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To: zimmerlyolivia@icloud.com
Cc: [Oliver Orjiako](#); [Jose Alvarez](#)
Subject: RE: Planning Commission Hearing 1.29.26
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 11:38:00 AM
Attachments: [N Ridgefield Agricultural Analysis copy.pdf](#)

Good day, Olivia,

Thank you for providing this feedback for tonight's Hearing to select the Preferred Land Use Alternative.

I am forwarding to additional members of Staff. Your comments will be brought to the attention of Planning Commission ahead of the continuation of the Hearing to select the Preferred Land Use Alternative. This will also be added to the Index of Record.

Best regards,

Jeff Delapena
Program Assistant
COMMUNITY PLANNING

564.397.4558

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-----Original Message-----

From: Olivia Zimmerly <zimmerlyolivia@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2026 10:06 AM
To: Jeffrey Delapena <Jeffrey.Delapena@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: Planning Commission Hearing 1.29.26

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of Clark County. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jeff,

Please provide the attached report to the Planning Commission Members for tonight's meeting.

Thank you,

Olivia Zimmerly



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ECONOMICS



AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE LAND ANALYSIS FOR DETERMINATION OF DE-DESIGNATION IN CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

PREPARED FOR
NORTH RIDGEFIELD EXPANSION AREA PROPERTY OWNERS
OCTOBER 2024

JOHNSON ECONOMICS, LLC

621 SW Alder St, Suite 506
Portland, Oregon 97205



**JOHNSON
ECONOMICS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

JOHNSON ECONOMICS was retained by a series of property owners to evaluate a cluster of parcels in Clark County (referenced throughout as the “subject property”) under the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) to determine if they meet the criteria of agricultural resource lands. These criteria are:

- (a) *The land is not already characterized by urban growth.*
- (b) *The land is used or capable of being used for agricultural production (based on physical characteristics).*
- (c) *The land has long-term commercial significance for agriculture (WA 365-190-050).*

The analysis will consider site-specific and broader local trends in land use, urban growth, and future potential for agricultural use as detailed in WA 365-190-050. The main components of this study are:

- *Characterization of urban growth around the subject property.*
- *Determining if the subject property is primarily devoted to commercial agriculture production.*
- *Analysis of the long-term commercial significance of agricultural production at the subject property.*
- *Review of the criteria for agricultural resource lands in the context of the subject property.*
- *Assessment of the state of agriculture in Clark County, including agricultural and urban trends.*
- *Recommendations for de-designation of the subject property.*

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The subject property is characterized by urban growth. It joins the Ridgefield urban growth boundary (UGB) and is zoned with an urban reserve and industrial overlay. Almost 1,000 new homes have been built within two miles of the property since 2018. Developed land close to the property is primarily residential, commercial, or industrial, though the immediately surrounding parcels are mostly agricultural.

The availability of public facilities and services is mixed at the subject property. It is outside the City of Ridgefield utility service areas, though Clark Public Utilities recently updated adjacent power and wastewater lines. Schools and emergency services are within three miles and the nearest hospital is about eight miles away.

The soils on the subject property include a range of classifications and are suitable for some crops. The most practical agricultural use is hay, which is currently farmed on portions of the property, or livestock grazing. The site holds some consumptive irrigation rights, but historically, these rights did not provide enough water access to support any crops beyond hay. Additionally, the productivity of potential farm operations is below a profitable level.

The property is designated as agricultural land under Current Use, a tax deferral program. However, most of the parcels are not being farmed as of October 2024, so they no longer meet the criteria to be designated this way. The total assessed fair market value of land and buildings in the developable parcels is \$8.75 million, much higher than the current taxable use, rendering them infeasible to purchase for anything other than development.

Land in Clark County is trending towards more residential use and less agricultural use. From 2017 to 2022, land in farms decreased by 38%. Over that same period, Clark County’s population increased by 48,000 (a 10% increase) and almost 27,000 new residential units (16,000 single-family homes) were permitted.

Ridgefield is also trending towards more residential and commercial use and less agricultural use. From 2017 to 2022, Ridgefield’s population increased by over 200%, and over 3,000 new residential units (2,500 single-family homes) were permitted within the city. Furthermore, almost 1.2 million square feet of commercial and industrial space is in planning or under construction within a mile of the subject property.

