

City of Chelan  
**Sustainability Steering Committee**  
“Agriculture” briefing paper

*February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010*

**Potential benefits of urban agriculture**

- Food security
- Food safety
- Improved nutrition and fitness
- Economic impacts
  - Affordable living and poverty alleviation
  - Contributions to the local economy
- Social impacts—community involvement, including involving all sectors of the population; affordable food; sense of self-sufficiency, relaxation and other psychological benefits; education
- Contributions to urban ecology

**Potential problems related to urban agriculture**

- Incompatibility with other land uses; issues of noise, odor, runoff, air pollution, transportation impacts
- Competition for land between urban and agricultural uses; achieving urban densities
- Issues of equitable use of public resources

**Factors to consider**

- Growing for home use *vs.* growing food to sell or share
- Defining urban agriculture (see existing definitions below)
- The role of micro-agriculture in the local ecosystem/foodshed. Aspects of production that may have impacts include:
  - Growing, including irrigation/water use; energy use; impacts; community farms or gardens
  - Transporting
  - Marketing (e.g., Farmers’ Market)
  - Processing
- What is the City’s role in managing agriculture/micro-agriculture?
  - City interests, which may translate into goals:
    - Pollution prevention, including pollution by greenhouse gases and by toxic chemicals
    - Providing for urban densities; increasing residential density
    - Compatibility among uses
    - Economic development
    - Quality of life; accommodating lifestyle choices in the context of conscientious urban planning
    - Providing recreation facilities and maintaining open space
    - Health of natural systems and critical areas
    - Physical health
    - Aesthetics

- Potential roles for the City
  - Policy making and community involvement
  - Land use
    - Use of municipal lands
      - Vacant land
      - Designated open space
      - Rights of way
      - Parks and other recreation areas
      - Other municipal facilities
    - Allowed uses on private land, and standards for those uses
    - Managing the impacts of allowed uses
    - Use of rights of way
  - Infrastructure and services
    - Reuse of wastewater for irrigation
    - Water storage
    - Collection, processing, and distribution of organic wastes
    - Transportation planning
  - Development and management of community infrastructure
    - Farmers' market
    - Community gardens; community tool sheds; community processing facilities—e.g., community kitchens
    - Water use; irrigation demands
    - Support for neighborhood groups
  - Food security planning and implementation
  - Partnerships and advocacy
  - Education
- Sample policy questions—should the City:
  - Allow growing and selling of nursery stock? Where (in what zoning districts)?
  - Allow growing and selling of food crops? Where (in what zoning districts)?
  - Allow growing of food crops for giveaway (for instance, by the food bank)?
  - Allow production and sale of production inputs—e.g., tractors, fertilizers? Where (in what zoning districts)?
  - Allow, promote, or support food production in rights of way (e.g., planter strips, medians)?
  - Allow, promote, or support food production on unused City land?
  - Allow livestock in the city? What kinds (e.g., chickens, rabbits, goats, bees, fish)? How many? Where (in what zoning districts)?
  - Allow food production in designated open space areas? By whom? Under what conditions (for instance, how will steep slopes and native vegetation be protected)?
  - Use food-bearing trees, shrubs, and perennials in parks, street plantings, at City facilities, etc.? (What problems might that cause?)
  - Adjust its use of herbicides, insecticides, and synthetic fertilizers to better support food production in the city?
  - Promote and support the Farmers' Market? To what extent?
  - Create demonstration gardens in neighborhoods?
  - Promote development of a network of community gardens? What would be the City's role in developing and managing those gardens?
  - Treat wastewater for re-use in gardens?
  - Provide for reduced water rates for irrigation of food crops?

- Promote and support use of wood chips from the local facility for food gardens?
    - Collect, process, and distribute other organic waste for agricultural use?
    - Involve its Resource Conservation Manager (if/when it has one) in local food production?
    - Promote and support community involvement in food production?
    - Plan and prepare for food security?
    - Use its web site to educate the community about urban agriculture?
    - Collaborate and form partnerships to promote local food production?
  - City resources and capacity. Bear in mind that the City has limited:
    - Funds
    - Staff time
- The City's current Comprehensive Plan (*see agriculture-related excerpts, below*)
  - Are the existing provisions adequate?
  - If not, what would you like to see changed? How can the City interests and policy questions listed above inform the Agriculture provisions of the Sustainability Element?

