs may encourage developers to skip over participating farms, thus increasing urban sprawl and the costs of providing public services to the growing urban-fringe population, and adversely affecting planning efforts. Current use programs also do not have an equitable distribution of program benefits. Program benefits are not based on need; the largest parcels of agricultural land receive the most benefits, while

low-income farmers on small tracts of land receive the least amount of benefits (Lundin, 1976: Part II, 126-127, 132-133).¹⁸

Zoning, the second growth management technique used by the Council to preserve agricultural land, cannot preserve farmland (Gray, 1975; Lundin, 1976; Toner, 1979). Toner (1979: 13) describes how zoning may be overcome in agricultural areas,

Local communities have learned that zoning is not enough to save farms and farmland. Exclusive agricultural zoning can be subverted by water and sewer extensions that make the zoning economically impossible. Likewise, if a community restricts the extension of water and sewers to agricultural areas but neglects to zone, private wells and septic systems can support thousands and thousands of two-to-ten-acre ranchettes or one- to two-acre subdivided lots.

In addition, where agricultural zones place restrictions on land use, agricultural landowners cannot recoup the full, assessed value of their land investment. Gray (1975: 4) writes:

Zoning is often controversial because of the restrictions it imposes on land use, ordinarily without compensation to the landowners. In some cases zoning may require that the land be maintained in one use when it would be financially advantageous to the owner to convert the land to some other use. Zoning land agricultural in an urbanizing area would be a case in point. The owner may financially gain by selling or using the land for urban development; but if the land must remain in farming, the owner is unable to capture the difference between the value for development and agriculture.

However, if a local jurisdiction's agricultural zoning regulations are "unreasonable," they may be illegal and be

overruled by local, state or federal courts. The power of local government to regulate land is limited by the legal standard of "reasonableness." All land regulations are held legally to be a public encroachment on an individual's private property rights. If a regulation causes a serious infringement of a landowner's property rights, the regulation may be defined by the courts as "unreasonable," and it must be removed.

A land use regulation may be defined as "reasonable" if four legal standards are satisfied (Gleeson, 1975). One of these standards, which is based on the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, requires government to pay just compensation to landowners for property which is taken for public use (Walsh, 1975: 9). While the Fifth Amendment does not require governments to pay compensation for the simple regulation of property, if the regulation significantly depreciates the value of the property, it will be defined as a "taking" and, therefore, unreasonable use of local government legal authority. Gleeson (1975: 64) states the general taking rule concerning land regulation:

The greater the reduction in value, the more likely the regulation will be considered a "taking"; conversely if the reduction in value is slight, the likelihood of a taking vastly diminishes.

On the basis of this legal consideration it would appear that the Council's plans to extend permanent agricultural zoning to all of King County would significantly depreciate farmland

values and probably would have been defined - had they been implemented successfully - as a "taking" by the courts and, therefore, illegal.

In addition to the legal constraints associated with using zoning to preserving agricultural land, other authors have posited reasons why the technique cannot preserve farmlands. Perin (1977: 148), Gleeson (1975: 39) and Chavooshian (1975: 115) state that zoning controls only the location of particular land uses; the timing, type and extent of development are still determined by developers and the land marketplace, elements which zoning does not address. Furthermore, Perin (1977: 149-153) argues that zoning actually encourages development by reducing the uncertainty and financial risk in the development of land. Practically all development experiences three areas of risk and uncertainty: interest rate risk (capital and labor are committed to one interest rate); business risk (the development may not be completed once initiated); and market risks (the market for the development will decline after construction is completed). For a developer and lending institution that provides the financial resources for development to realize a profit from an undertaking, the development must be successfully completed. If the risk and the uncertainty concerning a particular development is minimized, the development has a greater chance of being successfully completed. Before zoning was implemented, the

risk of development rested almost entirely on the developer and the lending institution. Without zoning two incompatible land uses could become located next to each other (as they still can), and widespread grievances requiring a legal settlement resulted. Each land-use nuisance case brought before the court was judged according to its own merits, and the courts used varying criteria in their decisions to resolve them. At great risk to the developer, a plaintiff could take a developer to court and deprive him/her of the right to continue the development without any compensation.

When zoning was implemented, these risks inherent in development were reduced, but not eliminated. Zoning regulations defined acceptable land uses throughout a jurisdiction, segregating incompatible ones, and the developer and lending institution adhering to them could expect a stable return from their investment unhampered by court challenges from current or future neighbors. That is, they could expect the costs of complying with the zoning to be less than the costs of a possible lawsuit without zoning. Thus, zoning became a form of risk-reduction that protects investments in real estate. Because zoning regulations constitute an important reduction in the risk and uncertainty associated with development, they are ". . . probably the single most significant incentive on behalf of development" (Perin, 1977: 152). Furthermore, because an inherent assumption of zoning is

that all land in private ownership is developable (Chavooshin, 1975: 115), zoning appears to be a technique incapable of protecting land from development when administered by a local government.

In conclusion, by the end of 1975 King County government had made little progress toward implementing an agricultural land retention program. Nonetheless, this period contributed significantly toward the evolution of such a program. Although a current use tax program was implemented, it was not effective in reversing the decline in farmland and, therefore, did not represent a solution to the locally perceived problem of farmland development. Zoning was an unacceptable land use technique for permanently saving farmland among a majority of Council members and a number of interest groups. Thus, only two alternative methods of perserving farmland, direct support to farmers and the farming infrastructure and the public acquisition of farmland or interest in farmland, remained as possible ways of preserving farmland in King County, and it should come as no surprise that the County and local citizens favoring farmland preservation will increasingly favor these remaining two techniques in future chapters.

Chapter 6 - Chapter Notes

¹Home rule is often interpreted as the power granted by the state to incorporated jurisdictions to exercise powers of local self-government, subject to the laws of the state (National Association of Counties and International City Management Association, 1978: 54). However, when home rule is authorized, the decision to develop, adopt, revise or repeal a home rule charter rests with the people of that local jurisdiction.

²In King County, all ordinances approved by the Council are entered into a two-volume set of laws called the King County Code.

³The Washington Current Use Program (R.C.W. 84.34) was approved by the State legislature in 1970.

⁴A more thorough discussion of how highest and best use tax assessments affect farmland is presented in Appendix A.

⁵Appendix B contains a brief description of these soil categories.

⁶If a conflict existed between the 1964 Plan and Ordinance 1096, the Ordinance's policies would prevail.

⁷The EDC replaced the Planning Commission. An early assignment of the EDC was to review the County's recently approved open space-current use taxation policies and to develop recommendations for an official King County policy concerning this issue. The EDC's subsequent endorsement of the State's current use taxation laws in November, 1971, later resulted in Council adoption of the taxation policy on a local level, as described previously.

⁸Other soil quality and parcel size criteria were also included in the proposed ordinance. If passed, the proposed ordinance would amend the 1964 Comprehensive Plan's open space policies for a second time.

⁹Under U.S. Constitutional law and the principles of growth management, the ordinance could be classified as a "taking" of private land by local government.

¹⁰Sources within County government, however, commented that creating different policies according to geographic area could be an unconstitutional practice.

¹¹On July 10, 1972, the Council changed the Upper Green River Valley zoning to agriculture (Ordinance 1285).

¹²Eleven comments were included in the original review, and its major points are summarized in the list.

¹³Some of the acreage was donated to King County for parks.

¹⁴Local farmers who knew James and who wished to express their opposition to the proposed ordinance also asked James to testify on their behalf. Thus, James' statements also reflected the views of some - but not necessarily all - county farmers.

¹⁵Although views differ, Stern, Heavey, and Reams were the primary supporters of agricultural preservation during this period.

¹⁶Dahl (1961) suggests that elected officials may endorse a measure, which they initially oppose, if they perceive strong voter support for it. Because such support was lacking for the proposed agricultural zoning ordinance, Council members who opposed it had few reasons to change their positions.

¹⁷I am indebted to Jerry Hillis, a Seattle land use attorney, for this classification scheme.

¹⁸Although most tax programs are based on current use valuation of farmland, alternative forms of taxation have been proposed. For example, in a study of farmland development in the Portland, Oregon area, Arpke (1942) concluded that the high tax assessments of farmland were the result of "socially-created land values" caused by an "expanding community." His solution to the high assessments was an

"increment tax," probably equal to the difference between the agricultural value and the market value of the land, which returned "socially-created" value of the farmland back to the public. Although Arpke argued that his increment tax was an equitable method of resolving the high assessment problem, few states have implemented the approach. One state, Vermont, has a tax program designed to penalize land speculation. If a transaction produces profits over 200% on land owned less than one year, a 60% tax is imposed. If the profit is less than 100%, the tax is 30%. The rate declines each year the land is held, and after six years no tax is imposed (Lundin, 1976: Part II, 139).

CHAPTER 7

New Policies and Moratoria for Preserving Farmlands

The Birth of Local Interest in Farmland Preservation: 1974-1976

While the State and the King County Council were attempting to save farmlands through the current use tax program and agricultural zoning, other local government bodies and citizen groups were becoming increasingly active in farmland preservation. The Puget Sound Council of Governments (PSCOG), the regional planning body for Snohomish, King, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties, was an early advocate for farmland preservation.¹ In 1965 the agency adopted a four-county Comprehensive Policies Plan, which contained an Open Space Element advocating agriculture preservation on a regional basis. Under policies contained within the Open Space Element and the Plan's Open Space Map, designated areas of Class I, II, and III soils were defined as agricultural open space preserves where urban development was largely prohibited. The plan relied on wide-spread "local Government commitment" to exclusive agricultural zoning to implement its agriculture-open space policies (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 2). However, because local jurisdictions were neither voluntarily committed nor legally required to follow the regional

agricultural land preservation policies, few local governments heeded its mandates, and the development of agricultural land continued on an incremental basis throughout the region encompassed by the plan.

For seven years following the adoption of PSCOG's comprehensive plan, local governments in King County largely ignored the Plan's farmland preservation policies. In 1972, however, PSCOG completed an Interim Regional Development Plan (IRDP), which addressed land use issues throughout the four county region. When PSCOG planners discovered that conflicts existed between certain elements of the IRDP and existing comprehensive plans of local governments within their jurisdiction, they began working with local governments to resolve them, and LeRoy Jones, a PSCOG planner, was assigned to a zoning conflict between the City of Auburn's Comprehensive Plan and the IRDP. The focus of the conflict was a segment of land that the Auburn Comprehensive Plan had slated for development but which the IRDP had placed in an agriculture-open space classification. Because the Auburn-IRDP conflict was representative of other similar conflicts throughout the four-county region, PSCOG classified agriculture-open space as a regional issue, and authorized an eighteen month study, coordinated by Jones, to gather ". . . more information on the status and requirements of agriculture as a requisite for re-evaluating existing (PSCOG) policies and

programs" (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 174: 2). The study culminated in a 1974 report that contained the following two startling conclusions concerning the status of regional agriculture in Pierce, King, Kitsap, and Snohomish Counties:

1. Regional agriculture is now operating at a level far below its potential capability as determined by the soil and climatic factors of this region. Current production could be increased by nearly 50% without additional intensification of existing operations by reinstating agricultural activity on presently unused prime agricultural land.
2. If agricultural activity was increased to a level commensurate with existing regional potential, regional production could supply all small fruit, vegetable, dairy, and poultry commodities in quantities roughly equivalent to the regional consumption of these commodities.

In short, while the future of agriculture was uncertain in King County, regionally based agriculture could become a strong industry if the region's unused agriculture land was actively farmed. The PSCOG study of regional agriculture provided important analytical support for the continuing efforts of PSCOG and other local governments to preserve agricultural land within their jurisdiction (Jones, 1979).

While PSCOG was studying regional agriculture, citizen groups were being organized throughout King County to oppose the development of farmland. In 1974 Metro, King County's sewage treatment and mass transportation agency, was planning to install a huge sewer line through the center of the Green River Valley. The sewer line, named the "Auburn Interceptor,"

was designed to accomodate the maximum amount of growth that could conceivably occur in the valley between 1974 and the year 2030 (The Weekly, April 21, 1976). The size of the Interceptor (the planned pipe diameter was 78 inches) was so large that Metro correspondence referred to the line as the "ultimate interceptor." Metro argued that the sewer line was a necessary capital improvement because it would clean up water pollution caused by widespread usage of septic tanks in the valley. The agency denied that construction of the Interceptor would cause significant future growth in the valley. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was providing 75% of the cost for planning and constructing the Interceptor (Wilson, 1979; The Weekly, April 26, 1976).

Whether or not sewer lines caused growth became - and still is - a hotly debated issue. Growth management and agricultural preservation advocates maintained that sewer lines encouraged development and population growth in the areas which they served (Wilson, 1979). However, according to Jim Ellis (1979), the founder of Metro, current evidence indicated that utilities were not causes of development, particularly in the Green River Valley. Before 1964, no metropolitan sewer lines existed in the valley. Each city in the valley had developed its own independent sewage system, each city also had water supplied from local wells, and in an effort to increase their tax bases, these cities encouraged business and industry to

develop in the valley.² When the Boeing Company constructed its plant in the valley during the 1950s, it also built its own water system and sewage lagoon. The Green River Valley cities did not become a part of Metro until after 1968. Thus, according to Ellis and other Metro proponents, sewer lines were not a cause of growth. If development was encouraged by a local community, alternative methods of providing utility services existed, and growth would be the inevitable result.

Nevertheless, Green River Valley cities welcomed the Interceptor, for they believed it would increase their development potential and tax bases (Wilson, 1979: 8). However, a small group of environmentalists led by Seattle businessman Thomas Wimmer and environmental attorney Marvin Durning organized a campaign to halt the project. Wimmer's group attacked Metro's plans and the EPA's claim that the Auburn Interceptor would cause insignificant environmental effects, threatening the EPA with a lawsuit. Feeling the group's pressure, the EPA agreed to write an EIS on the Interceptor and to ask Metro to reduce the sewer line's pipe size from 78 to 72 inches.

Just when the anti-Interceptor advocates were beginning to have an impact on the proceedings, Wimmer's group ran out of funds, and the environmentalists decided not to follow through with a legal challenge to the project. With its opposition

depleted of financial resources, Metro and the EPA were able to proceed with the project (Wilson, 1979).³

While Wimmer's group was causing unrest in the Green River Valley, two citizen groups were organizing in the Sammamish Valley to oppose the development of Domenice Vitulli's 141-acre farm in the North Creek Valley (which is adjacent to the Sammamish) in east Bothell. The encroachment of urbanization around his property had made farming more and more difficult. His farm was bordered by two freeways (Interstate 405 at the Bothell Interchange and State 522); all public utilities were available on his property; his land suffered from drainage problems; and his taxes had skyrocketed. Vitulli decided to sell his farm to Centennial Regional Center Associates, who planned to construct a large-scale shopping center on the site. In 1973 Vitulli applied to the City of Bothell for a change in the zoning of his property from agriculture to commercial development.⁴

However, many Bothell residents were alarmed over the planned shopping center and the Planning Commission's decision. Four other farms had property adjacent to the Vitulli farm, and residents felt that if the Vitulli farm was developed, the other four farms would soon follow. If the Vitulli farm and the four adjacent farms were rezoned, over 500 acres would be slated for development. Many residents felt that the change would damage their environment.

Before the rezoning's final hearing before the City Council, a city-wide advisory vote on the rezoning was conducted on February 11, 1975. The outcome was 677 to 672 in favor of the rezoning. On February 18, 1975, the City Council approved the rezoning by a 4-3 vote. Following the decision, on March 18, 1975, Bothell citizens presented the City Council members with a petition containing over 725 signatures (25% of the city's registered voters), requesting that a referendum election be held permitting Bothell residents to choose between the two land-use plans (farm vs. shopping center).

The City Council rejected the petition. A group of 51 citizens then filed a lawsuit against the City of Bothell, contending that a 1973 state law and a Bothell ordinance passed in December, 1974, permitted the residents of Bothell to vote on issues such as the rezoning. On June 14, 1975, the case was heard and dismissed in King County Superior Court, which stated that the City had the authority to rezone. The citizen group appealed the case to the State Court of Appeals (Seattle Times, January 18, 1976; SAVE, no date).

While the above proceedings were occurring, another group called Save A Valuable Environment (SAVE) was organizing to halt the City rezoning. In March, 1975, SAVE filed a lawsuit against the City of Bothell, contending that the City had practiced spot zoning and violated the Open Public Meeting Act and appearance-of-fairness doctrines. Unlike the previous

group, the focus of the SAVE lawsuit was the process which the City of Bothell used to reach its decision (rather than the decision itself). SAVE's lawsuit was scheduled to appear before the courts in June, 1976 (SAVE, no date).

By challenging the City of Bothell in court, the two citizen organizations had caused a considerable amount of public attention. In April, 1975, Dick Young of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer wrote,

(t)he old Vitulli farm on the outskirts of Bothell, currently the most controversial piece of agricultural land in western Washington, [is] where a massive regional shopping center may be constructed on 141 acres of King County's finest farm soil . . . You'd be surprised how many people are looking at Bothell rightnow. And you'd be surprised how much impact that town can have on the shape of Puget Sound in the future. They have the power right now to . . . set trends that will affect us all for years to come.

The debate surrounding the Vitulli farm was resolved in the summer of 1976. In the SAVE lawsuit, the Superior Court ruled that the City of Bothell had spot-zoned the land and violated the state appearance-of-fairness doctrine when it approved the project. A month later the Centennial Regional Center Associates dropped its plans to acquire the site. In addition to the high costs of an appeal, the developers also gave two other reasons for dropping the proposal (Seattle Times, July 21, 1976). First, recent soil tests indicated that the land was unsuitable for development unless large amounts of peat soil were removed and replaced by fill. Second, the

developers had already spent \$250,000 in option payments at a rate of \$4,000 per month, and the total payments would continue to increase after the SAVE lawsuit. In short, citizen activism as well as extensive site preparation costs had saved Bothell farmland from being developed.

While the Vitulli farm controversy developed a significant amount of public attention concerning farmland preservation, perhaps the greatest impacts were being created in the Green River Valley by a group of King County citizens named PLAN (Preserve Land for Agriculture Now). PLAN was organized in November, 1974, patterned after a similar organization in Pierce County, and was co-founded by Christine Foulks and Ann Mack, primarily because no single-purpose organization existed in King County for preserving agricultural land (Kent News-Journal, November 22, 1974).⁵ Its members consisted chiefly of the same persons who just three years ago had fought to preserve the Pike Place Market. They had already witnessed the decline of the Market and knew that it was related to the decline of farming in the County. The organization, which would support any program that could preserve farmland effectively, was committed to stopping the current decline in farmlands (Vernon, 1979; Mack, 1979).

PLAN originally attempted to halt the decline of King County agricultural land through an educational approach. The group's first major project was the production and public

distribution of a map showing the location of in Puget Sound farms where consumers could purchase fresh produce directly from the farmer.⁶ Because no government agency had records on the location of farms in the region, PLAN had to perform a parcel-by-parcel, physical inventory of the region's farmlands to locate all of the region's produce farms. Their map represented the first comprehensive inventory of King County produce farms and became an annual publication of the group (Mack, 1979; PLAN, 1978).⁷

However, while the group's map had performed an important educational function, it had little impact on preserving farmlands, and PLAN members felt that they had to become active politically to reduce or halt the conversion of agricultural land in the future. Realizing that the organization had little political clout to realize its objectives, PLAN decided to contest farmland rezones to more developed uses as its new strategy for stopping the steady decline in farmlands. After King County's Charter was adopted in 1969, reclassification of property, or rezoning, became the function of a zoning and subdivision examiner. The examiner was responsible for conducting public hearings on all rezone requests in unincorporated King County and rendering a decision to approve or deny each rezone requested. If the examiner's decision was contested by the rezone applicant or an aggrieved party, it could be appealed to the Council for further review and

consideration. From 1969 to 1979 King County had only one zoning examiner, Bruce Laing. It was PLAN's purpose to intervene in the rezone process and argue for decisions favoring farmland preservation at both the zoning examiner and Council levels of government.

On April 2, 1975, William Miskell petitioned the County to rezone his 21 acre farm in the Lower Green River Valley from A (agriculture) to G (general), which would permit certain forms of development. Laing conducted a hearing of Miskell's rezone petition the following June. As in all hearings, the examiner is mandated by law to enforce the policies of the 1964 Comprehensive Plan and other land use policies approved by the Council. Because the Council had not extended Ordinance 1839's mandatory agriculture zone classification into the Green River Valley, the Comprehensive Plan's open space policies, which encouraged development in the Green River Valley, still applied to the Miskell property and Laing (King County Building and Land Development File No. 232-75-R:11) was forced to conclude that,

The Council's actions indicate that the preservation of agricultural lands shall not be considered as a factor in the review of proposals for the reclassification of property in Range 5 and west [i.e., the Green River Valley] until such time as the Council applies agricultural preservation policies to that area.

The examiner approved the rezone.

PLAN members felt that if nobody opposed the Miskell rezone, the Council would have no reason for denying it and would be "forced" to endorse the examiner's decision (Mack, 1979). In their first political confrontation, Christine Foulks and Ann Mack strongly protested the rezone before the Council. However, the Council ignored the group's arguments and approved the rezone (Ordinance 3237). Nonetheless, although PLAN's first appearance before the Council ended in failure, the group accomplished an important, indirect objective: they had informed the Council of their existence and strong commitment to preserving agricultural land.

PLAN's second rezone bout occurred four months later on October 28, 1975. Joseph Gunter, a Green River Valley farmer, applied for a rezone of his property from the existing zones, A (Agriculture) and SE (Suburban Estates), to M-L (Light Manufacturing) to allow the warehousing of construction equipment by the firm M.A. Segale Incorporated. Because a number of similar rezones were scheduled to appear before the examiner in the near future, the Gunter rezone became a highly important and strategically critical case. PLAN members felt that if the Gunter rezone could be stopped, a precedent would exist for denying similar, future rezone requests in the valley.

In a case that would last seven months, Joseph Gunter was represented by Jerry Hillis, one of Seattle's most prominent

land use attorneys. Mack, Foulks, and Ken Vernon, an attorney, represented PLAN in opposition to the rezone. They were joined by Dr. William Freeman, a representative of the Washington State Environmental Council, which also supported a recommendation to deny the rezone. On January 13, 1976, Robert Eveleigh, Deputy Zoning Examiner, denied the application.

The applicants immediately appealed the decision to the Council. PLAN was present again to prevent the examiner's decision from being overturned in the Council. After hearing arguments from all parties, the Council approved the rezone, subject to a number of conditions established by the Council (Motion 2439; Mack, 1979; Vernon, 1979).

Thus, PLAN's two initial efforts to prevent rezones of agricultural land in the Green River Valley had failed. However, unlike its predecessors, the Auburn Interceptor and SAVE, PLAN had attracted public attention to the agriculture preservation issue and, even more importantly, had demonstrated to the Council that strong support existed for the preservation of agricultural land threatened by development. PLAN had brought the issue into the Council Chamber itself. Television and newspaper coverage of the rezones, particularly the Gunter rezone, also developed public awareness of the issues. After the Miskell and Gunter rezones, PLAN continued its political activity in land use decisions, testifying in opposition to any rezones or annexation that could have a negative impact on

farmlands as well as notifying other groups of these hearings.

While PLAN, SAVE and Wimmer's group were opposing rezones and capital improvement projects which they perceived as threatening to local agriculture, Jim Ellis was also becoming an activist for agriculture and open space preservation. From 1970 to 1974, Ellis served on a national commission studying water usage across America. Because farms are among the biggest users of water, his attention soon became focused on urban farmlands. He became convinced that most farmlands surrounding urban areas would be lost to development unless deliberate, public intervention occurred. Speaking before such groups as the Municipal League, the local Phi Beta Kappa Chapter, the League of Women Voters and the Chamber of Commerce, Ellis argued that open space and farmland preservation cannot be achieved through zoning. Public purchase of land was the only long-lasting method of preserving farmland. In a 1975 speech before the League of Women Voters, Ellis advocated the preservation of farmland through land banking: farms would be acquired through public funds and leased back to the farmers. According to Ellis, public acquisition was a fair method of preserving farmland, for, unlike zoning, it equally distributed the economic burden of preserving farmlands among all residents. In Ellis' mind, the two issues of farmland preservation and open space acquisition were inseparable; the preservation of farmlands would also

produce significant amounts of functional open space throughout the County (Ellis, 1979; Daily Journal of Commerce, April 29, 1975).

However, unlike the Metro and Forward Thrust capital improvement campaigns, Ellis' support of farmland preservation did not result in a formally constituted organization having the publicly acknowledged task of developing an open space/farmland preservation package. Ellis conducted a one-man campaign to promote his proposals, hoping that other groups would respond and translate them into a specific farmland/open space preservation program. The response which Ellis envisioned never materialized, and as a result, his initial activity concerning the issue had little public impact.

The 1976 Moratorium on Farmland Development

While citizen activism supporting agriculture preservation was occurring throughout King County, a number of important changes were also occurring within the Council. When the Charter was adopted in 1969, broad policy-making powers were granted to the legislative, or Council, branch of government. However, since the Charter's adoption, most policies had originated within the Executive branch, and the Council had assumed a virtually automatic "review-and-endorse" role in County government. The Council wanted to change the existing "rubber stamp" relationship between the legislative and

executive branches and become the true creator of County policy, and, as a first step in July, 1974, the Council hired Keith Dearborn, a planner who was a member of PSCOG's regional agriculture study team, and who was completing a law degree program, to create a policy development role within the Council. Initially assigned to a diverse set of County policy issues, Dearborn later became involved in agriculture preservation issues just as the Council was considering an extension of Ordinance 1839's mandatory zoning into west King County (Dearborn, 1978). In April, 1975, he was joined by Susan Allen, a member of the County's Budget and Program Development Department, who wished to become more active in County growth management issues (Allen, 1978). Changes were also occurring on the Council itself. Paul Bardon and Ruby Chow, representing District 7 and District 5 respectively, were elected to the Council in 1974, replacing John O'Brien and Ed Munro. Bardon and Chow were conservatives politically, advocated minimal government involvement in land use issues, and were not strong advocates of agricultural preservation.

Following Ralph James' critique of the County's proposal to extend permanent agriculture zoning into west King County in May, 1975, the proposed ordinance was referred back to committee. Although the County had performed an EIS concerning the possible effects of the ordinance on west King County, Dearborn and Allen, as new arrivals in the County Council

staff, felt that the study was poorly done and could not be used as a basis for decisionmaking on this issue. If the proposed ordinance was referred back to the Council for final consideration, they thought that it would never pass, and because only three council members strongly supported agriculture preservation (Stern, Reams and Heavey), the entire agriculture issue might never appear before the Council again. Therefore, they developed a political strategy that would allow the proposed controversial ordinance to die in committee but also would retain agriculture preservation as an important issue within the Council. Acknowledging that the EIS was inadequate, they were able to convince the Council that agriculture preservation was a complex issue that could not be adequately addressed within a single EIS designed for a specific ordinance. The issue required further study. Their arguments convinced the Council to postpone further consideration of the proposed ordinance and to authorize further studies of how to preserve agriculture (Dearborn, 1978; Allen, 1978).

During the remaining six months of 1975, five events occurred that had an important impact on the Council. First, in November, 1974, the responsibilities of the citizen Environmental Development Commission were expanded to include policy development in the areas of transportation, utilities, public facilities, recreation, housing and community

development, conservation, human services, capital improvements, as well as land use (King County, 1978a). It also assumed a new name, the Policy Development Commission (PDC). In October, 1975, the PDC released a report by the Ad Hoc Growth and Quality of Life Committee which reconfirmed the County's existing policies concerning open space and farmland preservation and also endorsed growth management as an approach to implement them. Further, the report included the results of a county-wide poll in which 88% of the respondents favored protecting agricultural land and environmentally critical areas from development. The findings of the PDC report maintained Council interest in agricultural issues and also provided support for the Council's decision to continue studying alternative methods of preserving farmland.

Second, in 1974, the State Office of Program Planning and Fiscal Management, under the authorization of Governor Daniel Evans, initiated a program called Alternatives of Washington to enable citizens to participate more effectively in long range decision-making regarding Washington's future growth and development. During the summer of 1974, Stern, Dearborn, and Reams participated in a series of regional seminars to develop alternative goals and policies for the State. Stern was assigned to an agriculture task force, where she first learned about the loss of farmland occurring in urban areas of the State. The trio returned to the County Council as a coalition

of advocates for local farmland preservation. The coalition maintained the political momentum of agricultural land preservation in the Council during the last six months of 1975 (Dearborn, 1978; Stern, 1978; State of Washington, 1976).

Third, in September, 1975, Susan Allen visited Suffolk County, New York, to review their PDR program for preserving local farmlands. Her report to the Council about her visit had a strong, positive influence on several council members. The success of the Suffolk County PDR program suggested that the PDR concept was a workable scheme of preserving agricultural land that might also be appropriate for King County. Within the Council, PDR emerged as both a feasible and effective alternative way of preserving County farmland (Allen, 1978; Dearborn, 1978).

Fourth, Council farmland preservation advocates realized that no adequate land use policies existed in the County to guide decisionmaking in agricultural rezone hearings. Because no guidelines existed, strong justifications for denying an agricultural rezone application did not exist. Therefore, under existing land use policies, the County was practically powerless to halt the loss of farmland through the zoning examiner process. The coalition realized that either new policies or alternative land use methods of preserving farmland were needed to preserve agricultural land in the future (Dearborn, 1978).

Fifth, as described in the previous section, PLAN was pressuring the Council to deny the Miskell and Gunter rezones. In testifying before the Council, Ann Mack and Christine Foulks were aware that the Council lacked formal policies that prevented farmland from being developed. As an interim measure, PLAN publicly requested that a moratorium on all agriculture rezones be established until the Council developed policies to preserve farmlands currently threatened by development (Mack, 1979). On December 22, 1975, the Council, under Ream's chairmanship, heeded PLAN's request and approved Motion 2251, which established a one-year moratorium on rezoning land currently zoned as agriculture, containing Class II or Class III soils, or currently in use for commercial agricultural production in the Sammamish and Green River Valleys, the Lower Cedar River area, and Vashon Island. Motion 2251 also authorized that a study " . . . which will result in proposals for policies and/or programs regarding agricultural lands located West of and including Range 5 (i.e., the County's suburbanized farm areas) . . . and . . . be completed on or before December 31, 1976." In a second motion, Motion 2252, the Council mandated that the study include an inventory of the County's current agricultural land, an examination of recent trends in agricultural land uses in the County, an assessment of future demands for agricultural land and of the present and future economic and land use viability of agricultural activity

in the county, and an exploration of alternative types of policies and programs for preserving agricultural land as well as the financial and legal aspects of such programs. The Department of Planning and Community Development and the Council staff were assigned the responsibility of accomplishing these tasks.

In summary, 1975 represented a turning point in the County's agricultural policy development process. The transformation of the EDC into the PDC enhanced the Council's ability to obtain citizen input on a wide variety of policy issues. However, because the PDC was comprised of members jointly selected by the Executive and the Council, PDC policy recommendations continued to be reflections of the PDC appointment process and were not representative of all King County residents. Therefore, the PDC's continuing endorsement of agriculture retention in its 1975 ad hoc report was partially expected.

The 1976 moratorium represented a quantum leap in the Council's agriculture preservation policies. While previous policies stated only that farmlands should be preserved, the motion creating the moratorium stated that farmlands will be preserved. In addition, the studies authorized by Motion 2252 reflected new Council interest in preserving agricultural activity as well as farmland. In short, a sufficient consensus existed among Council members to approve the goal of farmland

retention (represented by the passage of the one-year moratorium).

The arrival of Keith Dearborn and Susan Allen on the Council staff provided the necessary planning expertise needed to assemble a county-wide agriculture retention program. The duo was directly responsible for maintaining the Council's momentum toward the development of an agricultural policy after Ordinance 1839 was sent back to committee and, when paired with Council members Stern, Reams, and Heavey, a core group of agricultural preservation proponents emerged within the Council.

Perhaps more importantly, however, Dearborn and Allen, each having significant education and experience in planning and law, realized that any public program to preserve farmlands was vulnerable to possible court challenges once it was approved. To guard against such a possible challenge, they developed a program that largely conformed to legal standards governing land use regulations. On the basis of "due process" considerations in the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (and the standard of "reasonableness"), a land use program regulating farmland development should be based on reason (for example, a program developed through a rational planning process) and not appear arbitrary, capricious, confiscatory, or discriminatory (Gleeson, 1975). According to growth management principles, if a local jurisdiction has

comprehensively planned for growth by consciously fulfilling the requirements listed below, the implemented plan is likely to be upheld as a reasonable form of land use regulation by the courts (Gleeson, 1975).

1. Inventory of its natural resources.
2. Calculating the impacts of future growth.
3. Analyzing its ability to accomodate growth.
4. Evaluating alternative plans for accomodating the growth.
5. Basing its implemented plan on this information.

Conversely, comprehensive plans designed to prevent growth and to maintain present land use patterns will likely be declared "unreasonable" (and, therefore, unconstitutional) by the courts. Nonetheless, because judges and lawyers interpret the concept differently across plans, no definitive standard of reasonableness exists, and planners cannot be certain that a plan satisfies the reasonableness criterion until it survives one or more legal challenges in the courts - challenges which may or may not occur in any given planning process.

The 1976 moratorium and the agriculture studies authorized by the Council were important first steps toward satisfying these requirements. The moratorium did not appear arbitrary; it provided needed time to study the complexities of preserving farmland in order to develop later agricultural land retention policies and programs (Gleeson, 1975). Furthermore, the 1975

motion establishing a moratorium contained an introductory section that summarized all of the Council's previous agricultural policies up to that point in time. Arguments supporting agricultural land preservation were also included in the section to justify the motion. This format bolstered the Council's compliance with the Fourteenth Amendment's "reasonableness" requirements, for it demonstrated that the action was not arbitrary but rather based on a history of King County agricultural land and open space preservation policies. All subsequent County farmland preservation motions and ordinances also adopted this format, using Ordinance 1096, which established a farmland policy for all agricultural land in King County, as the starting point in the County's history of farmlands policy.⁸

Whether or not the Council's 1976 moratorium on farmland development violated legal standards of reasonableness is unknown, for it was never tested by either an application for rezoning of agricultural land or a lawsuit. The motion authorizing the moratorium was not a law; it merely reflected Council policy and intent on agricultural rezones during 1976. Nevertheless, what is important during this period is that the Council, with the aid of Dearborn and Allen's expertise, initiated a planning process designed to conform with the law and to terminate in a program for preserving farmlands. If the latter had been accomplished without the former, the courts

might have had reason to overrule the program in the future, and the Council's efforts would have been in vain.