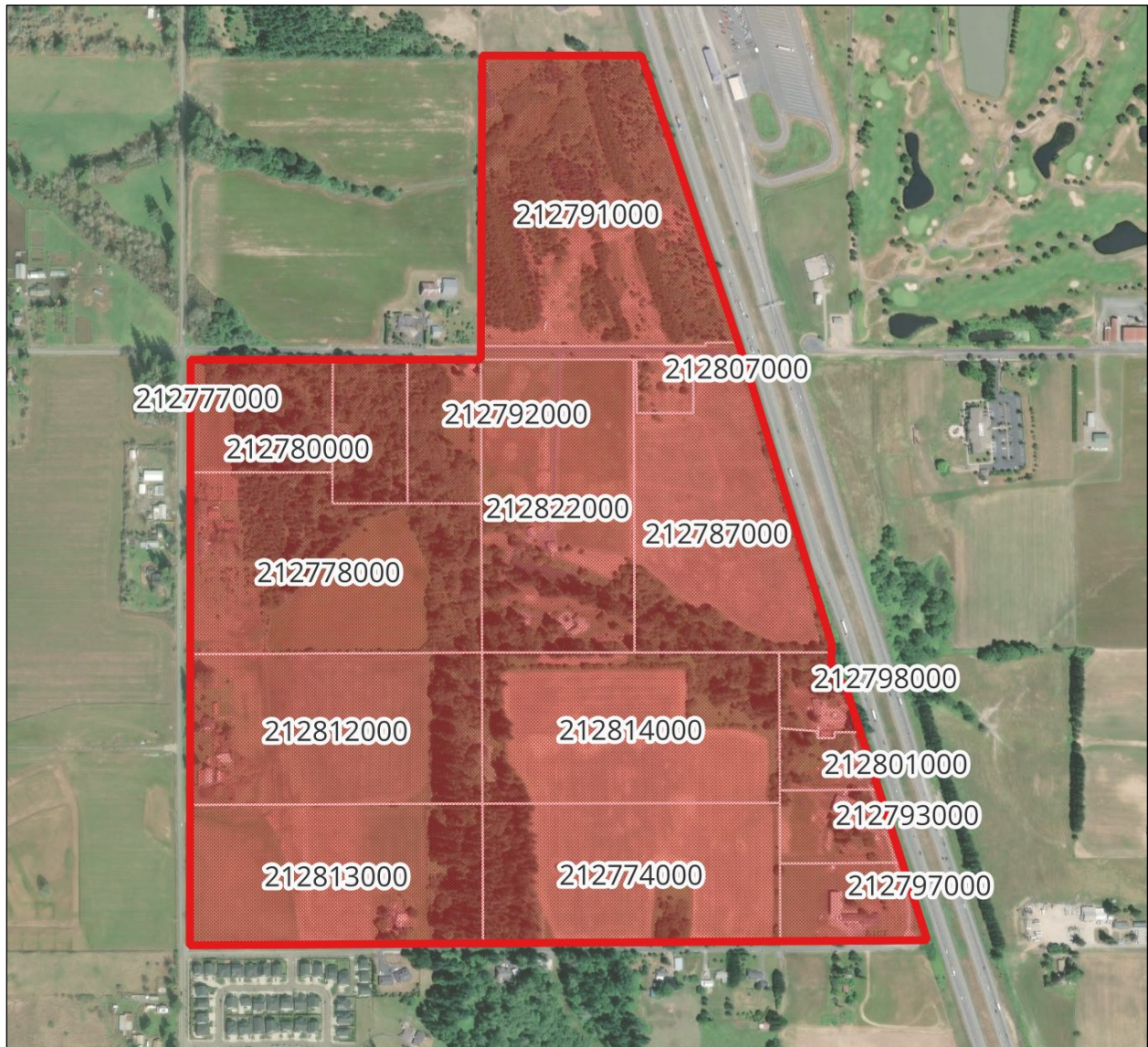


We find that the subject property does not meet the criteria of agricultural resource land as defined by the Washington Growth Management Act, and therefore, we recommend de-designation.

III. SITE ANALYSIS

The subject property is comprised of 16 parcels that total 199.1 acres. The parcels are mapped with their ID numbers below. All parcels are zoned for agricultural use.

FIGURE 3.1: PARCELS CONTAINED IN THE SUBJECT PROPERTY



SOURCE: Clark County, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

The property is bound by Interstate 5 to the east.



PROPERTY BACKGROUND

The subject property is comprised of 16 parcels. These are owned by a total of 10 different property owners. Four parcels (on the southeast side of the property) contain homes and are not designated as agricultural land under Current Use, though they are zoned for agriculture.

The large parcel on the north side of the property, parcel 212791000, was a tree farm until around 2015, when it became defunct. It was sold in 2016, and tree farming was attempted again, but most of the trees died due to a lack of available water, according to the property owners. As of October 2024, this parcel is not being farmed.

Through 1998, parcel 212787000 was used for grazing cows and farming strawberries. From 1998 to 2003, the property was leased to a strawberry farmer, but according to the property owners at the time, the farm often did not produce enough strawberries to sell commercially. Since 2003, the parcel has been in weeds and grass and not able to be hayed for commercial purposes. The adjacent small parcel included a home until 2016, when the home was demolished. Parcel 212822000 is also currently in weeds and grass; the owners keep llamas for weed control only.

The four large parcels on the southwest side of the property, parcels 212812000, 212813000, 212814000, and 212774000, make up the Smith Farm. The current owners have had the property since the 1960s, using it for both grazing cows and farming hay, although it has been many years since it was grazed. The owners currently contract with a hay farmer in order to meet the agricultural requirements of Current Use. Parcel 212778000 is also hayed for this reason, though it is owned separately.

The three small parcels on the northwest side of the property, 212777000, 212780000, and 212792000, are mostly trees. There is one home and a small area of grass; these parcels are not being farmed commercially.

If development proceeds on this property, no homes will be retained, except for the home on parcel 212822000. Therefore, we exclude its assessed value from the following analysis.

The first three images below show the north side of the property in 2012, including the tree farm and areas of grass and trees. The last two show grass and trees on the west side in 2023, and an old barn on one parcel.