## **Resources**

- Web sites
  - Urban Agriculture: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban\\_agriculture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_agriculture)
  - Guidelines for Municipal Policymaking on Urban Agriculture: [http://www.idrc.ca/cfp/ev-29688-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/cfp/ev-29688-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)
  - *Redefining Prosperity: Energy Descent and Community Resilience Report of the Bloomington Peak Oil Task Force*: <http://bloomington.in.gov/media/media/application/pdf/6239.pdf>; section on food and agriculture begins on page 173, with recommendations beginning on page 188
  - What is Urban Agriculture? <http://www.ruaf.org/node/512>
  - Why is Urban Agriculture important? <http://www.ruaf.org/node/513>
  - Sustainable Agriculture: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable\\_agriculture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_agriculture)
  - What is Sustainable Agriculture? <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/Concept.htm>
  - Urban Agriculture and Community Food Security in the United States: Farming from the City Center to the Urban Fringe: <http://www.foodsecurity.org/PrimerCFSCUAC.pdf>
  - Urban Agriculture notes: <http://www.cityfarmer.org/>
- Articles
  - "Urban farming on the rise in Bloomington, Indiana": <http://www.cityfarmer.info/2010/02/22/urban-farming-on-the-rise-in-bloomington-indiana/>
  - *Permaculture Activist*: <http://www.permacultureactivist.net/articles/articles.htm>
  - Agriculture briefs from last week's *Methow Valley News*: <http://www.methowvalleynews.com/story.php?id=3032>
- Books
  - *Farm City*
  - *Food Not Lawns*
  - *Gaia's Garden*
  - *Growing better cities: Urban agriculture for sustainable development*
  - Other I just came across...
- Foodshed concept and maps
  - Vancouver 100-mile diet: <http://foodshed.100milediet.org/vancouver-foodshed-items>
  - Foodshed mapping tool: <http://www.cals.cornell.edu/cals/css/extension/foodshed-mapping.cfm>
- Food, Inc. (movie). Available for rent at Safeway. Website: <http://www.foodincmovie.com/>

## **Agriculture-related excerpts from the City's comprehensive plan**

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### **Introduction**

From "Benefits of the Plan", p. 4: Promotes Desired Changes. The Chelan Planning Area has a local economy consisting of agricultural industries, recreation/tourism, goods and services, and forest products. At the same time, the plan must accommodate a proportionate amount of business and industrial land uses to support the increasing population over time. This plan strives to secure the agricultural industry, expand desirable recreation opportunities, improve the quality of life, and establish a year round economy.

From community involvement description: September/October, 1993. Telephone Survey. The County Planning Department conducted a telephone survey of 400 County residents. The survey was designed to be a county-wide sampling of opinions and concerns. Issues of concern included crime, property rights, traffic and housing. Housing types considered most in need were single-family rentals, low income and elderly housing. Types of economic growth most preferred were "high-tech industrial", agricultural and commercial...

Chelan Planning Area Statement of Intent: The intent of this comprehensive plan is to provide a guide for the development of the Chelan Planning Area. The plan strives to maintain and enhance the existing quality of life that includes: culture, customs, economy, agricultural economy, sense of community, water quality, and recreational opportunities. This is a plan to promote the development of a 12 month economy utilizing the abundant natural resources of the area. This plan should provide for expansion of these opportunities, while maintaining an adequate infrastructure to accommodate this growth. Continuous public participation is warranted, with decision making and implementation at the local level. This plan will ensure the protection of individual property rights, and provide for the right to farm according to historic and recommended practices

From definitions: Urban Growth refers to growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of such land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources, rural uses, rural development, and natural resource lands designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170. A pattern of more intensive rural development, as provided in RCW 36.70A.070(5)(d), is not urban growth. When allowed to spread over wide areas, urban growth typically requires urban governmental services. "Characterized by urban growth" refers to land having urban growth located on it, or to land located in relationship to an area with urban growth on it as to be appropriate for urban growth.

### **Commercial sub-element**

Goal 1, Policy 20: The Lords Acres area should be designated as a special use district as a mixed use agricultural, tourist commercial, and residential use area. Rationale: It is in the community's overriding public interest to keep its downtown businesses viable. As the Chelan Planning Area continues to grow, and its economy diversify, there will be a need for additional tourist commercial opportunities. Currently the downtown businesses overly rely upon a summer/seasonal economy. General commercial development in the Lords Acres area at this time would negatively impact down town businesses. The existing agricultural uses should be provided the opportunity to continue agricultural opportunities as long as they are viable and choose to farm

### **Industry sub-element**

"The industrial uses in the planning area are primarily agriculturally based."