New Policies and Public Interest in Farmland
Preservation: 1976

While the County Council was embarking on a year-long analysis of local agriculture, other King County organizations were also becoming interested in agricultural preservation. Since the Pike Place Market was saved by the voters in 1971, the number of county farmers selling produce in the Market had continued to decline. The Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority (PPMPDA), an organization funded by the City of Seattle to preserve and restore the Market area, felt that the number of local farmers remaining in the Market had become critically low, and unless something was done to reverse the downward trend, the local farmer would disappear entirely from the Market's produce stalls. Because the City of Seattle had invested over \$30 million (mostly through federal Block Grant Funds) into restoring the Market since the vote to save it, the thought of local farmers disappearing from the Market was totally unacceptable among City officials. Under the direction of Richard Locke, the PPMPDA launched a county-wide campaign to inform the public about the declining number of farmers at the Market. A documentary film was selected as the

primary mechanism for disseminating their message to the public.

Work on the film started in early 1976. Locke invited another local organization, People Power Coalition, to assist in the task. Directed by Arlis Stewart, People Power Coalition was a group of local organizations which had combined forces to increase their overall effectiveness in promoting public issues, and its primary function was to explore and create public issues by advocating, publicizing, and promoting their importance throughout the region.⁹ Stewart and Locke decided that the best strategy for publicizing their message was through scheduled presentations of the film before various community groups and organizations. They believed that if members of local organizations viewed the film and adopted formal positions regarding the decline of the Pike Place Market farmer and farmland preservation, the film would have a greater individual and community-wide impact than under any other mode of presentation. The film was also scheduled to appear on a number of local television stations.

Both groups lacked sufficient resources to produce and distribute the film, and funding had to be secured from an alternative source. The Washington Commission of the Humanities, a state organization which regularly funds proposals that promote the humanities in the public area, was chosen as the primary source of funding for the project.

Following an initial proposal that was not accepted by the Commission, Stewart and Locke began work on a second proposal in April, 1976. Because the focus of the proposal was the Pike Place Market farmer, its major goal was to ". . . explore both the importance of the small farmer's contribution to the western Washington agricultural industry and how this set of land use activities and patterns relates to competing land uses." Following a suggestion made by Emery Bundy, a staff member at KING-TV (Seattle's NBC affiliate), the film's primary thrust was to,

- a) describe the issue in terms of:
 - What has happened to agriculture in King County?
(or, where and why have all the farmers gone?);
 - Why should we try to preserve the agricultural industry in King County?; and
 - How can we preserve the agriculture industry?
- b) document the full range of views concerning the loss of agriculture among individuals and/or organizations knowledgeable about the issue.

The proposal also called for a short manuscript summarizing the policy issues in the goal statement, plus over fifty presentations of the film throughout King County to facilitate public discussion on the loss of agriculture. A questionnaire concerning agricultural issues was also scheduled to appear in a local newspaper.

The Commission approved the proposal in May, and in June, 1976, a Core Group Planning Committee consisting of Ralph James, a number of local university faculty members, Pike Place Market farmers, and representatives of other organizations was formed to develop the film's specific content and format. Dan Carlson, an urban planning faculty member at Antioch College West, researched the issues and performed necessary background work for the film. Much of his early research was also used to develop a number of "issue files" that local reporters could freely access to write informative articles on the subject.

On November 12, 1976, the first showing of the film, entitled, "The Last Farmer at the Market?," was held at the Pacific Science Center located on the site of Seattle's 1962 World's Fair. Although attendance was by invitation only, representatives from local governments and community organizations, both in support and opposition to the farmland preservation issue, were invited to the film's debut. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, made from Pike Place Market produce, were served. In total, over the next two years, the film would be shown over eight times on local television stations and presented to over one hundred community groups.

The film generated a significant amount of public awareness concerning the decline in the number of local horticultural (or produce) farmers at the Market and within King County's agriculture industry. More importantly, though,

in generating widespread public awareness that horticultural farmers were disappearing from the Market, the film played a key role in making the loss of farmers a public issue and developing public awareness that something could be done to prevent local horticultural farming from declining any further (Stewart, 1979, Locke, 1976; People Power Coalition, 1977b).

However, by focusing almost exclusively on the decline of farmers in the Pike Place Market, the film examined the loss of farmlands only within a small portion of King County's agriculture industry. While the dominating focus of the film was the decline of the horticultural farmer in the Market due to the gradual development of agricultural land, horticultural farms represented only 6.6% of King County's farmlands (Sanger, 1978: V-55). Dairy farming, which uses 93.4% of King County agricultural land, dominates the industry and the farming landscape (Sanger, 1978: V-55). Dairy farmers were largely excluded from the film simply because few sell their products through public produce markets.

The film's focus appeared to have at least partially caused two key impacts on King County residents. First, the public gradually began to equate the Pike Place Market with the loss of agricultural land. The Market itself became a public symbol and promoter of the agriculture preservation issue. Because the Market was located in downtown Seattle, thousands of urban residents who visited the Market were continually

reminded of the need to preserve the Pike Place Market farmer and their farms. Second, because the dairy industry was almost ignored in the film, the public tended to equate the development of agricultural land only with the loss of horticultural farms and its impact on the Pike Place Market. In general, throughout the movement to save farmlands, most county residents appeared uninformed of the dominate role which the dairy industry played in King County agriculture. Nonetheless, because the public tended to perceive and value the preservation of horticultural farms as a means of preserving the historical flavor of the Market (a value that was documented just four years previously in the referendum to save the Market), widespread public support for preserving all County farmlands resulted. In short, the agriculture preservation movement's early focus on the Pike Place Market was partially, but yet significantly, responsible for generating initial public awareness and support for preserving King County's agricultural land.

The film also affected the direction of the farmland preservation movement in King County. Up until this time King County policies had focused almost exclusively on preserving agricultural land. The "Last Farmer at the Market?" film, however, emphasized the preservation of the farmer and King County's agriculture industry. Although closely interrelated, the two are highly different preservation themes, the latter

encompassing the former. Agriculture systems consist of three basic components, land, a willing corps of operators, and the necessary economic infrastructure, and a healthy agriculture industry is possible only when all three components are present (Lundin, 1976). Preserving an agriculture industry, therefore, means preserving each of its three components. The preservation of agricultural land, on the other hand, addresses only one of the three components, by definition a much smaller task. In theory, if only agricultural land is preserved and the other two components are allowed to decline, the likely result is a gradual disappearance of agriculture activity, leaving a supply of agricultural land no longer actively farmed but serving as passive open space. Although neither of these two preservation themes is inherently superior to the other, the film's focus on preserving King County's agriculture industry directed public interest in the issue toward accomplishing this much broader preservation theme, a theme which the Council itself would eventually embrace.

Opportunity Missed at the State: 1976-1977

King County's effort to develop agricultural policies in 1976 was being matched by an effort in the State Legislature to establish a comprehensive state land use planning process. House Representatives Thompson, Hanna and Blair had proposed a bill that would require counties to adopt comprehensive land

use plans that would identify land having long-term importance for the production of foods, fibers, or minerals. Further, each county would have to restrict the future development of these lands if that development was defined as urban growth, would probably lead to it, or would be incompatible with the continued importance of such land. Thus, through the power of the State and the passage of the bill, King County agricultural lands could have been preserved through a State-mandated King County land use plan. However, because the legislature was not committed to state land use planning and support for the measure did not exist among State agriculture officials, the legislature did not approve the bill. With the State eliminated as a viable source of legislation to preserve farmlands, King County officials had little choice but to develop a program on their own (State of Washington, 1976; King County, 1976b; Dearborn, 1978).

Council Farmland Preservation Efforts
During the Moratorium

While the PPMFDA and People Power Coalition were joining forces to promote the Market farmer issue during 1976, the King County Council and the Planning Division were initiating their year-long study of local agriculture.¹⁰ In 1976 Dave Mooney had replaced Bill Reams as Council Chairman. Also, Tom

Forsythe and Ed Heavey were replaced by two new Council members, Mike Lowry and Bob Grieve. Under this new council membership, Lowry would become a strong advocate for farmland preservation, and Mooney, as Council Chairman, would also become a proponent of the issue. Thus, in 1976 Stern, Reams, Mooney and Lowry composed the core group of councilpersons supporting agriculture preservation.

The Council's first agricultural legislation was to pass Motion 2355 on March 8, 1976, which increased the number of farms included in the interim moratorium on agriculture rezones. As of this date, Council staff, led by Dearborn and Allen, and the Planning Division were starting work on the agricultural studies mandated by Motion 2252. As an initial step in the completion of these studies, they had translated the motion's study requirements into a set of key questions that would have to be answered thoroughly before a preservation program could be developed. Specifically, these questions were,

1. Do we want to protect agricultural lands?
2. Why do we want to protect agricultural lands (economics, aesthetics, etc.)?
3. What is the impact of protecting agricultural lands (revenues, jobs, product quality, etc.)?
4. Which land do we want to protect, given answers to #2 and #3?

5. How are we going to protect agricultural lands?

Three major studies were proposed to answer these questions: an inventory of agricultural land, an analysis of major economic issues, and an analysis of agriculture preservation projects, programs and policies. In April, 1976, the Planning Division hired LeRoy Jones, who had previously managed the production of PSCOG's 1974 report on regional agriculture, to perform the inventory. The inventory was to document the location, soil type, ownership, size, climatic factors, and other characteristics of King County's prime agricultural land. The study would serve as the Council's "information base" for assessing the need and impact of alternative farmland protection programs considered by the Council in the future.

The economic study was divided into three sections, each section focusing on a particular question,

1. What are the present economic contributions of the agricultural industry in King County?
2. What are the forecasts for agriculture in King County in the future?
3. What are the trends in those areas of the country which export farm products to King County and what impact will these trends have on King County?

The studies were designed to assist the Council in choosing specific agriculture preservation policies and programs. The Planning Division was to address the first two questions in

studies directed by Tom Johnston. The third question was addressed by a consulting firm, Mathematical Sciences Northwest, under the direction of Guenter Conradus.

John Lundin was also contracted as a consultant to provide a description and analysis of existing agriculture preservation policies and programs.¹¹ The Council authorized the Lundin study primarily because it would, first, enable the Council to understand and effectively evaluate policy and program alternatives, and second, allow the Council to choose the type(s) of program(s) it desired in a rational manner, and, third, to adjust the design of such programs to suit local needs and budget limitations. Specifically, Lundin, an attorney by profession, was to produce,

- a) a description of various types of programs available to King County for the protection of agricultural land and the agricultural industry, with an emphasis on:
 - zoning
 - acquisition of land or interests in land,
 - tax programs, and
 - support programs for farmers and the agricultural industry;
- b) a description of the experiences of other governments in proposing or implementing their programs;
- c) a detailed outline of legislative administrative steps necessary to implement a program in King County;

- d) a list of documents that must be developed to implement a program;
- e) a description and assessment of major legal issues that the County must consider.

In short, Lundin's study would serve as both an information base for evaluating alternative methods of farmland preservation and an implementation guide for a future King County agriculture preservation program.

Although all of the studies were completed by the end of September, the two economic studies were disappointments for Council farmland preservation advocates. Because the Planning Division's study of economic factors affecting King County agriculture production was merely a general description of agriculture in King County, it failed to address the specific economic issues and questions that the Council had raised earlier in the year and, therefore, would not aid the Council in developing agricultural preservation policies and programs. Further, the results of the Mathematical Sciences Northwest study indicated that if agriculture production were to stop completely in King County, the price and availability of commodities would not be affected (Mathematical Sciences Northwest, 1976a,b). In short, with only three months of the moratorium remaining, the Council lacked an economic analysis that would clearly support the Council's actions to preserve

agricultural land (Jones, 1979; King County, 1976b; Dearborn, 1978).

Despite the findings and limitations of these studies, during the last three months of 1976 Council members and staff favoring farmland preservation as well as members of the Planning Division worked frantically to develop a new policy for preserving agricultural land before the moratorium expired on December 31, 1976. With Lundin's thorough study of alternative agriculture retention programs completed in late September, the Council had an important resource for developing its own policies and programs. On the basis of his study, Lundin rejected zoning and tax programs as effective methods of preserving agricultural land. While recognizing the benefits of a transfer of development rights program, he did not strongly endorse the method because of serious practical problems associated with the implementation of the program. In fact, he endorsed only two approaches, the public acquisition of land or development rights in land and agriculture support programs, as effective, long-term means of preserving agriculture and agricultural land.¹² Lundin also suggested that, in the past, the most effective retention programs had used a combination of the various approaches to preserve agricultural land and that (Lundin, 1976, Part II: 163),

. . . King County should tailor agriculture preservation programs carefully to the need of each river valley, or defined geographic area within

the County. Each area is likely to have unique resources and particular needs that might justify a varying combination of preservation tools. Whichever tools are selected, they should be closely tied to a carefully articulated set of goals and objectives, and a carefully laid out comprehensive plan to preserve open space and agricultural land in the County. All the public policy objectives arising from a preservation program, and the full range of possible benefits to the County from such a program should be carefully articulated.

According to Lundin, a farmland preservation program developed through a rational planning process and meeting the criteria outlined above was more likely to satisfy these requirements and be upheld by the courts than a program that did not.

Lundin (1976, Part I: 54-60) also outlined the necessary steps that the Council would have to perform to implement an acquisition program (not necessarily in this sequence) as follows:

- I. The Council should justify the program prior to implementation by,
 - A. Delineating the importance of agriculture to the county, the variety of public benefits to be realized, and the public purposes to be achieved in an amendment to the 1964 Comprehensive Plan, and by
 - B. Documenting factual information and legislative findings to demonstrate that the Council carefully evaluated alternative land preservation programs before choosing a program for implementation.
- II. The Council should approve an implementation ordinance that,
 - A. Defines the County's power to acquire land or interest in land and,
 - B. Establishes the basic authority for a land acquisition program.
- III. The Council should also,
 - A. Identify funding sources;
 - B. Clearly define the concept, "development right";

- C. Evaluate the cost of the program;
- D. Develop specific criteria to govern the acquisition of land or PDR;
- E. Develop procedures for the selection of land or development rights to be acquired; and
- F. Establish an administrative mechanism to review and monitor the program.

In short, Lundin's research provided the Council with overwhelming legal and empirical evidence (as cited in his study) supporting the acquisition of land, purchase of development rights, or the establishment of support programs as justified means of preserving agricultural land. Methods of implementing these programs were also outlined. Not surprisingly, most of the Council's efforts in the next three months began to reflect the conclusions of the Lundin study. Specifically, the Council adopted a two-stage strategy for implementing an agriculture preservation program. In the first stage, an eighteen-month moratorium on the development of agricultural land would be established by County ordinance. Like its 12-month predecessor, the eighteen-month moratorium was intended to halt temporarily the development of farmlands while the County developed either a PDR or purchase of farmland program for Council review.¹³ In a subtle but nonetheless significant change in policy, agricultural support programs would also be developed, indicating that County officials were seriously exploring ways of expanding their preservation policies to include not only agricultural land but also agriculture activity in King County. In the second stage,

Council approval of the program would be secured, and implementation would begin. Thus, under this strategy the eighteen-month moratorium would become permanent at its termination, provided that the County passed a compensation program before the moratorium expired.

Work on the development of the ordinance that would establish the eighteen-month moratorium was concentrated in the last three months of 1976. A key component of the ordinance's development was identifying the specific parcels of agricultural land that should be protected from development by the moratorium. Because these parcels would most likely also be eligible to participate in a subsequent PDR or land acquisition program, a significant amount of Council time and effort was devoted to this issue.

Bernice Stern, in particular, was strongly committed to protecting the County's most "valuable" agricultural lands. She was opposed to a moratorium that would establish uniform protection policies for all county farmland. Her views were shared by other members of the Council, and the entire Council soon became involved in an intensive effort to develop criteria for defining "valuable" agricultural land.¹⁴

Although the final selection of criteria was clearly a Council responsibility, Allen, Dearborn, Jones, and the Policy Development Commission were assigned the task of developing alternative sets of criteria for Council review.¹⁵ However,

instead of unilaterally submitting - and later defending - sets of criteria before the Council, the County staff developed a simple procedure that allowed them to develop criteria with instead of for the Council. Normally, the full Council would meet every Monday and Friday; Wednesdays were devoted to committee meetings. Each Wednesday, County staff would present criteria before Bernice Stern's Planning and Community Development Committee for initial review. Using LeRoy Jones' inventory of King County farmland, the individual parcels of farmland that were defined as "valuable" by the proposed criteria were illustrated on a plastic overlay. Using a base map, an overhead projector and the overlays, the Council members could see which specific parcels of land became defined as "valuable" under a given set of criteria.

In each committee meeting the staff and Council members attempted to achieve agreement among the committee members on a specific set of criteria. Once the criteria were applied to maps, parcels of farmland became either "valuable" or "not valuable," causing significant debates throughout the meetings. Once agreement was achieved, the criteria and the maps were presented before the full Council on the next Friday. Because the criteria had received preliminary approval of the committee members, both staff and Council members became proponents and defenders of the criteria before the full Council. In short, the procedure made staff less defensive about their work,

facilitated cooperation between staff and Council, and gave the Council an important "co-creator" role in the criteria development process. Because the procedure was such a useful means of rapidly resolving a large number of complex issues, it was generalized for all issues concerning agriculture preservation and progress toward developing new agricultural policies advanced rapidly.

By December, this intensive but informal style of communication had produced a preliminary ordinance authorizing an eighteen-month moratorium and consisting of the following three main elements:

1. the establishment of "Agricultural Districts," or geographical areas containing most of the County's agricultural activity;
2. the identification of "significant (or "valuable") lands within these districts; and
3. guidelines for applying existing Comprehensive Plan policies to the "significant lands." These guidelines would restrict rezoning of farmland to non-agricultural uses, subdivision activity, and sewer extensions in areas designated as "significant lands" by the ordinance.

Similar to the 1976 moratorium, the proposed ordinance's eighteen-month moratorium was intended to halt the development of farmland temporarily while the County developed compensation programs to protect significant lands permanently after it

expired (Dearborn, 1978; Allen, 1978; Stern, 1978; Jones, 1979; Ordinance 3064).

While the Council was developing its ordinance to establish a new eighteen-month moratorium, staff and Council members realized that additional resources would be necessary to develop and implement the agriculture preservation and support programs during the new moratorium. In October, the concept of an "Office of Agriculture" emerged as a useful means of accomplishing this objective. Dearborn and Allen, proponents of the concept, felt that a separate office would provide more exposure and public awareness of the County's attempts to preserve agricultural land than any other administrative body within County government.

By mid-November, Bernice Stern had secured a \$75,000 commitment from King County Executive John Spellman to fund the office in next year's County budget, who increased it to \$100,000 one month later. Further, in an attempt to secure Executive recommendations into the program development process, Spellman established an Executive Advisory Agricultural Steering Committee consisting of one member of the Council (Bernice Stern), a representative of the County's Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the County Executive and representatives of pertinent County departments.¹⁶ The committee was created because the development of the preservation and support programs ". . . will require expert analysis from various

disciplines, will cut across departmental responsibilities, and will require the attention at the highest levels of County government" (Executive Order No. 2046, December 14, 1976). The committee represented Spellman's first public participation in the farmland preservation movement (King County, 1976b; Executive Order No. 2046, December 14, 1976).

With Spellman's participation and support assured and new policies for farmland preservation developed in the form of a proposed ordinance, the Council, Planning Division, and Policy Development Commission began to inform the public and hold community hearings concerning its new policies. In December, a letter was mailed to all property owners of land parcels affected by the proposed ordinance. They were informed that the Council would begin holding public hearings on the proposed ordinance starting January 17, 1977, and were invited to attend and comment on the proposed ordinance (Policy Development Commission News, December 1976; King County, 1976b).

In December, the PDC's Conservation Committee and the Planning Division sponsored community meetings in four agricultural areas of the county: Snoqualmie Valley, Enumclaw Plateau/Upper Green River Valley, Sammamish Valley, and Vashon Island. In each community meeting the PDC, Planning Division and other County officials listened to problems and concerns of farmers in each area and acquainted them with the County's new

efforts to preserve farmland. About fifty people attended each meeting. Described in one PDC report as "informative," it is unclear how these meetings influenced County efforts to preserve farmlands. (Policy Development Commission News, December 1976; King County, 1976b).

Continuing its involvement in the County's drive to establish policy to preserve farmlands, the Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce reviewed the proposed ordinance in its Land Use and Business Development Committees. While the two committees had a number of questions concerning the details and interpretation of the proposed ordinance, they felt that a number of important considerations were absent,

1. the environmental and economic impacts of the ordinance had not been thoroughly analyzed;
2. the effects of the proposed ordinance on the value of each parcel of land was not determined;
3. the amount of lost property tax revenues caused by the proposed ordinance had not been determined;
4. no source of funding for permanently preserving farmland was identified in the proposed ordinance; and
5. the proposed ordinance did not require voter approval of a farmland preservation program and its associated costs.

The two committees strongly opposed the proposed ordinance, concluding that (Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce, 1977),

In our opinion, this draft ordinance contemplates severely affecting a significant amount of private property and numerous citizens and property owners in an adverse and inequitable manner. A much more complete analysis will be required, we feel, to satisfactorily answer the questions raised in our analysis. The King County Council, accordingly, is strongly urged to take no action on this [proposed ordinance], and further, not to extend the "moratorium" ordinance which expired December 31, 1976, until such satisfactory answers are forthcoming.

On January 14, 1977, Bernice Stern submitted a formal reply to the Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce, stating that,

1. the environmental impact statement prepared in 1974 concerning permanent agriculture zoning for all King County farmland (Ordinance 1839) addressed the same issues as the proposed ordinance (and, therefore, a new statement was unnecessary);
2. the effects of the proposed ordinance on land values and property taxes will be determined during the coming months;
3. the issue of whether or not a public vote should be taken was currently being discussed by the Council; and
4. some of the Chambers' comments were incorporated into a new version of the proposed ordinance.

However, because the 1974 EIS was not a thorough analysis of the impacts of a county-wide, mandatory agricultural zoning ordinance, the 1974 EIS was also an inadequate analysis of economic and environmental impacts of the proposed ordinance, and the Council's attempt to apply the 1974 EIS to the proposed ordinance, was, therefore, inappropriate. Further, because the Council lacked substantive answers for the Chambers' remaining concerns, the Chambers' call for a "much more complete analysis" remained unsatisfied (King County, 1976b; Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce, 1977).

In conclusion, in January, 1977, the Council was ready to hold public hearings concerning its proposed ordinance to identify significant farmlands and establish an eighteen-month moratorium. Operating under a significant time constraint, a dedicated Council and County staff worked intensively together to develop a new set of policies that would extend the 1976 moratorium. Mike Lowry, an advocate of farmland preservation, was elected chairman of the Council, virtually assuring a Council commitment to pursue and develop policies and programs to save agricultural land as well as agricultural activity during 1977.

However, the Council was largely unprepared for the first public hearings of the ordinance in two significant ways. First, because the Council had not conducted environmental and economic impact analyses of the proposed ordinance's effects, the Council lacked adequate analytical support to justify its proposed policies. Because virtually all Council members and staff had participated in the development of the proposed ordinance, it reflected the views of the entire Council, and broad support for the proposed ordinance existed among Council members. This support, however, was based largely on the Council's perception that the County's dwindling supply of farmlands and farming activity faced possible extinction if the Council did not act now to save them. The Council knew what it wanted to do, and the analyses proposed by local business

groups would not alter this fact and, therefore, appeared unwarranted at this time. Council members apparently believed that growing support for farmland preservation among County residents and within County government (reflected by Spellman's increased participation in farmland preservation issues and his endorsement of a new agriculture office) would justify their actions and cause few negative political repercussions.

Further, through agricultural land preservation, the Council members were firmly establishing themselves as the County's policy makers, a status they wished to monopolize since the Executive-Council form of government was first established. However, by not addressing business group concerns in a substantive way, the Council lacked evidence to justify its farmland preservation efforts and remained vulnerable to business' future criticisms of its policies.

Second, although the Council was proposing an ordinance that would have a significant effect on County farms, few farmers were intensively involved in the development of the proposed ordinance. The Policy Development Commission, which provided citizen input into the development of the proposed ordinance, had no farmers in its membership, and the PDC had to solicit farmers to attend its meetings. Farmers in the county's agricultural districts were not involved in community meetings until after the proposed ordinance was developed. In essence, the proposed ordinance reflected the thinking of

County officials, but its support among the County's farming community - the group of people which the proposed ordinance would most effect - was questionable. Coincidentally, the results of a statewide study released in January, 1977, by the Alternatives for Washington Project suggested that farmers would be least likely to support such a measure among all demographic categories (State of Washington, 1974: 103-112). In short, when the public hearings for the proposed ordinance began on January 17, 1977, the Council was in a precarious political situation.

Ordinance 3064 and a Second Moratorium

Sparked by the mass media's coverage of the proposed ordinance and the Council's mailed notices to property owners, a record overflow crowd of over 300 persons filled the Council Chambers on the first day of public hearings. Sign-up sheets for persons wishing to testify were posted, and each person signing the roster was asked to indicate her or his position concerning the proposed ordinance (oppose vs. support). The Council Chairman selected individuals from the roster, alternating between those who opposed and those who supported the ordinance.

Although those opposing the proposed ordinance wanted the Council to either reject or reconsider the measure, supporters on the Council had other intentions. As Bernice Stern

suggested in her opening statement, the purpose of the hearings was not to debate the merits of preserving farmlands but rather to hear public testimony regarding farmland policies the Council had already informally decided to pass (King County 1977a: 4),

We [the Council will listen to your suggestions and . . . take into account the testimony we hear today as we consider this ordinance again and will possibly make amendments to it and then make a recommendation back to the Council, we hope, this coming Monday, January 24th, which will be the earliest date when the Council would take action. We are looking forward to that action, but we want to listen to you and give consideration to your suggestions today.

Because of the large numbers of people wishing to testify, four Council hearings were held.¹⁸

Spellman, the first person to testify in support of the proposed ordinance, commended the Council and ". . . those who have been working so hard to try to find some means of dealing with this problem instead of taking the easy way out and saying there is no solution and waiting for the inevitable outcome" (King County, 1977a: 10). He was followed shortly by Jim Ellis (King County, 1977a: 14), who posed two fundamental questions concerning the proposed ordinance to the persons gathered in the Council Chamber:

1. Do we want for the future wall-to-wall urban development or do we want a variety of uses in the County, including agriculture, with clustered urban development around existing centers, separated by green space?; and
2. How can we practically get this result and be fair and reasonable to the owners of property?

His response to his questions was just as direct:

I believe if you could look back and ask the members of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in the 1920s when they had probably one of the most beautiful cities in metropolitan communities in the world, whether they ever dreamed that their promotion would produce today's L.A., I don't believe they ever dreamed that [today's L.A.] result would happen, and I certainly don't believe they'd have been satisfied with it. And I wouldn't be satisfied with it here. The second question is how do you deal reasonably and fairly with the landowners. In my opinion, if you are going to make a general public policy, which requires holding land for less than its best economic purpose in the marketplace, there has to be a public acquisition of the necessary rights, and we have to pay the people from whom those rights are being taken.

. . . it is necessary, in order to set any concrete program in motion for the protection of individuals and the accomplishment of a permanent structure for a variety of [land] uses in this County, it is necessary that we have a temporary moratorium in which a plan can be developed which is realistic and fair . . .

In short, I would conclude by saying we do want to make the necessary policies which will produce the kind of future area which we love now and would like to keep, and secondly we ought to be prepared to make the investments of public monies to deal with the private owners fairly.

Ellis' testimony was perhaps the most articulate expression of the basic issues confronting the Council. He explicitly recognized that the entire issue of preserving farmlands and open space is a question of values - and Ellis clearly supported the value of an urban environment having a diversity of land uses. Recognizing the value which Americans and the American legal system hold for private property rights, Ellis endorsed public compensation of land owners as the best method

of preserving farmlands and protecting the property rights of those affected by the Council's proposed ordinance.¹⁹

A number of voluntary associations throughout King County also testified in support of the proposed ordinance.²⁰

Although most of the representatives of the voluntary associations were enthusiastic and highly supportive about the concept of preserving farmlands, only a small minority of the groups appeared to have a strong understanding of the fundamental problems and issues associated with achieving agricultural preservation.

Support for the proposed ordinance was reinforced even further when Arlis Stewart, head of the People Power Coalition, presented the results of a Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper survey. Readers were asked to respond to a questionnaire printed in the newspaper, and about 96% of almost 1,200 respondents favored farmland preservation (King County, 1977a: 68).

Ralph James, representing the Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce, also supported the proposed ordinance, but only with much modification. According to James, farming cannot be preserved simply because the land is preserved as agricultural open space; agriculture as an activity must be economically viable, or profitable. He strongly recommended that the Council obtain a current economic impact statement on the Council's agricultural preservation program. James was also

critical of the lack of public involvement - particularly from the farming community - in the formation of the ordinance. He recommended that more public hearings be held and agricultural advisory committees be established in each of the County's agricultural areas to secure the needed views of the farm community.

Only one realtor spoke in opposition to the proposed ordinance. On the other hand, most of the farmers who also testified at the hearing were highly critical of the proposed ordinance and raised important economic questions concerning agricultural preservation. Some farmers, fearing the unknown impacts of the proposed ordinance and the possible loss of their land, requested that their farmlands be excluded from the proposed ordinance. As two farmers testified (King County, 1977a: 111,258),

I should have the option to sell my land to the highest bidder, including the County, if they have the funds to do so. Why should I be expected to provide free open space for the general public? Remember, my land is my retirement. It represents my lifelong endeavors, and why should I sacrifice any part of it. We are talking about individual rights which we cherish so much in this great country of ours.

and

. . . I have a feeling that some of the farmers feel like the Indians do when they were put on the reservation. Now, they are being put into the agricultural preservation reservations.

Only two farmers supported the program throughout the four days of public hearings.

Because the proposed ordinance was also developed without the participation of municipalities in the County's agricultural areas, a number of public officials from these municipalities, particularly within the Enumclaw Plateau and the Snoqualmie Valley, opposed the proposed ordinance. Most of these officials requested that the Council include them in their future efforts to preserve agricultural land.

A final criticism mentioned throughout the hearings was that residents living in areas affected by the proposed ordinance were notified about it only a few days before the first hearing began. The short notice itself caused a significant amount of frustration and anger among the testifiers directly affected by the measure. In summary, speakers at the hearings fell into six broad categories: community leaders (John Spellman, Jim Ellis, etc.), business (Ralph James), voluntary associations,²² farmers, other governments within King County and the general public. In general, there was overwhelming support for the concept of agricultural land preservation from all six groups. As one farmer put it (King County, 1977a: 54-55),

Who would be against agriculture? It's just like motherhood. Who's going to be against it? Is there anybody in this room to vote against agriculture?

At the same time, public testimony for the proposed ordinance tended to be inversely related to an individual's direct, personal involvement in the county's farmlands. Thus, those

persons and voluntary associations most enthusiastic about preserving agricultural land often had the least amount of direct involvement in county farming activities. In contrast, the county's farmers tended to either seriously question or oppose the County's efforts to preserve farmlands. With the sudden, urgent interest among County Council members and the general public to preserve agricultural land, county farmers felt increasingly threatened, confused, and frustrated. As one farmer testified (King County, 1977a: 112),

I've been sitting here since 9:30 this morning, and I've seen some very interesting things. The people, they . . . It says on the front page of this thing that we're supposed to be protecting agricultural lands. Now, does that mean the land is what we're protecting or the people who are owning the land or the people who are farming the land? By the time I've gotten through this discussion, I don't even know what the proposal's proposing to do. I see a situation where everybody's running out to protect somebody and they're not asking them how they would like to be protected. I see a bunch of people who live in the city of Seattle who maybe have a lot of well-meaning thoughts and a lot of interest groups but who have no lifeblood viable interest in what they're talking about, trying to promote ordinances that will affect people who . . . I haven't heard a farmer get up yet and give an unequivocal endorsement of this thing.

However, despite the arguments against the measure, the Council voted unanimously, 9-0, in favor of the ordinance on January 31st.

Largely engineered by Dearborn, the unanimous vote resulted from the following two informal commitments among the Council members (Dearborn, 1978): an implicit commitment that

any future program to preserve agricultural land would be subject to voter approval, and an explicit commitment within the proposed ordinance to a limited, eighteen-month moratorium. There are other possible explanations for the unanimous vote. For example, in his study of New Haven, Dahl (1961: 164) states that ". . . elected leaders keep the real or imagined preferences of constituents constantly in mind in deciding what policies to adopt or reject." Because of perceived widespread support for Ordinance 3064, Council members may have believed voting against the popular agriculture ordinance would have severe, negative political repercussions, something which all Council members probably wished to avoid. Alternatively, because under this informal agreement King County voters - not Council members - would decide the fate of any future farmland preservation program, Council members would not be ultimately accountable for a farmlands program, and those who either weakly supported or opposed farmland preservation could endorse Ordinance 3064 without fear of strong political reprisal from their respective constituents, producing the politically safe, unanimous vote. From a different perspective, Council members supporting Ordinance 3064 may have agreed to the commitments because recent, demonstrated voter support for not developing the Vittuli farm suggested King County voters would endorse a county-wide farmlands program in the future. While each explanation has a degree of validity, the unanimous vote

clearly demonstrated that all Council members at least publicly supported farmland preservation and that farmland preservation would be an important Council issue in the future. A public consensus among Council members had been reached.