FIGURE 3.2: STREET VIEW OF PARCELS WITHIN SUBJECT PROPERTY, 2012-2023





SOURCE: Google Earth, JOHNSON ECONOMICS



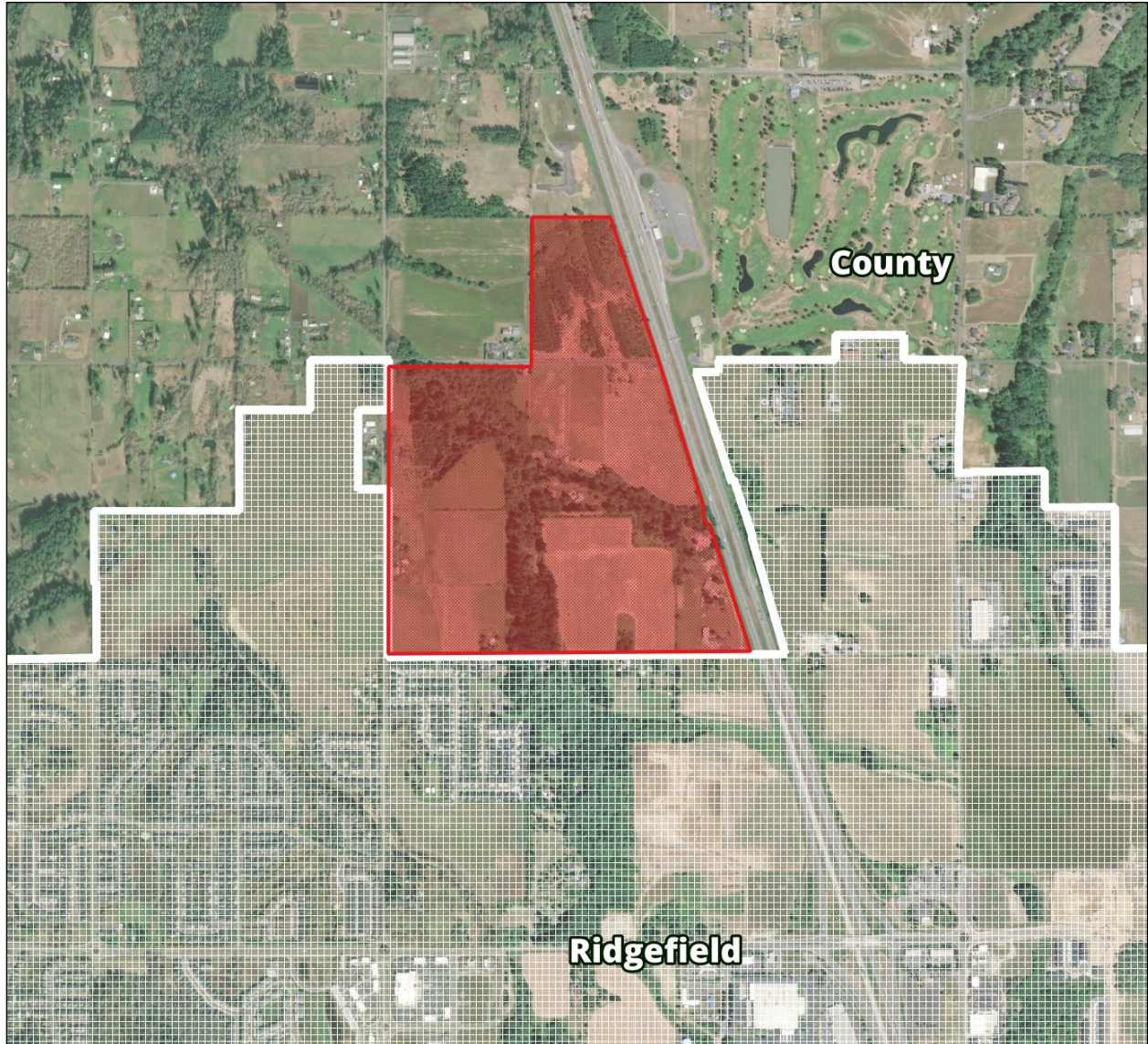
Eleven out of the sixteen parcels are within the Current Use program and have been since the development of Clark County's comprehensive plan, which was adopted in the 1990s. Current Use allows open space, timber, agricultural, and forest lands to be taxed at the value of their current use, rather than at their assessed value. This program is a tax deferment, so if the lands are withdrawn, the owner must pay at least seven years of back taxes at the assessed value, plus interest in some cases. This is detailed later in the report.



IV. CHARACTERIZATION OF URBAN GROWTH

The subject property is adjacent to the Ridgefield Urban Growth Boundary to the west, east, and south. The parcels on the inside edges of these boundaries are primarily residential, commercial/employment, or parks/open space. These boundaries were last updated in 2022, according to Clark County's GIS system.

FIGURE 4.1: RIDGEFIELD URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY, 2022

