

**Comprehensive Plan Policy R-650 with Explanatory Text**

Policy R-650 is in the Resource Lands Section of Chapter 3 of the updated Comprehensive Plan. It is preceded by explanatory text as follows:

The river valleys in King County are critical locations for agriculture, salmon habitat and natural floodplain processes. In compliance with growth management, portions of several of these valleys were designated as Agriculture Production Districts (APDs) to protect the diminishing farmland for long-term commercial agriculture, thereby preventing their conversion to other uses that are often incompatible with habitat protection or that would require expensive flood risk reduction projects.

Some of the highest quality of salmon habitat in King County is found within the APDs. As a result of federal listing of Chinook salmon as a threatened species, King County is obligated to take actions for protection of Chinook habitat in our watersheds. Such actions include restoration of habitat in portions of each of our rivers and, because many sections of our river systems are in a highly altered state, those reaches within APDs offer some of the most promising opportunities for habitat restoration critical to salmon recovery. Each of the Water Resources Inventory Area Salmon Conservation Plans has recommended additional protection or restoration of critical habitat within the APDs. At the same time King County is committed to the preservation of productive agricultural soils and local agricultural production and protection of public safety in flood prone areas through the restoration of floodplain processes.

The farmers in the county support fish protection and fish recovery through many regulated and voluntary actions. King County recognizes that fish, flood management, and farm interests must work together in a collaborative manner. It is essential that farmers and other property owners in each watershed be directly included in planning and in the review of integrated, watershed-wide strategies that support the needs of agriculture, fish recovery, and flood risk reduction and floodplain management. Specific habitat protection rules should not jeopardize the agricultural productivity within the APDs.

R-650 Aquatic habitat restoration projects, floodplain restoration projects and projects under King County's mitigation reserves program in an Agricultural Production District (APD) shall be evaluated through a collaborative watershed planning process with the goal of maintaining and improving agricultural viability, improving ecological function and habitat quality, and restoring floodplains through integrated, watershed-wide strategies. A watershed planning process shall be established for an agricultural production district because of the number of potential restoration projects and shall:

- a. Ensure that agricultural viability in the agricultural production district is not reduced as the result of actions taken and that agriculture remains the predominant use in the agricultural production district;
- b. Evaluate and recommend actions at all scales across the affected watershed to maintain and improve agricultural viability, restore ecological functions

and aquatic habitat and restore floodplains, including voluntary actions taken by landowners;

- c. Be a collaborative effort among affected land owners, interested stakeholders, and King County and be updated on a periodic basis; and
- d. Identify and recommend actions that King County should take or ensure are taken to maintain and improve agricultural viability in the agricultural production district and address any impacts to agriculture from aquatic habitat restoration projects, floodplain restoration projects and projects under King County's mitigation reserves program constructed in the APD