By the new Ordinance (3064), approximately 32,500 of the County's 55,000 acres of farmland was designated as "agricultural lands of County significance," an eighteen-month moratorium on agriculture rezones was established, and restrictions were placed on subdivisions and water and sewer extensions on these lands. Proposals by a jurisdiction to annex designated land would be supported by the Council only if the jurisdiction's plans and zoning for the land were for agricultural uses. Further, Ordinance 3064 authorized that three farmland preservation programs - 1) purchase of development rights, 2) land acquisition, and 3) land trades, as well as twelve different agriculture support programs - be analyzed in conjunction with newly formed Agriculture District Advisory Committees (following the recommendation of Ralph James), by August 1, 1977 and October 1, 1977, respectively. Formal recommendations and implementation proposals for the farmland preservation and support programs were to be presented to the Council on those dates. A new King County Office of Agriculture would be responsible for developing the two sets of proposals.

Following the passage of Ordinance 3064, seven agricultural district advisory committees were formed.²³ Many of the farmers testifying during the January hearings were appointed to these committees by the County Executive (subject to Council confirmation), and remained active in the County's efforts to preserve farmlands throughout the ensuing campaign (Ordinance 3074 and Motion 2926). The primary function of the committees was to assist the Office of Agriculture in the development of recommendations for the agricultural preservation and support programs. The organizational location of the Office of Agriculture within County government was initially undecided. Both County Executive John Spellman and Council Chairman Mike Lowry, who had assumed a leadership role in pushing the farmland ordinance through the Council, wanted the new office under their respective branches of government. As one newspaper columnist wrote, "The fight is over who gets to do what most everyone wants done" (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 23, 1977). With the authorization of Ordinance 3075 and an appropriation of \$100,000 by Ordinance 3073, the Office of Agriculture was created and, largely because it performed an administrative function, was placed under the County Executive as a section of the County's Planning and Community Development Department. John Ryan, the head of the department, became the director of the office, while Jack Lynch, director of the County's Department of Budget

and Program Development, became the director of the Planning and Community Development Department. Both the advisory committees and the new agricultural office were to dissolve on July 31, 1978, a few days before the 18-month moratorium ended. Thus, following a two-month pause to establish rigid agricultural policies and a formal structure in King County government responsible for developing programs to implement these policies, King County resumed its moratorium and analysis of farmland preservation methods.

Conclusion

As noted at the end of the last chapter, Council farmland preservation advocates had failed to preserve agricultural land through zoning, and the prospects of ever accomplishing their policy objective appeared dismal. However, thanks to aggressive, independent citizen action to save farmlands, efforts to kindle public interest in farmlands preservation by People Power Coalition, new Council staff supporting farmland preservation, and Lundin's comprehensive study of farmlands preservation, Council momentum shifted dramatically from a majority opposing farmlands preservation to a unanimity supporting farmlands preservation. This largely fortuitous combination of events culminated in Ordinance 3064, which represents the second milestone in the development of King County's PDR program.

Ordinance 3064's development, however, was not typified by rational inquiry and planning. Little emphasis was placed on systematically developing alternative solutions to a perceived problem and evaluating how they impacted various population groups, and, as a consequence, the zeal which created Ordinance 3064 largely ignored and at times infringed upon the values, interests and needs of other groups who were not included in the Council's policy development process.

Specifically, farmers and business interests were largely excluded from the Council's policy development process and as a direct result few of their interests and needs were addressed by Ordinance 3064. In particular, farmers perceived the Council's farmland preservation efforts as an infringement on their private property rights. Because business is the primary developer of King County farmlands and farming itself is a business activity, the Council's failure to analyze the economic impacts of Ordinance 3064 on the business community infringed upon their interests also.

It is in this context that Ellis' testimony takes on special significance. He recognized that saving farmland was really only a question of values, and he proposed using public compensation programs to protect the private property rights of landowners affected by the Council's farmland preservation efforts. Thus, he had identified a solution that would in principle address the seemingly conflicting interests of both

Council members and farmers. Recognizing these arguments, the Council mandated that the Office of Agriculture should focus its analysis of farmland preservation methods on programs involving public compensation to private property owners.

By adopting Ordinance 3064, the Council authorized the Office of Agriculture to develop proposals for support programs, formally signalling a major shift in Council policy from merely preserving agricultural land to preserving agricultural activity as well. The Council also later agreed to establish advisory committees to assist County officials in developing new agricultural land and activity preservation programs. Thus, although substantial areas of disagreement existed between the Council and business and farmer interests, the County was beginning to address them in a partial way.

The County's next task was to develop its farmland retention and support programs.

Chapter 7 - Chapter Notes

¹In 1965, PSCOG was called the Puget Sound Governmental Conference.

²These cities include Auburn, Kent, Renton, and Tukwila, which are all located in south King County.

³Wimmer was later honored as "Environmentalist of the Decade" by the Washington Environmental Council, while Durning later became the Assistant Director for Enforcement at the EPA (Wilson, 1979).

⁴Bothell is an incorporated town having a population of 5,750 persons when the rezone occurred (SAVE, no date).

⁵Multi-purpose organizations having an interest in agricultural land preservation did exist, but none had an exclusively agricultural focus.

⁶The advantages of this market alternative are that farmers can sell their goods to the consumer for more than the wholesale price while the consumer can buy produce for less than the market price.

⁷Local governments subsequently used the map as the authoritative reference on current locations of produce farms (Jones, 1979; Mack, 1979).

⁸The 1964 Comprehensive Plan was obviously deleted from this history because it endorsed the development of the Green River Valley.

⁹The Greater Seattle Church Council, KING TV (NBC affiliate), KZAM (a local radio station), League of Women Voters, King County Policy Development Commission, the local Public Broadcasting Station, as well as the PMPDA were members of the Coalition.

¹⁰While the Executive branch of King County's Charter government performed a planning function since its inception, the name of its planning office changed periodically.

¹¹John Lundin and Mathematical Sciences Northwest were paid \$4,000 each for their studies. The contract money was authorized by Motion 2623 in August, 1976.

¹²Specifically, Lundin states that PDR ". . . allows the private landowner to continue to farm and administer the land, and pay local property taxes on it. Such a program is fair, since the public that shares the benefit pays to preserve the agricultural use of the land, while the individual property owner is compensated for the rise in the value of his property" (1976, Part II: 160). Because PDR addresses only the land component of an agriculture system's three components (i.e., land, a willing corps of operators, and the necessary economic infrastructure), support programs are necessary to address the other two components.

¹³Gleeson (1975) states that moratoriums may not be legal if they function only to halt growth temporarily, but if they are used to buy time to develop a growth management plan (such as King County's agricultural retention program), they may be upheld by the courts.

¹⁴Possible criteria are the quality of the soil, type of agricultural activity, farm size, location, and several others.

¹⁵In June, 1976, the Council assigned the Conservation Committee of the PDC to review and evaluate policies and programs relating to agricultural land use. Their assistance was also provided in the criteria development effort.

¹⁶In King County government, all administrative departments, except the Assessor's Office, are accountable to the County Executive.

¹⁷The Puget Sound Chambers of Commerce is a 21-member federation of individual chambers in the region. However, because of Seattle's dominance in the area's economy, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce tends to dominate this organization.

¹⁸The four meetings occurred on January 17th, 18th, 24th, and 31st.

¹⁹As previously described in Chapter 1, Coughlin and Plaut (1978) state that PDR, one form of a public compensation program, is an effective means of preserving open space.

²⁰The following fourteen organizations testified:
American Association of University Women, Auburn Citizens for Planned Growth, Bear Creek Value Association, Evergreen Land Trust, Future Farmers of America, League of Women Voters, 35th Legislative District Democrats, Northwest Friends of the Earth, Pike Place Merchants Association, PLAN, Puget Sound Group of the Sierra Club, Seattle Audobon Society, Washington Democratic Council, and the Woodinville Community Action Council.

²¹For example, the Pike Place Merchants Association was critical of the fact that only 4 of the 66 farmers in the Market were affected by the proposed ordinance.

²²A voluntary association may be defined as a group of people who are organized to promote some shared interest of its members and who participate on a voluntary basis (Tait, 1979: 32).

²³The seven districts were Snoqualmie Valley/Patterson Creek, Lower Green River Valley, Upper Green River Valley, Sammamish/Bear Creek River Valleys, Enumclaw Plateau, Upper Snoqualmie Valley, and Vashon Island.

CHAPTER 8

Council Approval of a PDR Program to Preserve County Farmlands

Program Development: 1977

Following the mandate of Ordinance 3064, in February, 1977, the County Office of Agriculture began to develop complimentary agricultural land protection and support programs. Many of the County's planners, such as LeRoy Jones, who had helped develop Ordinance 3064, were assigned to the Office to develop the two sets of programs. However, because the development of the programs had become an executive function, the Council and the County's planners no longer worked as an informal, cohesive unit. Instead, a more formal, "us-them" relationship emerged between the Office of Agriculture and the Council. Because of this new organizational distance between the two bodies, program development occurred at a slower pace, communication between members of the Council and the Office of Agriculture was reduced, and, perhaps most importantly, the Council as a whole had less control over the development of agriculture land preservation and support programs than before. Program development was now largely controlled by the County Executive and staff under his branch of government.

By March, 1977, the seven previously noted District Advisory Committees (DACs), composed of district farmers, property owners, and other individuals familiar with each district's agricultural industry, began to meet with representatives of the Office of Agriculture on a bi- or tri-weekly basis.¹ The meetings normally consisted of intense discussions of both the specific problems facing agriculture in each district and methods of resolving them. While each district was often confronted by unique problems and issues, five common concerns emerged among the DAC meetings (King County, 1977b):

1. Land values must be reduced to ease the financial burdens of new farmers entering the profession.
2. A serious need exists for surface water runoff controls and financial assistance in resolving current drainage problems.
3. Urban encroachment often results in nuisance complaints or lawsuits that are detrimental to farm operations.
4. Farmers are forced by law to pay for nonfarm improvements, such as LID services, which may seriously threaten the economic viability of a farm.
5. If development restrictions are placed on farmlands, the value of the land would be reduced drastically. Unless farmers are compensated for this reduction in property value, farmers would lose their current ability to borrow money needed for farm operations.

In addition, because development restrictions imposed on farmlands would significantly reduce the value of the land and place substantial economic burdens on the farming community,

all of the DACs agreed that compensation was the only equitable means of implementing development restrictions without adversely impacting existing owners. The DAC members recommended that any farm preservation program implemented by the County should be permanent and voluntary, limit development and subdivision activity, allow a wide range of agriculture-related land uses, and preserve farmlands in large, contiguous blocks.

In addition, most of the DACs developed their own recommendations concerning which farmlands in their respective districts should be protected by an agricultural preservation program. In most cases, the agricultural lands designated by the DACs did not correspond to the farmlands designated by the Council in Ordinance 3064. Unlike the Council, which had focused on soil quality as a major criterion for identifying significant county farmlands, DAC members relied on their personal knowledge of their agricultural districts and their perceived importance of developing large, contiguous blocks of agricultural land.² According to DAC members, the Council's agricultural districts, which contained a number of noncontiguous land parcels, would not preserve farmlands, particularly if the program was voluntary.

In addition to the District Advisory Committee members, the Office of Agriculture also contacted six national and Canadian "experts" who had previously formed and/or managed an

agricultural land preservation program. The experts generally agreed that any agricultural preservation program should strive to build contiguous blocks of farm property. Further, if sufficient funds existed, lands most threatened by urban development (normally those having the highest development rights costs) should be acquired first. The experts disagreed on whether such a program should be mandatory or voluntary in nature.

On the basis of these recommendations, the Office of Agriculture formed five conclusions (King County, 1977b: 6):

1. Preservation of agricultural land in perpetuity can be assured only through a public acquisition program.
2. Contiguous blocks of land are necessary to insure the integrity of an agricultural land preservation program.
3. Acquisition of contiguous blocks of land can only be assured through a mandatory program.
4. The consensus of the DACs is that an acquisition program must be voluntary.
5. Control of surface water runoff and protection from nuisance lawsuits are needed to assure continued agricultural activities.

The DACs view that an acquisition program should be voluntary conflicted with the Office of Agriculture's conclusion that a program requiring participation was necessary to preserve large, contiguous blocks of land. To the DACs, a mandatory program would infringe upon the rights of farm property owners, and they opposed the possible use of eminent domain as a means of enforcing a mandatory program.³ This conflict between mandatory and voluntary participation would become an important

issue in the development of a County farmland preservation program. In fact, because business had previously advocated for a voluntary program, and Ordinance 3064 also endorsed programs having voluntary participation, apparent widespread support for a voluntary program existed to oppose any faction advocating a mandatory one.

Finally, the Office of Agriculture also identified three basic sources of funds for compensating farm owners. First, with voter approval, the County could sell general obligation bonds. Second, under the authorization of R.C.W. 84.34.200, the County could use Conservation Futures Tax funds to preserve designated farmlands. However, although the County could receive \$1.25 million in tax funds per year over the life of a farmland preservation program, the use of the funds would be limited to only properties currently enrolled in the State's Current Use Taxation Programs (only a small proportion of the county's total farms). Third, in March 1977, a bill authorizing a federal \$50 million per year matching fund program to acquire and protect agricultural lands was introduced into Congress by Representatives James Jeffords (Vermont), Norm Dicks (Tacoma, Washington), and other members of the House. If passed, the bill would provide a significant pool of resources for implementing the program.

Based on these conclusions and gathered information, the Office developed alternative preservation and support programs

for Council review. Seven alternative methods of preserving agricultural land were proposed:⁴

1. Do nothing; let the private market prevail.
2. Purchase development rights to all designated lands with mandatory participation and sale of bonds for funding source.
3. Purchase all designated lands with mandatory participation and with either a lease-back or sale-back of the acquired properties to former property owners.
4. Purchase development rights to all Council designated lands where participation is voluntary.
5. Purchase development rights to contiguous blocks of land designated by the District Advisory Committees where participation is voluntary.
6. Conduct a PDR demonstration or pilot program (followed by a county-wide program).
7. Preserve farmlands by strengthening tax incentives, zoning, and related laws.

In its formal August, 1977, report to the Council (as mandated by Ordinance 3064), the Office of Agriculture (King County, 1977b: 42) recommended the fifth alternative, stating that,

It would be a program most likely to succeed in the eyes of the agricultural community, would meet most of the recommendations of the national experts and would be effective in maintaining the lands now commercially farmed as well as being strategically located to assist in the prevention of sprawl.

By choosing this alternative, the Office of Agriculture was implicitly acknowledging and trusting DAC judgements while also eliminating a potential source of political conflict had the Office selected a different method. Implementation would proceed in two broad stages: first, obtain commitments from farm owners to participate in the program based upon appraisals of development rights, and, second, once the total cost of the

program is known, secure funds for the program from one or all of the three sources described previously (King County, 1977b; People Power Coalition, 1977a).

The Office of Agriculture's support programs, presented to the Council on October 7, 1977, were also developed in conjunction with the DACs. The report contained recommendations for specific programs designed to assist the county's agriculture industry in three major categories: marketing, farm labor training and education, and economic development. Programs proposed by the Office of Agriculture in each category included:⁵

Marketing

1. Supply information on the costs and benefits of marketing options, including: u-pick - we-pick stands, fresh wholesale markets, wholesale processing markets, farmers markets
2. Identify county produce in markets through a local labeling, "King County Fresh" logo program.
3. Expand markets for locally grown produce through creation of a new Bulk Commodity Exchange which seeks to link local producers with food buying clubs, institutions, and restaurants wanting local produce.
4. Supply information on cost and equipment for self-processing of farm products by the farmer.

Farm Labor Education and Training

1. Identify and train new farmers through agricultural internship programs.
2. Coordinate and expand opportunities for current and prospective farmers.
3. Create a model/demonstration farm facility to serve the agricultural research and recreational needs of the public through agricultural research and demonstration projects.
4. Maintain the supply of labor to local farms.

Economic Development

1. Develop processing facilities in King County.
2. Develop farm labor housing.
3. Provide financial assistance to local farmers through loans and insurance programs.

Of all the support programs described within the report, the Bulk Commodities Exchange (BCE) deserves special attention. Developed as a joint project involving the Office of Agriculture, Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority, Hunger Action Center, and Metro Center, the BCE operates as a nonprofit middleman that connects King County produce farmers with organizations and individuals needing produce in bulk quantities. Under this arrangement, the farmer receives more for his produce from the BCE than from selling to the wholesaler, while the customer pays less for produce from the BCE than from buying produce through other outlets. Thus, both buyer and seller benefit from the BCE's seller-buyer matching service. The BCE's largest accounts consist of restaurants, school districts, and other public institutions.

In short, the Office of Agriculture had proposed a comprehensive set of agriculture support programs that local governments with limited funds could pursue. Perhaps more importantly, however, the support programs reflected a strong County commitment to using public funds to assist a private sector enterprise maintain its economic viability and thereby preserve a land base designated as valuable by County government (King County, 1977c).

Following the requirements of Ordinance 3064, the Office of Agriculture submitted its agriculture program and support reports to the Council on August 1, 1977 and October 7, 1977, respectively. According to the ordinance, the program report was to include an analysis and, where applicable, implementation proposals for three land programs: PDR, land acquisition, and land trades. The analysis was to include for each program,

1. specific geographical areas for implementation,
2. procedures for implementation,
3. administrative structure for implementation,
4. estimated costs (where applicable),
5. means of raising necessary revenues (where applicable),
6. drafts of legal documents, ordinances and/or motions necessary for implementation, and
7. tax base sharing impacts.

What the Council received was a brief, 47-page report that developed alternative land preservation programs, recommended a program for implementation, and outlined implementation procedures. In short, while the Council was expecting a detailed document that, with minor modifications, could become the basis of the County's agriculture preservation program, the Council received seven alternative program proposals, a

recommendation for a single program, and a documentation of major issues requiring Council resolution.

The Council's response to the report was anticipated. While Council members generally regarded the report as an "inadequate" 47-page outline, Bill Reams was more specific, "It's disappointing to say the least . . . I can't vote for the program at this point" (Fournier Papers, August 21, 1977). Further, because one conclusion of the report was that public acquisition of contiguous blocks of farmland could only be assured through a mandatory program, the report appeared to question the County's previously stated, explicit intentions to develop a voluntary agriculture preservation program (Ordinance 3064). One probable reason for the disparity between the Council's expectations and the Office of Agriculture's report was the lack of communication between the two groups. Compared to the close staff-Council member relationships in the development of Ordinance 3064, Office of Agriculture staff, who were now under Executive control, communicated less frequently and more formally with Council members than before, and this change in communication patterns apparently caused the disparity between the two bodies. Nonetheless, because the Council was beginning its annual budget preparation work, it set aside both reports temporarily to concentrate on budget concerns. Thus, by August, 1977, the County had made little

progress toward developing a land preservation program since the passage of Ordinance 3064.

A Seattle Chamber of Commerce Challenge: 1977

Up until this time, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce had continually supported the concept of agricultural land preservation, but only a few of its interests and concerns had been addressed by County government. Recognizing that a farmlands preservation program could significantly affect business activity by reducing the amount of land suited for developed, business uses, the Chamber established an Agricultural Preservation Task Force, chaired by Robert Waller, to voice business interests in the County's farmland preservation efforts in the hope of creating a County program which it could ultimately support.⁶

Following the Office of Agriculture's submission of its land retention and support programs to the County Council, the Task Force conducted a systematic review of the data and methodology employed by the County to generate Ordinance 3064 and the two reports. The Task Force discovered that key analyses of agricultural data conducted by the authors of Ordinance 3064 and the Office of Agriculture during the development of the County's agriculture policies, programs, and reports were performed incorrectly. The Task Force formally documented its conclusions regarding the County's agricultural

studies in a "White Paper" on November 15, 1977. While it represented a detailed critique of the County's analyses, the paper contained three major conclusions.

First, in conducting its analyses of agricultural data (produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Census Bureau), the County failed to make analytical adjustments for Bureau of Census changes in the definition of "farm" in 1950, 1959, and 1974. Because the County failed to adjust for these changes in definition, the County's studies overestimated farm acreage and number of farm losses between 1945 and 1974. Further, while the Office of Agriculture studies indicated a continuous decline in the number of farms and farm acreage between 1945 and 1974, Bureau of Census tables reported an increase in both the number of farms and farm acreage between 1969 and 1974.

Second, the County failed to incorporate soil quality considerations in its analyses, creating the impression that all of the agricultural land developed between 1945 and 1974 was prime cropland (Class II and Class III soils). In describing the loss of agricultural land between 1945 and 1974, the County normally cited the following two statistics:

1. The acreage of land in farms decreased from over 165,000 acres in 1945 to less than 58,000 acres in 1974,

2. Farmland has declined by an average of 3,500 acres per year since 1945.

Because the two statements fail to describe acreage losses by soil type, the County data implied that all farmland losses between 1945 and 1974 occurred on prime agricultural land. However, according to recent studies of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, most of the farmland losses occurred on marginal agricultural lands (Sanger, 1978: V-44).⁷ Thus, the County's portrayal of farmland losses between 1945 and 1974 was incomplete.

Third, the County overestimated the number of persons employed in agriculture. Although Ordinance 3064 stated that 6,230 full-time and 1,400 part-time persons, plus 17,000 seasonal workers, were members of the County's agriculture labor force, the Census Bureau reported that only about 1,200 full-time and 5,600 part-time or seasonal workers existed in King County (Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1977; Eastside Journal American, December 8, 1977).

In short, the Chamber claimed that the authors of Ordinance 3064 and the Office of Agriculture analysis of King County agriculture overestimated and incorrectly portrayed the loss of farmland. According to the Task Force, the County's studies could ". . . seriously mislead the public and County policymakers" (Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1977: 3).

The white paper, together with a resolution from the Chamber's Executive Committee requesting an economic impact statement on the County's agriculture retention programs, were submitted to the County Executive and the Office of Agriculture, who dismissed the white paper's findings. Following a reiteration of their position to John Spellman, a meeting was arranged between members of the Task Force and Office of Agriculture staff on December 15. However, while Office of Agriculture staff members acknowledged the validity of the Task Force's conclusions regarding its analyses of county agricultural data, on the next day, December 16, Tom Ryan, representing the Office of Agriculture, appeared before the Council, recommending that it proceed to implement a PDR program to preserve farmlands. Ryan noted that if the program was voluntary, contiguous blocks of farmland could not be preserved and that condemnation of land was an alternative that could be employed to achieve this objective. Stunned by the sudden turn in events and the County's suggestion to preserve farmland through condemnation, the Task Force became more adamant that the County correct the findings of its agriculture studies and perform an economic impact statement on the possible effects of an agricultural preservation program before proceeding any further. Eventually, heeding the arguments of the Task Force, the County Executive and the County Council conceded that important economic issues concerning the

preservation farmlands existed, and the County contracted with John M. Sanger Associates, a San Francisco consulting firm, to perform an economic impact study of a King County PDR program (Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1978a; Spellman, 1979).

In conclusion, since the Council first proposed preserving farmlands through zoning, local business (represented by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce) and County government (both executive and legislative branches) had disagreed over a number of issues -- disagreements increasingly resolved by County concessions to business demands. The County's decision to fund an economic impact study of a PDR program was perhaps the most significant concession to date. While business' successful record in gaining concessions may be attributed simply to its persistent intervention in County farmland preservation efforts, other reasons also exist. Because a costly PDR program would require voter approval in King County, County officials increasingly believed that it would eventually need business support to win voter approval at the polls, and making concessions was one way of gaining this support.

Alternatively, businesss may have convinced County officials that its demands were both reasonable and necessary to preserve local farmlands while County analyses to date were inadequate for developing farmland preservation programs. Also, by agreeing to conduct an economic impact study, the County was belatedly attempting to develop ways of managing growth based

on rational inquiry rather than by arbitrary judgement, making the County's farmland preservation-growth management efforts consistent with "due process" legal requirements in the U.S. Constitution. As a result of business intervention in the farmlands preservation efforts, County officials now regarded the Seattle Chamber of Commerce as a knowledgeable and powerful party interested in local farmland preservation issues that they would have to work with in developing agriculture preservation programs.

A New Growth Management Emphasis: 1977-1978

During the fall of 1977 John Spellman was campaigning for his reelection as County Executive. As the Republican candidate, he actively boosted and supported the County's efforts to preserve agricultural lands. He was opposed by two other candidates, Audrey Davis, a former Democratic councilman and mayor of Mercer Island, and Harley Hoppe, the King County Assessor.⁸ Davis, who was involved in Mercer Island's earlier attempts to obtain voter approval of open space bonds on Mercer Island, advocated a "go slow approach" toward county farmland preservation, favoring pilot agriculture preservation programs before implementing a program county-wide. Hoppe, who was also a Republican but filed as an independent to run against Spellman for the county executive position, was opposed to any attempt to preserve agricultural lands through government

intervention. He charged that the plan was ". . . the most foolish idea anyone ever thought of" (Seattle Times, September 14, 1977) and ". . . under the guise of protecting and preserving open space, a socialist program of controlling growth, development and the free enterprise system" (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 20, 1977). According to Hoppe, growth should be controlled by the land market. Further, because existing state current use tax laws granted tax breaks for agriculture open space, he believed the plan was ill-advised and unnecessary.⁹ In short, each of the three candidates running for the county executive post held different views concerning agriculture preservation.

Spellman, the single advocate for farmland preservation, was re-elected to a third 4-year term as County Executive, and he regarded the victory as an indicator of public support for farmland preservation (Spellman, 1979). Throughout 1977 and his campaign for reelection, Spellman's continuing support of agriculture preservation and open space was matched by his increasing interest in growth management. Faced with sharp development and population increases accompanied by forecasts of continuing county population growth in the future, particularly within the unincorporated areas of King County, the Spellman administration began to focus its attention on developing the policies and plans that would accommodate this expected growth while also protecting the region's quality

environment. Planning in the 1970s for the expected population increases of the 1980s and 1990s became an important goal of his administration. Growth management was selected as the planning tool to accomplish this goal.

On February 3, 1978, Spellman outlined the key elements of his growth management program. Stressing that the primary purpose of the program was to absorb future growth ". . . in ways that will preserve the environmental quality that makes King County so attractive to newcomers and existing residents alike," Spellman (1978a) said his program would,

. . . preserve a range of housing choices from the lively urban atmosphere of our cities to the rural environment in the eastern part of the county,

. . . [assure] the continued viability of our farms,

. . . [protect] our streams from the inevitable consequences of thoughtless urbanization, [and]

. . . [assure] that existing public investments in parks, roads and sewers and schools are used wisely before new investments are made.

He (1978a) added that,

. . . the highest priority of King County government in 1978 is the adoption of growth management policies relating to land use, the phasing of supporting services such as water and sewer, and regulatory actions such as zoning and subdivisions . . . These policies will provide the framework necessary to strengthen and give direction to the community planning process to provide predictability for residents and builders alike, and to establish a more consistent set of land use controls and development incentives for King County.

Finally, Spellman requested (and eventually was granted) funds

to establish a Growth Management Office in the County's Planning Division to help prepare these policies.

Meanwhile, growth management was also becoming a central concern of the Council. A primary objective of Mike Lowry, the 1977 Council Chairman, was to develop a growth management function in the Council. Using the momentum of the agriculture retention issue as a means to develop this new Council function, a Growth Management Committee was established early in 1978.

Thus, at the end of 1977, both the Office of the County Executive and the Council had identified growth management as an increasingly important function of County government. Because County officials viewed farmland preservation as an effective means of directing development away from agricultural areas and toward population centers, agricultural land retention performed two complimentary functions: saving farmlands and growth management. According to County officials, a PDR program would be capable of preserving agricultural land, creating open space, and enhancing the region's environment. Thus, the movement to preserve agricultural lands appeared destined to become the cornerstone of the County's growth management programs.

Other cities and organizations throughout King County were also becoming increasingly interested in growth management and the movement to preserve agricultural lands. The

municipalities of Redmond, Kent and Auburn had expressed an interest in working with the County through formal interlocal agreements to preserve agricultural lands within their boundaries.¹⁰ Using money awarded from a second Washington Commission for the Humanities grant, the People Power Coalition scheduled another series of 35 community meetings concerning the farmlands issue. The film "Last Farmer at the Market?" was revised to include a discussion of alternative methods of preserving agricultural land and was shown at the community meetings and appeared several times on local television stations.¹¹ Planning instructor Dan Carlson composed a brochure entitled "Protecting Agriculture in an Urbanizing Area," which documented the County's current efforts to preserve agricultural land, described important issues facing the public, and encouraged citizens to become involved in the issue. The brochure suggested that citizens become involved in agriculture preservation issues through such organizations as PLAN, the PDC, the Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, the Grange, Friends of the Earth, Hunger Action, or the Washington Environmental Council. However, because nearly all of these organizations were strong supporters of the County's efforts to preserve agricultural lands, the brochure's political neutrality appears questionable. The brochure was

distributed at the community meetings and to interested citizens.

Federal Legislation and a County Land Study: Early 1978

In January, 1978, Bernice Stern, the Council's agricultural land preservation advocate and enthusiast, was elected Council Chairperson. Her new position assured a high priority for agriculture preservation in the Council's upcoming 1978 deliberations. Bob Gaines, the Council representative from the Enumclaw and Green River Valley area of the County, was replaced by Gary Grant. As a newcomer to the Council and its efforts to preserve agriculture in King County, Gary Grant was neither a strong advocate nor opposed to the Council's agriculture retention policies.

Important events were also occurring on the national level. In November, 1977, Representatives James Jeffords (Vermont) and Norm Dicks (Washington) and other Congressmen introduced a House bill to the House Rural Farms Subcommittee that would provide a \$50 million pool of funds over five years for preserving agricultural lands. In March, 1978, Washington Senators Magnuson and Jackson introduced a similar bill that would provide state and county governments with up to 75% of the necessary funds to acquire agricultural lands.¹² Accompanied by a proposed 5-year, \$464 million appropriation, the bill targeted funds primarily for farmlands in urban areas.

In short, a large amount of federal matching funds could be available for King County's agriculture preservation program by the end of 1978, and the problems associated with funding a PDR agricultural preservation program would be greatly diminished if the bill was approved. Adopting an optimistic perspective concerning the outcome of the proposed federal legislation, the Office of Agriculture began to develop alternative preservation programs based on various levels of federal support. However, neither the Senate nor the House ever approved their respective bills (House Bill 5882, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, March 3, 1978; Fournier Papers, March 17, 1978).

In February, a King County Vacant Lands Inventory, performed through a cooperative agreement among King County's Planning Division, the PSCOG King (County) Subregional Council and county municipalities, was completed documenting the location, quantity and type of vacant lands in western King County (excluding Seattle, Mercer Island and Vashon Island). Performed primarily to collect resource information for the development of growth management policies and plans, the inventory identified an abundance of vacant land within the study area.¹³ About one-half of the land in the study area, or about 130,000 out of 250,000 acres, was identified as vacant. About 107,000 acres of vacant land were zoned for single-family residential use, while 10,500 acres were zoned for industrial use (King County, 1978b).

The study's findings clearly supported the County's efforts to preserve agricultural land. Because a large supply of land zoned for development existed in the study area, the need for developing agricultural land was significantly low. Alternative land resources having little or no agricultural productive value existed in the county which could be used for development purposes. Thus, the study nullified business concerns that a PDR program might seriously reduce the supply of land suited for business uses.

In summary, the early months of 1978 were primarily devoted to developing growth management policies and programs within County government. The County's development of agricultural preservation policies and programs had become an important sub-component of the County's new growth management emphasis.

The Development of King County's PDR Program: Mid-1978

In April, 1978, Spellman appeared before the Council to present a timetable for placing an agriculture preservation bond measure before the voters.¹⁴ He proposed a \$50 million program, which would consist of both local funds (approximately \$25 million) and federal matching funds (from Magnuson's proposed legislation), to be placed on the ballot in the up-coming November election - or possibly the September primary election if Council authorization of the bond measure could be

secured by then. Further, because the county's agricultural land would not be protected from development between August 4th, the last day of the 18-month moratorium, and the date of the election, Spellman also proposed that the Council approve between \$250,000-\$500,000 in councilmanic bonds to purchase options for development rights of agricultural land areas most threatened by development.¹⁵ However, because of the inherent risk involved in purchasing development right options, the Council did not approve of the latter proposal (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 17, 1978).¹⁶

Undaunted, Spellman came right back in June, 1978, proposing a \$25 million PDR agriculture preservation program. In a Council address, he asserted that a PDR program was the only way to assure with certainty that farms would not be overrun by urban sprawl, and that farmers would be compensated for the loss of their rights to develop the land. Predicting that 60% of local farmers would participate in the program, Spellman also emphasized that ". . . those who elect not to participate in the acquisition program will not have a right to a rezone or subdivision." He repeated his previous schedule of placing the measure on the November ballot (Spellman, 1978b).

Most of King County's larger newspapers contained editorials endorsing Spellman's PDR bond proposal (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 19, 1978; Seattle Times, April 29, 1978). Public support for the program was also growing. A

recent opinion poll by the Gilmore Research Group found that 79% of those polled (1006 telephone interviews) believed preserving agricultural land was important. However, only about half said they would be willing to pay an extra \$5 a year in taxes to protect farmland from residential and commercial development (Fournier Papers, July 9, 1978).

Other forms of support for the PDR program were also emerging. In July, 1978, the long-awaited Sanger economic impact study of a PDR program was released. Commonly referred to as the "Sanger Report," the study represented the most comprehensive analysis of King County agriculture available. According to the Sanger Report (1978: S-4), a PDR program would significantly improve agriculture in King County by increasing the rate of return in farming and by enhancing the prospects for future profitability, resulting in expanded investment in agriculture; retaining or adding 17,000 to 23,000 acres in farmland; increasing full-time employment by 300-400 jobs; and increasing gross farm income \$3-\$6 million annually. Furthermore, the dairy industry would expand production, maintain its long-term competitive advantage, and increase land in productive use by as much as 5,000 acres, while vegetable and berry production acreage would increase, reversing a two decade decline. Having expanded supplies of local agricultural products, consumers would save at least \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually.

The Sanger Report (1978: VII-5) forecasted an especially bright future for the County's dairy industry,

The PDR program will offer the dairy operator the opportunity to place major emphasis on long-term production and is likely to encourage further expansion in the size of major dairies . . .

Compared to scenarios possible without the PDR program, the net impact of the program on dairy land in use could range as high as 20,000 acres by 1985.