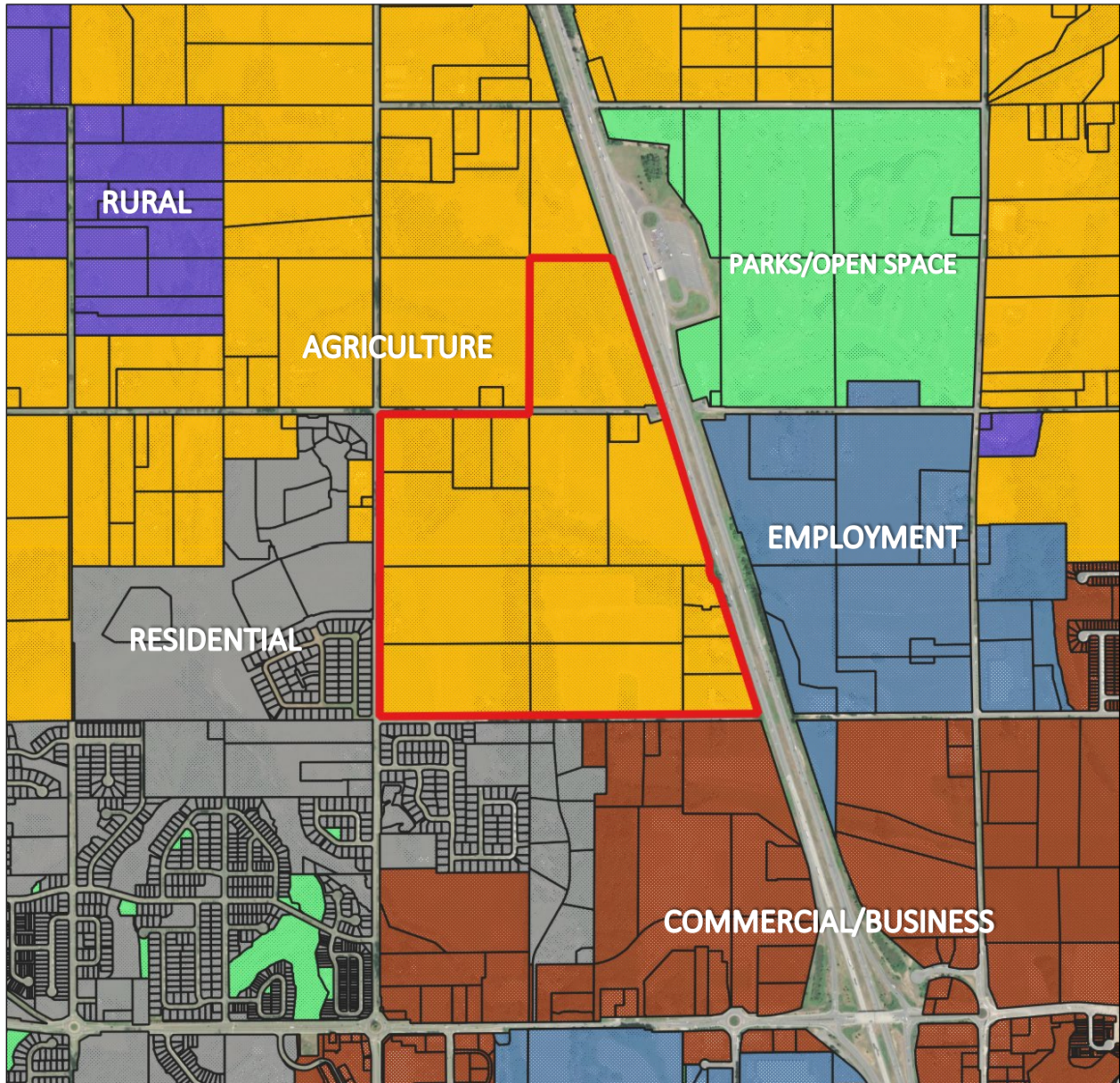


SOURCE: Clark County, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

The subject property is zoned for agricultural use. Agricultural zoning continues to the north and west of the property. The land to the immediate west, east, and south of the subject property is zoned for residential, commercial/business, and employment (which includes industrial) uses. The property is also zoned with an urban reserve and industrial overlay and has been tentatively planned for industrial use in recent years.



FIGURE 4.2: CLARK COUNTY ZONING, SUBJECT AND SURROUNDING PROPERTIES



SOURCE: Clark County, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

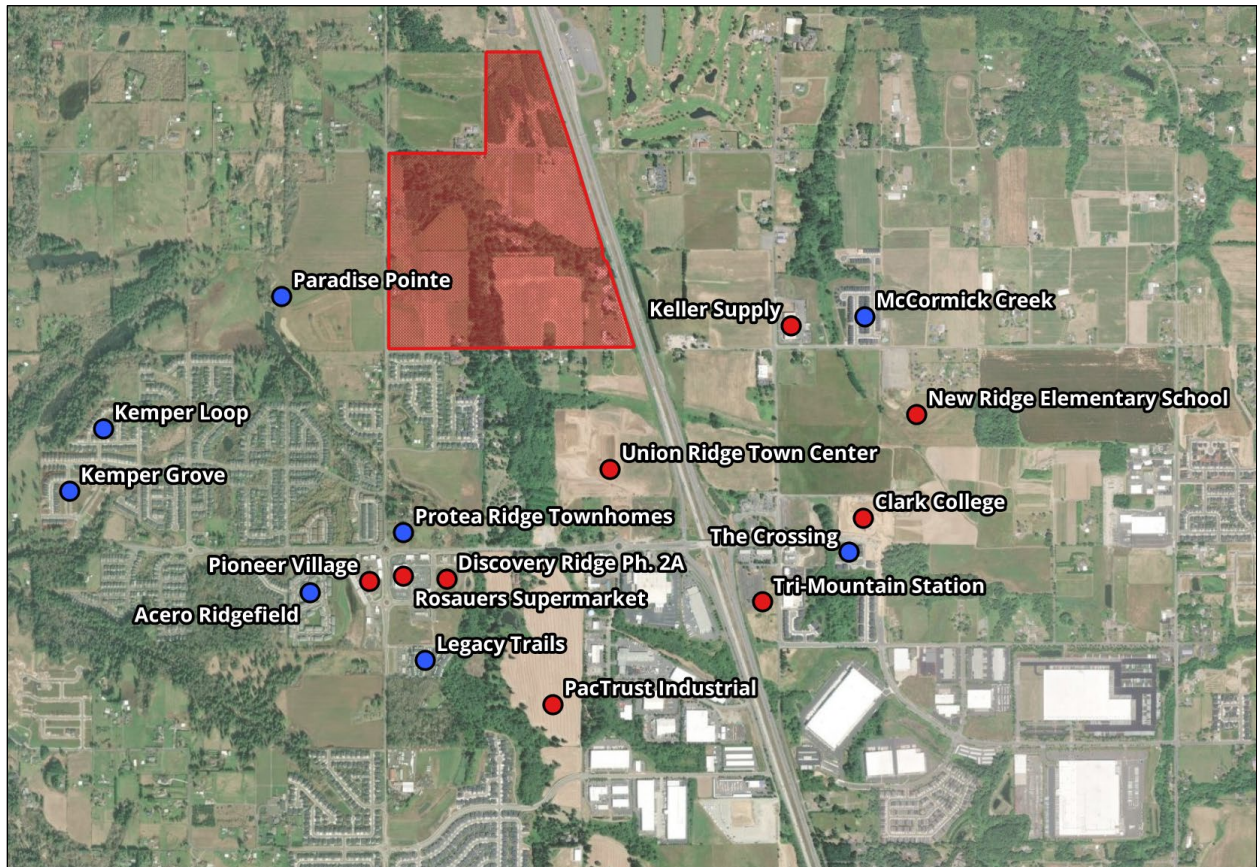
Within about a mile of the subject property, four subdivisions have been built out since 2018. Kemper Loop and Kemper Grove to the southeast total 241 units. McCormick Creek, to the east of the subject site across I-5, was completed in late 2023 and includes 90 homes. About half a mile to the south of McCormick Creek is The Crossing, a 132-unit townhome development completed in 2023. There are also two complete rental apartment projects: Acero Ridgefield, which was completed in 2019 and includes 300 units, and Legacy Trails, completed in 2021 with 195 units. One subdivision, Paradise Pointe (in some planning documents as Paradise Found), is under construction and will add 296 homes to the area. This is the closest residential development to the subject site. Lastly, Protea Ridge Townhomes, a smaller, 12-unit project, is still in the application process.

