



King County

K.C. Date Received _____

**CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2016 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS**

PROJECT NAME: Lower Green APD West Valley Highway Farms

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Open Space System: Lower Green Agricultural Production District
(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: 47.02 acres and 5 parcels
(Size in acres and proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal)

CFT Application Amount: \$300,000
(Dollar amount of CFT grant requested)

Type of Acquisition(s): Fee Title Conservation Easement Other: Development rights

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name: Ted Sullivan Phone: 206-477-4834

Title: Farmland Preservation Program Manager Email: ted.sullivan@kingcounty.gov

Address: 201 South Jackson St., Suite 600, Seattle WA 98104

Date: March 18, 2015

PROJECT SUMMARY:

One of the targets for King County’s Local Food Initiative and the Kitchen Cabinet is to bring 400 new acres of land into food production each year for the next ten years. A strategy to accomplish this target is to make land available to lease for food production for new and beginning farmers by preserving farmland through fee acquisition and the purchase of easements. Based on affordability of farmland in King County, there is a strong need to acquire farmland for the purpose of leasing to tenants who are unable to acquire expensive land in this county. This project to acquire fee interest on these five parcels in the Lower Green Agricultural Production District will allow for expansion of a farm lease program offered to beginning and economically challenged farmers, which will contribute to the success of the Kitchen Cabinet and Local Food Initiative to increase access to farmland.

I. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

- A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve
- B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources
- C. Scenic resources
- D. Community separator
- E. Historic/cultural resources
- F. Urban passive-use natural area/greenbelt
- G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition
- H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs

Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve: Although the project's success would result in more agricultural activity, the lands proximity to Mullen Slough and tributaries of the Green River, as well as the adjacent identified wetland provides habitat for small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds, which includes foraging for hawks.

Salmon habitat and aquatic resources: The project's land is hydrologically connected to the Green River – an important salmon bearing river in King County. The land is entirely designated as a Critical Aquifer Recharge Area category 2, which benefits groundwater filtration. It is also part of the floodplain for the Lower Green APD and contributes to water storage during seasonal flooding. The Farmland Preservation Program Deed and Agreement requires that a conservation plan be prepared and approved for the property by the King Conservation District. The purpose of the conservation plan is to ensure farming activities occurring on the property are performed using agricultural Best Management Practices to protect water quality, both on-site as well as in off-site drainage systems. Preserving this property for agricultural use will help to maintain the quality of water leaving the site, thereby protecting salmon habitat, other downstream aquatic resources, the adjacent wetland, and groundwater recharge.

Scenic Resources: These farm properties provide or will provide outstanding open space scenic opportunities associated with the Lower Green Agricultural Production District. The agrarian activity and aesthetic contribution from the open space and agricultural use can be seen from State Route 167 and the West Valley Highway.

2. ADDITIONAL FACTORS

- A. Educational/interpretive opportunity
- B. Threat of loss of open space resources
- C. Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed .
- D. Partnerships - Describe any public or private partnerships that will enhance this project
- E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan?
- F. Transferable Development Credits (TDC) participation

Threat of loss of farmland resources: In 1959, there were approximately 100,000 acres of prime farmland in King County; however, by the late 1970's approximately half of these acres had been permanently converted to other uses. The inception of the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) in 1979 and the implementation of a variety of County policies and initiatives since then have helped to greatly reduce the loss of farmland. However, by current estimates, the original 100,000 acres of prime farmland that existed in 1959 are now reduced to approximately 41,000 acres. Most of these prime farmlands are within the designated Agricultural Production Districts (APDs) and, although this designation offers some protection, it is frequently challenged and may not be sufficient to provide protection on a permanent basis. Fee acquisition and removal of development rights allows the County to place covenants on the property which limit it to agriculture and open space uses.

Preserving these separate properties as a large farm will protect it from being divided into smaller residential farms that would no longer be viable for the growth of agricultural products at a commercial scale. Their location adjacent to the City of Auburn and close proximity to the City of Kent makes them especially vulnerable to development over time. Participating in FPP also removes the property's speculative development value, thereby helping to ensure that the property will remain affordable and thus available for agriculture or open space uses.

Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed: This project will work with the owners of each of the five parcels: Allitto LLC, Wyatt, Taylor, Spencer, and Hang.