Since the dairy industry occupies 90% of all agricultural land in King County and is the dominant industry in the sector, impacts of the program on the dairy industry constitute the major impacts of the program.

Using development right values between \$900 to \$1,500 per acre, the total cost of the PDR program for the approximately 40,000 acres designated as "significant" by the Council would be between \$35-\$61 million.¹⁷ If a 60% property owner participation rate was attained, the most probable cost would be \$29-\$38 million.

In terms of negative impacts, the Sanger Report suggested net property tax losses would range between \$70,000-\$100,000 annually for the County and \$60,000-\$100,000 for the state school fund. However, these tax dollar losses would most likely occur from the enrollment of more farmlands into the current use taxation program rather than a PDR program. Further, a PDR program would have almost no impact on King County's supply of developable land or housing costs.

Without a PDR program, the report estimated that by 1990 total land in farms, if past trends continued, would decline by 31,000 acres, or 60% over 1974 acreages (Sanger, 1978: VI-20).

In July, the Office of Agriculture also released a supportive environmental impact statement on the King County agricultural retention program. Drawing extensively from the Sanger Report and other agriculture documents, the EIS stated that a PDR program would insure the long-term stability of the county's agriculture land base for the following reasons (King County, 1978c):

1. PDR would reduce the market value of the land to its agricultural use value, thereby reducing the tax burden to landowners and lowering the capital requirements for new entrants into farming.
2. PDR would be immune to development pressure and could be made permanent.
3. PDR was supported by the District Advisory Committees.

The EIS also contained a review of alternative purchase priorities for sequencing how development rights could be purchased:

1. according to agricultural district,
2. degree to which land is in danger of conversion to nonagricultural use based on zoning or proximity to urban centers,
3. cost (lowest valued parcels purchased first),
4. type of farm (commercial farms have highest priority),
5. type of production or method of marketing, or
6. size of parcel.

The EIS identified only three unavoidable adverse impacts:

1. continued pollution from pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, plus their impacts on higher levels of the food chain;

2. minor agricultural runoff; and
3. drainage of seasonal wetlands to increase their agricultural utility, thereby slightly reducing habitat for flora and fauna dependent on them.

However, while these two studies forecasted highly beneficial impacts of a PDR program, their conclusions were based largely on the assumption of a 60% property owner participation rate. The County's prediction that 60% of the property owners would participate was the result of a survey conducted by the Office of Agriculture. However, in performing this survey, the Office of Agriculture used questionable methodology. Only Sammamish Valley property owners were polled by telephone by County staff. In the Upper Green River Valley, farmers polled themselves, while in the other agricultural districts the District Advisory Committees asked property owners (Wheatley, 1978; Jones, 1979). Thus, because the estimated participation rate was based on variously defined sampling methodology, the results of the survey could be inaccurate. Further, because the 60% participation rate happens to produce a PDR program cost similar to John Spellman's program proposals, the 60% participation rate appears questionable. In short, although the evidence supporting a 60% property owner participation rate in a PDR program is weak, the County used this estimate to characterize future PDR program performance.

While the County Executive was working with the Office of Agriculture and developing his June PDR proposal, the Council was becoming increasingly concerned about what the County's final agriculture retention program would look like. The 18-month moratorium's termination date, August 4th, was not far away, and an agriculture retention program had still not been developed. In order to remedy this situation, the Council, operating through the Office of Agriculture, hired Keith Dearborn on May 1st as a consultant to develop the County's agriculture retention program, to draft proposed ordinances describing the program and authorizing a PDR bond proposal, and to help win Council approval of the bond proposal.¹⁸ Dearborn worked closely with John Keegan, a member of the County's Prosecuting Attorney's Office, in drafting the ordinance that defined and placed the agricultural program on the November ballot. In order to become a consultant, however, Dearborn had to quit his job as policy research director of the Council's staff and be subsequently rehired by the Office of Agriculture as a consultant. Earning nearly twice as much as a consultant than as a County Council staff member, Dearborn's tenure as a consultant would last seventeen weeks, until August 25th (Eastside Journal American, October 25, 1978; Seattle Times, October 24, 1978; Dearborn, 1978; Keegan, 1979).

Dan Carlson, the author of People Power Coalition's agriculture public information brochure, was also hired as a

consultant by the County to produce a similar document designed to inform the public about the County's agriculture retention efforts and to publicize a series of six hearings concerning the County's agriculture program. The meetings were scheduled between July 19 and August 28 at various locations throughout the County. Members of the Council also attended the hearings. Entitled "Old MacDonald -- Still has a Farm," the brochure advertised the hearings as an opportunity for citizens to voice their opinions and assist the Council in determining ". . . the priority areas for using bond monies to retain farmland" (Seattle Times, October 10, 1978; King County, 1978d).

The People Power Coalition was also active in the summer of 1978. It hired Dr. Ronald Boyce, Seattle Pacific University economist and urban affairs specialist, to make a number of public presentations around the county concerning agriculture preservation. Although Boyce supported the concept of a PDR agriculture program, he was concerned that the County was implementing a program without sufficient planning and attempting to sell it to the public on a false basis. One of his major concerns was that although the County's Office of Agriculture prepared an environmental impact statement on the PDR program, the EIS failed to address the program's impacts on adjoining counties. Boyce feared that if land speculation was prevented in King County by the PDR program, increased speculation would occur in other counties. The County's PDR

program should be coordinated within a larger, Puget Sound comprehensive planning effort.

According to Boyce, because farming will continue to decline even if lands are preserved through a PDR program, the County should set farmlands aside primarily for open space and esthetic reasons. Alternative reasons for preserving farmlands - such as the need for agriculture during energy shortages, prevention of land speculation, or ensuring continued farm activity in King County - should not be used to justify a PDR program.

According to Boyce, his primary purpose was to raise questions about agricultural preservation to the public in an attempt to present a more balanced outlook on the County's proposed PDR program (Seattle Times, April 17, 1978; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, June 22, 1978). Because Boyce's views were in direct opposition to the conclusions of the Sanger Report, the public was exposed to contradictory arguments concerning the expected outcomes of the County's complex PDR program. Rather than convincing the public that his arguments were correct, Boyce's arguments - and the arguments of other individuals against the PDR program in the upcoming bond vote - tended to confuse the public and generate public distrust concerning the merits of the program.

In summary, between December, 1977, and August, 1978, the County became unofficially committed to a PDR program.

Beginning with Tom Ryan's speech before the Council in December 1977, the executive branch, under Spellman's leadership, began to push for a PDR program. Spellman's speeches before the Council promoting the PDR programs in April and in June spawned the County's commitment to the land use technique. The County's decision to authorize an economic impact study of a PDR program (the Sanger Report) pushed the County further towards adopting a PDR farmland preservation program. However, perhaps the most critical element in gaining unofficial approval of the PDR concept was Spellman's personal involvement in meeting with Council members to determine what type of program each would support and developing a program agreeable to most members. In short, an explicit decision to develop a PDR program within King County government was never made; it evolved through a time-consuming, consensus-building process.

PDR Receives Council Approval: September, 1978

Public momentum favoring the proposed agriculture preservation program was building. In a telephone poll of 403 registered voters who planned to vote in November (conducted during the last week of August and the first week of September by the University of Washington Educational Assessment Center), 70% of the respondents were in favor of farmland preservation. Further, about 60% of those polled said they would be willing to pay at least \$5 per year in added taxes to support the

program. Only 20 of the 403 persons interviewed strongly opposed the program. However, the Council questioned the polls validity, arguing that while Seattle residents comprised only 43% of all King County registered voters, 59% of the respondents were from Seattle. Because Seattle residents tended to favor the plan more than other County residents, the results appeared to be biased to some Council members (Seattle Times, September 9, 1978; Sammamish Valley News, September 13, 1978).

Nonetheless, within an atmosphere of overwhelming public support for the proposed program, the Council began to review the ordinance developed by Keith Dearborn and John Keegan. Discovering that only three Pike Place Market farmers were included in the draft ordinance, Gary Grant proposed an amendment that would include Pike Place Market farmers located within incorporated cities in the proposed program.¹⁹ Supported by Seattle Mayor Charles Royer and a variety of voluntary associations, the Grant Amendment would make 22 Pike Place farmers eligible for the program.²⁰ Although Grant wanted to have the Market farmers included without raising the cost of the program, other Council members argued that the Market farmers should be simply added to the existing program, increasing the cost of the proposal by \$6 million. Supporting Grant's amendment but advocating a less costly proposal, Mike Lowry proposed including only those incorporated city farmlands

without sewers within Grant's amendment.²¹ Under Lowry's proposal, 16 Pike Place Market farmers would become eligible at an additional cost of \$1 million. The Council approved Lowry's proposal (Eastside Journal American, August 11, 1978, August 26, 1978; Fournier Papers, September 3, 1978).

During the first week of September a number of key local figures testified both in favor and in opposition to the program. On September 5th, Harley Hoppe, King County Assessor, and Bob Gamalielson, a representative of the Seattle/King County Board of Realtors, expressed strong opposition to the measure. Hoppe, claiming that the state's current use tax administered by his office provided sufficient farming incentives, stated that the program would ultimately cost much more than \$30 million. Bob Gamalielson, representing the real estate industry's first public involvement in the measure, argued that the program would primarily benefit speculators and large farmers; the small farmer would receive few benefits. However, Ed Heavy, former Council member, testified in support of the measure, arguing that it would bring a degree of certainty to the development industry by clearly identifying where developers could and could not build (Seattle Times, September 6, 1978). On September 8th, John Spellman also reiterated his arguments in support of the measure (Seattle Times, September 9, 1978).

However, following this early round of public hearings on the draft ordinance, politics began to dominate the Council's proceedings. A minority of the Council members - Ruby Chow, Paul Bardon, Tracy Owen, and Gary Grant - supported a plan to merge Metro, the County's sewer and transit agency, into King County government. Because the four-Council member minority required only one more vote to place the plan before the voters for approval, the minority group developed a political strategy that would secure Council approval of a merger plan in exchange for its support of the farmlands program.²² On September 7th, the Metro backers succeeded in scheduling a Council vote on the merger plan before voting on the agriculture program, thereby placing the Metro merger advocates in a position to delay the agriculture program and perhaps prevent it from appearing on the ballot in November. However, Bernice Stern, PDR advocate and Council chairperson, was able to work out a compromise. Stern, who supported the concept of a Metro merger, engineered Council approval of the merger plan by post-poning its appearance on a ballot until November, 1979. The compromise broke a Council deadlock, and the agriculture program was assured of being the only bond measure in the upcoming November election (Seattle Times, September 6, 1978, September 9, 1978).²³

In the final agriculture program, North Creek River Valley, containing only four eligible farms, was deleted from

the program while the Upper Snoqualmie River Valley was added. The addition of the Upper Snoqualmie area increased the cost of the bond measure to \$35 million. Gary Grant soon followed with his own version of the agricultural program, proposing a less costly \$29 million bond program. Grant argued that a \$21.4 million bond issued could accomplish the same objectives as the more costly \$35 million bond package. The difference between his two figures (\$29 million minus \$21.4 million) would provide leeway to cover higher than expected land costs and buy development rights on some 5,000 eligible acres of dairyland in the Enumclaw Plateau that were not threatened by development. However, Lowry countered Grant's arguments, stating that rising land prices would make it impossible to establish a viable program using Grant's bond proposal. Grant's proposal failed by one vote (Lowry, Stern, Dunn, Reams and Grieve favoring the larger \$35 million package) (Record Chronicle, September 13, 1978; Seattle Times, September 12, 1978; Eastside Journal American, September 12, 1978).

However, Grant, who had never been a strong advocate of farmland preservation since he took office in 1978, backed the \$35 million measure after being assured that specific development right purchase priorities would be included in the program's authorizing ordinance.²⁴ Three purchase priorities were established within the ordinance.

TABLE 3

Development Rights Purchase Priorities in County Program

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Type of Farmland</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Estimated Development Rights Cost</u>
1	Food producing horticultural lands threatened by development	772	\$ 4,020,000
2	Food producing livestock	1,974	\$ 7,580,000
3	Other lands	<u>8,000</u>	<u>\$23,400,000</u>
	TOTALS	10,746	\$35,000,000

The Council also agreed that the County had to purchase 60% of the development rights of first priority lands before bond proceeds could be used to preserve any other lands (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, September 12, 1978; Eastside Journal American, September 12, 1978; Seattle Times, September 12, 1978).

As the Council approached a vote on the agriculture measure, last minute opposition to the program emerged. Both supporters and opponents of the program questioned whether the County (i.e. the Executive Branch) was prepared to administer this new, unique program. According to Grant, there was ". . . skepticism on the part of many Council members over the

Executive's ability to administer this program in an unbiased way to meet the stated intent of the program" (Enumclaw Herald, September 7, 1978). In order to secure some control over the program, the Council approved an amendment that would give final approval of each development right purchase to the Council (Enumclaw Herald, September 21, 1978).

Finally, just before the vote on the program occurred, Tracy Owen introduced an amendment that altered the bond's finance plan. Originally, the \$35 million bond was to be financed over a 40-year payback period. With interest, the total cost of the bonds would be \$85 million. Owens proposed and obtained Council approval of a 20-year payback plan, which reduced total program costs to \$56.3 million. Under Owen's financial plan, a \$50,000 homeowner would be assessed \$7.35 per year for the program (Seattle Times, September 12, 1978; Eastside Journal American, September 12, 1978).

On September 11, 1978, the Council unanimously voted in favor of placing the agriculture PDR program on the November ballot. Bernice Stern called the vote ". . . one of the most significant steps taken by the County Council in our years of life" (Seattle Times, September 12, 1978). The Council's unanimous vote was politically safe: the decision to place the farmlands retention program on the ballot represented only the first step in a 3-step program approval process, and with opinion polls indicating conservatively that over 80% of King

County voters favored farmlands preservation, Council members had few alternatives but to vote for the program.²⁵ As the only bond measure on the November ballot, the PDR program was labeled "Proposition 1."

Conclusions

Much to the joy of agriculture preservation advocates, the 18-month moratorium authorized by Ordinance 3064 had culminated in a \$35 million PDR bond issue that would preserve about 10,750 acres of agricultural land in King County. However, similar to the development of Ordinance 3064 during the 12-month moratorium, the development of the County's new PDR program was guided more by politics than a rational planning process such as that described in Chapter I. As previously described, Ordinance 3064 authorized the 18-month moratorium to halt farmland development temporarily while the Office of Agriculture, in conjunction with county farmers and other citizens, developed a detailed program implementation plan based on thorough evaluations of three alternative programs. Although the Council viewed the Office's studies, which recommended adoption of a PDR program, as inadequate, the Office of Agriculture and County Executive persisted in their efforts, making three appearances before the Council to promote the County Executive's favored program, the purchase of development rights. County Executive authorization of the

Sanger PDR economic impact study came only after months of Seattle Chamber of Commerce lobbying - not at the beginning of the moratorium when its findings could have substantially bolstered the Office of Agriculture's studies and later recommendations for a PDR program. In short, while the Executive branch did conduct studies which in the end supported its favored method of farmland preservation, the views and politics of the County Executive and his staff largely guided events during the 18-month moratorium. Nonetheless, despite the Executive branch's early, unsuccessful political efforts and its later, almost emergency need to hire Dearborn to write the PDR program ordinance, in the end farmland preservation advocates - both executive and legislative - got what they wanted, a program that in theory could permanently preserve County farmlands.²⁶

During the 18-month moratorium growth management became an important issue in King County government and created more support for the County's efforts to preserve farmlands. King County's population was growing noticeably in its suburban areas, and the public was becoming increasingly concerned about "urban sprawl." Many people wanted only to preserve King County's current quality environment by preventing it from becoming a sprawling urban center. Those supporting farmland preservation clearly recognized that a PDR program could effectively retain farmlands as open space and prevent

"wall-to-wall" development in the County. Many farmland supporters used the threat of King County's "Los Angelization" to build support for a PDR program.²⁷ Taking action now to prevent a perceived future problem - themes expounded a decade earlier by Ellis in Metro and Forward Thrust - were familiar to many County residents, and the argument did increase support for a farmland preservation program.

Related to the issue of preventing urban sprawl was the need to preserve farmlands permanently. County officials who wanted to preserve farmlands as open space usually wanted to do so on a long-term, permanent basis. Because a PDR program is in theory capable of accomplishing this objective, the land use technique gained favor among County officials. Further, unlike several other methods of land use regulation, the PDR technique would remove development rights from the land market and place it under the control of King County government, an action which would increase their ability to regulate land use. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, this significant change has important consequences for local realtors and other groups who rely on and prefer a land market unencumbered by government control for survival. This proposed change in King County's land market will be an important cause of realtor opposition to the PDR program in the next chapter.

Testimony during the proposed program's hearings clearly suggested who supported and who opposed the program. Hoppe, a

former candidate for County Executive and current County Assessor, opposed the program because in his mind it represented local government's intrusion into the private land market and rights of private property owners, areas where Hoppe believed government should not be. Gamalielson's testimony represents the first significant opposition from real estate interests. Although four Council members threatened to vote against the PDR program if other Council members did not support their proposal to merge Metro into King County government, Stern's compromise and the perceived undesirable political consequences of voting against the program led to the unanimous Council vote to place the program on the November ballot. The next chapter is an account of the fourth and final milestone in the policy and program development process, voter approval of a PDR program.

Chapter 8 - Chapter Notes

¹Each district had between 6-9 members. The meetings were well attended, except for the Lower Green River Valley, which had only two DAC members in attendance.

²Large, contiguous parcels of farmland would substantially reduce the negative impacts of urban encroachment on the farming community.

³Eminent domain refers to the power local governments receive from the state to acquire land with or without the consent of the landowner for a reason that benefits the public welfare. Landowners are compensated for the loss of their land.

⁴The list is from a summary of the alternatives in a brochure published by People Power Coalition entitled, "Protecting Agriculture in an Urbanizing Area," October, 1977.

⁵This list is derived from King County (1977c) and People Power Coalition (1977a).

⁶The Task Force was an outgrowth of the Puget Sound Land Use Committee which had been active in County agriculture issues since 1974.

⁷Marginal agricultural land is defined as farmland not generally desirable or suitable for productive use.

⁸The County Assessor is an elected position.

⁹When Hoppe's views concerning farmland preservation became known to the Council, Hoppe was excluded from the development of its farmland policies and programs.

¹⁰The County Council approved Motion 3090, which supported the establishment of such agreements. John Keegan of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office had completed drafts of interlocal agreements that would enable a future PDR program to acquire the development rights of agricultural land within city boundaries (Keegan, 1979).

¹¹This film was entitled "Last Farmer at the Market?"

¹²Senator Magnuson was the primary sponsor of the bill. John Spellman, Bernice Stern, Mike Lowry, and Jim Ellis were present in Washington, D.C. for the bill's introduction (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, March 3, 1978).

¹³If the location and characteristics of undeveloped lands are identified, policymakers and planners may improve their understanding of where anticipated population and employment growth may be accomodated.

¹⁴In King County, all bond measures over \$10 million must receive a 60% voter approval. Amounts under \$10 million, or councilmanic bonds, only require Council approval. The Council must approve an ordinance authorizing the bond measure to be placed on the ballot, where they are referred to as "propositions."

¹⁵For example, the Sammamish and Upper Green River Valleys, experiencing acute pressure from development interests to create residential subdivisions on farmland, would qualify for a substantial portion of these funds (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 17, 1978).

¹⁶If the County bought the options but the voters failed to approve the ballot proposition, the County would forfeit the option money.

¹⁷The Enumclaw Plateau contains the largest portion of this acreage, 21,050 acres (Sanger, 1978: VIII-2). If the plateau's participation rate was 60%, the PDR costs would be about \$16,200,000.

¹⁸Dearborn worked under Tom Ryan, Office of Agriculture Director, to serve as a liaison between the Executive Branch and Council.

¹⁹In the draft ordinance, only unincorporated lands were eligible for the PDR program.

²⁰Other organizations supporting the amendment were PLAN, Alliance for Agriculture, Pike Place Merchants Association, Washington Environmental Council, Seattle Audubon Society, and the Lake Washington branch of the American Association of University Women.

²¹Sewered lands are generally more expensive than land without sewers.

²²In general, strongest supporters of the farmlands program were not members of the minority favoring the Metro merger.

²³The County also delayed putting a medical assistance aid car bond program on the ballot because of possible negative influences it might have on the agriculture bond issue.

²⁴By placing priorities within the authorizing ordinance, future councils would have difficulty changing these priorities.

²⁵The steps are: first, Council approval of the program; second, voter approval of the measure; and third, the decisions of King County farmers to participate in the program.

²⁶Whether or not a PDR program can or cannot permanently preserve agriculture land was an unresolved legal question in this policy and program development process.

²⁷For example, Ellis used this argument when he testified before the Council, as noted in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 9

Voter Approval

The First Election: November 1978

Following Council approval of the program, the battle for public approval began. The Seattle Chamber of Commerce's recently formed Growth Management Task Force (GMTF), chaired by Shan Mullin, began a systematic review of the Council's ordinances authorizing the program.¹ On September 13th, proponents of the bond measure appeared before the GMTF to describe the merits of the innovative program.² They were followed a week later by a group of program opponents.³ On the basis of the arguments of the two groups, the GMTF concluded that it could not support the program without certain assurances from the County Council and County Executive that adequate administration procedures for implementation of the program would be prepared before acquisition begins, program participation would be voluntary, and the program could be resubmitted for a public vote only after all bonds are retired (at least 20 years). Following assurances from the County Executive and the Council Chairperson that the GMTF's requests would be satisfied, the task force endorsed the program. Following GMTF review, the program was submitted to the Chamber's Board of Trustees for final review. On October 17th,

the Board also endorsed Proposition 1, contingent on a lengthy set of "understandings:"

1. Participation will be voluntary.
2. No official or administrative moratorium will prevent land owners within eligible districts from free utilization of their property within existing laws and regulations.
3. Administrative procedures will be developed and adopted by the County Executive and the Council before the program is implemented, which includes:
 - a. an application process
 - b. an appraisal process
 - c. a comprehensive land purchase priority system
 - d. a selection system
 - e. purchase plans for each geographical area where purchases are to be made to assess the consistency of proposed development rights purchases on a site specific basis with applicable land use plans
 - f. a monitoring system for the program consisting of:
 - an independent, non-partisan citizens' committee to review the program, and
 - quarterly reports from the Office of Agriculture
 - g. unnecessary increases in the size or budget of the Office of Agriculture.
4. Technical amendments clarifying the voluntary nature of the program, its consistency with comprehensive land use plans, and its duration will be incorporated into King County Ordinance 3872.

Further, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, along with other citizens' groups, offered to monitor the development and implementation of the program on a continuing basis (Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1978b, c, d, e, f).

In short, beginning with Ordinance 1839 the Seattle Chamber of Commrece, with the assistance of Ralph James, had assumed an important review, comment, and evaluation role in

the development of King County's agriculture policies and programs. The Chamber of Commerce was a major advocate for a voluntary farmland retention program, the inclusion of farmers and property owners in the policy and program development process, and the production of PDR environmental and economic impact statements. Because the Chamber of Commerce had established itself as an influential organization with sufficient resources and expertise to perform thorough analyses and evaluations of the County's agriculture retention proposals, County officials clearly recognized that Chamber of Commerce support was necessary to establish the program's credibility among the business community and the voting public. Therefore, County officials were eager to satisfy Chamber of Commerce demands concerning the more detailed characteristics of the County's agriculture retention program. The County Council amended the ordinance in October as outlined by the Chamber of Commerce.

While the County was securing business support of Proposition 1, other efforts to promote the bond issue were also underway. Because County government was prohibited by law to campaign for the proposition, a citizens committee was formed to promote the bond measure among county voters. The group formed to promote the program, named Save Our Local Farmlands Committee (SOLFC), was largely assembled by the key County supporters of the program, John Spellman, Bernice Stern,

Mike Lowry, and Bill Reams, and was composed of a cross-section of business, labor, and environmental interests as well as political figures of both parties: Dan Evans, former Governor; Blair Butterworth, former aid to Governor Ray; Jerry Hillis, land use attorney; Paul Schell, former director of Seattle's Department of Planning and Community Development and candidate for City Mayor; Jim Bender, head of King County Labor Council; and Robert Buck, Vice President of Rainier National Bank. Jim Ellis, Scott Wallace (former King County Commissioner and Snoqualmie Valley dairyman), and Marilyn Ward (citizen activist in social services) became the SOLFC's co-chairpersons. Keith Dearborn was appointed as Executive Director, while Robert Buck served as the committee's treasurer.

The SOLFC had two major purposes: to promote and secure voter approval of the bond issue, and, once passed, to monitor the program's implementation. Formed in late August, the committee's campaign could not begin until after Council approval of the bond issue. The committee's campaign strategy was simply to inform as many persons about Proposition 1 as possible. Committee members felt that the more the public became informed and understood the complex measure, the more the public would be likely to vote for it (Seattle Times, October 18, 1978; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, September 15, 1978; Buckley, 1978; Dearborn, 1978; Ward, 1979; Ellis, 1979).

However, almost from its creation, the SOLFC was plagued by a number of organizational problems.

First, for Jim Ellis, the timing of the election was poor. When Scott Wallace and Keith Dearborn asked Ellis to co-chair the committee, he informed them that a prior commitment to visit India on Ford Foundation business would prevent him from contributing much to the early campaign. Further, because little time remained to mount an organized campaign for the November election, Ellis favored a February vote on the agriculture retention program. Under February election timelines, Ellis, who wanted to raise funds to finance the campaign, would have had sufficient time to collect sufficient contributions. Nonetheless, in spite of Ellis' preferences and previous commitments, he agreed to co-chair the committee. Following an initial solicitation for campaign funds among the business community, Ellis departed on September 20 for a month's stay overseas (Ellis, 1979).

With Ellis away, the SOLFC lacked a clear figurehead, and the campaign became highly disorganized. Scott Wallace, the second SOLFC co-chairperson, was doing an enormous amount of public speaking in support of the proposition and devoted little time to campaign organization. Marilyn Ward, a leader of previous campaigns and the SOLFC's third co-chairperson, was highly involved in raising campaign funds, public speaking, and securing mass media support. However, in sharing the

committee's chairpersonship, Ward was largely excluded from committee leadership work. Frustrated by the chairpersonship's three-way responsibility split and the committee's state of confusion, Ward served more as a woman figurehead for the campaign than as a campaign leader (Ward, 1979).

During Jim Ellis' absence, Keith Dearborn, the committee's Executive Director, had assumed campaign leadership responsibilities. However, the SOLFC was Dearborn's first experience in campaigning and citizen activism following a career in public employment, and he was unable to organize and manage the campaign staff effectively. A clear campaign strategy for winning the election never developed within the committee. Further, because other political camps had already recruited the area's most experienced campaigners before the SOLFC was organized, only an inexperienced pool of campaign workers remained to promote the farmlands proposition. In short, because the SOLFC lacked a single, experienced chairperson backed up by a pool of seasoned campaign staff, the SOLFC campaign was hampered by a slow, confused start (Ellis, 1979; Ward, 1979; Buckley, 1978).

However, in spite of these early handicaps, more organized campaign efforts began to emerge in October, only one month before the election. In addition to the usual campaign brochures, yard signs, fliers, and mass mailings soliciting campaign contributions, the SOLFC organized a number of

promotional activities. A self-guided tour of the county's farmlands was organized to boost the program. In an effort to inform as many voters as possible about the merits of Proposition 1, a "speaker's kit" was developed to help SOLFC campaigners prepare for public speaking engagements.⁴ Vermont Representative James Jeffords, author of the House's agriculture preservation bill, and John Talmadge, the first farmer to participate in a PDR program in New Jersey, were flown to King County to promote the bond issue. Special festivities at the Pike Place Market, local restaurants and County parks were organized in support of Proposition 1. The October issue of Sunset magazine, delivered to over 78,000 subscribers in King County, also published a four page article on the bond issue (Save Our Local Farmlands Committee, 1978; Seattle Times, September 5, 1978, September 24, 1978, November 3, 1978).

However, the SOLFC's key impact occurred through how they promoted the proposition. In developing the County's agriculture policies and programs, the County learned that stronger public support existed for preserving food production horticultural land than for dairy farms.⁵ Taking advantage of this simple fact, the SOLFC developed a campaign that emphasized the horticultural farm. The SOLFC's location within the Pike Place Market represented the committee's strongest attempt to develop this association among the public. SOLFC

brochures often emphasized this element of the program that had strong public appeal, and the SOLFC campaign generated strong, emotional support for farmland preservation among King County voters (Save Our Local Farmlands Committee, 1978; The Weekly, November 22, 1978).

Although the SOLFC had a slow start, the three major opponents to Proposition 1 began their campaigns even later. In mid-October, a citizens' committee called PLAN-B, Preserve Land and Not Bureaucracy, was formed to oppose the bond issue. Composed primarily of real estate interests, the group was organized by two local realtors, Bob Gamalielson and Charles Brown. Norman McCue, a realtor, was the organization's chairman. Although PLAN-B members supported the concept of open space, they were opposed to the proposition primarily because,

1. less costly planning and development methods could achieve the same result;
2. the total overall costs of the program were underestimated;
3. the program would increase the size of King County bureaucracy;
4. the program would disturb the land market and increase the price of housing; and

5. the program could not assure the preservation of farming activity in King County and, therefore, should be promoted as an open space bond issue.

The major thrust of PLAN-B's campaign consisted of numerous public appearances and newspaper interviews by committee members who described PLAN-B's views.⁶ Similar to the SOLFC, the campaign strategy of PLAN-B was to inform and educate the public concerning the negative impacts that a PDR program would cause. While PLAN-B members felt that they were effective in convincing voters to oppose Proposition 1, they also experienced a certain amount of frustration in their efforts. Since the campaign to save farmlands began, the preservation of farmlands had become an increasingly emotional issue. Strong public sentiment for preserving farmlands existed. In opposing the proposition, PLAN-B was often rebuked for its position. According to Brown (Eastside Journal American, October 28, 1978),

To come out against Prop 1 is like coming out against mom and apple pie. . .

Prop 1 is no longer a ballot issue. It's a fad.

Thus, the focus of the PLAN-B campaign was to avoid Proposition 1's emotionalism, and to encourage voters to concentrate on the merits of the PDR program, to become aware of the program's faults, and to vote against the proposition in the November election (Seattle Times, October 12, 1978; Seattle

Post-Intelligencer, October 13, 1978; Eastside Journal American, October 5, 1978, October 13, 1978, October 28, 1978; Gamalielson, 1979; Brown, 1979).

The second major opponent to Proposition 1 was Harley Hoppe. Although Hoppe was never intensively involved in the campaign against the farmlands bond issue, his short participation had a dramatic impact. Researching data within his office and the County's Building and Land Development Division, Hoppe discovered two facts: only 62 acres of land were converted from agricultural zoning to other uses between 1970 and 1978; and annexation of land by cities and towns in the county during the past six years totaled only 3,384 acres, and the bulk of that land was residential, not agricultural, zoned property. In short, recent land use data did not support the County and SOLFC's perceived need for a PDR program to save agricultural land. According to Hoppe, the repeated claims by supporters of the bond issue that County farmland had been disappearing at a rate of 3,500 acres per year ". . . is totally false and cannot be supported by the facts." Hoppe stated that the farmland supporters had made ". . . false, misleading and deliberately deceptive statements" (Seattle Times, October 18, 1978). Further Hoppe (ibid) argued that,

The supporters of the farmlands plan say annexation has been one of the main culprits in the so-called disappearance of farmlands, but the facts just don't support them.

[The State's Open Space Act] has worked well in protecting not only agriculturally-zoned lands, but open spaces that are capable of preserving King County in its natural state without spending \$70 million to do so.

Already, 56% of the county is preserved as green belt and will continue to remain that way. It is fairly obvious that the proponents of Proposition 1 are either misinformed or are deliberately distorting the truth in an effort to gain support.

SOLFC response to Hoppe's argument came from Keith Dearborn, who charged that Hoppe was focusing on the very end of a long period of farmland loss (1945-1978) to say that no problem existed. Because the bulk of the County's farmland was lost in the 1960s, Dearborn stated that (Eastside Journal American, October 30, 1978),

You can't take the 1970s as a benchmark for what's going to happen in the future. We had lost half of the farmland we had here in 1959 by 1974.

In short, because Hoppe and Dearborn's periods differed, each had different interpretations of the data supporting the need for a PDR program. According to one columnist (*ibid*),

Though each is correct, this is one challenge that Hoppe may win. Not because voters agree with either of the protagonists but because the water's been muddied and doubt created on which set of facts is accurate.

The third major opponent of the farmlands program was Frank Ruano, a Seattle realtor noted for his previous activism in community issues.⁸ Although a member of PLAN-B, Ruano's activities were largely independent from the organization's campaign. According to Ruano, Proposition 1 was unnecessary,

because the Open Space Act (providing for current use taxes) together with comprehensive planning could protect the County's agricultural lands from development. In a public debate on the proposition sponsored by the Municipal League, the YMCA, People Power Coalition, and KZAM radio, Ruano and Gary Volchok were pitted against John Spellman and Jerry Hillis.⁹ In the debate, Ruano argued that the language of the ordinance authorizing the program was so loose that County officials could later modify the program to take development rights from farmers who were unwilling to sell them to the County. The program could become involuntary. Emphasizing that the public "think before you vote" and thoroughly examine the authorizing ordinance behind the ballot measure, Ruano burned a copy of the measure during the debate (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, October 21, 1978; Seattle Times, October 21, 1978).

However, Frank Ruano's most notable participation occurred when he filed a complaint with the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office on October 5th charging that the County unlawfully spent public funds to promote the passage of the farmland bond issue. Citing state prohibitions against public expenditures on campaigns, Ruano's complaints focused on two County consultant contracts. First, Ruano charged that Keith Dearborn, who was hired as a County consultant to develop the PDR bond proposal, also received public funds to prepare the campaign in support of Proposition 1. Second, Ruano also

charged that Dan Carlson, who later became Dearborn's chief aid on the SOLFC, also received public funds to develop a brochure (entitled "Old MacDonald -- Still has a Farm") promoting the bond measure. Ruano asked the Prosecutor's Office to invalidate the upcoming ballot and set a new election date for the farmland's proposition (Seattle Times, October 10, 1978).