**Goal 1:** encourage the city of Chelan to develop as a service, retail, residential, tourist, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and activity center for the Lake Chelan basin

## **UGA sub-element**

### **Goal 1**

Policy 5: Recognize that lands can continue to be used for agricultural purposes. Rationale: Existing agricultural areas in the urban growth area should not be put out of business by encroachment from expanding urban uses.

Policy 6: Existing agricultural uses within the Urban Growth Area are “grandfathered” uses that have the right to continue as long as the owner chooses to operate them. Rationale: The agricultural use was established first and as long as long as it is economically viable it should be allowed to continue.

Policy 7: New non-farm development adjacent to orchard in the Special Use District should provide buffering. New orchard next to an existing development in the Special Use District must obtain a conditional use permit and provide a buffer. Buffer options should include 25ft setbacks with a minimum 6ft high hedge, or 100ft setbacks including the use of right of ways. Rationale: This ensures that existing orchard operations in the Special Use District are able to continue to farm as long as they choose to, and that any new orchard operations in the Special Use District are not detrimental to urban development.

Policy 8: Notification should be placed on all plats or binding site plans that the adjacent land is an orchard operation subject to a variety of activities that may not be compatible with residential development. The notice should state that the agricultural related activities performed in accordance with city, county, state and federal laws shall not be subject to legal action as public nuisances. Rationale: Such notification will allow potential purchasers to make educated real estate purchase decisions.

### **Land use designations**

**Special Use District (SUD)** - To provide an opportunity for low density residential housing, and low impact tourist commercial planned unit developments. Currently a significant number of property owners in this area wish to continue in agricultural use. However, looking to the 20 year planning period, many property owners wish to have some development options. This development should minimize orchard/non-farm development conflicts and protect the character of the area

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**Warehousing and Industrial District (W-I)** - This designation is intended to be applied in areas suitable for industrial use which are or will be developed by industries not detrimental to agriculture or recreation in the Lake Chelan area. The regulations of the zoning district for this designation will supply the necessary open level space needed for such development.

### **Economic Development element**

*(Note: the Economic Development Element was developed for the Chelan Valley, so some provisions are less relevant to urbanized areas)*

Regarding compliance with GMA Goal 8 (“Maintain and enhance natural resource based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses”): This Economic Development Element secures the agriculture industry and enhances the recreation industry, also a natural resource-based industry. Existing timber and fishing industries are compatible with this Plan. (Fishing is addressed specifically as a recreational use to be further developed.) This Plan attempts to conserve these lands better than other techniques, by supporting the economic viability and profitability of the industries. The businesses must be competitive and profitable to ensure their longevity. For example, the farms will only exist if the farmer can continue to make a living farming the land

**Goal 3: Identify and implement programs, projects and/or regulatory changes that remove barriers and improve viability of agricultural industries.** Rationale: The traditional agricultural economy is experiencing significant change. Because of its important role in the history and development of the community and its contribution to the quality of life in Chelan, agriculture will continue to play an important part in the community’s economic future.

## *Policies*

Policy 3.1 Review existing land use plans and regulations to ensure that existing agricultural uses are protected from incompatible uses and are provided with reasonable flexibility regarding permitted uses and structures.

Policy 3.2 Review and update existing land use and infrastructure plans and regulations to ensure, without limiting uses, that there are a variety of locations ready for development or expansion of agricultural support and processing facilities.

Policy 3.3 Promote and support efforts to diversify the agricultural industry through agri-tourism, wineries and other value-added agricultural products, and produce stands.

Policy 3.4 Advocate and participate in groups and efforts intended to change county, state and federal statute that limit the viability of agriculture in the Chelan Basin

## **Introduction**

### Agriculture

The agricultural industry, consisting mostly of fruit orchards, was established in the Chelan area over 100 years ago and has been the traditional mainstay of the economy ever since. In fact, the first commercial apple orchard in Chelan County was planted in the early 1880s after settlers discovered how well fruit trees flourished under local growing conditions. The orchard industry expanded over time as irrigation canals and ditches conveyed water to greater acreage.