Early discussion with two of the landowners (Allitto LLC and Hang) and the listing for sale of the Taylor property indicate that if the appraisal figures come in at acceptable levels it is possible 3 transactions could be ready to move toward closing in early 2016.

The property owned by Spencer is used for the storage of landscaping and organic materials. The future of this noncompliant use is being determined by the legal system and it continues to be a challenge to resolve. It is possible acquisition of this site may not occur until the result of this compliance issue is determined.

Partnerships: If fee purchase is successful, the outcome of this project could result in a partnership with Seattle Tilth and/or another third party who would manage and lease the land as an incubator farm for students and for disadvantage farmers (i.e., Hmong farmers). This project would further the County’s policy goal to protect active farmland that contribute to the local food supply.

3. STEWARDSHIP AND MAINTENANCE

How will the property be stewarded and maintained? Does the property lend itself to volunteer stewardship opportunities? How will ongoing stewardship and maintenance efforts be funded?

The success of this project will result in the implementation of best management practices, which would minimally protect water quality issues. FPP staff regularly monitors participating farms to ensure the owners are aware of the restrictive covenants on their property, and that they are complying with them. Similar stewardship would occur if managed as leased farmland. For this project, monitoring activities would include site visit and meeting with the farmers and those responsible for farm management. Additionally, FPP staff routinely drives by properties and check aerial photographs of preserved properties. Site visits and meetings with property owners are generally done once every one to three years unless a situation warrants more frequent visits. If a covenant violation is noted, staff informs the owner of the violation and work with them to resolve it. If such means of resolving a violation are unsuccessful, the County has the option of resolving it through litigation.

Funding for staff to monitor FPP properties and perform other program management activities is included as an expense item in the County’s annual budget.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT^a	CFT: \$300,000
2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT^b	PEL: \$0

^a*Allowable CFT acquisition costs (Ordinance 14714): The disbursement of funds shall be made only for capital project expenditures that include costs of acquiring real property, including interests in real property, and the following costs: the cost of related relocation of eligible occupants, cost of appraisal, cost of appraisal review, costs of title insurance, closing costs, pro rata real estate taxes, recording fees, compensating tax, hazardous waste substances reports, directly related staff costs and related legal and administrative costs, but shall not include the cost of preparing applications for conservation futures funds.*

^b*King County projects only, if applicable.*

Estimation of property value:

Briefly note how land values have been estimated (i.e., appraisal, property tax assessment, asking price, letter of value or other means).

This cost estimate is based on the appraised value of the properties as determined by the Department of Assessments. A formal third-party appraisal would be needed to determine actual fee acquisition cost.

PROJECT COSTS	ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE
Total property interest value	\$1,075,000
Title and appraisal work	\$25,000
Closing, fees, taxes	\$15,000
Relocation	\$0
Hazardous waste reports	
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	\$15,000
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	\$1,130,000

MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources (CFT can only provide a maximum of 50% of anticipated project costs)	DATE (Expended or Committed)	DOLLAR AMOUNT (Expended or Committed)
King County's Farmland Preservation Program 79' Bond	Current	\$300,000
Total CFT Funds Previously Received <i>This Project</i>		\$0
Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds <i>Currently Identified</i>		\$0
Unidentified Remaining Match Need	TBD	

Unidentified remaining match need: What funds are anticipated and what is the time frame?

Please briefly discuss how the unidentified remaining match need above will be met.

This multi-parcel, multi-owner, and potentially multi-year project will require more funds to be successful. Additional CFT and other funding sources will be pursued as needed. If other active FPP projects with dedicated 79' Bond dollars are not fruitful in 2015 and 2016, then additional 79' Bond dollars could be available as well.

5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Brief Activity Description	Dollar Value of In-kind Contribution	Status (Completed or Proposed)	Activity Date Range (Completion Date or Proposed Completion Date)
none			
TOTAL	<i>Not applicable</i>		

6. ATTACHED MAPS (*Two maps are now required: 1) site map and 2) general location map; you may also include one additional map, aerial photo or site photo*)

8 ½ x 11" maps are preferred, but 11 x 17" is acceptable if folded and hole-punched for insertion into a three-ring binder.

