

**From:** [Oliver Orjiako](#)  
**To:** [Jeffrey Delapena](#)  
**Cc:** [Jose Alvarez](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Comments on La Center's Comp Plan Update  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 6, 2026 4:58:13 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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FYI. Thanks.



**OLIVER ORJIAKO**  
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**From:** Ann Foster <annfoster5093@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 6, 2026 4:52 PM  
**To:** Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; tcoleman@ci.lacenter.wa.us;  
tstrobehn@ci.lacenter.wa.us  
**Cc:** Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>  
**Subject:** Comments on La Center's Comp Plan Update

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Hello, I am writing this as a resident of La Center, Washington, and a Friends of Clark County board member in response to the City of La Center's comments on the DEIS for the Comp Plan Update that are posted on the City of La Center's website as a call to action

From the perspective of the Average Susie Citizen, I can speak to what's important to me and the town I love.

There are many reasons to love La Center. It is nestled on a lovely, meandering river and hosts a great bar, Mexican restaurant, pre-school, health clinics, hairdressers, a dentist, an architect, mini groceries, a post office, a fire station, a great pizza joint and the best bakery in the Pacific Northwest! The area of these local businesses is walkable distance from surrounding residential blocks, three schools, a waterfront park(s). This residential ring then evolves gracefully into rolling ag and rural lands, many of which contain working farms

that are important to our community. I share with many others that we want to protect the downtown from becoming a strip mall, making walkability impossible, but some growth in the downtown area that provides for some residential development and small business retail shops would only enhance our community.

There appears to be no reason to expand around the junction, paving over precious ag-designated land, when we have the data in front of us showing that job, housing and population projections can be accommodated within the current UGA.

On the topic of jobs, the Susie's of the World care about WHAT the jobs are; if there is going to be commercial development, light industrial development, let us tell you which we want for our community, as all jobs are not equal. We do want decent affordable housing, not RV Storage facilities, warehouses or heavy industrial uses on vast amounts of acreage. We want small businesses that cater to the community (not transform it into something different). We are concerned that the City gave away "jobs" lands to the Cowlitz Tribe, in the form of 60 acres that would've been 340 jobs. If that " jobs" land had not been given away, it could have been used in our update process - creating what would've been a surplus today of job land in the amount of almost 200 jobs. ([La Center council agrees to let Cowlitz Tribe incorporate land east of I-5 into trust | The Reflector](#))

Regarding the Ag Study and La Center's complaints about the Ag Study, where was La Center in early 2024 when the County was telling the Cities that if they wanted to expand into resource lands, they would have to do a comprehensive county wide study or, even later, when the City submitted site specific documents rather than requesting a countywide study of ag acreage? It wasn't there. Of significance, let's make it clear that I can find nothing of La Center asking for countywide resource land study prior to December 2024. Community Planning proceeded on the correct assumption that La Center had enough available land within its UGA to meet the forecasted housing, population and employment allocations.

There are many of us who also wanted a thorough and comprehensive Resource Lands Study. However, not at this intersection of the Comp Plan Update process. I favored a more extensive process for the resource lands study, one that would take place over time after we completed the Comp Plan. But the City of LaCenter and the City of Ridgefield led the charge to move forward by expanding the time to complete the CP Update and getting at least an Ag Land resource study, ostensibly because the cities believed that a resource study would result in the cities being able to de-designate agricultural lands and bring those lands into an expanded urban growth area.

So, in response, the County put out an RFP limiting the resource land study to JUST AG LANDS (La Center did not comment on the RFP or object), hired a consultant (La Center did not comment on or object) and then that consultant took twice as long as the initially proposed 2 months, did a thorough job, including open houses with the community and taking hundreds of comments and then, in accord with the applicable criteria, produced a comprehensive report. So now, the position of the Cities is "we don't like the result" because it found that the lands the Cities wanted de-designated still qualify as Agricultural Lands of Long-Term Commercial Significance, as many of us had already concluded and placed data in the record in December showing that they qualified. So, because they do not like the result, the cities are attacking the process and the consultant report that they insisted on being conducted.

La Center's call to have people comment says that the "stated purpose" of this study was

not to “ask what soils underlie areas and to what extent those soils might support or constrain future development.” misconstrues what the consultant did in conducting the study and producing a report. Rather, the consultant’s report is in line with the specifics set for in the RFP. The RFP states:

*“The county seeks a thorough technical evaluation of land within the unincorporated areas, outside of the current urban growth areas, of the county utilizing all applicable state and local agricultural resource lands designation criteria. This evaluation is to include both the currently designated agriculture lands, as well as recommendations for inclusion of any lands that should qualify for such designation but currently are not designated agriculture resource lands.”*

A thorough read of the study shows that is exactly what the consultant did. One does not have to be an expert to know that soils are important for agriculture and enhance our daily lives as human beings. If you include some of the more successful (real farmers, not just landowners) farm businesses they will tell you. Give soils a chance.

The allegation that the consultant performing the Ag Study interviewed a limited number of Susie’s is also simply not credible in that I know personally of those that were interviewed that are not farmers, Ag Commission members or FOCC board members. Plus, scores of people showed up at both Open Houses, engaged in detailed conversations with the consultants and made extensive comments that were provided to the consultants and used by them in their analysis.

It seems to me that anyone who requested to be interviewed, certainly would’ve been accommodated and certainly the consultants considered the City’s comments in their analysis.

It is clear that the City’s planning community does not include those that have a vision of a healthy balance for this City among residential, light industrial, commercial and agriculture. Agriculture is a way of life in much of Clark County and it is essential to the economic viability of this small town, County and State: berries, Christmas trees, produce, flowers, honey and more come from the fields surrounding the “core” of La Center. To say that “the purpose of protecting agricultural lands ..to be an outsized and overriding theme of this Comprehensive Plan update” is offensive to those of us who live here and depend upon local ag and ag businesses. The City of La Center seems to be oblivious to the air, water, food security, impacts of climate events that ag and resource lands contribute to our existence here on Earth.

So, I will be writing to the County and telling them that the City has misrepresented the Comp Plan process and, particularly, the Ag Land Study and that I will be supportive of not converting designated agricultural lands of long term commercial significance and not expanding our current urban growth area boundaries.

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Best regards,  
Ann Foster  
Organizer, Salmon Creek Farmers Market  
President, Friends of Clark County  
360-600-0100