The general consensus of the community is that the area benefits from the agriculture industry and appreciates the aesthetic qualities of the orchards. This area is recognized for growing some of the best apples in the world. Over the decades, excellent marketing and distribution have contributed to the success of local crops. However, the orchard industry has declined in recent years. Locally, agriculture is impaired by some significant forces, including: 1) Large, consolidated orchards being developed in South Central Washington, and 2) increased foreign production in countries such as Iran, France and China which is not subject to the same constraints as U.S. growers. With this in mind, the Washington State Apple Commission has advised the community to diversify its economic base.

One of the goals of this element is to help the agriculture industry maintain economic viability by incorporating land use policies that support farmers, orchardists, and others related to the industry. Policies are intended to allow flexibility and support for improvements, changes and expansion necessary to maintain a viable fruit industry. New farming techniques are helping expand the growing season. The industry is encouraged to pursue opportunities to add value to their crops (e.g. food processing, wineries) to help diversify and keep agriculture profitable. Such opportunities may help offset the seasonal nature of agricultural work and generally offer higher paying jobs. The potential for agri-tourism is also of keen interest as local producers look for ways to create direct connections with consumers.

### Basics strategy area

“...enhancement and retention of existing businesses and economic generators (e.g. recreation, tourism, agriculture) is preferable to moving the community in an entirely new direction.”

### Infrastructure strategy area

Agri-tourism/Vineyard/Wineries – This portion of the community’s economy is important enough to warrant inclusion in this strategy area in addition to an area of its own. The community has consistently identified diversification and protection of agriculture as a high priority and integral to the economic vision. Inclusion of this project/theme in the infrastructure strategy area is intended to insure that the changing needs of the agricultural endeavors in the Chelan Basin are considered as infrastructure is planned and improved. Action items specific to agriculture are included in the Agriculture strategy area.

### Agriculture strategy area

The third strategy area is Agriculture, one of the historic and desired future cornerstones of the Chelan Valley's economy. Agriculture, specifically agri-tourism, vineyards and value-added products highlighted by a fledging wine industry, was identified as the number two priority through the process used to develop

this element. This strategy area is designed to encourage efforts by local agricultural interests in exploring new and direct marketing crops, developing a value-added industry and increasing the tourism draw to agricultural enterprises - all identified as opportunities in the SWOT process. The strategy area includes "Top Twenty Projects/Themes" priorities 2, 5, 6, 9, and 13; and is vital to the realization of the Goal 3 and associated policies contained in Chapter III. The projects/themes within this strategy area are:

- Agri-tourism Vineyard/Wineries - As previously noted, this project/theme is so central to the community's economic vision that it has a strategy area of its own.
- Economic diversification - As previously noted, the notion of economic diversification is a central focus of this plan with diversification of the agricultural industry a high priority. There are no actions or recommendations related to the general project/theme of economic diversification.
- Pay attention to local needs and desires - This theme is included in the Agriculture Strategy Area because of the unique position held by agriculture in the community. Nearly all new development - commercial, residential or industrial - is most likely the result of the conversion of agricultural land. While such conversions are inevitable as market conditions impact the value of agricultural commodities, the results can be a benefit or detriment to the community.
- Retention of existing businesses/people - The orchards, vineyards, farms and ranches in the Chelan Basin are existing businesses and their retention can be one of the least expensive approaches to economic development, however like other types of businesses, an issue much larger than local government. Market conditions and forces generally have a greater impact on a business or individual being able to keep the operation going than actions of a local government. However, there are things a community can do.
- Partnerships - Many of the non-market forces that affect the viability of the agriculture sector has to do with the "layer-cake" of federal, state and local regulation and increasing land values and pressures resulting from changing land uses. One of the most effective ways to address these issues is through creation and maintenance of partnerships among diverse local interests.
- Actions/Recommendations: The actions and recommendations for the agriculture strategy area are intended to provide some focus on what types of actions the City can take to promote, encourage and otherwise support the area's agricultural economy as it undergoes a transition. In some cases the action item may be simply to maintain updated plans. The following pages contain a list of priority projects along with recommended implementation steps...projects [are] listed in priority order.