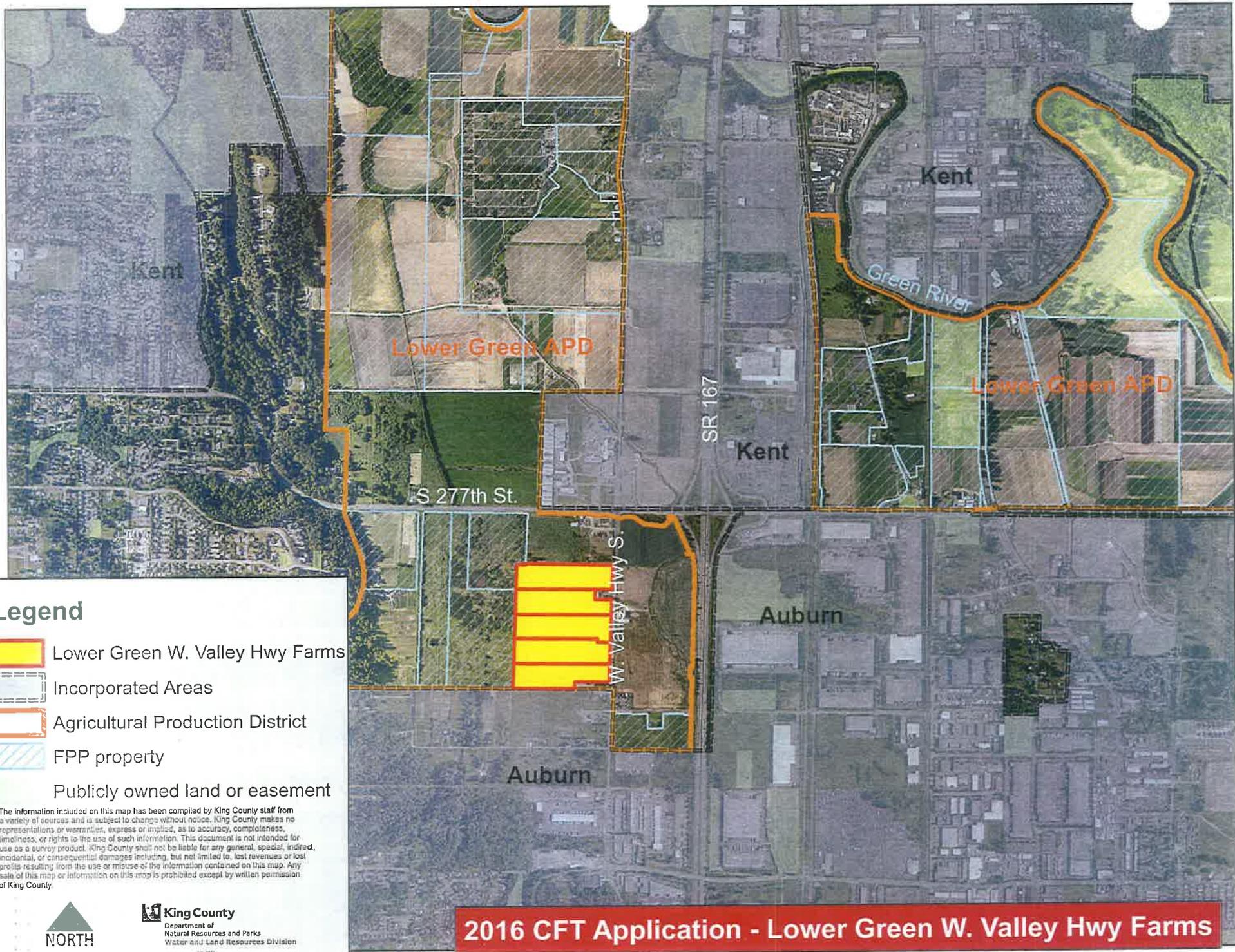
Site Map that shows the following:

- Each parcel proposed for acquisition in yellow or distinct shading and an indication of any parcel proposed for less than fee simple acquisition, such as a conservation easement;
- Location of any proposed development to the site such as parking, trails or other facilities;
- Location of any proposed site restoration;

- Existing adjacent public (local, state or federal) parks or open spaces labeled and shown in dark green or distinct shading.