There are also several commercial, educational, and industrial developments within the same radius. Union Ridge Town Center to the south is expected to be completed by early 2025. It will have 14 small commercial sites anchored



by Costco. Pioneer Village, which is partially complete, will have 16 small commercial buildings. Tri-Mountain Station, a nine-building commercial center, is still waiting on permits. Clark College at Boschma Farms, opening in 2025, will specialize in advanced manufacturing technologies, reflecting Ridgefield's large industrial sector. The remainder are commercial and warehouse buildings. These developments are mapped below: blue points are residential, and red points are commercial/industrial/educational buildings.

FIGURE 4.3: NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PROXIMITY, 2024



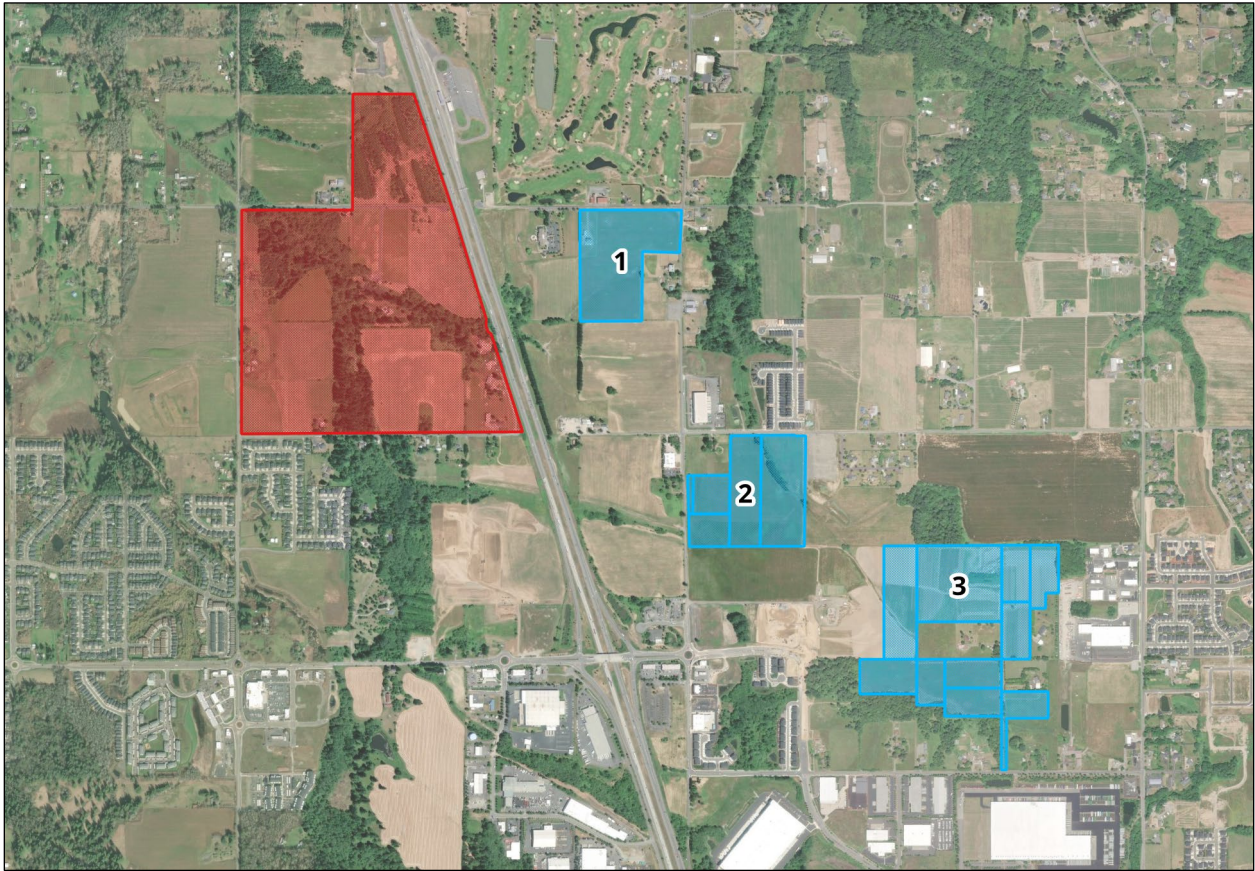
SOURCE: Clark County, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

About 1.5 miles north of the subject property is the Cowlitz Tribe reservation. The first major development in that area was the Ilani Casino in 2016, followed by several small commercial developments (gas stations, convenience stores) at the Interstate 5 interchange, and then expansions to Ilani's hotel, parking garage, and conference center.

Six parcels near the subject site were recently listed for sale (clusters 1-2, shown below). There are also twelve parcels that will be listed for sale soon (cluster 3, shown below). These parcels are advertised as zoned for commercial, employment, and industrial uses, though the parcels in clusters 2 and 3 are currently designated as agricultural land under Current Use, according to Clark County land records.



FIGURE 4.4: LAND FOR SALE IN PROXIMITY, 2024



SOURCE: Clark County, local brokers, local media, JOHNSON ECONOMICS



V. CURRENT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The Smith Farm, which includes four large parcels in the southwest area of the subject property, and a small parcel to the north of those, are the only parts of the property that are currently being farmed. The total farmed area is about 48 acres, or 25% of the subject property area.

For the last several decades, the parcels have only produced hay. According to the property owners, this has been done to keep the properties' grass under control and to meet the requirements of Current Use. The Smith Farm contracts with a hay farmer and is not directly involved in the sale of any hay. The remaining parcels are not being farmed, and the grass and weeds growing on many of them are unsuitable for haying.

FIGURE 5.1: STREET VIEW OF HAYED PARCELS, 2012



SOURCE: Google Earth, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

Within half a mile from the subject site, there are a few small farms. Immediately to the west is Greene Jungle Farm, a small family farm that raises animals on pasture and farms a variety of produce. Millennium Farms to the northeast produces fruit, vegetables, and herb starts. There are also a few stables to the north of the property; these qualify as agricultural land under Current Use.