In response to Ruano's charges, Dearborn argued that his contract earnings were calculated on an hourly basis, permitting clear segregation of campaign work from County services. According to Dearborn (Seattle Times, October 10, 1978),

I kept very complete time records because I was very sensitive to the whole question of improper public expenditures and I can say categorically that I did not charge the County for anything but County work.

On October 23rd, John Keegan, who investigated Ruano's charges, ruled that Dearborn was not in violation of the State's Public Disclosure Act, stating that Dearborn's dual role ". . . may create an appearance of overlap with public employment, but such an appearance is not in violation of the disclosure laws" (Seattle Times, October 24, 1978).¹⁰ Further, Keegan ruled that the "Old MacDonald" brochure did not constitute promotion of the ballot proposal.

Three days later, Ruano charged that the Prosecuting Attorney Office's rulings were a cover-up and forwarded his complaints to the State's Public Disclosure Commission for

further review. John Keegan, who had helped develop the farmland program's ordinances, had discussed the restrictions of the State Public Disclosure Act with Dearborn before he signed his consultant contract. According to Ruano, Keegan's prior involvement in the farmland's program and Dearborn's contract led to his conclusion that a cover-up had occurred. Ruano also charged that the County Executive and the Council had violated the disclosure law by working "to influence the outcome" of the vote on the farmlands measure "beyond being informational" (Seattle Times, October 24, 1978, October 25, 1978). David Clark, assistant director of the Public Disclosure Commission, later announced that Ruano's charges could not be answered before the election because of its late filing date.

In summary, the King County Council had placed a complex, innovative and hotly disputed agricultural retention program on the November ballot for voters to consider. The bond issue's proponents (the SOLFC) and opponents (PLAN-B, Harley Hoppe and Frank Ruano) were bombarding the public with data and arguments to support their respective positions. Faced with this bewildering set of campaign rhetoric and the recent effects of California's Proposition 13 (i.e., the growing nationwide movement to reduce property taxes), the chances of a required 60% voter approval of the bond issue appeared dim. However, like Proposition 1's three successful predecessors, Metro,

Forward Thrust, and the Pike Place Market Referendum, an active citizenry rallied around the issue, and with each passing day of the campaign the chances of the farmland's bond issue securing the required 60% of the public vote seemed to improve.

The most notable support for the bond issue came from King County voluntary associations. Just as numerous voluntary associations had expressed their support for Ordinance 3064 in the County Council chamber over eighteen months ago, even more voluntary associations were expressing their support for Proposition 1. A partial list of associations, media and other organizations supporting the farmlands bond issue is noted in the following table:

TABLE 4

Voluntary Associations, Media and Other Organizations
Supporting the Farmlands Bond Issue

Voluntary Associations & Other Organizations	Media
Seattle Chamber of Commerce	Seattle Times
Municipal League of Seattle and King County	Seattle Post-Intelligencer
League of Women Voters (all King County chapters)	KING (NBC)
Seattle Audubon Society	KIRO (CBS)
Friends of the (Pike Place) Market	KOMO (ABC)
Church Council of Greater Seattle	Kent News-Journal
Oregon-Washington Farmer's Union	Renton Record-Chronicle
King-County Farm Bureau	Auburn Globe-News
Association of King County Historical Organizations	Bellevue Journal
PLAN	American
American Association of University Women (Lake Washington Branch)	Sammamish Valley News
King County Democratic Central Committee	Burien-Highline Times
Metropolitan Democratic Club	Bothell Northshore Citizen
Young Republicans of King County	West Seattle Herald
American Institute of Architects, Seattle Chapter	Federal Way News
Hunger Task Force, Diocese of Seattle	Argus
Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority	The Weekly
American Society of Landscape Architects, Washington Chapter	
Washington Environmental Council	
King County Labor Council	

A number of the voluntary associations worked with the SOLFC to promote the bond issue. For example, on behalf of the SOLFC, both the King County chapters of the League of Women Voters and the Washington Environmental Council (WEC) solicited their members for written endorsements of Proposition 1.¹¹ These endorsements, collected from the League and WEC as well as other voluntary associations, were forwarded to the SOLFC, which assembled them for public release in the final weeks of the campaign. The SOLFC published nearly full page ads listing these endorsements in the Seattle Times, Seattle Post-Intelligencer and other major King County newspapers. Under a bold heading that read, "WHO'S REALLY BEHIND THE FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PROPOSITION?" over 850 persons, including Senators Warren Magnuson and Henry Jackson, County Executive John Spellman and County Council Chairperson Bernice Stern, and almost 50 King County organizations were listed as supporters of the proposition. In short, although the ad created a public image that hundreds of unrelated and unassociated persons had independently endorsed the proposition, the majority of the endorsements were systematically collected from the members of voluntary associations that had previously announced their support for the proposition (Seattle Times, November 4, 1978; Hedmen, 1979; Beamer, 1979).

In addition to their participation in the endorsement ads, the members of voluntary associations also contributed money and volunteered to work on the SOLFC campaign. The League of Women Voters was particularly active in this area. Local League officials knew that if the voters did not understand a bond issue, they would tend to vote against it. Because Proposition 1 was a complex program and had strong League of Women Voters support, League members became active in the SOLFC campaign to inform voters about the merits of Proposition 1. Local chapters sponsored debates on the bond issue, election parties, and a voters' fair in downtown Seattle. Having conducted their own study of farmland preservation issues in March, 1977, the local League of Women Voters membership represented an informed corps of Proposition 1 supporters that helped promote the bond issue throughout the County (Hedmen, 1979).

In short, although lacking well organized leadership and a clear campaign strategy to win the election other than informing and explaining to the public how Proposition 1 would work, SOLFC was under full operation by the end of October. Backed by the efforts of the League and other voluntary associations throughout the County, the campaign was making headway. A GMA Research Corporation telephone poll of 400 King County voters conducted between September 23-26 found that 40% of the polled voters favored the bond issue, while 27.7% were

opposed and 32.1% were undecided (Seattle Times, October 21, 1978). One month later between October 20-26 GMA Research Corporation telephone interviewed 261 registered voters (GMA Research Corporation, 1978). The poll indicated that 46.4% of the sampled voters favored Proposition 1, 29.9% were against, while 23.7% were undecided. While the results of the two polls showed slowly growing support among both supporters and opponents of the proposition, the surveys suggested that among registered County voters the proponents had gained twice as many voters in the one-month period as the opponents had.¹² Thus, the results of the poll indicated that the SOLFC campaign was convincing voters to support the proposition.

However, as in all election campaigns, garnering public support for the proposition had some costs. Although the SOLFC had received hundreds of small contributions from individual supporters and a few large ones from major King County businesses, the SOLFC committee was heavily in debt.¹³ In the week just before the election, it owed about \$25,000.¹⁴ Last minute mass media ads and other campaign activities on the weekend before the Tuesday, November 7th election increased the committee's debt by \$12,000. Keith Dearborn, in an all-out effort to build public support for the proposition, was authorizing campaign expenditures without sufficient cash or in-kind contributions to cover them (Seattle Times, November 3, 1978; Ellis, 1979; Ward, 1979).

PLAN-B, however, had no political debts. The group received a check for \$7,500 from the State Board of Realtors, but it was returned because, the Board and PLAN-B members believed, the contribution might jeopardize the Board's tax status as a nonprofit organization. Nonetheless, PLAN-B received just under \$6,000 mainly from real estate firms, businessmen and farmers. Most of these funds were devoted to mass media ads in the final days of the campaign (Eastside Journal American, October 13, 1978; November 4, 1978).

While the SOLFC and PLAN-B were busily mounting campaigns and receiving much public attention, King County farmers - the intended direct beneficiaries of the program - received little attention from the two campaigns or the mass media.¹⁵ Three reasons account for the farmers' status. First, many farmers were reluctant to express their support or opposition to the program until after receiving a PDR offer from the County (if the bond measure passed). Many farmers feared that any expression of support or opposition might affect their participation status and any future development right appraisals of their land. Second, because 60% voter approval of the proposition was necessary before the program could even begin, and because most of those votes were located in the county's urbanized areas, the two groups concentrated their campaigns in the county's most populated areas, often ignoring farmers in the county's rural areas.

Finally, and most significantly, most of the farmers interviewed by the press were not highly supportive of the measure:

My neighbor just sold his land for \$10,000 an acre. I want to get the most I can out of my land. I'd just as soon sell to the County, but if the proposition fails and someone offered me more money, he'd have it tomorrow (Kent News-Journal, October 18, 1978).

I've got four daughters. They are not interested in farms. I have no one to give the farm to. The people from the County come out here and ask if I'd sell it to a developer. What else can I do? I'd sell. (ibid)

I'll go for the greenbelt if they convince me this program will in fact keep it greenbelt without taxes eating us up. (NorthshoreCitizen, October 16, 1978).

I still haven't seen anything in writing, only verbal information. We need to know a lot more first. (ibid)

The danger I see in Proposition 1 is that you're saving the farmland first. But what about the farmer? You need to save the farmer (University of Washington Daily, November 1, 1978).

Financially, we'd be much better off if we worked to kill this program and sell the property for commercial development . . . Frankly, no landowner is too enthusiastic about it because in 2 or 3 years this land is going to be worth twice as much (Eastside Journal American, June 26, 1978).

Naturally, then, given their opposition and because Proposition 1 needed 60% voter approval, the SOLFC focused on King County's large population of urban voters, especially those living in Seattle, and involved few farmers publicly in their campaign during the election campaign months.

While farmer support of Proposition 1 appeared questionable, other changes were happening in the ballot

itself. Five days before the November vote, the King County Division of Records and Elections announced that Proposition 1 would officially appear on the ballot as, "Proposition-Farmland and Open Space Bonds;" the "1" would not appear on the ballot. The farmlands bond issue was initially labeled as "Proposition 1" because County officials were expecting two other propositions: the Metro merger and a measure to make most County elective posts nonpartisan. When these two proposals never materialized, numbering became unnecessary. Although Keith Dearborn, spokesperson for the SOLFC, and other farmland supporters stated that the ballot change would not affect the vote, bond supporters were nonetheless concerned about the confusion among County voters and subsequent loss of votes that the ballot change could cause (Seattle Times, November 2, 1978).

As election day neared, a 53% voter turnout was predicted for King County (Seattle Times, November 2, 1978). SOLFC members and other supporters of the farmlands bond issue felt optimistic and expected that at least 60% of those who did vote would approve the measure.

On election day a remarkable thing happened. After counting 98.2% of the countywide votes, 166,491 "yes" votes in favor of the proposition and 111,058 "no" votes opposing it, tabulators discovered a 59.986% voter approval rate (Seattle Times, November 8, 1978). With the vote so close, the fate of

the bond measure rested with about 21,000 absentee ballots that were distributed among King County voters. Following a week of suspense focused on the absentee ballots, the final Proposition 1 election tally was 177,984 votes in favor and 119,912 votes opposed - a 59.747% voter approval rate - so the bond issue was barely defeated. If the ballot issue had received just 754 more "yes" votes out of the 297,896 votes cast, the measure would have passed.¹⁶

Ironically, it may have seemed, voters in the farmland areas of the County did not support the program while 65% of Seattle voters did. Only between 40-45% voter approval was obtained in the Enumclaw Plateau, the Upper and Lower Green River Valley. The Upper Snoqualmie River Valley, where Scott Wallace lived and promoted the program, and the Sammamish River Valley had over a 60% voter approval. Dearborn speculated that if all of the county's agricultural areas had farmers promoting the bond issue (like Scott Wallace in the Lower Snoqualmie Valley), over 60% of the voters in these areas would have also supported the program (Dearborn, 1978; Seattle Times, November 28, 1978).

Numerous arguments were advanced to explain why the program had failed. First, much public confusion existed concerning the direct and indirect effects of the proposition. While widespread agreement existed that the proposition would preserve farm open space (a direct effect of the PDR program),

both supporters and opponents of the program disagreed on whether or not the PDR program could preserve farming activity (a predicted indirect effect of the program).¹⁷ During the final weeks of the campaign, the SOLFC was advertising the bond issue as a farmland and open space program in order to maximize public support for the program (Seattle Times, November 4, 1978).

Second, Senator Magnuson's proposed bill authorizing federal funds for PDR programs never materialized. Some voters believed that the County's \$35 million would be insufficient to achieve the County's program objectives.

Third, the City of Seattle was sponsoring the following three initiatives in the November election:

Initiative 13: to allow job and housing

discrimination based on sexual orientation;

Initiative 15: for less restrictive police shooting policy; and

Initiative 16: for a public spay-neutering animal clinic.

Local campaign literature and local newspapers were encouraging "no" votes on all three initiatives. Voters supporting the farmlands proposition could have confused the measure with the three initiatives, causing a number of inadvertent votes against the proposition.

Fourth, some voters were opposed to higher taxes for any reason.

Fifth, some voters opposed increasing government control of land.

Sixth, some voters were against the program because they believed it would increase the County's bureaucracy. Many voters also doubted whether the County had the capability of implementing such a new and complex program. Others opposed the program simply because they believed John Spellman was using it to gain the state's governorship.

Seventh, some voters believed that it was too late to save County farmlands and, therefore, the program was unnecessary.

Eighth, the proposition's small but vocal group of opponents - PLAN-B, Frank Ruano and Harley Hoppe - were effective in convincing voters to oppose the program. Frank Ruano's charges concerning County misuse of public funds, though later dismissed, produced adverse publicity and made Dearborn and the SOLFC begin their campaign on a defensive note.¹⁸ Hoppe's evidence demonstrating only minor recent losses in agricultural land also made the public question the merits or urgent need for the expensive bond issue. PLAN-B members, who attended numerous meetings and participated in several debates, also convinced a sufficient number of voters to oppose the measure.

Ninth, the SOLFC lacked sufficient time, campaign staff, and expertise to promote the proposition effectively.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Proposition 1 was inaccurately promoted as a measure to save horticultural (produce) farms and to maintain low food costs in King County. As one local paper summarized the SOLFC campaign (The Weekly, November 22, 1978),

In the end, the Farmlands committee [SOLFC] ignored such figures [i.e., data supporting the proposition] and played instead on emotions. The Pike Place Market, it was argued, was a cultural resource of the city; it was becoming economically unfeasible for truck farmers to survive and supply the Market with fresh produce; passage of the bond issue would somehow guarantee that the farmers would stay.

Yet this claim doesn't ring true at all. Some 90% of the farmlands in the county are devoted to dairy needs . . . Berries, eggs, and ornamental horticulture all take up more land than vegetables. The Pike Place Market, moreover, survives on a mere 500 acres of farmland. Nor is it realistic to claim that preservation of King County farmlands keeps food costs low in Seattle: Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap Counties all supply Seattle with far more fresh produce than the farms of King County.

In summary, a number of reasons were advanced to explain why 40.253% of the voters did not support Proposition 1 (The Weekly, October 18, 1978, November 22, 1978; Seattle Times, November 28, 1978).

Nonetheless, public response to the close outcome of the election was extremely positive. On the day after the election, the Seattle Times published an editorial stating that (Seattle Times, November 8, 1978),

The heavy yes vote for the County's farm-preservation bond issue . . . indicated that many people are willing to put aside thoughts of property tax revolt if the object of public spending seems worthwhile.

Both John Spellman and Bernice Stern proclaimed that the close vote guaranteed a resubmittal of the proposition, perhaps as early as the following spring. Spellman believed that the campaign was gaining support every day and would have gained the necessary 60% voter approval if there had been more time to explain the complex proposition to the voters (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, November 9, 1978). Shortly thereafter, Bernice Stern declared that, in any case, the Council would not permit development on County farmland until after the bond issue was resubmitted to the voters (Seattle Times, November 15, 1978).

The Second Election: September 1979

While County residents were evaluating the merits of Proposition 1 during the election campaign, Jim Ellis returned in late October from his overseas trip only to find the SOLFC nearly \$40,000 in debt. After Proposition 1's defeat at the polls, Ellis was initially less enthusiastic than County officials about a resubmission of the bond issue. Realizing that "it's hard to bury a dead horse; harder to resurrect one," Ellis (1979) felt that any resubmission must be accompanied by a campaign committee free of debt. Through personal contacts

of local business and community leaders, Ellis began a one-man effort to collect enough contributions to pay off the SOLFC debt. A large number of local businesses responded to his requests. However, in general, less than 10% of the businesses that contributed funds to the SOLFC had an in-depth knowledge of the issues surrounding King County's farmland retention program. The vast majority of business contributions were made for a limited set of reasons:

1. Property owners must be compensated for any public taking of property or property rights.
2. Proposition 1 will provide King County with a quality environment.
3. If the County's environmental quality is enhanced, business will benefit in a number of ways:
 - a. recruitment and retention of employees becomes easier;
 - b. more people will be attracted to the area causing business growth;
 - c. people will be less likely to leave the area during an economic recession, thereby providing the area with a degree of economic stability; and
 - d. future development would become more predictable under a PDR program, allowing business to plan better and reduce its risks.

4. Growth is inevitable in King County; we should prepare for it.

Some contributions were made simply because of their respect for Jim Ellis and his previous community work. By the end of March, 1979, Ellis had eliminated the SOLFC campaign debts.¹⁹

While Ellis was collecting SOLFC contributions, John Spellman, Bernice Stern and the SOLFC co-chairpersons were meeting to develop a strategy for resubmitting the bond issue to the voters. One complaint often raised in the previous election was that the agriculture retention program had come from the County to the people. Like Metro and Forward Thrust, if county residents had really wanted to save County farmlands, they would have developed and proposed the plan to County government officials. Realizing the political benefits of having a citizen's committee sponsor a second PDR program, John Spellman and Bernice Stern announced in mid-December that a citizen's committee would reconsider the farmland proposal to determine if it should be resubmitted to the voters. The two County leaders called for a community effort directed by the three co-chairpersons of the SOLFC, Jim Ellis, Scott Wallace, and Marilyn Ward (Issaquah Press, December 13, 1978).

After the new citizen committee's first meeting on December 19th, it became apparent that the committee would represent a revised version of the Forward Thrust citizen campaign that Jim Ellis had organized in the last decade, as

described in Chapter 5. An identical process would occur with the farmlands proposition. Under Ellis' leadership, citizens would meet to review the merits of farmland preservation and to propose a new program to the County Council. The citizen committee, retaining its former name (Save Our Local Farmlands Committee), was composed primarily of previous Proposition 1-SOLFCA supporters as well as the leaders of PLAN-B.²⁰

The primary mission of the citizen committee was to make recommendations to the County on the best means of preserving farmlands and open space. The committee was expected to review alternative methods of preserving farmlands and open space, and its final recommendations to the County had to be supported by information gathered during the course of the review. In performing this task, the committee members divided into five sub-committees to perform in-depth investigations of the following farmland issues:

1. identifying methods for selecting land to be purchased (i.e. a priority system) that would not be subject to political favoritism;
2. determining how much land should be included in a future program;
3. identifying the location of farmland that should be preserved;
4. calculating the costs of preserving farmland;

5. evaluating the voluntary vs. mandatory nature of farmland preservation programs;
6. simplifying the ordinance authorizing a farmland retention program;
7. determining the best time for resubmitting the bond issue to the voters;
8. evaluating the future of farming in King County;
9. analyzing demographic and development trends in King County;
10. reviewing alternative land use methods of preserving farmland.

In short, committee members were to research comprehensively the major local issues surrounding farmland preservation.

These findings and conclusions would become the framework for the committee's future recommendation(s) to the County on how to preserve local farmlands (Farmlands Study Committee, 1979).

However, for Ellis, the committee had a greater mission than simply formulating a program for County Council review and approval. Perhaps more than anyone else in King County, Ellis realized that population growth was inevitable, and rather than ignore this fact, King County should prepare now to meet the future demands which growth would place on the environment. The key to developing and implementing plans to handle future growth rested, be believed, on achieving a consensus among the area's populace on the most desirable method(s) of accomodating

future growth. The development of a "shared vision" was the key to achieving this consensus (Argus, March 16, 1979),

The capacity to achieve consensus planning in a metropolitan community is difficult where planning power is shared by many governments and where the needs of neighbors are sometimes in conflict with each other or with regional needs. The fundamental need is to develop a shared vision of the future of the area that is widely understood and supported by the people.

To achieve such a vision, citizen organizations and media must clarify and communicate the choices. To implement such a vision, the affected governments must act together. Without joint effort between the cities and the county, no vision can happen in this metropolitan area.

Ellis believed that the results of the November election had demonstrated that ". . . a consensus to hold open space in King County" existed (Argus, February 2, 1979). The main task of his citizen committee was to develop a method of preserving open space farmlands which at least 60% of King County voters could support.²¹ His strategy for accomplishing this task was ". . . to ascertain the principal reasons advanced against the program, examine their validity and see how we might modify the proposition to legitimate arguments made against it" (Argus, February 2, 1979). The basis for his strategy was simple (Argus, March 16, 1979),

People can be turned on by working together against blight, pollution, fear, and poverty. This whole metropolitan area can be greater than the sum of its parts if we will respect the needs of each of the parts in our processes.

The citizen study committee analyzed farmland and open space issues between December, 1978, and May, 1979, and on May 21, 1979, the committee was ready to present its conclusions in the form of a proposed farmlands and open space program to the County Executive and County Council.²² Published in an easy-to-read and attractive notebook, the committee recommended a \$50 million farmlands and open space program to acquire the development rights to 12,000-15,000 acres of farmland over a six year period. The committee concluded that the increased costs of the program were necessary because the price of farmland in King County had recently increased substantially and federal funding (i.e. the Magnuson bill) had not been appropriated for local programs (Farmlands Study Committee, 1979).²³

The committee's program differed in a number of important ways from the previous program. First, the life of the general obligation bond was extended from 20 to 30 years. Although the extension would increase the total amount of interest paid over the life of the bonds, the 30-year payback period assured that annual homeowner taxes would remain low (e.g., \$9.00 per year for homes assessed at \$50,000). Second, the committee changed the program's farmland purchase priorities from a rigid system based on soil type to a system based on both the likelihood of the farmland being developed in the future and the type of farming activity.

TABLE 5

Farmland Purchase Priorities in the Citizen
Committee PDR Program

Priority	Type of Farmland
1	Farmlands either most threatened by development (about 7,000 acres) in the Sammamish and Lower and Upper Green River Valleys, or important for their horticultural food production (about 1,600 acres).
2	The Lower Snoqualmie Valley (about 15,000 acres) and certain farmlands in the Enumclaw Plateau (about 5,200 acres).
3	All other farmlands within King County Agricultural Districts.

Third, the committee developed a detailed, public procedure for selecting properties based on independent appraisals of farmland property values coordinated by a citizen selection committee. Fourth, the committee recommended that development rights of any property could not be purchased for more than its appraised value. Fifth, the program was explicitly voluntary. Committee members predicted a 50% property-owner participation rate (based on the experiences of the PDR program in Suffolk County, New Jersey). Sixth, both the program description and the general obligation bond funding request were combined within a single authorizing ordinance developed by the

committee. This format provided legal assurances that program funds would be expended in accordance with program implementation procedures (Farmlands Study Committee, 1979).

On May 21, 1979, the citizen's committee presented its recommendations to the Council. Led by Ellis, the key members of the committee one-by-one testified in support of the new farmlands program. Included in the parade of committee testifiers were Ralph James (representing the Seattle Chamber of Commerce) and Bob Gamalielison (former member of PLAN-B). Even Harley Hoppe, an outspoken critic of the previous program proposal, had positive comments for the committee's work.²⁴ Only Frank Ruano and a representative of the Seattle/King County Board of Realtors testified in strong opposition to the measure.²⁵ Jim Ellis was publicly credited for forging the consensus of support for the program among such a diverse set of County interests. From all outward appearances, Council approval of the citizen committee proposal appeared virtually automatic. The committee requested that the Council place the measure on the up-coming September 18th primary election ballot (Seattle Times, May 22, 1979).²⁶

However, several significant Council membership changes had occurred since the last November election. First, Mike Lowry, the 1978 Council Chairperson who helped engineer Council approval of the previous ballot measure, was elected as his district's Congressman during the last November election. He

was replaced on the Council by Patricia Thorpe, a Renton City Council member who also supported agricultural land preservation. Second, Ruby Chow, an unenthusiastic supporter of farmlands preservation, had become the Council's new Chairperson. Third, following the citizen committee's presentation, Bernice Stern, believing that Council approval of the package was imminent, had departed on vacation. Thus, only a minority of the Council's eight remaining members (Bill Reams, Bob Dunn, and Patricia Thorpe) were strong supporters of the farmlands program.²⁷ A strong political base for assuring Council approval of the new program did not exist.

Within this political context, a series of important events occurred. First, although Ellis had successfully developed a consensus among his committee members, his Council consensus-building efforts were less successful for a number of reasons. Ellis had publicly criticised the Council's ordinance authorizing the first farmlands ballot measure, stating that it was a poorly drafted document. These statements offended certain members of the Council. In developing and proposing the new program, Ellis failed to work closely with protocol conscious Council Chairperson Ruby Chow, thereby eliminating the possibility of Chow becoming a proponent of the measure and facilitating its passage through the Council. Thus, relationships between Ellis and some Council members were strained and not conducive toward developing a consensus.

Second, some Council members wanted to place the Metro-County consolidation issue (i.e. the "Metro merger" issue that first appeared during Council review of the previous farmlands measure) on the November ballot. However, Karen Marchioro, King County Democratic chairperson and strong supporter of the merger, apparently felt that placing the farmlands measure on the September ballot could result in the merger's subsequent defeat at the polls in November (The Weekly, July 4, 1979). Realizing that Ellis, the founder of Metro, strongly opposed a Metro merger, Marchioro did not wish to see Ellis develop a farmlands political organization in September that could easily be used to battle the Metro merger issue in November. A political plan emerged to trade Council support of the farmlands program for a November ballot containing both the Metro merger and the farmlands program.²⁸ Because Council members supporting the Metro merger were also the Council's least supportive farmlands backers, Marchioro's plan was politically feasible (The Weekly, July 4, 1979).

However, no Council member wished to risk voting against the popular farmlands program to secure a favorable Council Metro merger vote. Therefore, an alternative strategy having public merit was devised to accomplish the political plan's objectives. During the early weeks of June, a coalition of five Council members apparently headed by Paul Bardon proposed that a \$45 million parks and recreation bond be attached to the

farmlands measure to form a \$95 million open space measure.²⁹

The coalition members gave four reasons for their proposal. First, Council members felt that more money was needed to complete parks plans originally begun with Forward Thrust money (Seattle Times, June 12, 1979). Second, a combined farmlands-parks package would enhance the salability of the farmlands measure to suburban voters, who least favored the agricultural program last November because they felt there was nothing in it for them (Eastside Journal American, June 9, 1979). Third, Bardon and Grant argued that their constituents favored parks more than farmlands (Eastside Journal American, June 12, 1979; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, June 13, 1979). According to Bardon, "People in my district [southwest King County] have little interest in - or gasoline for - driving out into the country to buy produce or inspect the landscape" (Eastside Journal American, June 9, 1979). Fourth, Council members Barden and Owen were receiving more criticism from their constituents over unfinished park projects than over dwindling farmlands (Eastside Journal American, June 12, 1979). The coalition also suggested that placing the farmlands measure, together with a parks and recreation bond measure, on the November ballot would benefit both bond programs. Because only a few measures would appear on the September primary ballot in suburban areas of the County, voter turnout might not be sufficient to validate a September bond vote. A bigger

voter turnout would certainly occur in the November election, eliminating the validation problem.

Ellis was strongly opposed to this new turn of events, believing it was too late to put together a \$45 million parks package and sell it to the voters. Although Ellis had no objections to the parks bond idea if the proposal was thoroughly researched and the public was involved in its development, no public input had occurred on the parks issue.³⁰ Without public review the parks bond issue would be placed on the ballot prematurely and cause both itself and the farmlands measure to fail. Ellis also stated that a \$45 million parks bond issue would also preempt his plans to mount a major campaign for \$100+ million open space-parks bond issue next year (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, June 12, 1979).

Reams also opposed the parks measure, stating that it was designed to take advantage of the farmland proposal's popularity. Thorpe opposed the parks bond issue because putting the two measures together ". . . should be done with the same thoroughness, with the same care and with the same fiscal responsibility that we put into the agricultural land issue" (Eastside Journal American, June 12, 1979). Bardon countered these charges, claiming that the two bond issues enhanced each other. The extra park bond money would provide recreation benefits to all areas instead of benefiting only a few farmland owners (Eastside Journal American, June 9, 1979).

When the Council met in formal session to consider the farmland bond issue on June 12, a 4-4 deadlock resulted: Bardon, Grant, Owen and Grieve would not place the farmlands proposal on the ballot without an accompanying parks bond issue; Reams, Dunn, Thorpe and Chow opposed the idea. After the Council recessed, an intensive, informal bartering session began. In a meeting with Bardon and Owen, Reams and Dunn said they would support a reduced parks plan if Owen and Bardon backed the farmland plan. Bardon and Owen refused. According to Bardon, "You need our votes for the [farmlands plan], and we need your votes for our deal, so why don't we just do both together . . . put 'em both on the ballot together" (Seattle Times, June 12, 1979). Following that exchange, Reams, Ellis, Bardon, and Owen met. Reams told Ellis that Bardon and Owen wanted assurances that the farmland backers would not block the parks proposal if the Council went ahead and approved the farmlands measure. Ellis replied that he would consider supporting the parks plan, but only if it was on the November ballot and the farmlands issue was on the primary. Again, no deal. At that point, Ruby Chow reconvened the Council. Bardon, Grieve, Owen, Grant and Chow voted to defer a decision on the farmlands measure until the following week. The Council requested that Spellman contact the county's 29 cities and forward their ideas concerning parks and open space projects to the County Executive by the following Friday, four days later.

The Council's actions were met with strong reprisals from all corners of the public sector. Seattle Mayor Royer and Seattle City Council President John Miller immediately sent a letter to the Council to post-pone their parks plan for at least a year. The Seattle Chamber of Commerce also opposed the Council's action, as did the Seattle Master Builders Association, the Municipal League, numerous environmental groups and Congressmen Mike Lowry, Joel Pritchard, Norm Dicks, and Don Bonker. The local press was also critical of the Council's actions, as the following excerpts from editorials in Seattle's two major newspapers suggest:

A badly needed program to insulate King County farmlands against commercial development pressures has been placed in jeopardy by irresponsible positions taken by four members of the County Council³¹ (Seattle Times, June 13, 1979).

King County's farmland preservation program is in danger of being killed off by a hunger for political pork that is warping the judgments of five members of the County Council (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, June 14, 1979).

Further, a total of 15 of King County's 29 cities refused to cooperate with the Council's effort to put together a parks program.

On June 16th, Spellman gave the Council a list of proposed park and recreation projects submitted by cities totalling more than \$70 million. However, although Spellman had performed the tasks requested by the Council, he also opposed their actions

and lobbied extensively for them to keep the two issues separate.

One week later, on June 18, the Council met again. Amazingly, the parks bond issue was not even mentioned. Ellis and his committee gave testimony in support of farmlands preservation. Frank Ruano and a representative of the Seattle/King County Board of Realtors, the farmland bond issue's only opposing group, testified against the measure. The Council, led by Bardon and Grant, spent four hours making minor changes in the program.³² Finally, the measure passed 8-0. Although Grant warned the SOLFC supporters that the required number of voters for validation might not vote in the primary, Ellis convinced the Council that the measure's popularity would increase voter turnout and assure validation, and it was placed on the September 18th primary ballot (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, June 19, 1979; Seattle Times, June 19, 1979).

In short, following public criticism from a number of sectors, the four Council members had quickly reversed their previous position favoring a joint farmlands-parks bond issue in the November election. A number of events were critical in forcing this reversal to occur (The Weekly, July 4, 1979). First, Congressman Mike Lowry and Seattle Mayor Charles Royer, both democrats, pressured Marchioro to change her position. Second, Pat Thorpe's strong stance opposing piggybacking the

two bond issues affected the favorable Council vote. Third, the farmlands backers threatened to force a vote on the farmlands-parks debate in the Council. Fourth, Ellis retreated from the debate's foreground. Fifth, John Spellman intensively lobbied Council members for their support. Sixth, an informal commitment was made to plan an open space bond issue formed by the County (as opposed to an Ellis-led group). Seventh, strong and immediate public criticism of the park bond supporters' actions caused them to reverse their votes. Eighth, Ruby Chow, Council Chairperson, skillfully allowed everyone to have an opportunity to express their views in the deadlock, promoting cooperation and agreement. Finally, the refusal of the County's cities to cooperate with the park bond supporters made the political ploy backfire (The Weekly, July 4, 1979).

Thus, the only group opposing the farmlands issue was a small faction of realtors, who opposed the plan because it was ". . . a needless public expense that could unduly limit growth and lock the County into a perpetual land-use plan which might prove counterproductive in the future" (Seattle Times, August 26, 1979). They were joined in July by Richard Louthan, a Maple Valley attorney, who filed a lawsuit to prevent the farmlands bond issue from appearing on the ballot. Louthan believed the measure required a new EIS, and he felt that a public PDR program constituted an unlawful lending of the

public credit. However, Loutham's lawsuit was dismissed before the election (Seattle Times, July 11, 1979).

Searching for an alternative method to prevent the farmlands issue from being approved in September, Frank Ruano announced his plans to protect farmlands without any public expense. If voters rejected the September 18th farmlands bond issue, Ruano promised to prepare and circulate a state initiative to place strict legal constraints on the future development of County farmlands. Patterned after Washington State's 1971 Shoreline Management Act (which provides strict controls over waterfront and riverfront development), Ruano's plan would use state constitutional powers to prevent farmlands from being developed.

Ellis (Seattle Times, September 6, 1979) personally responded to the plan:

It is impractical and inequitable. It would require state legislation, and that is pie-in-the-sky. Hearings were held on just that idea less than 2 years ago, and the idea met with stiff opposition, especially from realtors. In light of that, I can't really take [Ruano's] proposal seriously, coming from a realtor. To propose it now, less than two weeks before the election, strikes me as a pretty thin kind of charade. On top of that, it's terribly inequitable because it wouldn't compensate landowners for what rightfully is theirs . . . It would deny many of them their retirement.