#### *Priority actions—1-5 years*

**Farmers Market - the farmers market is an excellent way to create direct connections between the producer and consumer. The market can also enhance opportunities to promote agri-tourism**

- Form committee to work with market organizers to identify new, more visible location (e.g. city street, old bridge, in one of the parks, near PUD boat ramp)

**Establish and maintain an ongoing dialog with agricultural interests, land and business owners and a wide range of residents that affect agriculture**

- Maintain active membership in agri-tourism and agricultural promotion
- oriented groups - promote participation by city staff and elected officials
- Hold annual "agri-tourism" workshop with focus on hearing from a variety of sources about strengths, weakness, threats and opportunities facing local agricultur
- Educate affected citizens on how to get involved in local government

**Work with agricultural interests to facilitate opportunities for value-added products and encourage the development of on-farm marketing to residents and visitors**

- Support the development of the Institute for Rural Innovation and Sustainability (IRIS) at Wenatchee Valley College
- Cooperate with and support efforts to create an "appellation" for Lake Chelan wineries
- Explore potential tax incentives for new, expanded or value-added agricultural industries
- Participate in efforts to identify a target market for the area's growing wine industry

- Participate in the Highway 97 Corridor project to promote the development of agri-tourism in the Lake Chelan Valley
- Identify and remove barriers to the placement of crop signs in the area
- Review and revise land use regulations, if needed, to permit mixed-use developments that incorporate agriculture (e.g. vineyard and golf course)
- Use partnerships with a variety of organizations to develop a brochure to promote agriculture in the Chelan area. The brochure should highlight the of area's crops and products, provide a "guided" tour of the area and encourage visitors to patronize local farmers
- Enact a City policy, resolution and/or ordinance that requires, whenever possible and practical, that the City buy locally grown food
- Promote and support the creation of an "incubator" in the Chelan Area with a focus on development of development, production and marketing of value-added agricultural products
- Actively implement polices 3.1 through 3.4

The entire comprehensive plan is available online at <http://cityofchelan.us/planbuild/planning.aspx> Under the heading "Planning topics", select heading "long-range planning" , then scroll down to "2009 Comprehensive Plan."

## Definitions of urban agriculture

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): "...industry that produces, processes and markets food and fuel, largely in response to the daily demand of consumers within a town, city, or metropolis, on land and water dispersed throughout the urban and peri-urban area, applying intensive production methods, using and reusing natural resources and urban wastes to yield a diversity of crops and livestock."

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban\\_agriculture\\_-\\_cite\\_note-11#cite\\_note-11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_agriculture_-_cite_note-11#cite_note-11)

The Council on Agriculture, Science and Technology (CAST): "Urban agriculture is a complex system encompassing a spectrum of interests, from a traditional core of activities associated with the production, processing, marketing, distribution, and consumption, to a multiplicity of other benefits and services that are less widely acknowledged and documented. These include recreation and leisure; economic vitality and business entrepreneurship, individual health and well-being; community health and well being; landscape beautification; and environmental restoration and remediation."

## Excerpts from Benton County's *Overall Economic Development Plan*

*Benton City Public Market:* Establishing a public market would provide an outlet for locally grown agricultural products as well as a venue for local artists and craftspersons to market their products, and improve overall consumer spending within the city. Conveniently sited, regular public market days will also increase foot traffic in the downtown area thus offering additional marketing opportunities for local small businesses and farm producers. In 2006, the BCEDC initiated exploration of the potential of a public market/farmers market in Benton City. Potential sites have been identified and the project has been discussed with likely vendors. BCEDC will act as a catalyst for this project, with the objective of developing an independent, self-sustaining organization to operate and maintain the program.

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### **Agri-Business Suppliers**

Modern day agriculture requires a long supply chain. Attracting suppliers to the area can enhance and retain local industries by shortening supply lines and reducing costs. Also included in this category are companies that may be able to utilize agricultural byproducts, i.e. strawboard manufacturers utilizing cornstalks.

### **Value Added Processing**

Vertical integration in the agricultural industry has reduced the revenues generated from unprocessed agricultural products. Value Added Processing seeks to attract/retain companies that perform 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage processing before the product leaves the region.

### **Agri-Tourism**

Certain agricultural sectors, most notably the wine industry but other agricultural sectors as well, can expand regional tourism. Napa Valley in California has a very successful tourism industry that was developed from the wine industry. Increasing agri-tourism does not rely on recruiting businesses, though occasionally a rural area may need to recruit a high-end restaurant that would not normally be supported by the local population, but relies on a great extent on marketing the community in urban areas.