VI. COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR AGRICULTURE

LAND CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION

Land capability classification refers to the suitability of soils for growing field crops. Class I soils are the most versatile soils and Class VIII the least. Generally, land with soil classified at IV or higher is unsuitable for most crops but may be appropriate for pasture/grazing use.

The subject property is made up of a mix of soils and land capability classifications. Most of the property area is some type of Gee silt loam. GeB is 0-8 percent slopes, GeD is 8-20 percent slopes, GeE is 20-30 percent slopes, and GeF is 30 to 60 percent slopes. The GeB and GeD areas are Class II and IV soils, which, according to the Clark County Assessor, are suitable for most crops and pasture. The land around Allen Creek is GeE, which is Class IV and suitable for some crops, and GeF, which is Class VII and not suitable for any crops, except grazing in some circumstances. There are also a few small areas of Odne silt loam (OdB). This soil type is Class VI and generally not suitable for crops.

FIGURE 6.1: USDA SOIL CLASSIFICATION, 2024



SOURCE: USDA Web Soil Survey, JOHNSON ECONOMICS



WATER RESOURCES

The subject property has five groundwater claims of record and two appurtenant water right certificates. We summarize the scope of each of these water rights here.

The first groundwater claim is located in the northwest portion of the subject property. It has a point of withdrawal on Parcel 3 and authorizes water use for stockwater and domestic purposes on Parcels 1, 2, and 3. In the northeast portion of the subject property, three groundwater claims share a point of withdrawal on Parcel 6. These three claims authorize domestic use of water on Parcels 4, 5, and 6. Finally, the fifth groundwater claim authorizes domestic use and irrigation of six acres on some portion of Parcels 7-10. This claim does not contain an accompanying map or a readable legal description, so it is not possible to determine precisely where the six irrigated acres are located within Parcels 7-10.

In addition to the five groundwater claims, the subject property is covered by two water right certificates: S2-*16975C and G2-*08020C. S2-*16975C is a surface water certificate with a priority date of October 19, 1961. It authorizes 18 acres of primary irrigation at a rate of 0.07 cubic feet per second ("cfs"), up to 13 acre-feet ("AF") per year. It also authorizes stockwater use year-round at a rate of 0.01 cfs, up to 1 AF per year. The source for this water right is Allen Canyon Creek, and the original application indicates that the specific contemplated use is pasture irrigation. The place of use for this water right is identified in a map that accompanies the S2-*16975C application. It covers portions of Parcel 11, 12, 13, and 14, and is depicted in its approximate location by the blue outline below.

G2-*08020C is a groundwater certificate with a priority date of March 31, 1966. It authorizes 52 acres of irrigation at a rate of 32 gallons per minute, up to 26 AF per year. It also authorizes single domestic use up to 1 AF per year. The point of withdrawal is located in Parcel 13. While the file for G2-*08020C does not contain a place of use map, per the terms the certificate, the water right holder may irrigate 52 acres in Parcels 11, 12, 13 and 14. Note that the place of use of this water right appears to duplicate at least some portion of the 18 acres authorized under S2-*16975C, but the certificate does not clearly designate a relationship to this surface water right (i.e. supplemental use).



FIGURE 6.2: CLAIMS TO WATER RIGHTS, PARCELS WITHIN SUBJECT PROPERTY



SOURCE: Clark County Assessor, Washington Department of Ecology, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

To the west of the subject property is North Royle Road, which has two travel lanes, each about 11 feet wide. These are separated by a double yellow line. There are no bike lanes or sidewalks. The posted speed limit along the subject properties is 40 miles per hour, and then 35 miles per hour south of North 10th Street, within the City of Ridgefield. The intersection of North 10th Street and North Royle Road at the southwest corner of the property is controlled by a stop sign on North 10th Street. The intersection of Northwest 289th Street and North Royle Road/Northwest 31st Avenue is controlled by stop signs on Northwest 289th Street. The subject property is, at closest, 1.3 miles (driving distance) from the closest Interstate 5 on ramp.



A section of North Royle Road, south of North 10th Street, is included in the Ridgefield Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (2024-2029) as a development-built project; it will be completed by a private developer, as part of a larger project, rather than by the city. Another section of North Royle Road, north of Northwest 289th Street, is included as a future funded project.

The subject property is currently under the jurisdiction of the Rural/Resource Sewer District. However, it is adjacent to the City of Ridgefield Wastewater Service Area on the south and west boundaries of the site. Access to this service through the City of Ridgefield would be easily available if the subject property was annexed into the Ridgefield UGA. Electricity is provided by Clark Public Utilities and water service is provided by the City of Ridgefield. The city is in the process of updating their Water System Plan, which is expected to be completed around fall 2024. As of early October 2024, the plan has not been updated.

AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

The subject property is about one mile west of the Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue Station 21, within the Clark-Cowlitz Fire District. It is about 2.5 miles east of the Ridgefield Police Department. The nearest medical center with an emergency department is Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center, about eight miles to the south of the subject property. There is a primary and urgent care clinic about half a mile south of the subject property, on Pioneer Street.