For Ellis, when a majority has legislative approval (i.e., King County Council approval) to act in the public interest, the will of the majority should prevail over any minority.

Specifically, Ellis (Argus, March 16, 1979) believed that,

When constitutionally guaranteed rights are at stake, the minority must be protected from the majority; however, in matters of public improvements or public preference there has to be a way for the majority to carry out its will when a determined minority opposes that action.

The capacity to act is crucial during a time of growth. This is the time when public facilities are strained and demands to relieve congestion, pollution or crowding are heaviest; it is also the time when changes occur that have an impact on the environment.

Balancing these goals and accomodating them to the public purse is fundamentally the duty of legislative bodies rather than judges or administrators.

Thus, while Ellis' citizen planning approach was based on consensus, unanimous agreement was unnecessary to implement public programs.

However, perhaps the strongest threat to the farmlands measure emerged in August when it was discovered that no off-year election primary in the past decade had attracted more than 21% of the County's registered voters to the polls. The farmlands measure needed a 22% voter turnout for the validation, and at least 60% of those 22% must favor the agriculture plan (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, August 20, 1979). Thus, the SOLFC backer's main problem was of their own making: getting enough voters to the polls during the September 18th primary. Faced again with a late campaign start (due to the lack of any organized opposition to the program), the SOLFC's strategy was to capitalize on the Seattle vote. Several Seattle city council positions were being contested, and SOLFC

members were optimistic that the Seattle city council races would help generate sufficient Seattle voter turnout to validate the election. However, key supporters of the farmlands issue were not available to assist the campaign. Moreover, Jim Ellis, suffering from recent health problems, was unable to help the campaign, and John Spellman would be at a week-long State Bar Association convention in Vancouver, British Columbia (Seattle Times, September 16, 1979).

Thus, when election day arrived and the votes were tabulated, 77% of the voters had cast ballots in favor of the farmlands bond issue. However, while 22% of the County's registered voters did turnout for the election, 13% of the voters who cast ballots in other races failed to vote on the farmlands measure (Seattle Times, September 20, 1979), thereby again invalidating the farmlands vote.

The Third Election and Voter Approval: November 1979

Ruby Chow immediately ordered a special Council session to consider an emergency ordinance that would place the measure in the upcoming November general election. However, in order to call a special session, the County Charter required that at least five Council members must approve of the meeting through a signed statement. Further, because Dunn was on vacation in London while Owen was on a hunting trip elsewhere in the state, State law required both to submit a waiver that they had no

objections to the meeting. However, because of State laws requiring that a minimum of 45 days must elapse between the date a proposition is placed on the ballot and the date of the election, the Council had to approve a new November farmlands ballot by September 21, only three days after the primary. Further, because at least seven Council votes were necessary to place the measure on the November ballot, all County Council members had to approve the action.

Following strong lobbying efforts by Spellman and Stern to secure Council support for the resubmission, the Council convened on September 21st to decide the fate of the bond issue. Everyone within the Council Chambers knew that the fate of the bond issue hinged on the vote of one man, Paul Bardon. In the November, 1978, election and the September primary, the farmlands issue was known as Proposition 1. During the Summer of 1979, the Council had approved placing the Metro merger issue on the ballot as Proposition 1. Being a staunch supporter of the Metro merger, Bardon informed the farmland supporters that he would not vote in favor of placing the farmlands bond issue on the ballot if it replaced the Metro merger as "Proposition 1."³³ Although farmlands backers opposed changing the farmlands program ballot name, they desperately needed Bardon's support. The farmland proponents capitulated to Bardon's demands and the Council again voted unanimously (7-0) to place the farmlands issue on the ballot

for a third time. This time the measure had the ballot title of "Proposition 3" (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, September 21, 1979; Seattle Times, September 20-22, 1979).

By the November election practically every prominent official in King County had endorsed the farmlands proposition. A wide array of local businesses had contributed to the SOLFC in support of the bond issue.³⁴ Local organizations, voluntary associations, and public officials were almost unanimous in their support of the measure, although Frank Ruano was still leading a campaign against the proposition. He questioned the large corporate and individual campaign contributions received by the SOLFC. According to Ruano (Seattle Times, November 4, 1979) the large contributions,

. . . reveal a conspiracy of banks, utilities and speculators who hope to profit [from the measure].

I am completely convinced that this [farmlands preservation] money is going to wind up in the hands of the banks and speculators, not the farmers. Why else would these big-money interests be kicking into this campaign?

Ruano's views were contradicted by Ellis, who solicited most of the contributions. He felt that most contributions were the result of the donors' sincere interest in the future of their community and did not reflect any potential personal or corporate gain (Seattle Times, November 4, 1979).

With increasing widespread support for the PDR program, 63% of the voters approved the farmlands and open space bond

issue in the November election, and for the first time anywhere in America, the voting public had approved the public purchase of development rights as a means of preserving its local farmlands (Seattle Times, November 7, 1979).³⁵

Conclusions

Public programs funded by voter-approved bonds rarely make three ballot appearances before being ratified. A number of factors explain why the PDR program repeatedly appeared on the ballot. First, the number of individuals and groups opposing the PDR program gradually declined throughout the campaign.³⁶ After the first election, Ellis formed a citizen committee, which mainly consisted of PDR supporters (most of whom were former SOLFC members) and the leaders of PLAN-B, as an instrument for building support for the PDR program. Despite arguments opposing the purchase of development rights technique by PLAN-B leaders, Ellis nullified these disagreements by assisting largely pro-farmland committee members formulate a new PDR program which addressed most of the needs represented on the committee. By using cooptation successfully to convert first election opponents into PDR proponents, Ellis eliminated the major organized opposition to the bond measure.

In addition to the conversion of PLAN-B leaders, Ellis and his committee members also involved County Assessor Harley Hoppe in their farmlands study. Although in the end Hoppe

remained opposed to the PDR program, he praised the committee's proposal and did not campaign against the measure in the ensuing elections.

With Hoppe effectively silenced in the campaign, only Ruano and a few other local realtors campaigned against the bond measure. However, Ellis personally countered their opposition to the program, and in the end these remaining opponents did not prevent voter-approval of the farmlands program. In short, by reducing the number and power of the PDR opponents, Ellis and other PDR supporters became a virtual political monopoly, inundating voters with pro-farmland retention information and appeals to support the PDR bond measure. Though loosely organized, the pro-farmlands monopoly successfully maintained political momentum toward achieving final voter approval of the bond measure across the three elections.

While Ellis and other farmland proponents effectively decreased the number of individuals and organizations opposing the measure, they simultaneously increased the number of persons and local organizations publicly endorsing the program, the second major factor explaining the farmland program's three ballot appearances. Banfield (1961) states that the "representativeness" of a program is judged in part by the number and character of the civic and voluntary associations supporting it. If a large number of public endorsements are

secured, voter approval becomes more likely. Public endorsements became a central focus of the campaign to retain farmlands. Although numerous organizations and individuals volunteered their endorsements of the program, a central part of the SOLFC campaign was collecting and publicizing endorsements from as many organizations and individuals as possible.

A key group in the endorsement campaign was the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, which endorsed the proposition after the County agreed to make several changes in its original PDR program. Farmland retention leaders apparently believed that the concessions were worth an official Chamber of Commerce endorsement and would subvert possible business opposition to the PDR program - opposition which could ultimately defeat the bond measure at the polls.

Along with business support, it appeared that most King County groups active in civic affairs had endorsed the bond measure, and their memberships also became a major source of individual endorsements during the campaign. By printing lists of these endorsements in nearly full-page newspaper ads, the SOLFC effectively used the program's popularity among some elements of King County to build and sustain support for the program among voters across the three elections.

Clearly, Ellis played an important role in reducing the proposition's opposition and building support for the program.

In his farmlands study committee and throughout the last two election campaigns Ellis encouraged his citizen committee members, other local organizations and voters to support the program for a variety of reasons. Ellis and SOLFC members knew that people supported the PDR program for a number of reasons, such as a means of preserving open space, managing urban growth, preserving farming activity, or keeping local farmers at the Pike Place Market. Realizing that some people agreed with some of these reasons but disagreed with others, Ellis encouraged citizen committee members, local organizations, and voters to endorse the program for the reasons they agreed with - a practice which probably kept some criticisms of the innovative program from being voiced during the campaign. In short, while the outcome of Ellis' committee and SOLFC campaign suggested that a united front supporting agricultural land retention existed, farmland backers were a diverse group, supporting the proposition for different reasons.

While business support of the PDR program may have been the result of Seattle Chamber of Commerce intervention in King County's policy and program development process, Ellis also garnered business leader support for the program. Business leaders virtually financed Save Our Local Farmland Committee operations, and they presumably influenced Seattle Chamber of Commerce endorsements of both PDR programs. As previously described, while most business leaders did not understand the

complex PDR program, they contributed funds and supported the program primarily because Ellis had requested their support and the program benefited and was consistent with business interests. However, in evaluating the relative importance of these two reasons for business leader support, Ellis' business leadership contacts established through Metro and Forward Thrust and his track record in creating public programs that benefit business appear to be the major reason for their support (Seattle Sun, July 30, 1980).

However, while Ellis was instrumental in financing the campaign and developing support for the farmlands program, he failed to win Council approval of his committee's farmland program. Initially blocked in the Council, widespread public criticism of Council members who opposed the new farmlands program was needed to win the Council's unanimous approval of Ellis' bond measure.

Finally, the close returns in the first two elections also explain why the PDR program was repeatedly resubmitted to the voters. Voter support for the bond measure was never below 59% across the three elections. If the voter approval rate was less, say 50% or even 55%, PDR program leaders might have conceded defeat. With the outcomes always so close, they probably believed resubmitting the bond measure was highly justified.

Although the PDR program was finally approved at the polls, nothing - not even the implementation of a PDR program - is guaranteed in an American urban political system. As we shall see in the next chapter, those still opposed to the PDR program continued to be an important force in King County's political system.

Chapter 9 - Chapter Notes

¹The agricultural program was authorized by a set of three ordinances, 3870, 3871, and 3872. Ordinance 3870 amended Ordinance 3064 to include certain non-sewered incorporated lands in the program. Ordinance 3871 placed the \$35 million bond issue on the November 7th ballot. Ordinance 3872 gave the King County Executive the authority to develop administrative procedures and purchase development rights of lands volunteered for the program, subject to the approval of the County Council.

²The proponents included Tom Ryan, Director of the King County Office of Agriculture, Susan Agid of the King County Prosecutor's Office, Jim Ellis, Scott Wallace, a former King County Commissioner and currently a Snoqualmie Valley dairy farmer, and Blair Butterworth, former aid to Governor Ray.

³The opponents included County Assessor Harley Hoppe, and Bob Gamalielson and Mike Cooper, representing the Seattle/King County Board of Realtors.

⁴The kit contained a history of the program and information supporting the proposition.

⁵This stronger support is reflected in the high priority which horticultural farms have in the authorizing bond ordinances.

⁶PLAN-B initially had little campaign funds but last minute contributions totalling just under \$6,000 were used in a newspaper and radio advertisement campaign against Proposition 1.

⁷Jerry Hillis, Seattle land use attorney, stated that agriculture conversion was slowed in the '70s because of the region's slumping economy.

⁸Ruano is most noted for his earlier opposition to the construction of King County's multi-purpose domed stadium.

⁹Hillis was a land-use attorney supporting the measure, while Volchok was a realtor specializing in industrial land sales in the Kent Valley. Volchok also appeared in the "Last Farmer in the Market?" film as an opponent to the proposition. Although Harley Hoppe was originally scheduled to appear in the debate, a late cancellation resulted in Volchok's appearance (Kern, 1979).

¹⁰The state law permits public employees to participate in election campaigns (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, October 24, 1978).

¹¹The King County Chapters of the League of Women Voters had over 900 members. Keith Dearborn, a board member of the WEC, requested and obtained the group's campaign assistance (Hedmen, 1979; Beamer, 1979).

¹²Sampling error could either slightly increase or decrease this ratio.

¹³The top business contributors were Seattle-First National Bank (\$2,000), Rainier National Bank (\$1,500), and Pacific Northwest Bell (\$900). The SOLFC had received about \$15,000 in cash contributions and \$15,000 in-kind contributions (Seattle Times, November 3, 1978).

¹⁴PLAN-B did not spend more than it received in campaign contributions (Seattle Times, November 3, 1978; Eastside Journal American, November 4, 1978).

¹⁵Scott Wallace, Snoqualmie Valley dairyman and SOLFC member, was receiving much attention even though his farm was ineligible for any PDR funds. He was influential in securing thousands of dollars in SOLFC campaign contributions from Snoqualmie Valley Farmers (Save Our Local Farmlands Committee, 1978).

¹⁶Already burdened by a large debt, the SOLFC declined its legal right for a recount of the votes, which the committee would have to pay for.

¹⁷In order to preserve farming activity, farmers must participate in the program and invest the development rights funds which they receive from the County back into their farms. Under the program's guidelines, farmers could freely spend their development right money any way they chose. However, because the PDR program would reduce the price of farmland, young people could afford to enter farming as a career, thereby perpetuating the industry. In short, because the validity of these and other opposing arguments was unknown, much confusion existed concerning what the program could and could not do. As previously described, however, the Sanger Report (1978) indicated that a PDR program would increase farming activity in King County.

¹⁸The State Public Disclosure Commission unanimously dismissed all of Frank Ruano's charges after the election (Seattle Times, November 22, 1978).

¹⁹This list is compiled from seventeen interviews of businessmen whose companies contributed \$500 or more to the SOLFC campaign. The interviews were conducted in March and April, 1979.

²⁰About 90 citizens with diverse backgrounds participated on the committee. Membership was open to anyone who wished to serve. On December 19, 1978, the Committee, meeting without PLAN-B members, agreed to invite the group to join the committee. Minutes of committee meetings document the committee's name (Save Our Local Farmlands Committee, 1979).

²¹In other words, it was unnecessary for all voters to support all elements of the program, but the program must contain elements which at least 60% of the voters could agree with.

²²The members of the citizens committee had unanimously approved the proposal (Farmlands Study Committee, 1979). A major difference between the November, 1978, proposal and the committee's proposal was the clear recognition that the program was both a farmlands and open space program.

²³The committee changed its name from "Save Our Local Farmlands Committee" to "Farmlands Study Committee," apparently to differentiate the committee's pre-election membership from its post-election membership.

²⁴The citizens committee consciously involved the Assessor's Office in the development of the new proposal. His office contributed important estimates of King County agricultural land market values to the committee's study of the county's agricultural system. Hoppe commented that "(u)nlike the first time around, the figures that are being used [by the committee] are reasonable and well substantiated" (Seattle Times, May 17, 1979). Further, Hoppe stated that the committee did an "excellent job" in drafting the proposal. However, Hoppe stated that he still could not support the concept of a public farmland preservation program.

²⁵This time around, King County realtors were divided on the issue. Many realtors believed the program could only improve their business, and several had contributed to the SOLFC or expressed their support for the measure (Personal interviews of six realtors who were active in the campaign and/or had contributed to the SOLFC).

²⁶Committee members did not want the measure to conflict with any other measures that might appear within the November general election.

²⁷Other Council members were Tracy Owen, Paul Bardon, Ruby Chow, Gary Grant, and Bob Greive.

²⁸Metro merger backers thought their campaign would be helped if the Metro merger appeared on the same ballot as the farmlands issue.

²⁹The coalition consisted of Bardon, Owen, Grant, Grieve, and Chow. Other Council members present at that time were Reams, Dunn, and Thorpe.

³⁰Ellis believed that the public must be involved in any program if an additional tax is involved (Eastside Journal American, June 9, 1979).

³¹These Council members were Paul Bardon, Tracy Owen, Gary Grant, and Bob Grieve.

³²Ellis stated that the changes were constructive improvements to the measure (Seattle Times, June 19, 1979).

³³Metro merger advocates believed they could get 10% more votes simply by having the well-publicized farmlands' "Proposition 1" title (The Weekly, September 26, 1979).

³⁴Even the Boeing Company, King County's biggest employer and a major developer of farmland in the Green River Valley, had contributed (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, September 7, 1979).

³⁵Although Suffolk County, New York implemented the first PDR program to retain farmland in America, their PDR program was approved by the county's legislative body, not county voters. The Metro merger proposition was defeated in the November, 1979 election.

³⁶By "campaign" I mean the period between September, 1978, when the Council first placed the PDR program on the ballot, and November, 1979, when it was finally approved by the voters.

CHAPTER 10

Court Challenges Stymie Farmland Program

With the farmlands preservation program finally approved by the voters, King County officials prepared an initial \$30 million bond offering to begin the program. However, when they tried to sell the bonds at an 8% interest rate, the maximum amount permitted by State law, market interest rates exceeded this limit, and investors avoided the County's offer in favor of other bonds offering double-digit interest rates. Realizing that other Washington counties selling bonds probably faced similar interest rate problems, County officials pressured State legislators to increase the interest rate ceiling to 12%. On April 7, 1981, six days after the State raised the limit, King County agreed to sell \$30 million in farmland bonds to a financial consortium headed by Banker's Trust Company of New York at an 8.4436% interest rate (The Weekly, November 5, 1980; Seattle Times, May 9, 1980, May 29, 1980).

The bond sale was soon challenged in a lawsuit filed by Chalmers Ekness, a partner in an architectural and engineering firm, and Kenneth Rogstad, president of Blackstock Homes, in King County Superior Court. Attorneys for Ekness and Rogstad argued that the 8% interest limit in effect when the voters approved the farmland bonds should prevail, not the 12% ceiling

later passed by State legislators. They stated that up to \$9 million could be saved by enforcing the 8% limit. County attorneys defended the sale, arguing that the ballot proposition only stated that the interest rate would not exceed the amount permitted by State law. When the bonds were sold, the 8.4436% rate was legal (Seattle Times, May 9, 1980, May 29, 1980).

The King County Superior Court ruled in favor of the County, but Ekness and Rogstad appealed their case to the State Supreme Court, which overturned the lower court's decision on June 3, 1980. The decision nullified the \$30 million bond sale, and the County could not sell farmland bonds for more than 8% interest without voter approval. Because achieving voter approval might be difficult, County officials decided to wait until interest rates fell below 8% before offering the bonds again (Seattle Times, May 29, 1980, June 3, 1980; The Weekly, November 5, 1980).

In addition to the Ekness and Rogstad lawsuit, Richard Louthan, who had opposed the PDR program during the campaign, also challenged the vote to save County farmlands in a lawsuit before the State Supreme Court. Louthan questioned the program's constitutionality, arguing that the County cannot make payments to farmers unless it receives something of value in return. According to Louthan, development rights have no value because the County could preserve farmlands through other

land use controls without cost to the public. On June 3, 1980, the court upheld the program's constitutionality, stating that development rights are (Seattle Times, October 3, 1980),

. . . beyond question a valuable right in property. Since the County acquires a valuable right for funds it expends, there is no merit in the contention the expenditure of funds . . . is in reality a gift [to farm owners].

While the ruling heartened County officials, market interest rates still exceeded 8%, and, therefore, they could not sell bonds to implement the program (Seattle Times, May 9, 1980, May 29, 1980, June 3, 1980, October 3, 1980).

Later that month a third lawsuit challenging the election results was filed in County Superior Court by Peter Bement, a Seattle resident; along with Philip Henning, a realtor; Jerry Marcy, a real estate broker; Ted Peterson, former 44th district State senator; and Fred Gilbert, president of Property Owners Protective Organization. The group charged that Spellman and other County officials violated State laws in promoting the farmlands bond issue and the SOLFC did not report its campaign contributions properly. With the new Bement lawsuit and the State Supreme Court's decision to overrule the previous bond sale, bond firms and investors were reluctant to submit new bids for a farmland bond offering, dashing all County hopes of a quick program start. Spellman and County Council Chairman Bill Reams said the lawsuit ". . . will extend the time and

increase the cost for the planned acquisition of farmland development rights" (Seattle Times, June 6, 1980; The Weekly, November 5, 1980).

Later that year, Bement's attorney and his co-plaintiffs withdrew from the lawsuit, leaving Bement as the lone challenger. Citing lack of funds as the reason for his attorney's departure, Bement continued with his lawsuit, serving as his own lawyer. His court challenge was based on the following arguments:

1. King County is not losing farmland, as its proponents contend.
2. Dairy farmers, not the public, will be primary beneficiaries of the program.
3. Spellman used his position to promote the bond issue.
4. Spellman used County funds to print and distribute publications supporting the bond program.
5. Spellman sponsored a free luncheon in his office to promote the program.
6. Spellman allowed the County to pay Dearborn consulting fees after leaving a County job.

Soon after Bement's case began, the court rejected several of the issues presented by Bement, and his case was dismissed, ending the challenge (Seattle Times, October 28, 1980, November 25, 1980, November 27, 1980).

In short, one year after voter approval, the farmland program had not begun, stymied by high market interest rates. Ironically, these same high interest rates were slowing farmland development in the county. Further, because the County Council was rejecting all attempts to rezone farmlands for development, not one acre of farmland had been developed since the election. Thus, the two moratoriums, the long voter approval campaign, and the more recent court challenges had effectively prevented farmland development from 1976 through 1980 (The Weekly, November 5, 1980).

In closing, it should be noted that widespread public support for the PDR program probably still existed at this date. Local efforts to save farmlands were officially recognized when the Seattle-King County Municipal League bestowed its Outstanding Citizen award to all those who had served on the committee to preserve local farmlands. In addition, although John Spellman was elected as Washington's next governor in November, 1980, his Council-appointed replacement, Ron Dunlap, continued local efforts to sell the farmland bonds. At the time of this writing, interest rates remained above 8%, but County officials remained optimistic that they would soon fall below the limit (Seattle Times, June 7, 1980, February 25, 1981).

Conclusion

The events in this chapter underscore just how unpredictable political processes and outcomes may become. When a majority of voters approve a public program at the polls, the majority normally expects implementation to proceed without undue delay. In the United States where open and accessible political and judicial institutions exist, those who fail to achieve their purposes in the political process may later become recusant minorities seeking redress in the judicial system. As witnessed in this chapter, minority court challenges may stymie majority preferences for some years, if not permanently. Thus, it would appear that as long as a minority with sufficient resources does not concede to the will of the majority, it may legally challenge political outcomes in court, making even voter-approved outcomes all too uncertain. In this context, unpredictability reigns and the development and implementation of programs in a predetermined, step-by-step manner become virtually impossible.

In the next chapter, the information presented in this part is examined to answer the questions posed in the first chapter of this study.

PART IV: Who Governs? Who Plans?

CHAPTER 11

Who Governs?

As described in Chapter 1, in U.S. metropolitan areas, planning is performed within and is dominated by the political process, and an understanding of planning activity cannot be achieved without first understanding how decisions are made in the political process. Given this relationship between the planning and the political processes, my purpose in this chapter is to examine how decisions are made in my case study, or "Who governs, how, and to what effect?" In the first section of this chapter I present a methodology describing how I will answer the question, Who governs?, which is formally addressed in a second section.

The Methodology

As described in Chapter 2, different community power theorists offer different concepts of power and influence and different methods of examining these concepts and decisionmaking in the American community. Given the present lack of agreement in this literature, I have borrowed some of their ideas but developed a separate methodology to examine how decisions are made in my case study. The methodology consists of the following steps.

The first step is the identification of important decisions. As discussed in Chapter 2, community power theorists generally agree that decisionmaking tends to be incremental, a conclusion supported by events in my case study. Incremental steps in this study often reflected major decisions in the process, each step building upon the outcome, or decision, of its predecessor. The major decisions in this case study are as follows:

1. The decision to establish farmland retention as an important problem to resolve (or alternatively, who initiated this process?).
2. The decision to reject zoning as an acceptable land use technique for retaining King County agricultural land.
3. The decision to implement a 12-month moratorium on farmland development.
4. The decision to implement an 18-month moratorium on farmland development.
5. The decision to establish the purchase of development rights (PDR) as the preferred method of King County farmland retention.
6. The decision to approve King County's PDR program.¹

In the second step each of these decisions is examined.

The examination of each decision listed is guided by the

following questions: Who participates?; How do these participants influence the decision?; and Whose views prevail? In this analysis "power" refers to a person or interest group's access to or command of resources, while "influence" refers to the exercise of power in the decisionmaking process (Clark, 1968; Magill and Clark, 1975). This analysis appears in the next section of this chapter.

In the final step the question "Who governs?" is answered. In general, possible answers to this question will vary between two extremes: either a single interest group or person (i.e., a ruling elite) or all participants in the case study (i.e., a democracy). Along this continuum many other, different answers are also possible. To find where this case study falls along this continuum, the following procedure is applied.

First, answers to the question "Who influences decisionmaking?," "Who actually decides?," and "Whose views prevail?" are compared across the six decisions. If a single person or interest group consistently influences events, makes key decisions, and prevails across the six important decisions in the study, that person or group governs and constitutes a ruling elite. If different persons or interest groups consistently influence, or decide or prevail across the decisions, who governs is defined in terms of these differences among the participants. On the other hand, if different persons or interest groups influence, decide or prevail at

different times in the case study, few (if any) groups or persons govern overall. In short, the answers to who governs are based on three dimensions of decisionmaking, Who influences? Who decides? and Who prevails? These dimensions are evaluated across the six important decisions to determine who governs, how, and to what effect in the case study. Using this methodology I find the following answers.

The Analysis

Decision 1: Establishing Farmland Retention as an Important Problem. The evolution of this decision was treated in Chapter 6. As the material presented in this chapter indicates, few sources exist which document how farmland retention became a local problem. Outside of Council ordinances, few County records on the subject exist. Local newspapers did not contain detailed descriptions of the problem's development. My interviews did not provide additional information regarding this early period in the case study. In fact, most respondents knew very little about how the problem emerged. In short, because farmland retention was not an important issue early in the case study, detailed information about its origin as a public issue does not exist.

Nonetheless, the information presented in Chapter 6 does answer at least some of the questions posed in the previous section. Specifically, the evidence suggests that farmland

retention became an important issue through a series of Council decisions. In the early 1970s the Council established stronger open space/farmland policies, which were followed by a current use tax program to preserve farmlands. This legislation identified farmlands as an important category of land use in King County. Following these decisions, the evidence - though incomplete - suggests that Council member Bernice Stern's Community and Environmental Development Committee and the Environmental Development Commission (EDC) established farmland retention as an important problem. The EDC was an Executive-Council appointed citizen advisory group established to assist Council planning, which was the main responsibility of Stern's committee. The evidence in Chapter 6 indicates that the Council instructed the EDC to develop more detailed agricultural land retention policies; whether or not Stern's committee initiated the request is unclear. However, because the two groups have identical planning specializations, the Council request most likely originated in Stern's committee, and as chairperson of that committee, she may have played a major role in initiating the request.²

The EDC recommended that the Council preserve farmlands from development through County-wide agricultural zoning, and under Stern's leadership, the Council's Community and Environmental Development Committee later submitted the EDC's recommendation to the Council for consideration, where it was

criticised by different interest groups (see Decision 2). In essence, the controversy caused by the proposed zoning change made farmland retention a local issue.

In summary, no single decision established the loss of agricultural land as a local problem. Rather, the decision appears to have evolved through a series of decisions which incrementally and cumulatively strengthened the County's commitment to preserve farmland from development. The evidence suggests that two major interest groups, farmland community leaders (i.e., community leaders advocating farmland retention, or Stern's planning committee in this decision) and County bureaucratic interests (i.e., the EDC), were influential in establishing farmland retention as an important problem.³ Because Stern's planning committee could have independently developed and submitted county-wide agricultural zoning legislation to the Council, it appears that County bureaucratic interests functioned to legitimate farmland community leader needs for stronger County farmland policies in this decision.

Decision 2: Rejecting Zoning as the Method of Farmland Retention. This decision was examined in Chapters 6 and 7. Its major participants include business interests (the Seattle, Kent, and Bellevue Chambers of Commerce), farmer interests, real estate/developer interests, County bureaucratic interests (Council staff members Keith Dearborn and Susan Allen and County planners), and community leaders (the Council).

Business, farmer and real estate/developer interests influenced the decision in this issue. Business interests opposed agricultural zoning mainly because, in their view, it infringed on private property rights and it could not preserve farming in county valleys. Real estate/developer interests opposed the legislation because, in their view, it infringed on a free land market and violated the rights of private property owners. The two interest groups influenced the Council not to extend agricultural zoning county-wide, producing a compromise limiting the zoning change to farming areas in eastern, rural King County (where minimal development was occurring).⁴ Farmer interests, represented by Scott Wallace (Snoqualmie River Valley dairy farmer) and Christine Foulks (representing the Pike Place Market Preservation and Development authority and a later co-founder of PLAN), supported the compromise legislation. When the county-wide agricultural zoning ordinance was re-submitted to the Council following the completion of a County environmental impact statement, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, representing business and farmer interests, testified against the zoning change and influenced a majority of Council members to oppose the proposed legislation.

Council defeat of the county-wide agricultural zoning ordinance appeared imminent. However, in order to avoid a Council vote on the zoning change - a vote which could halt farmland retention efforts in County government, Keith Dearborn

and Susan Allen, representing County bureaucratic interests and favoring farmland retention, influenced the Council to refer the ordinance back to committee (where it eventually died) and to study other ways of preserving farmland, thereby sustaining the issue in the Council. Thus, the Council never voted on the measure; the outcome of this decision was actually a form of non-decisionmaking (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970). While County bureaucratic interests influenced the non-decision, the views of business, farmer and real estate/developer interests prevailed. In the next decision, the Council takes further, less controversial steps toward establishing a farmland retention program.

Decision 3: Implementing a Twelve-Month Moratorium on Farmland Development. The first of two County moratoriums, this issue encompasses the period between Council rejection of zoning (May, 1975) and Council approval of the moratorium (December 22, 1975). The issue is described in Chapter 7. The decision's major participants include the following interest groups: voluntary associations (PLAN, SAVE and Wimmer's group), County bureaucratic interests (represented by the Policy Development Commission and Dearborn and Allen), farmland community leaders (Jim Ellis and Council farmland retention advocates), and the mass media. The EDC was renamed the Policy Development Commission when the Council expanded its policy areas and membership in November, 1974. A major interest group

in the previous decision, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce is conspicuously absent from this issue. Although the reasons for their non-participation are unknown, in the previous decision the Chamber lobbied for County studies of farmland retention issues, and the studies authorized under the moratorium may have satisfied the groups's demands. In any case, most of the persons and interest groups who participated in this decision favored preserving farmlands from development.

Voluntary associations and County bureaucratic interests were the main interest groups influencing the decision. PLAN was the first to propose the moratorium in one of its zoning appeals before the Council. Dearborn and Allen's support for the moratorium as a strategy for conducting further farmland studies also influenced the Council's decision. Further, Allen's favorable report regarding Suffolk County's PDR farmland retention program convinced some Council members that alternative methods did exist and that farmland retention was a goal worth pursuing.

Voluntary associations, the mass media and the PDC also influenced the decision, though in a less direct way. PLAN, SAVE and Wimmer's group attracted substantial newspaper and television coverage of their challenges to farmland rezones and sewer extensions, establishing farmland retention as an issue among the public. A PDC poll showed overwhelming public support for preserving farmland from development. In short,

following the defeat of a county-wide zoning program, these three interest groups created public interest and revived Council interest in farmland retention.

Who were the members of these groups? As previously indicated, little is known about PDC members, except that they are appointed by the County Executive and the Council and, hence, most likely reflect the views of these community leader interests. The leaders of PLAN, SAVE and Wimmer's group were mainly local professionals. Wimmer, a Seattle businessman, the group's co-leader, was an environmental attorney, and the group was mainly composed of environmentalists. The president of PLAN also was an attorney, while its co-founders worked for or were active in the Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority. Because SAVE challenged farmland rezones through the courts, the evidence suggests that SAVE's leaders and/or membership also had legal backgrounds. In short, the leaders of voluntary associations in this decision came mainly from professional occupations, were of middle and upper-class status, and were committed to preserving farmlands from development. The leaders of these voluntary associations neither had vested interests in county farmlands nor represented county farmer interests.

At this time in the case study, a minority of Council members strongly supported farmland retention. The information in the case study is insufficient to determine their influence

(if any) on the Council's decision. Further, the evidence also indicates that Jim Ellis, who favored farmland retention, had little influence on the decision.

In the end, the Council decided to implement a 1976 moratorium to halt farmland development temporarily and to perform the agricultural studies advocated by Dearborn and Allen. Thus, while most of the participants in this issue favored the decision, the views of County bureaucratic interests, voluntary associations, and farmland community leaders prevailed.

Decision 4: Implementing an Eighteen-Month Moratorium on Farmland Development. This issue is described in Chapter 7. Numerous interest groups participated in this issue. Major farmland community leaders include King County Executive John Spellman, Council members, and Jim Ellis. County bureaucratic interests include Dearborn, Allen, planning department staff, and the PDC. Most of these persons coordinated or performed some of the agricultural studies mandated by the Council when it authorized the twelve-month moratorium. Under separate consultant contracts, Mathematical Sciences Northwest and John Lundin also performed the remaining County studies, and they constitute a consultant interest group during this period. Farmer interests (and other land owners affected by the second moratorium) also participated by attending public hearings conducted by Council staff and by

testifying at Council hearings. As described in Chapter 7, other interest groups that testified at the Council hearings (and not mentioned previously) included business interests, real estate interests, voluntary associations, other governments in King County and individuals from the general public speaking in their own behalf.

Fourteen voluntary associations testified at the Council's hearings (see Chapter 7, footnote 20 for a complete list). Major interests represented include environmentalists (the local Sierra Club and Audubon Society), farming interests (Evergreen Land Trust, Future Farmers of America, Pike Place Merchants Association), planning interests (Auburn Citizens for Planned Growth and PLAN) and political interests (Washington Democratic Council, 35th Legislative District Democrats), and civic interests (the League of Women Voters). As described in Chapter 7, while most of these voluntary associations overwhelmingly supported the eighteen-month moratorium and County farmland retention efforts, only a few groups were directly involved in farming or appeared to have a strong understanding of local farmland retention issues. Nonetheless, their endorsements visibly demonstrated to the Council that strong interest group support for farmland retention existed. Although specific evidence is lacking, these groups reinforced and probably influenced the Council's unanimous decision to implement a second moratorium on farmland development.