Location Map that shows the following:

- Other permanently protected open spaces (private, non profit, institutional, etc.) shown in light green or distinct shading;
- Major water courses such as creeks, rivers, lakes or wetlands;
- Major roads, arterial roads or regional trails.
- *Map scale: This map should show approximately a ten-mile radius around the proposed acquisition(s).*



Legend

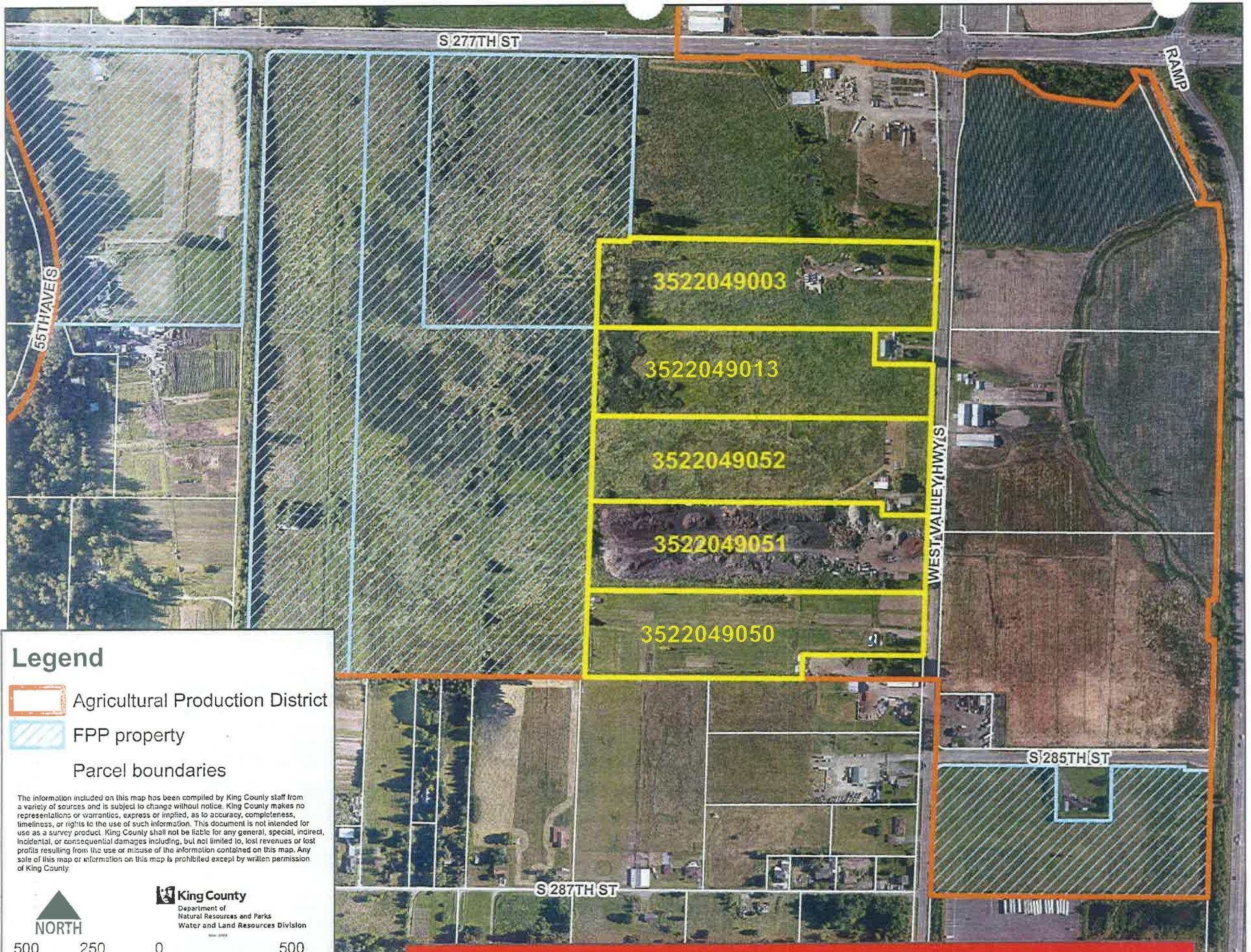
-  Lower Green W. Valley Hwy Farms
-  Incorporated Areas
-  Agricultural Production District
-  FPP property
-  Publicly owned land or easement

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King County
 Department of
 Natural Resources and Parks
 Water and Land Resources Division

2016 CFT Application - Lower Green W. Valley Hwy Farms



Legend

-  Agricultural Production District
-  FPP property
-  Parcel boundaries

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 NORTH

 500 250 0 500 Feet

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 Department of
 Natural Resources and Parks
 Water and Land Resources Division
Since 1892

CFT 2016 - Lower Green APD - farmland easement or fee purchase