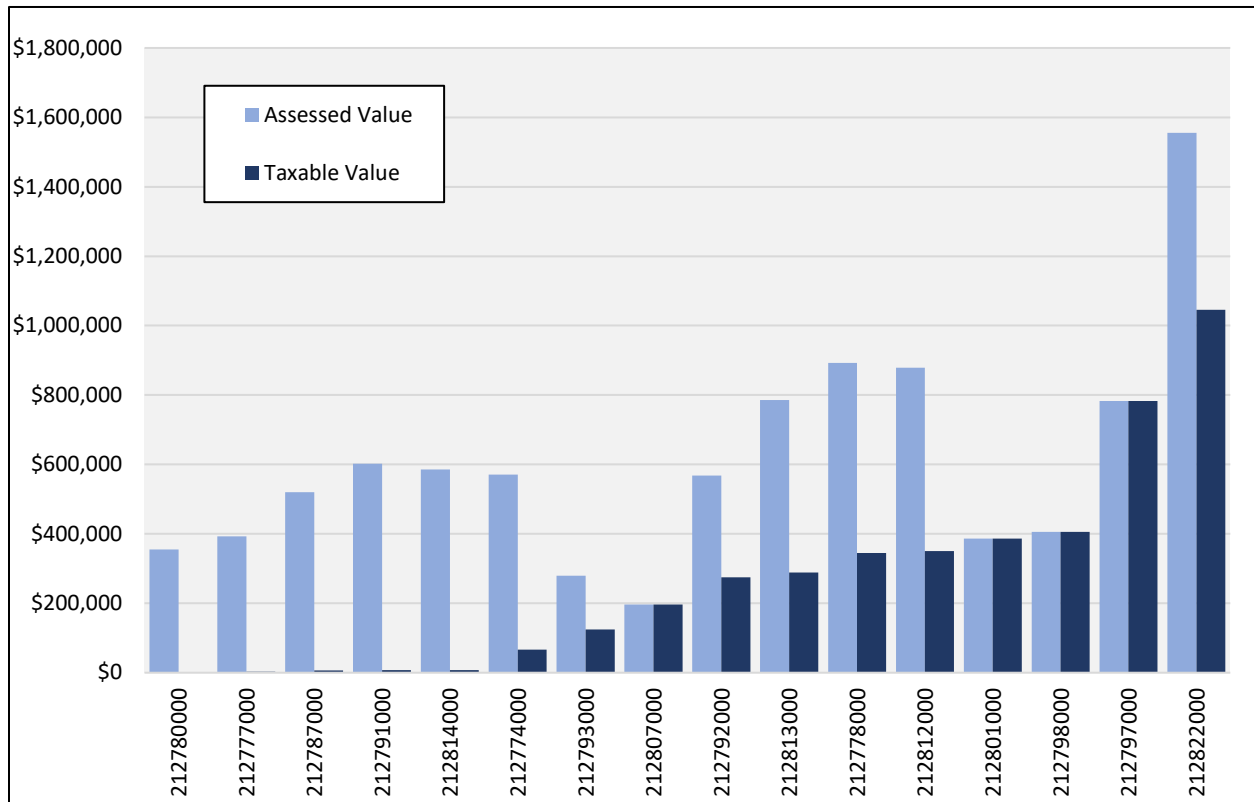
The subject property is in the Ridgefield School District, about 2.5 miles west of Union Ridge Elementary School. However, the district is set to begin construction on a new elementary school about a mile east of the subject property if voters approve the construction cost. The property is about 2.5 miles north of Ridgefield High School and View Ridge Middle School.

TAX STATUS

Eleven out of the sixteen parcels that make up the subject property are designated under the Current Use program as agricultural lands, so they are taxed at a reduced value from their assessed market value. The graph below illustrates the difference between the assessed value and the taxable value under this program.



FIGURE 6.3: ASSESSED VALUE AND TAXABLE VALUE OF SUBJECT PARCELS, 2024 TAX YEAR



SOURCE: Clark County Assessor, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

The basic definition of farm and agricultural land under Current Use is:

“any parcel of land or contiguous parcels of land that are 20 or more acres: (i) devoted primarily to the production of livestock or agricultural commodities, for commercial purposes; (ii) enrolled in the federal conservation reserve program or its successor administered by the United States Department of Agriculture; or (iii) other similar commercial activities as may be established by rule... ‘Commercial agricultural purposes’ means the use of land on a continuous and regular basis, prior to and subsequent to application for classification or reclassification that demonstrates that the owner or lessee is engaged in and intends to obtain through lawful means, a monetary profit from cash income by producing an agricultural product” (RCW Chapter 84.34 and 84.33).

As of October 2024, most of the parcels are not dedicated primarily to agriculture; some parcels have not been farmed for over 10 years. The parcels will need to be withdrawn from the program whether the property moves forward with de-designation or not, since the parcels no longer meet the Current Use requirements. According to Clark County Assessor records, the parcels have been designated under Current Use since at least 2006, so removing them from the program would incur only back taxes and interest and no additional penalties. Upon withdrawal from Current Use, we estimate the total additional back taxes plus interest to be around \$563,000.

PROXIMITY TO URBAN GROWTH AREAS

The subject property is adjacent to the Ridgefield Urban Growth Boundary. It is within one mile of seven residential projects that were recently built or that are under construction, with a total of over 1,200 new homes. Additionally,



there are multiple commercial and industrial developments within a mile of the subject property. It is also close to a lot planned for a new elementary school. This demonstrates proximity to urban growth areas.

PARCEL SIZE

The largest parcel, which was previously a tree farm, is 27.2 acres. The hayed parcels, including the ones that currently make up the Smith Farm, are 18.5 to 22 acres, and the smallest parcel is 1.5 acres. These are significantly larger than residential parcels in subdivisions around the site, which range from 0.14 to 0.2 acres. Commercial and industrial parcels to the south range from 1-33 acres; these are similar in size to many of the parcels within the subject property.

LAND USE PATTERNS & INTENSITY OF SURROUNDING LAND USE

There are a few small farms to the north and west of the subject property. To the north is Current Use-designated agricultural land, including a few parcels that appear to have been hayed within the last five years. Immediately to the southwest is a 296-lot subdivision, Paradise Pointe, which is under construction as of October 2024. Farther to the east and south are commercial and industrial centers – many permitted and built within the last 5 years.

New residential development is taking place primarily to the west, east, and south, inside the Ridgefield UGA. As those cities grow, new residential subdivisions will move towards the current UGA boundary and potentially even adjoin the subject property, as is the case with the Paradise Pointe subdivision. Agricultural use of the subject property would stand in contrast to anticipated land use patterns of surrounding areas.