Similarly, farmland community leaders, such as Spellman and Ellis, also endorsed the proposed legislation. While representatives of other local governments also generally endorsed the moratorium, they requested greater participation in the development of the County's farmland program. These endorsements also no doubt influenced and reinforced Council support for the moratorium, particularly given that Spellman's administration would ultimately be responsible for the development of the program.

Consultant interests also influenced decisionmaking. Lundin influenced the Council's decision through his study of alternative farmland retention methods. Lundin endorsed only two complimentary methods of farmland retention, support programs and the public acquisition of land or development rights in land, and he provided the Council with guidelines for implementing these programs. In apparent agreement with Lundin's conclusions, the Council approved the second moratorium to develop alternative farmland retention programs from the subset recommended by Lundin.

County bureaucratic interests also influenced the Council's unanimous decision. A major issue confronting the Council was defining which county farmlands should and should not be affected by the moratorium. As described in Chapter 7, by involving all Council members in the identification of farmlands to be preserved from development, Council staff and

planning department staff coopted Council member support for the second moratorium. Thus, County staff used a form of non-decisionmaking to suppress potential Council criticisms against the proposed moratorium. Among County bureaucratic interests, Dearborn was insistent upon and particularly influential in obtaining the unanimous Council vote.

When the proposed ordinance to implement an eighteen-month moratorium was completed, it reflected mainly the views of the Council. Other interest groups, particularly real estate, business and farmer interests, were largely excluded from its development. Although the Council addressed some Chamber interests in the design of the moratorium, it rejected the Chamber's initial request not to extend the first moratorium another eighteen months. Farmer criticisms during the Council hearings had little affect on the Council's decision. Thus, in spite of opposition from some groups, the views of farmland community leaders, County bureaucratic interests, consultant interests and voluntary associations prevailed. Following the decision, responsibility for program development shifted to John Spellman and his Office of Agriculture.

Decision 5: Establishing Purchase of Development

Rights as the Preferred Farmland Retention Method. This issue was described in Chapter 8. Its major interest groups include the mass media, farmland community leaders (Spellman, Ellis, Senator Warren Magnuson and Congressman Norm Dicks and Council

farmland retention advocates), County bureaucratic interests (Dearborn, John Keegan, and Office of Agriculture staff), consultant interests (Dan Carlson, farmland retention experts and Sanger consultants), farmer interests (farmer District Advisory Committees, or DACs), business interests (the Seattle Chamber of Commerce) and real estate interests (Seattle/King County Board of Realtors and County Assessor Harley Hoppe).⁵

The decision establishing PDR as the preferred farmland retention method was made by the Council when it unanimously agreed to place the bond measure on the ballot for voter consideration. Among those who participated in this issue, who influenced the Council's decision?

Following unanimous Council approval of the moratorium and the Council-Executive battle for control of the Office of Agriculture, the Spellman administration became responsible for developing a farmland retention program from the alternatives prescribed by the Council. Executive program development was highly political. Based on informal meetings with Council members and Jim Ellis, DAC recommendations and continued mass media, voluntary associations and voter support for agricultural land retention and a PDR farmland program in particular, Spellman became an ardent PDR supporter, and he used his administration to promote the program.⁶ Specifically, using DAC recommendations and the views of farmland retention experts to bolster his position (as described in 1977 Office of

Agriculture reports), Spellman (or his representative) presented three PDR farmland retention proposals to the Council for consideration. Although the Council largely ignored the first, and his second failed because federal matching funds (promised by Magnuson and Dicks in proposed legislation) never materialized, his third proposal was formally considered by the Council and eventually evolved into the County's PDR program. In short, the County's commitment to a PDR program evolved largely from political considerations. Farmer, farmland community leader, voluntary association and mass media interests influenced a County Executive commitment to a PDR program, who in turn influenced a Council commitment to the program.

While Spellman's advocacy spawned the County's commitment to a PDR program, other farmland community leaders, County bureaucratic interests, and business interests also influenced the development of this commitment. First, the Council hired Dearborn as a consultant to assist the County Executive in developing the County's farmland retention program. The hiring injected Council influence into the Executive's program development process, and because Dearborn favored a PDR program, strengthened the County's commitment to the program.

Second, in response to Seattle Chamber of Commerce and Council criticisms of the Office of Agriculture's farmland studies, Spellman authorized a PDR economic impact study

(performed by Sanger Consultants) as well as a County PDR environmental impact study. The impact studies, along with a County-sponsored vacant lands inventory, supported the Executive's proposed PDR farmland program and eliminated some of the concerns which other interest groups had raised against the program. The Sanger consultant report in particular eased business concerns that County bureaucratic interests had overestimated and incorrectly portrayed the loss of farmland to support Spellman's PDR farmland retention proposals. The net effect of these studies was increased Seattle Chamber of Commerce and Council support for the PDR program.

Popular and mass media support also influenced the Council's decision. Seattle's two largest newspapers published editorials endorsing Spellman's PDR programs. Public opinion polls conducted by Gilmore Research Group and the University of Washington's Educational Assessment Center also indicated strong voter support for farmland retention. Between 50 and 60 percent of those polled favored a PDR bond measure. This widespread support undoubtedly increased the political risks of voting not to place the bond measure on the ballot. Thus, as described in Chapter 8, farmland retention's popularity influenced Council members to support the program.

By the time Council hearings were held to consider the Spellman program, Council member support of the program appeared well-established. However, some Council members

changed characteristics of the program to satisfy their own views or the views of other interest groups. For example, Council member Tracy Owen amended the measure's finance program to reduce PDR bond interest costs. Seattle Mayor Charles Royer and other voluntary associations (PLAN, Alliance for Agriculture, Pike Place Merchants Association, Washington Environmental Council, Seattle Audobon Society, and the Lake Washington branch of the American Association of University Women) proposed modifying the program to include more Pike Place Market farmers, and Council members Gary Grant and Mike Lowry complied with their requests. When a Council deadlock emerged over the Metro merger issue, Stern was influential in developing a compromise favoring the PDR program. Real estate interests testified against the program, but developer interests supported the program. In the end, those who opposed the program had little impact on the Council vote, which was unanimous.

In general, interest groups favoring farmland retention and the PDR bond measure prevailed, which includes most of the participants in this decision.⁷ However, because Spellman was influential in establishing a County commitment to a PDR program, his views dominated the issue and ultimately prevailed by the decision. Ironically, although the Council had approved a PDR farmland retention bond measure, County officials were

prohibited by law to campaign for the program. Others would ultimately influence the final decision of the case study.

Decision 6: Approving King County's PDR Program. This issue encompasses the three election campaigns and is described in Chapter 9. The major participants favoring the PDR program include farmland Community leaders (Stern, Spellman and Ellis), business interests, the mass media, and voluntary associations. The most important voluntary association in this decision is the Save Our Local Farmlands Committee (SOLFC), which was formed to win voter approval of the PDR bond measure. During the campaign, other voluntary associations and interest groups also participated in the campaign, mainly through their endorsements of the PDR program. Groups which endorsed the bond measure include the Municipal League, the League of Women Voters, King County Labor Council, Metropolitan Democratic Club, Young Republicans of King County, PLAN, Church Council of Greater Seattle, King-Pierce County Farm Bureau, Seattle Audubon Society, Washington Environmental Council, the Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority and other groups. Most county newspapers and local television stations (ABC, CBS and NBC) had also endorsed the program. In short, the bond measure was supported by a variety of voluntary associations and mass media groups. Though business interests endorsed the PDR program, they were not actively involved in the campaign.

Major opponents in the campaign included real estate interests (PLAN-B and County Assessor Harley Hoppe) and Frank Ruano, but only Ruano opposed the PDR bond measure throughout the campaign. For this reason, he will be treated as a separate interest group in the analysis.

King County voters actually made the decision to implement a PDR program. How did the farmland proponents influence this decision? The SOLFC played an important role in influencing the decision. In addition to the usual yard signs, mass mailings and fliers, the SOLFC published nearly full-page newspaper ads of the voluntary associations, mass media groups and citizens (many of whom were members of the voluntary associations listed in the ads) endorsing the bond measure. These endorsements proclaimed farmlands to be an important element of King County's environment and encouraged voters to support the bond measure because "everyone" else did. Some of these voluntary associations, particularly the League of Women Voters, also assisted the SOLFC to promote the bond measure.

The SOLFC campaign was highly emotional. It largely ignored data supporting the campaign and emphasized how the PDR program would prevent the "Los Angelization" of King County and would keep local farmers in Seattle's popular Pike Place Market. These and other emotional themes of the SOLFC campaign sustained voter interest in farmland retention across the three

elections to win voter approval of Ellis' citizen committee PDR farmland retention program.

Among the three SOLFC leaders, Jim Ellis in particular influenced voter approval of the program by developing public support in three different ways. First, relying on his personal contact with local business leaders, Ellis obtained large contributions from big business to finance the SOLFC campaign and, hence, to develop voter support for the PDR bond measure.

Second, as described in Chapter 9, Ellis used cooptation (a form of non-decisionmaking) to develop a political monopoly supporting his committee's farmland retention program. In the issue's planning process, Ellis successfully eliminated most public opposition to the program while simultaneously increasing the number of groups endorsing it, creating a public image that "everyone" favored the novel program. In the final election, only Ruano and a small faction of realtors continued to oppose the measure. With few public criticisms voiced against the program in the final elections, voters had few reasons to question its merits, which produced the favorable vote.

Third, Ellis and his committee members realized that people supported the PDR bond measure for a number of reasons, and he encouraged voters to endorse the program for the reasons

they agreed with, which increased interest group and public support for the measure.

The long-term influence of People Power Coalition also influenced the vote. As described in Chapter 7 (see footnote 7), People Power Coalition (PPC) was a group composed of other interest groups, such as mass media interests (KING TV and KZAM radio), farmer interests (the Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority), civic interests (the League of Women Voters), and other interest groups. For the most part, these interest group members of PPC strongly favored farmland retention, particularly the local farmer at the Pike Place Market. Their film, "The Last Farmer at the Market?" documented local farmland retention issues and the possible disappearance of local farmers at the Pike Place Market. The film was presented before numerous local groups and shown several times on local television stations between 1977 and 1979. According to its sponsors, the major purpose of the film was to increase public awareness of local farmland issues. However, although the film did not endorse farmland retention, it clearly suggested that farmland retention was urgently needed, and the film no doubt influenced the public to favor local farmland retention efforts.

Whose views prevailed by the decision of King County voters? The results of the three elections, public opinion polls and PDR endorsements indicate that most county residents,

interest groups and voluntary associations favored farmland retention. At this most general level, most King County residents and interest groups prevailed by the decision. However, when the method of farmland retention is considered, a different conclusion is reached. Different interest groups held different views concerning how farmlands should be preserved, but due to County concessions to Chamber demands, more of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce's views were incorporated into King County'd PDR program than any other interest group. The evidence indicates further that Ellis' views largely coincided with the Chamber's, and as the leader of the citizen committee he was influential not only in resolving disagreements among committee members but also resolving them in favor of his and business interests. Thus, in this decision - and the case study as a whole - the views of Jim Ellis and business interests ultimately prevailed.

Conclusions

In this section answers to "Who influences decisionmaking?," "Who actually decides?," and "Whose views prevail?" are compared across the six decisions. The answers are summarized in Table 6 on the following page. The first column of the table lists interest groups who attempted, some successfully and some unsuccessfully, to influence each

TABLE 6

Influence and Decisionmaking Summary

	Who Influences?	Who Decides?	Who Prevails?
Decision 1 Establishing Farmlands as a Problem	Farmland Community Leaders (FCL) County Bureaucrats (CB)	Council	FCL CB
Decision 2 Rejecting Zoning	Business Interests Realtor/Developers Farmers CB	Council (Non-decision)	Business Realtor/Developers Farmers
Decision 3 Approval of 12-Month Moratorium	FCL Voluntary Associa- tions (PLAN) CB	Council	FCL Voluntary Associa- tions CB
Decision 4 Approval of 18-Month Moratorium	FCL CB Consultants Voluntary Associa- tions Business Farmers Other Governments	Council	FCL CB Consultants Voluntary Associa- tions
Decision 5 Selection of PDR	FCL CB Consultants Farmers Mass Media Business Voluntary Associa- tions Public Support	Council	FCL
Decision 6 Voter Approval	Voluntary Associa- tions FCL Real Estate Business Mass Media Frank Ruano	Voters	Business FCL (Ellis)

decision. The second column indicates who made the decision in each issue. The third column lists those interest groups whose views prevailed. While no single person or interest group consistently influenced decisionmaking, made decisions and prevailed across all decisions, only a small number of interest groups are represented across the six decisions. Interest groups in the case study may be divided into two categories, those who favored and those who initially opposed local farmland retention efforts. The major interest groups supporting county farmland retention efforts in the case study's decisions are farmland community leader (FCL) interests, County bureaucratic interests, voluntary association interests, consultant interests and mass media interests. Farmland community leader (FCL) interests, particularly Ellis, Spellman and Stern, initiated County farmland retention efforts and were a major force behind the development of a county farmland retention program. In the case study, Stern, Spellman and Ellis shared control of program development (Council farmland retention advocates in Decisions 1 through 4; Spellman in Decision 5; and Ellis in Decision 6), an event made possible by Spellman's and Stern's long tenures in political office. A County PDR program probably never would have been developed without this long-term commitment to preserving farmlands in both the legislative and executive branches of government.

Council staff members, particularly Dearborn and Allen, and County planners provided a willing corps of County bureaucratic interests to formulate farmland retention strategy and to assist farmland community leaders. In fact, their views prevailed in three of the six case study decisions (Decisions 1, 3 and 4), an indication of their influence in the case study. Bureaucratic interest influence on decisionmaking suggests that, unlike Bachrach and Baratz (1970), who identify a business mobilization of bias in decisionmaking, a bureaucratic mobilization of bias existed in this case study.

In a similar manner, consultant interests also assisted County farmland retention efforts and influenced decisionmaking, though some consultants had greater influence than others. Specifically, consultant views which supported farmland retention were embraced by County farmland retention advocates and influenced policy and program development, while those that did not were ignored. Farmland community interests also hired consultants for political purposes; Sanger consultants were hired to satisfy the demands of business interests.

Voluntary association and mass media interests generally contributed little toward the development of the County's farmland retention program. As described in this and earlier chapters, voluntary associations represented a variety of interest groups in the case study, united by their common

support of County farmland retention efforts. Most voluntary associations had few vested interests in county farmland; their memberships mainly consisted of middle- and upper class professionals who favored a King County with farmlands more than one without. Few voluntary associations representing low income or minority interest groups participated in the case study. Voluntary association influence was mainly in the form of endorsements of county farmland retention efforts and participation in the SOLFC campaign and Ellis' citizen farmland study committee. Some voluntary associations, such as PLAN, were more active politically than other groups, influencing the development of County farmland retention policies.

Mass media interests also generally supported local farmland retention efforts and influenced public support for the county's PDR programs. Referring to newspapers specifically and other mass media forms in general, Long (1958: 66) writes that the media ". . . has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are, and what most people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with." In this case study, mass media endorsements - and voluntary association endorsements as well - legitimated the county's novel farmland retention program and developed public support for the program.

The second category consists of interest groups who initially opposed county farmland retention efforts. Members

of this category are farmer, business and real estate/developer interests and Frank Ruano.⁸ The Seattle Chamber of Commerce rarely compromised its views in the study, and business interest influence (together with farmer and real estate/developer interests in Decision 2) largely determined what was and what was not an acceptable method of preserving county farmlands in the case study. As previously described, more business views were reflected in the voter-approved bond program than most other groups. Farmer and real estate interests, on the other hand, eventually endorsed the PDR program as a result of their participation in planning processes conducted by the Office of Agriculture and Ellis' citizen committee. Having views similar to business, farmers participating in the planning processes generally supported a PDR program. However, real estate interest support was obtained through cooptation in Ellis' planning process, and Frank Ruano was the only major interest group to oppose farmland retention efforts throughout his participation in the case study.

In summary, these findings indicate that a relatively small number of interest groups influence, decide and prevail at different times in the case study. About half of the study's interest groups strongly favored preserving farmland from development. These groups initiated farmland retention programs, promoted policy and program development, and

generally supported each other's efforts. The other half of these interest groups, unable to halt County farmland retention efforts, participated mainly to protect their interests in the County policy and program development process. If voters are excluded from consideration, only a very small proportion of King County's population is represented by these interest groups, and they constitute governing elites in the case study. In terms of the continuum described in the methodology section of this chapter, this answer to "Who governs?" is about midway between the single ruling elite extreme and the middle of the continuum, reflecting the higher number of interest groups but nonetheless fairly narrow range of views in the case study.

In this case study, interest groups govern by exerting influence to determine what is and is not a problem, to establish what are and are not acceptable methods of resolving the problem, and to obtain decisions - and non-decisions as well - in their favor. In incremental decisionmaking processes (such as this case study) no interest group dominates across all decisions; the views of most interest groups prevailed at one time or another in the case study, each contributing toward the study's ultimate outcome (voter approval of a PDR program).

As previously described, although the views of Ellis and business interests prevailed overall in this case study, the evidence does not suggest business views dominate in every decisionmaking process. For example, as described in Chapter 4

and The Weekly (September 23, 1981), the views of Pike Place Market preservationists prevailed over downtown business interests, who preferred to replace a large portion of the Market with an urban renewal project. In urban political systems, "Whose views prevail?" is answered anew in each decisionmaking process. In terms of elitest and pluralist community power theory, these findings suggest that neither business interests nor elected officials continually dominate community decisionmaking.

As Polsby (1980), Walton (1977) and others have argued, these findings suggest further that the elitest-pluralist continuum has outlived its usefulness as the key dependent variable in community power research. Where the community is conceived as a configuration of activities and interests in a given locale (H. Kaufman, 1977), and where interest group influence largely determines decisions and whose views prevail in the community, the following research questions become important: What interest groups identify and propose solutions to urban problems?; What interest groups oppose them?; What are the relationships among these interest groups?; How do they interrelate with each other in the decisionmaking process?; and What influence do they, both individually and collectively, exert on decisionmakers? Under this analytical framework the focus of community power research becomes one of examining interest group competition in the local political marketplace

to identify causal variables explaining the outcomes - or whose views prevail - of decisionmaking processes. This study (and others in the literature) suggests that interest group "influence" is an important variable explaining whose views prevail in decisionmaking processes. Additional studies examining different issues in different communities are needed to determine how interest group power is transformed into influence, to identify various forms of influence, and to examine how interest group influence affects decisionmakers (who themselves may constitute interest groups in the decisionmaking process). Answers to these questions may suggest new American community power theory.

In the next chapter, interest group participation in the planning process is examined.

Chapter 11 - Chapter Notes

¹My purpose in the sixth decision is to examine the campaign to win voter approval of the PDR bond measure. Because this campaign encompasses the three elections, the first and second elections are excluded from my list of major decisions.

²Although Stern (1978) could not recall her role in this issue, her history of farmland retention advocacy in this case study also suggests that her committee, and herself in particular, instructed the EDC to develop the policies.

³I categorize the EDC as a County bureaucracy interest group for several reasons. First, just like Council staff, the EDC assists the Council in developing policy. Second, although participation is voluntary, the group is a County organization and receives County funds to perform its duties. Third, EDC members are not the representatives of King County voters. EDC membership reflects the Executive-Council appointment process and, hence, constitutes a selectively-chosen interest group inside County government. Little information about EDC members exist, except their common willingness to participate in County planning.

⁴Other evidence substantiates this point. At the same time that the Council was considering the zoning change, it passed retention policies on wetlands and wildlife habitats because no opposition was encountered (Seattle Times, November 6, 1973).

⁵County Assessor Harley Hoppe is associated with this interest group because in the next decision he contributed a mailing list to assist real estate campaign efforts to defeat the County PDR program.

⁶As described in Chapter 8, when John Spellman was re-elected as County Executive in 1977, he regarded his victory as an indicator of voter support for farmland retention.

⁷Business interests were reviewing the County's PDR program and neither supported nor opposed the bond measure before the Council's vote.

CHAPTER 12

Who Plans?

My purpose in this chapter is to examine how planning is performed in this case study, or "Who plans with what ends and means for which interest groups?" In the section below, I describe my methodology for answering this question, which is formally answered in the second section.

The Methodology

Before this question may be answered, planning must be defined. For the purposes of this analysis, planning is operationally defined as a process containing the following characteristics. First, the participants in the planning process develop ends, expressed either as goals to be achieved or problems to be resolved, which they wish to accomplish in the future. Second, the participants identify one or more methods of accomplishing these ends. Third, the participants develop a recommendation, or their preferred method of accomplishing their ends, which is forwarded to decisionmakers for consideration. Thus, in this definition of planning, the outcomes of the planning process are evaluated by decisionmakers who accept, modify or reject them. This operational definition of planning neither precludes decisionmakers from participating in the planning process nor

limits participants to professional planners employed by government.

Given this operational definition of planning and its relationship to decisionmaking, the question, "Who plans with what ends and means for which interest groups?" is answered by examining the planning processes associated with each major decision in the case study, as defined in the previous chapter. In each decision, the following questions are answered: Who are the participants in the issue?; among these, who participates in the planning process? (or Who plans?); what are their ends?; what means of achieving these ends do they recommend to decisionmakers?; and in whose behalf? In general, and as noted in the last chapter also, possible answers to Who plans? in each decision will vary between two extremes: a single group of participants (such as government planners) or all interest groups in the planning process.

Similar to the methodology described in Chapter 11, answers to these questions will be compared across the six decisions to arrive at conclusions regarding the entire case study. Again, possible answers to Who plans? overall will range between the two extremes mentioned above. Using this methodology, I find the following answers.

The Analysis

Decision 1: Establishing Farmland Retention as an Important Problem. As described in the previous chapter, few sources exist which document how farmland retention became a problem and who the participants in this decision were. Nonetheless, the information presented in Chapter 6 does address the questions posed in the previous section, at least in part.

As described in the last chapter, community leader and bureaucratic interests in County government established farmland retention as an important problem. Specifically, the evidence suggests that Council member Bernice Stern's Community and Environmental Development Committee and the citizen Environmental Development Commission (EDC) participated in the decision's planning process. Stern's planning committee and the EDC shared one end, the development of more specific farmland retention policies. Following a brief study of local farmland issues and farmland retention methods (specifically zoning, purchase-leaseback, PDR, and "other means"), the EDC recommended county-wide agricultural zoning to preserve county farmlands from development, which Stern's committee introduced to the Council for formal consideration. The evidence suggests that the recommendation was made in behalf of bureaucratic and farmland community leader interests (i.e., community leaders favoring farmland retention) in County government. In essence,

farmland community leaders used the planning process to legitimate their own interests. In the next decision, the EDC recommendation encountered strong opposition from other interest groups.

Decision 2: Rejecting Zoning as the Method of Farmland Retention. This planning process and decision is described in Chapters 6 and 7. As described in Chapter 11, its major interest groups are business, farmers, real estate/developers, County bureaucratic interests and farmland community leaders. Among these participants, only farmland community leaders, represented by Council members favoring agricultural land retention, and County bureaucratic interests, represented by County planners, participated in the planning process. Following interest group rejection of the EDC's recommendation, the Council compromised and authorized additional planning, ordering the County's planning department to perform an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a county-wide agricultural zoning program. Similar to the EDC, County planners reviewed alternative farmland retention methods and also recommended county-wide agricultural zoning to preserve farmlands from development. Two Council committees reviewed the planner's recommendation, the Finance, Audit and Budget Committee and Stern's planning committee, and while the former made no recommendations concerning the EIS, the latter agreed with the planners and forwarded them to the Council,

where they were opposed by business, farmer and real estate/developer interests in the decisionmaking process.

In summary, in this decision, a political compromise initiated County planning efforts. Planning was performed by County bureaucratic interests in behalf of their own and farmland community leader interests. In the next decision, groups outside of County government engage in planning for the first time in the case study.

Decision 3: Implementing a Twelve-Month Moratorium on Farmland Development. This issue is described in Chapter 7, and its major participants include voluntary associations (PLAN, SAVE and Wimmer's group), County bureaucracy (represented by the Policy Development Commission and Dearborn and Allen), farmland community leaders (Jim Ellis and Council farmland retention advocates), and the mass media.

Little planning was performed in this issue. Among these participants, only PLAN engaged in planning. PLAN was a citizen group dedicated to preserving farmlands permanently through any means. The group attempted to halt the decline in farmlands by distributing a map of county farms and by opposing rezones of farmland to more developed uses. Both of these methods failed. However, in one Council appearance, PLAN recommended that a moratorium on all agricultural rezones be established until stronger County farmland retention policies could be developed. In short, although the Council never

agreed with PLAN's rezone appeals (which are themselves a type of planning recommendation), the Council - and particularly Council member and staff farmland retention advocates - did agree with its recommendation to establish a moratorium and to develop stronger farmland policies.

In summary, PLAN's "trial-and-error" approach to planning and farmland retention was ultimately successful. Because PLAN was acting as an independent organization, its members planned mainly in their own behalf. Dearborn, Allen and Council member farmland retention advocates identified studies to be performed during the moratorium. While PLAN was the first interest group outside County government to engage in planning, its views largely coincided with County planners in Decisions 1 and 2, and planning in the case study continued to support the preservation of farmlands from development.

Decision 4: Implementing an Eighteen-Month Moratorium on Farmland Development. This issue is also described in Chapter 7, and, as listed in the previous chapter, its major participants include farmland community leaders (King County Executive John Spellman, Council members, and Jim Ellis), bureaucratic interests (Dearborn, Allen, planning department staff and the PDC), consultant interests (Mathematical Sciences Northwest and John Lundin), farmer and business interests, and voluntary associations, representatives

of other King County governments and individuals from the general public.

When the Council approved the twelve-month moratorium, it also authorized a County planning process to develop policies and/or programs regarding farmland in the western, more developed areas of the county. The major participants in the planning process were Council members and staff, planning department staff, the PDC and two consultants, Mathematical Sciences Northwest and John Lundin, an attorney. Their method of accomplishing the planning process' ends was to conduct four agricultural studies. Two of the studies, an inventory of agricultural land and an examination and forecast of county agricultural trends, were performed by County planning staff. The other two studies, an analysis of alternative farmland retention methods and an examination of how other U.S. and foreign agricultural areas affect King County's agricultural market, were conducted by John Lundin and Mathematical Sciences Northwest, respectively. Dearborn and Allen coordinated the studies.

As described in Chapter 7, the findings of the Mathematical Sciences Northwest study did not support County farmland retention efforts. The County planner study of county farmland trends failed to address Council policy issues. Only two studies, Lundin's analysis of alternative farmland retention methods and the County inventory of agricultural

land, were used to develop the second, eighteen-month moratorium's policies. Under the eighteen-month moratorium, important county farmland was identified, guidelines for applying existing Comprehensive Plan policies to these farmlands were established, and a future planning process (to occur during the eighteen-month moratorium) was authorized to develop farmland retention and support programs. Based on Lundin's analysis of farmland retention methods, the planning process participants recommended that three retention methods (PDR, land acquisition and land trades) be analyzed during the second moratorium. As described in the previous chapter, County bureaucratic interests used cooptation in the planning process to influence Council support for the moratorium.

In short, in this issue, planning was performed by and in behalf of County Council and bureaucratic interests. The planning recommendations reflected the interests of County farmland community leaders who participated in the process, County bureaucratic and consultant interests. Other interests groups, particularly business and farmer interests, were largely excluded from the planning process. County planning interests issued recommendations even though some economic policy issues were never addressed and one study failed to support county farmland retention efforts. As described in Chapter 7, County interests in this planning process knew what they wanted to do, embracing studies that supported their ends

while largely ignoring those which did not. In the next decision, control of the planning process switches to the Executive branch of County government.

Decision 5: Establishing Purchase of Development Rights as the Preferred Farmland Retention Method. This issue was described in Chapters 8 and 9, and its major interest groups include the mass media, farmland community leaders, (Spellman, Senator Warren Magnuson and Congressman Norm Dicks, and Council farmland retention advocates), County bureaucratic interests (Dearborn, John Keegan, and the Office of Agriculture staff), consultant interests (Dan Carlson, farmland retention experts and Sanger consultants), business interests (the Seattle Chamber of Commerce) and real estate interests (Seattle/King County Board of Realtors and County Assessor Harley Hoppe).

With the implementation of the eighteen-month moratorium, Spellman's Office of Agriculture began a planning process to choose and develop a County farmland retention program. As previously described, the Council had already defined what farmland retention methods the Office of Agriculture was to consider. Mainly on the basis of recommendations from DACs and six experts on farmland retention, the Office of Agriculture recommended that the County purchase development rights to contiguous blocks of farmland designated by DAC members where participation is voluntary. The Office also recommended a

series of agricultural support programs. The Office of Agriculture had completed its planning process in the first eight months of the eighteen-month moratorium.¹

During the same period, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce was initiating its own planning process. The main purpose of the Chamber's planning process was to inject business views into the County program. Their principle methods of accomplishing this end were to evaluate the County's PDR program and to voice business interests in the County's farmland retention efforts. The Chamber established an Agricultural Preservation Task Force to accomplish their purpose.

After the County Office of Agriculture had released its farmland and support program recommendations, the Chamber Task Force reviewed the data and methodology the County had used to support its recommendations. According to the Task Force, the County had overestimated and incorrectly portrayed the loss of farmlands. Further, the Task Force believed that an economic impact statement was essential to correct the County's conclusions and to evaluate the merits of a PDR farmland retention program. Through an Executive Committee recommendation, the Chamber requested Spellman to correct the findings of his administration's agricultural studies and to perform a PDR economic impact statement. Spellman eventually complied. However, the Chamber neither approved nor rejected

Spellman's PDR program before the Council formally placed the PDR bond measure on the ballot, and its planning process actually extended into the next decision.

After the Office of Agriculture had released its recommendations but much before Sanger Consultant's PDR economic impact statement was completed, Spellman (or his representative) proposed three separate and slightly different PDR programs to the Council on three separate occasions. About one month after the Council accepted his last proposal (which Dearborn and Keegan had written) for consideration, the results of the Sanger consultant's economic impact statement and the Office of Agriculture's environmental impact statement were released. Although their findings generally supported the PDR program, they had arrived after the Executive's planning process had terminated and, hence, contributed little toward the development of the County's PDR program.

Similarly, other interest groups delayed their participation until after Spellman had submitted his administration's third program to the County. Dr. Ronald Boyce's critical public appraisals of the program (sponsored by People Power Coalition) occurred too late to impact the County's planning process. County public hearings on Spellman's program, Dan Carlson's brochure on farmland retention issues, and Council hearings on the proposed bond measure all occurred too late to impact the Office of

Agriculture's planning process.

In summary, in this issue, County planning efforts were highly normative; planning recommendations were based mainly on the views of farmers, County bureaucratic interests and consultant interests, which in turn influenced and bolstered Spellman's support for a county PDR farmland program. The Chamber's planning process, on the other hand, was performed to satisfy Chamber interests which were not addressed in the County's planning process. Thus, in this issue, interest groups plan to develop views regarding an issue, and once defined, to inject these views in the choice and design of a County farmland retention program.

Decision 6: Approving King County's PDR Program. This issue is described in Chapter 9. As described in the previous chapter, major interest groups in the issue are farmland community leaders, business interests, the mass media, voluntary associations, real estate interests and Frank Ruano.

As described in Decision 5, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce's Task Force was still reviewing the County's PDR program when the Council approved the measure. About one month later the Task Force recommended that the Chamber's Board of Trustees approve the PDR bond measure if the County modified the program to satisfy chamber interests. Farmland community leaders supported the changes and the Council amended the County PDR program as the Chamber had requested. Thus,

planning in their own behalf, business interests successfully used their planning process to influence County decisionmaking and to incorporate business views into the County's PDR program.

Planning did not begin again until after the first election when farmland community leaders Spellman, Stern and Ellis agreed that a citizen planning committee was needed to revamp the County's PDR program. The bulk of the committee consisted of Save Our Local Farmlands Committee (SOLFC) supporters, which included representatives from most interest groups and voluntary associations supporting the County's PDR program in the first campaign. For example, the committee included business interests (representatives of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce), farmers, civic interests (members of the League of Women Voters), PLAN members, developer interests, and County bureaucracy interests (Keith Dearborn). Although real estate interests, represented by PLAN-B leaders, also participated on the committee, Frank Ruano did not participate. Thus, while previous planning processes had often excluded some of these interest groups, this planning process attempted to include most of them.

As described in Chapter 9, although the committee's explicit purpose was to develop a program representing the "best" means of farmland retention, its implicit purpose was to address criticisms raised against the County PDR program in the

first election. Ellis' method of accomplishing this task was to begin from scratch, involving the committee's interest groups in researching the farmland issues outlined in Chapter 9. With support from his largely pro-PDR committee members, Ellis coopted real estate support for a revised PDR bond measure, eliminating a major source of criticism against the program. The committee unanimously endorsed its PDR program, which it recommended to the Council for approval.

In summary, in this decision, most interest groups participated in the planning process, and they developed a PDR program acceptable to most interest groups. Interest groups not included in the planning process continued to oppose the committee's recommendations. Although Ellis' committee benefited from a long history of farmland retention planning and decisionmaking, these outcomes suggest that to obtain wide interest group support for planning recommendations, most interest groups must be included in the planning process.

Conclusions

In this section answers to "Who plans with what ends and means for which interest groups?" are compared across the six decisions. The answers are summarized in Table 7 on the following page. Reviewing the evidence in the table, one quickly discerns again, as in Chapter 11, that only a narrow range of interest groups participated in planning processes in

TABLE 7
Planning Summary

	Who Plans?	What Ends?	What Means Recommended?	Whose Behalf?
Decision 1 Establishing Farmlands as a Problem	Farmland Community Leaders (FCL) County Bureaucrats (CB)	Develop farmland policy	Zoning	FCL CB
Decision 2 Rejecting Zoning	FCL CB	Farmland Retention	Zoning	FCL CB
Decision 3 Approval of 12-Month Moratorium	PLAN	Halt Decline of Farmland	Maps Oppose rezones Moratorium	PLAN
Decision 4 Approval of 18-Month Moratorium	FCL CB Consultants	Develop policy for west county farmland	Moratorium	FCL CB Consultants
Decision 5 Selection of PDR	CB Farmers Consultants	Develop Farmland Program	PDR	CB Farmers & Consultants
	Business	Inject Views into Program	None	Business
Decision 6	FCL CB Business, Farmers, Realtors, Developers Voluntary Associations	Resolve Criticisms	PDR	FCL CB Business, Farmer Voluntary Associations

the case study. Focusing on decisions one through five, King County government officials, representing farmland community leader interests and bureaucratic interests, dominated planning. Most other interest groups were excluded from County planning efforts, while the few outside groups that were included (i.e., PLAN, consultant interests and farmer DACs) generally favored farmland retention. As described in Part III, while the Council established the EDC/PDC to provide a formal mechanism for obtaining citizen recommendations in Council policy development, these citizen committees lacked members from opposing interest groups (mainly business, farmer and realtor/developer interests) and strongly favored farmland retention. With few opposing views to parry, pro-farmland retention County bureaucratic interests and County leaders dominated County planning processes, gradually strengthening the County's commitment to preserving farmlands from development. In short, because interest groups with opposing views were excluded from County planning efforts, the views of farmland community leaders and County bureaucratic interests prevailed, and County planning mainly served the purposes of these two interest groups.

As we can see from comparing the findings in Chapter 11 with those here, the County's exclusionary planning practices had two general consequences. First, in order to participate in the County's farmland policy and program development

process, excluded interest groups had no recourse but to challenge County farmland retention efforts in the decisionmaking process. In most cases, County officials catered to these groups, conducting Council and public hearings on the issues after County planning had terminated. In some cases, excluded interest groups successfully influenced decisionmaking to modify or reject County planning recommendations. For example, the County's first recommended method of farmland retention, county-wide zoning, was strongly opposed in the decisionmaking process by interest groups affected by the proposed zoning change but excluded from the Council's planning process. Later, business interest demands to include more farmers in County planning efforts resulted in farmer district advisory committees, whose views largely determined the Office of Agriculture's recommendations to preserve farmlands through a PDR program. In short, through their influence in the decisionmaking process, excluded interest groups in the planning process eliminated some farmland retention methods from further consideration and significantly affected how the County should develop a farmland retention program.

Second, one excluded group, business interests, initiated its own planning process to inject business views into the County PDR program (see Decision 5). Operating outside of the County planning process but within the ends and means of their

own, business interests influenced the County Executive and the County Council to authorize a PDR economic impact statement and to inject business views into the PDR program, actions which mainly benefitted business interests.

In the sixth decision, most interest groups participating in the case study were included in the planning process to develop a second farmland retention program. However, led and dominated by interest groups which had backed the County's PDR program, those opposing the bond measure in the first election (mainly real estate interests) had little influence on the planning committee's recommendation to submit a second, revised PDR bond measure to the Council and voters for consideration. Clearly, while some interest group criticisms of the first bond measure were resolved, and while the planning committee was open to anyone who wished to participate, the interest group composition of the committee's membership virtually guaranteed a second PDR recommendation.

These findings indicate that, at least in this case study, a narrow range of interest groups dominate and use the planning process to promote their own views. Groups holding opposing views are often excluded from planning, and where they are included (as in Decision 6), dominant interest groups use cooptation (a form of non-decisionmaking) to suppress challenges to their positions. These findings also indicate that in order for excluded interest groups to affect planning

recommendations, they must either conduct their own planning process (and later influence decisionmakers to accept their recommendations) or, more simply, become active in the decisionmaking process. In either event, these findings, together with those in the previous chapter, have implications for how planning is conducted in local governments, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 12 - Chapter Notes

¹The planning process was revived briefly between Spellman's second and third Council PDR program proposals when Dearborn was hired to translate Spellman's PDR recommendation into a proposed ordinance.

CHAPTER 13

Politics and Planning Effectiveness

Although King County's farmland retention policy and program development process successfully culminated in a voter-approved PDR program, planning principles in the literature suggest that planning in this process was generally ineffective. For both practical and theoretical reasons, planners generally agree that citizen involvement in the planning process promotes democratic principles we have been taught to revere (Rothblatt, 1978). Davidoff (1965), Skjei (1972), Rothblatt (1978) and others have advocated including most interest groups affected by a planning issue within local planning processes. In particular, Skjei (1972) and Rothblatt (1978) suggest that a major purpose of planning is reconciling the diverse views associated with planning in urban areas. A major role of public agency planners is to facilitate discussion among interest groups in the planning process and to resolve differences where feasible. Webber (1978: 158) articulately describes this style of planning,

Its special task would . . . be to help assure that all parties' voices are heard; that available evidence, theory, and arguments are weighed; that potentially useful options are considered and evaluated; that consequences and their distributions among the publics are identified and assessed.

In this context, planning is fundamentally a cognitive style, not a substantive field, not a

specialized departmentalized function in an organization, not a set of technical knowledge, certainly not an ideologically derived set of substantive goals about housing, economic development, human welfare, or anything else. In its generic essence, it is a special way of thinking about pluralities of individual and group wants and a special approach to satisfying those variously competing wants.

Under this framework planning is effective when all affected interest groups - and their respective evidence, theories, arguments and evaluations - in a public issue are also included in the issue's planning process.

These principles are not reflected in County planning processes in the study. Planning performed by King County government (i.e., decisions one through five in Chapter 12) was highly exclusionary. Government interest groups advocating farmland retention effectively controlled and used planning to promote their views within the political system. When used in this manner, planning becomes a source of power which interest groups use to influence decisionmaking.¹ Thus, in terms of the planning principles described above, County planning was generally ineffective.

However, later in the study most interest groups participated in Ellis' citizen planning committee (see Decision 6 in Chapter 12), and planning during this period generally conformed to the planning principles summarized by Webber. In the citizen planning committee where differing views were the

norm rather than the exception, no single view was inherently correct. As Webber (1978: 157) observes,

Whenever people's belief systems and wants differ, there is no gainsaying who is right . . . Under virtually all the social circumstances in which planners work, the acceptable way is necessarily the outcome of political processes. That is to say, there are no scientifically or technically correct answers, only politically appropriate ones.

Interest groups supporting farmland retention dominated committee planning, and their views - particularly those of Ellis and business interests - prevailed under the committee's recommendation for a second, revised PDR farmland retention program. Thus, while politics is inseparable from planning, the political process per se is not a constraint on the development of effective planning procedures.

Given these differences in County and citizen planning effectiveness, how can the effectiveness of local government planning be improved? One reason why government interest groups dominated planning in this study is the organizational location of planning in local government. In King County government - as in most local governments in the United States - planning resources are concentrated in executive branch planning departments and legislative planning committees (where administrative and decisionmaking authority for plan development resides). When planning resources are concentrated in this manner, they become focused around the policies, priorities and views of government and other dominant interest

groups. Other interest groups in the political process, particularly those in a minority, normally have few, if any, such resources to draw upon, creating inequities in how views are represented and what influence is exerted within the planning process. In short, the findings of this case study support and strongly reinforce the need for alternative plans and planning professionals to represent the views of all interest groups in a political process, an approach advocated by Davidoff (1965) a decade ago.

One method of regularly incorporating most interest groups in the planning processes is to free planning resources from legislative and executive control and to allocate them among interest groups through a separate government office. Specifically, similar to a local prosecuting attorney's office, planning resources should be centralized in an independent government office and directed by an elected official. In major planning issues identified by the office (as well as by the public and by legislative or executive branches of government), planners and other planning resources would be allocated among the various interest groups participating in an issue, advocating their views within the planning process and before elected decisionmakers. In such an organization model - as in any model - interest group influence would still determine whose views prevail in both planning and decisionmaking processes. However, by institutionalizing

procedures which purposefully promote interest group participation in the planning process, local government planning may become more effective than under planning procedures present in most local governments.

Chapter 13 - Chapter Notes

¹As cited in Chapter 2, Bachrach and Baratz (1962: 949) state that ". . . to the extent that a person or group - consciously or unconsciously - creates or reinforces barriers to the public airing of policy conflicts, that person or group has power."

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APPENDIX A

The Causes of Agriculture Decline in King County

As already noted in Chapter 3, changes in the local economy (along with "highest and best use" land valuation methods), the construction of Howard Hansen Dam and population growth initiated the decline of agricultural activity and farmland in King County. These three forces, in turn, set into motion a number of other influences which contributed toward and explain agriculture's decline in King County. The purpose of this section is to examine these influences in a systematic, sequential manner.

A primary reason for the decline of agriculture is the annexation of farmland by municipalities, which subsequently authorize its conversion for developed uses. Most annexations occur because local municipalities wish to increase their tax base to finance or expand public services. Municipalities may increase their revenues significantly by increasing their jurisdictions. By annexing undeveloped, adjacent farmland under the authority of Washington State law, local jurisdictions in the county's agricultural areas may acquire additional land resources for the future expansion of the business sectors of their local economies.¹ Under Washington State law, local jurisdictions also possess the legal authority

to rezone annexed farmland to a more intensive, developed use, such as commercial or industry.

As the development of farmland continues and its value and property taxes increase, speculation within the agricultural land market increases. Lindeman (1976: 142) describes the function of speculation in the market,

. . . as urbanization approaches, property taxes go up and soon the low-intensity user is caught in a squeeze. His rising taxes reduce his income; at the same time the rising value of his land offers the opportunity to sell out and to buy more land further out. However, since the land is not ready for development, a buyer must be willing to hold it until it is. Enter, then, the speculator, whose "function" it is to hold the undeveloped land from the time the original user is forced to sell out until a "final user" - i.e., a developer - is willing to buy it from him.

The activities of speculators, perhaps first documented in 1880 by Henry George (1942: 257), are designed to accomplish one objective: to make a profit. Significant profits are possible in land speculation. Clawson (1971: 103) reports that speculation in farmland conversion nets \$13.5 billion annually, which is divided equally among farmers and speculators. In general, these profits are based on superior, comprehensive knowledge of the land market and the ability to take advantage of it (Clawson, 1971: 102). Lindeman (1976) states that a parcel of land is often exchanged a number of times among speculators, who boost its price upward with each exchange. Eventually a business having sufficient financial resources and

the desire to pay prices for land that, on the basis of its location, will assure a profitable development venture in the future becomes the owner of the property, and the land is converted to an urban use. Thus, land which is considered by such people to be ideally suited for a particular type of urban development will tend to increase in value until it reaches its "highest and best use" within the local land market and becomes developed.

Related to the annexation and valuation issue, limited improvement districts (LIDs) are another important factor causing the decline of agricultural land. If a municipality annexes or is in the process of annexing farmland, it must at some point in time extend its public utilities (e.g., water, sewer, streets, electricity, gas, etc.) into the undeveloped area. The area receiving these new utilities is referred to as a limited improvement district, and normally a separate district is created for each utility. When LIDs occur within farming areas, the farmer incurs a significant financial burden. Arpke (1942: 476) reports that,

In forming a water district an attempt is always made to include as much assessed valuation as possible. This means the inclusion of a large amount of land in agricultural use and best adapted to a continuation of such use, in spite of the fact that the water is far too expensive to be used for agricultural purposes. Thus a farmstead with its high ratio of land value to total value is forced to pay a disproportionate share of what is, after all, a distinctly urban improvement.

Under Washington State law, residents within a LID are normally assessed the installation costs of the public service.

Residents generally have ten years to pay for these costs in a series of installments, beginning at the period of installation. The assessment is based on either the street footage and/or the square footage of a parcel of land for all property potentially serviced by the utility. Thus, farmers, whether they use the service or not, are assessed LID costs according to the size of their property.

The Puget Sound Council of Governments (1974: 55) has documented the cost of the recent LID projects near Kent. A water district was being created, and property owners were assessed \$0.024 per square foot of land potentially serviced by the utility. A farmer owning 50 acres of land would face an LID assessment of \$52,000. Two years later a sewer district was created. The assessment was \$0.006 per square foot of land potentially serviced plus \$5.06 per lineal foot of the parcel's street frontage. The 50 acre farm, which had 1,000 feet of frontage, was assessed \$18,000. Thus, in two years the Kent farmer's LID debt was \$70,000, or \$1,400 per acre. The total LID assessment, in addition to the farmer's annual property taxes, must be paid in 12 years - a tremendous financial burden for the farmer.

Arpke (1942: 475-476) further reports how LIDs may increase the conversion of agricultural land, stating that:

"Once such a district is formed it serves to encourage further urbanization by virtue of the fact that it provides an important urban comfort. Thus in an unofficial and completely indiscriminate way the area is classified as residential" (or suitable for development).

In summary, municipalities may expand their tax base by annexing farmland and rezoning the land for business uses. The annexation and subsequent encroachment of development causes land values to increase, and the farmer is assessed significantly higher property taxes. As the municipality extends its public services into the farm area to accommodate future development, local improvement districts are formed, which also significantly increase the farmer's financial burdens and encourage further urbanization. The high property taxes and LID costs eventually makes farming an uneconomical activity, thereby forcing the farmer to sell his land for development. Because of the incremental extension of public utilities into agricultural areas, ". . . this phenomenon tends to radiate outward (from a local municipality) as the urbanization which replaces agriculture on one tract of land stimulates increased valuation and LID establishment on adjacent agricultural lands" (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 55). The cumulative effect of this process normally initiated by annexation is massive reductions in farm acreages.

The resulting high values of farmland also cause three other indirect impacts on farmers. First, inheritance taxes established by the Internal Revenue Service may also create economic hardship among farmers. A significant proportion of King County's farms have been owned by a single family over a number of generations. If the legal owner or family head of a farm fails to pass on the ownership of his farm prior to his death, the heir to the farm must pay a significantly large inheritance tax based on the highest and best use value of the land. In certain cases the inheritance taxes may be greater than the agricultural value of the land, and the heir may be forced to sell the farm simply to pay the inheritance taxes. Because the heir cannot obtain enough revenue from selling the land to another farmer, the land normally is converted to new development.

Second, the high value of the farmland often becomes the farmer's retirement income. If a farmer owns his or her land throughout his or her farming career, usually its value has appreciated significantly during the period of ownership. The value of land is normally the farmer's biggest and perhaps only capital asset, and the increasing value of the land during a farmer's occupancy becomes the farmer's "nest egg" for retirement. As an occupational group, farmers realize that even if economic conditions become adverse and their income falls to subsistence levels, the value of the land would remain

throughout ownership. As retirement age approaches, the farmer need only sell his or her land to obtain sufficient income to retire on. Thus, farm ownership also becomes a retirement plan and ironically, because of the human desire to maximize earnings, a means of permanently reducing the supply of farmland in the region.

Third, the high land values prevent new operators from entering agriculture. If the price of agricultural land exceeds \$5,000 or \$10,000 an acre, few people have sufficient financial resources to enter the occupation, especially young persons. Without a continuous supply of new farmers, the size of the labor force devoted to farming will gradually decline, and agriculture would eventually disappear from the county. The financial difficulty of entering farming has been cited as a primary factor for the decline of agriculture in King County by a number of publications, farmers and officials.

As already noted, the construction of the Howard Hansen Dam encouraged the development of farmland in the Green River Valley. Other flood control projects during the 1960s also increased development in other King County agricultural river valleys. In late November, 1959, two major floods occurred in most of the county's rivers, causing \$6,698,000 in damages to river improvement facilities, roads, bridges, and private property (King County, 1962). Damages were so extensive that the county was named a National Disaster Area, and the three

King County Commissioners launched a public campaign to develop a flood control program that would stop the recurrent flooding of the county's river valleys. Because the Commissioners felt that small, incremental flood control projects on the county's rivers could not control the flooding, they initiated a comprehensive flood planning effort (King County, 1962).

The flood control plan produced by the county included its major agricultural river valleys: the Green, Snoqualmie, and Sammamish, as well as a number of other rivers in the area. The total cost of the flood control measures proposed in the plan was \$15 million, and in 1960 county voters approved a \$5 million bond measure to finance Phase I of the plan's implementation (King County, 1962). Most of the Phase I funds (approximately \$3 million) were appropriated to deepen and straighten the Sammamish River, which increased the river's flood water capacity and reduced the chance of flooding in the Valley. Most of the remaining funds were allocated for an elaborate flood warning system in the Snoqualmie Valley (King County, 1965: 1).²

In February, 1961, a citizens advisory committee was established to work with the County in the development of flood control programs and policies. The efforts of the committee and County government culminated in a comprehensive plan for flood control, published in August, 1964. One month later, on September 15, 1964, county voters approved a second \$5 million

flood control bond issue. The goal of the plan was simple: to eliminate or minimize the chance of flooding in the county's four, major river basins: the Green-Duwamish, Cedar, Sammamish, and Snoqualmie. However, while the plan was appropriately addressed to important flood control issues in these agricultural river basins, the authors of the plan also prescribed future land uses for each valley floor. Recognizing that the Snoqualmie River floods almost every year, they (King County, 1964a: 8) stated in the plan that,

The farmers and local residents have learned to live with this condition, to place their buildings and winter stock pens or barns on high ground and to limit their crops largely to grass and hay, or such other crops as can be produced after the spring floods have receded. While local demand for relief from these conditions has not been generally voiced, proximity to the State of Washington's metropolis and the need for economic use of the high value land will justify a high degree of flood control in the near future.

Further, because greater spring floods were occurring in the Sammamish River Valley than in previous years, a levee system was recommended for the river because, ". . . the need for consideration of the valley lands for more highly productive purposes than farming has become abundantly clear" (King County, 1964a: 28-31). Since the completion of the Howard Hansen Dam in 1962 removed the threat of flooding in the Green River Valley, water released from the dam would fill the water channel and back water up in the minor tributaries of the river, causing serious drainage problems on the valley floor.

Therefore, County officials and the citizen advisory committee also recommended that a drainage system be constructed to remove water from the valley floor. According to the two groups (King County, 1964a: 5),

The rapid expansion of population and industrial development in the Green River Valley makes the solution of this problem the most urgent of the overall King County plan.

In short, the authors of the plan also appeared to support flood control as a method of urbanizing the county's river valleys.

In conclusion, stimulated by two devastating floods in 1959, the County embarked on a major flood control program during the following decade. The flood control projects had immediate impacts on local agricultural production. Once the flood control improvements for the Sammamish River were announced, real estate speculation in the area increased (Eastside Journal, December 11, 1975), and county assessors re-evaluated the land according to current market conditions by reclassifying the area from agricultural to manufacturing and warehouse land use. Following the new classification, tax assessments on farms in the valley increased sharply, forcing many farmers to sell their land for development. In short, during the early 1960s the King County Flood Control Division, with the approval of the county's three commissioners, had

adopted and implemented flood control plans that promoted the development of the county's farmland.⁵

Another primary reason for the decline of agricultural land is the influence of regional and national food commodity markets on local agricultural production. All food producers in King County, Western Washington (of which King County is a part), and the nation participate in the same food market.⁶ Because the market is so large, market prices are not influenced significantly by an area's producers or consumers. Thus, because King County's food production is only a minute fraction of total production, county food producers cannot affect either the market price or the quantity of food supplied (Mathematical Sciences Northwest, 1976: 1; Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 65). Further, as one report (Mathematical Sciences Northwest, 1976: 21, 1) states,

King County's production of any single commodity is low enough that its availability in the market is not dependent upon local production.

and

. . . even should agricultural production cease in King County, the price and availability of commodities would be unchanged, except in the most immediate time frame.

In short, King County's farmers have little (if any) impact on food prices and supplies, and the role of the King County farmer in the market is quite limited (Mathematical Sciences Northwest, 1976),

As individual producers in a large market, Western Washington farmers may be considered "price-takers." Regardless of their individual output of any commodity, they do not affect the market price. They take the price as given and produce commodities within the limits of their resources, including skills to achieve the highest possible income.

The insignificant role of the King County farmer in the market is critical, for it restricts the number of alternatives a farmer may select to finance the increasing costs of farming in the county (caused by increased property taxes, LID assessments, etc.). Because the price of food products is controlled by the market, the farmer cannot simply increase the selling price of his farm's outputs.⁷ The farmer has four viable alternatives to choose from:

- 1) Quit farming and sell the land;
- 2) Switch to another crop that sells for a higher price within the market;
- 3) Sell the farm and buy less costly farmland in another location where development pressures are minimal;⁸ or
- 4) Plant two crops in the growing season (or increase productivity through some other mechanism).

Of the four alternatives, numbers one and three will cause the conversion of the farmland to developed uses. Alternatives two and four may be capable of offsetting some of the increasing costs of farming. However, within agricultural areas most threatened by development in King County, the two alternatives

do not generate sufficient revenues to compete with the more intensive forms of land use. In short, food prices established within the market restrict the selling prices of local produce, and farmers possess practically no viable alternative for increasing farm income to maintain an economically viable farm operation.

A second dimension of the national food market is the specialization of agricultural production in certain areas of the United States. Because of variations in environment, one area of the country may be capable of producing a good more efficiently (i.e., at least cost) than another area. If the area specializes in that good and if producers in other areas specialize in other goods, total production can be increased. If the areas trade their specialized goods between each other, all areas may obtain all goods, and each area would have a larger quantity of goods than it would otherwise. The ability to increase revenues substantially through specialization has caused certain agricultural products to be concentrated in a few, intensively farmed areas of the country.

Because of soil and climate conducive to agricultural crop production, California has become the major supplier of vegetables in the nation. Through specialization, California also achieves greater crop yields per acre than in Western Washington, with the exceptions of cabbage and cauliflower (Mathematical Science Northwest, 1976: 19). By raising

vegetables on large scale farms, California accounts for 78% of all western fresh market vegetable production (Mathematical Sciences Northwest: 1976: 19). Indeed, California is the most important source of fresh commodities in King County with the exception of snap beans, corn, cucumbers, and rhubarb (Mathematical Sciences Northwest, 1976: 19). Its year-round supply makes it a more preferable source of produce for local food retailers, and its uniform characteristics make it a more appealing good for shoppers than local produce (which tends to have irregular shapes and sizes). The large volume of California produce controls the commodity market and determines food prices and, therefore, farm revenues in King County. Further, due to a long growing season and low labor wages, Mexico is also becoming a major supplier of strawberries and produce (Mathematical Sciences Northwest, 1976: 21). Thus, because of the Southwest's large productive capacity resulting from specialization and ideal growing conditions, local farmers cannot produce vegetable goods competitively, which has in turn contributed to the decline of agriculture in King County.⁹

The Southwest became the nation's largest supplier of vegetable and other food products because of three interrelated factors: the construction of a nationwide freeway transportation system, technological advances reflected in vacuum cooling and refrigerated trucks, and the availability of low cost supplies of energy (for pesticides, fertilization, and

fuel). The freeway system provided a mechanism for transporting the food products, made possible by low cost fuels.¹⁰ The emergence of vacuum cooling, which removes the heat from food immediately after harvest, and the wide-spread use of refrigerated trucks permit long hauls of food products without a significant deterioration in the products' quality. Using this process, California products may survive and remain marketable for twenty days or longer. Finally, fertilizers and pesticides permit a Californian farmer to plant and harvest 10,000-30,000 acres of a single crop (e.g., lettuce, celery, carrots, etc.), which significantly reduces the operating costs of the farm. The economics of scale, together with the vacuum cooling process, permit, for example, California produce to sell in New York City or King County at a price which local farmers must get simply to break even. The local farmer cannot compete with the California agriculture industry's method of product distribution. The three factors interact to enhance farming operations in the Southwest while harming operations in the Pacific Northwest.

The costs of farm labor in King County have also increased constantly since World War II, forcing farmers to go out of business. The cost of labor has increased significantly as a result of higher minimum wages and increased benefits. The farmer must pay more for labor without offsetting increases in labor productivity.¹¹ Further, the supply of farm labor has

also declined. Unskilled laborers are choosing to enter higher paying jobs in other industries, and because of the longer growing season in the Southwest, fewer migrant workers travel to the region. As a result many farm jobs are not filled, even during periods of high unemployment. The vegetable and berry sectors of King County's agriculture industry, which are highly labor intensive activities, are most seriously affected by these trends.

Food product quality standards, imposed by law or through competition within the market, also increase the cost of farming. In order to satisfy the standards, a farmer may have to increase his usage of fertilizers and pesticides, buy new equipment, or pay higher wages to attract skilled labor. Because these costs are not offset by correspondingly higher food prices, they are an additional financial burden on the farmer.

Farmers who live in close proximity to urban development, such as in King County, are also plagued by nuisance laws. Most farm operations create noise (especially early in the morning), have odors, generate slow-moving street traffic, or may have escaped livestock. These conditions are often defined as offensive by a farmer's neighbors, and nuisance laws provide them with the legal ability to force the farmer to discontinue his operation. That is, if the farmer cannot comply with a court order to eliminate a nuisance, the farmer is forced to

sell the farm only to someone who is interested in developing the land for another use. Thus, the enforcement of nuisance laws may cause the conversion of agricultural land to urban uses.

As King County agricultural areas became urbanized, vandalism increased. Cattle were injured or killed (often by neighborhood dogs); machinery were disabled; gas was siphoned; fences were cut or broken; or property was stolen. All of these events reduce the amount of profits earned by local farmers and facilitate the decline of agriculture.

Environmental protection laws also negatively affect farm operations. Although local agriculture has only minor effects on air quality, farm use of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and fertilizers have a significant impact on water quality. The most significant source of pollution in the county is livestock waste, which contains large amounts of nitrogen that may contaminate water resources. Further, in areas where the costs of farming are increasing, farmers may choose to use chemicals more intensively to increase production land (and, therefore, their profits), creating additional negative impacts on water quality. Local environment protection laws prohibit such actions, and penalties for water quality violations may be as high as \$20,000 per day (King County, 1978: 24). Although agricultural violations have rarely been penalized more than several hundred dollars per violation (King County, 1978: 24),

stricter law enforcement in the future could prohibit certain farm operations. Thus, environmental protection laws could contribute significantly to the decline of local agricultural land.

Urban development may reduce productivity in adjacent farmland. In most developments land fill is deposited on the agricultural soil to support future construction, which makes the land virtually unrecoverable and alters natural drainage patterns. The construction of streets, buildings, parking lots, etc., reduces the surface ponding (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 53). The indirect result: farm soils stay wet longer, the growing season is shortened, and in certain locations, plants may not be able to attain maturity before the fall frosts occur. Thus, as urban development encroaches on farming, it alters the physical environment, and these alterations decrease the local viability of farming.

Finally, urban growth causes uncertainty, which reduces capital investments and causes the decline of agriculture. The uncertainty caused by urban expansion decreases the willingness of farmers and financial institutions to form long-term financial commitments. As one report states (Howard E. Conklin in Peterson and Yampolsky, 1975),

Urban expansion increases the uncertainty of returns on investments in barns, silos and other farm real estate items. Many investments essential to remaining competitive require extended periods of depreciation to

recover the initial outlay. Such investments generally add little or nothing to the value of the farm for nonfarm use, and indeed they may lower this value if they must be removed before use conversion can be completed .

If farmers are unwilling to make such expenditures, farm output declines. If underinvestment continues for a long period of time, revenues and investment returns become so low that a farmer must cease operation. By selling the farm, sufficient income may be obtained to recoup the initial investment and some profit. However, the loss of farms, in turn, causes uncertainty within the processor sector of the industry which relies heavily on local farm outputs. The effects of uncertainty on county processors are clearly documented in the following report (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 57-58).

In the early 1960s, processing plants in the Lower Green River Valley were confronted by the need for massive capital investments to update and modernize their operations. Adequate volumes of produce were still available in the area at the time, but the capital investments being considered would require up to 20 years of operation to pay for themselves. Plant managers, viewing trend projections [of the local agriculture industry], could not assure themselves that adequate volumes of produce would remain available for that 20-year period. The decision was made, therefore, to move the plants to less urbanized areas where future projections were more favorable .

Thus, uncertainty has caused processors to depart from King County.

However, once the processors left, an important market for local produce also left. Local produce farmers were forced to rely on the fresh produce market to sell their products, but the single market could not sustain all of the farmers. Further, by offering year-round availability of produce, the California agriculture industry was rapidly overtaking control of the market. Thus, following the departure of the processors, local produce farmers lacked sufficient outlets to sell their goods, and without an open fresh produce market, other farmers were also forced to sell their land for alternative uses.¹² In short, uncertainty within King County's agricultural industry has reduced investments required to maintain a stable and competitive agricultural economy, which has in turn contributed to the decline of agriculture within the County.

In summary, the following factors have caused the decline of agriculture within King County:

1. Annexation of farmland by municipalities.
2. Property taxes based on the highest and best use valuation of farmland.
3. LID assessments based on parcel size instead of usage.
4. Inheritance taxes that may be greater than the agricultural value of the land.

5. Farm sold for retirement to benefit from highest and best use valuation.
6. High cost of entering agriculture.
7. Flood control projects which encourage more intensive forms of development.
8. Influence of regional and national food commodity
9. Increased competition within the market from the importation of Californian and Mexican produce, facilitated by transportation systems, technological advances, and low cost energy supplies.
10. Increases in the costs of farming through higher wages and quality standards and reductions in the supply of labor.
11. Nuisance laws which may restrict and/or prohibit farm operations.
12. The cost of repairs caused by vandalism.
13. Standards imposed by environmental protection laws.
14. Land fills and alterations in drainage patterns caused by urban development which reduce agricultural productivity.
15. A reduction in market outlets for local produce caused by the departure of processors from the area due to uncertainty within the agriculture industry.

Agriculture requires three basic elements to be an economically viable industry: an adequate land base, corps of willing

operators, and an infra-structure of goods, services and market outlets conducive to production (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 85), in addition, of course, to financial and legal means to operate. With varying levels of impact, the combined effects of the fifteen factors are gradually eliminating each of the three elements that agriculture requires to exist. Unless these three factors become more stable in the future, uncertainty within the agriculture industry will increase, capital investment will decline further and agriculture will gradually disappear from King County.

Although the fifteen factors are often cited as major causes of agricultural land conversion in King County, little information exists that defines the causal relationships among the factors and measures their respective direct and indirect effects on farmland development. This information would assist decisionmakers to formulate plans that attacked the major causes of farmland development. Although further research is certainly needed in this area, few local governments may have accurate, longitudinal data of farmland development necessary to perform such an analysis.

Appendix A - Chapter Notes

¹In 1970, the average gross sales per acre of commercial and industrial enterprises in King County was approximately \$1 million (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 68), which far exceeds the average sales per acre of farming enterprises. Thus, tax revenues based on sales are much greater for developed than agricultural land.

²In November, 1962, a flash flood occurred in the Snoqualmie Valley and the early warning system's alerts helped reduce damages and saved lives.

³Because of the technical difficulty of implementing flood control measures on the Snoqualmie River, the plan did not propose a flood control system for the river. The issue remained under further study.

⁴The drainage project became the top priority of the King County Flood Control Division in 1965 (King County, 1965: 1).

⁵In October, 1969, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District, issued a report on flood control on the Snoqualmie River. Because of the Snoqualmie River's close proximity to the Seattle metropolitan area, the Corps recommended placing a dam on the river to satisfy the area's growing water needs. Similar to previous flood control studies, the report's conclusion was based on a cost-benefit analysis which defined the development of the river valley's agricultural land as a benefit, thereby producing a benefit-cost ratio favoring construction of the dam. However, the Corps recognized that a dam would encourage development, and they recommended that the river valley still be regulated as a flood plain after the dam was built. The County Commissioners agreed to the recommendation. However, because of the problems associated with the construction of the flood control system on the Snoqualmie, no dam was constructed on the river.

⁶Markets are nationwide because of two factors: first, the availability of cheap transportation to rapidly distribute food products across America and, second, advanced processing and freezing technology, particularly freezer truck transportation which make such long transportation distances feasible. Thus, the consumer is no longer reliant on regional production.

⁷If King County farmers did so, the prices of their products would be higher than the market, and the King County farmer would not sell his farm goods.

⁸Because of soil quality requirements, some crops cannot be shifted easily to another location. For example, because new berry farms produce very little during their first two years of operation, berry farms require 5-7 years to recover production on a new site (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 41). Similarly, because of their substantial investments, dairy farms are not easily relocated.

⁹Most local retail grocers receive Californian food products through wholesale distributors. If a distributor decided to purchase local produce instead of California produce during Western Washington's limited growing season, the California supplier may refuse to sell produce to the distributor during the off-season. Thus, a strong economic incentive forces distributors to purchase California produce throughout the year.

¹⁰Although fuel costs are increasing throughout America, Mathematical Sciences Northwest (1976b) states they will not affect market prices. As energy prices increase, the price of food commodities will also increase. But because producers in all regions of America face the same market conditions (i.e., they are all members of the same market) concerning energy supplies, their responses will tend to be substantially the same. Thus, King County's competitive position in the market, relative to California, will remain unchanged. Nonetheless, other reports, which state that the transportation costs of trucking produce from California to King County have increased from \$1,200 in 1975 to \$3,400 in 1979 (Seattle Sun, June 6, 1979), provide convincing evidence that local produce is less expensive than California produce when transportation costs change.

¹¹The farmer may compensate for higher labor costs by investing in mechanized harvest equipment. However, because most vegetable and berry farms in King County are small, most farmers cannot afford to buy the equipment. Thus, the farmer is forced to pay "whatever it takes" to harvest his crops.

¹²Processors and a stable supply of food products are interdependent: the absence of one precludes the other (Puget Sound Council of Governments, 1974: 25).

APPENDIX B

U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Quality Categories

The Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed a system of classifying the different types of soil found in America. In general, soils may be divided into eight groups, or capability classes. The eight classes represent a continuum of soil conditions developed ". . . according to the limitations of the soils when used for field crops, the risk of damage when they are used, and the way they respond to treatment" (Snyder, et al, 1974: 74). The classes may be defined as (Snyder, et al, 1974: 74),

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Class I: | Soils have few limitations that restrict their use. |
| Class II: | Soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices. |
| Class III: | Soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require special conservation practices, or both. |
| Class IV: | Soils have very severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require very careful management, or both. |
| Class V: | Soils are not likely to erode but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use largely to pasture. |
| Class VI: | Soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and limit their use largely to pasture, woodland, or wildlife habitat. |

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