HISTORY OF PERMITS ISSUED NEARBY

Since 2017, six subdivision permits and two multifamily permits have been issued within one mile of the subject property. These have added 958 new homes to the area, not including 308 homes under construction or in planning. Eight commercial and industrial building permits, plus one permit for a new Clark College building and one for an elementary school, have been issued since 2017, leading to over 164,084 completed square feet of commercial and industrial space. There are still 850,050 square feet under construction, and 158,839 SF in permit review. Permits issued nearby indicate strongly that the subject property is characterized by urban growth.

FIGURE 6.4: RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED SINCE 2017

#	Project Name	Address	Type	Status	Permit Year	Units
1	Protea Ridge Townhomes	N Royle Rd & Pioneer St	Townhome	Pre-App.	N/A	12
2	Paradise Found/Paradise Pointe	N 11th-13th; 35th-Royle Rd	Single-Family	Under Constr.	2022	296
3	Acero Ridgefield	4125 S Settler Dr	Multifamily	Complete	2018	300
4	McCormick Creek Ph. 2	N 10th Ave & N Fairhope Pl	Single-Family	Complete	2019	90
5	Kemper Loop	N Kemper Lp & N McCanta Wy	Single-Family	Complete	2019	53
6	Legacy Trails Apartments	540 S Royle Rd	Multifamily	Complete	2020	195
7	The Crossing	441 S 69th Pl	Single-Family	Complete	2020	132
8	Kemper Grove	N 3rd Way & N 30th Dr	Single-Family	Complete	2021	188
Total Residential Units						1,266



#	Project Name	Address	Type	Status	Permit Year	SF
9	Tri-Mountain Station	Pioneer St & S 65th Ave	Commercial	Permit Review	N/A	130,205
10	Discovery Ridge Ph. 2A	S 47th Pl & S 48th Pl	Commercial	Permit Review	N/A	28,634
11	Pioneer Village 11, 13, 15-16	Royle Rd & Pioneer St	Commercial	U.C.	2020	46,200
12	Union Ridge Town Center	Pioneer St & S 56th Pl	Commercial	U.C.	2023	255,850
13	Clark College	Pioneer St & NE 259th St	Education	U.C.	2023	49,000
14	PacTrust Industrial Dev.	S Wells Dr	Industrial	U.C.	2023	424,000
15	New Ridge Elementary	7025 N 10th St	Education	U.C.	2024	75,000
16	Rosauers Supermarket	101 S 47th Ave	Commercial	Complete	2018	54,000
17	Keller Supply Company	1200 N 65th Ave	Commercial	Complete	2019	55,868
18	Pioneer Village 1-10, 12, 14	Royle Rd & Pioneer St	Commercial	Complete	2020	54,180
Total SF						1,172,937

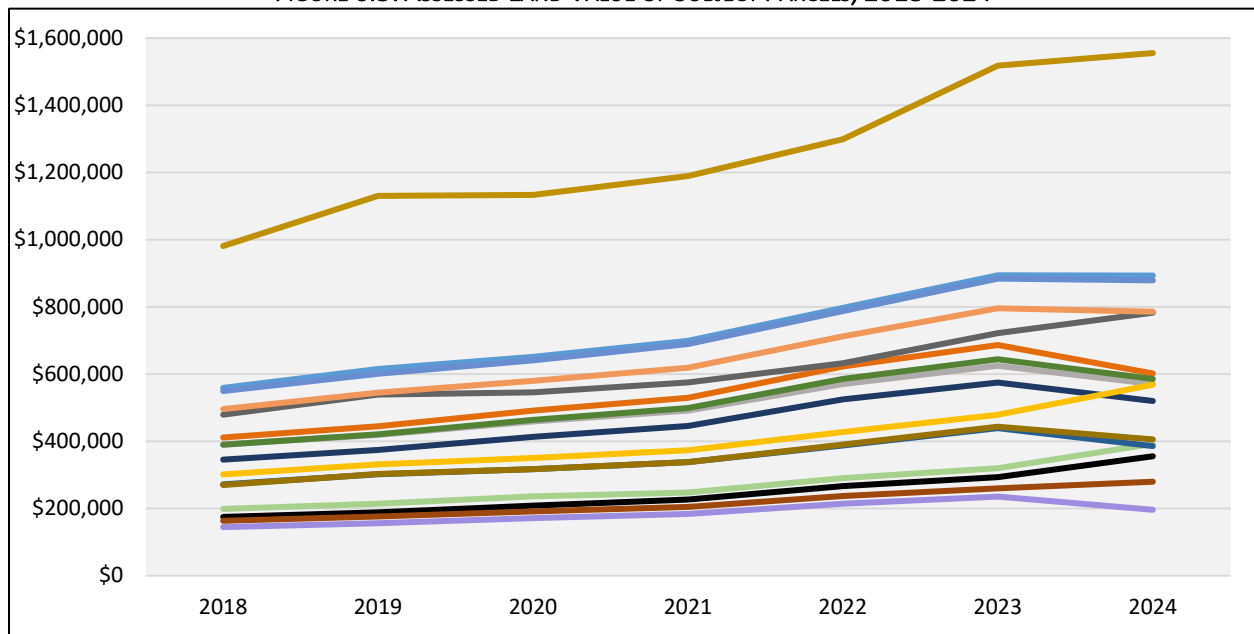
SOURCE: CoStar, Ridgefield Planning Department, Google Earth, local media, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

LAND VALUES UNDER ALTERNATIVE USES

Five parcels are designated fully under Current Use as Open Space or Farm & Agriculture land. These parcels have assessed market values of \$355,500 to \$601,800. Their taxable values range from \$1,759 to \$7,506. Per parcel, on average, these taxable values are 10% of assessed values. Six other parcels are also designated under Current Use, but only partially, or they include buildings that are taxed at the full assessed value. On average, those parcels have taxable values around 40% of assessed values. Finally, one parcel is designated under the Senior/Disabled Tax Exemption, and four parcels are taxed at their full assessed values.

The assessed prices reflect development values and are much higher than what a farmer would reasonably pay to use the land for agricultural production. Assessed land values have also increased significantly over the last few years. The graph below shows the assessed value over time for each parcel. From 2018 to 2024, assessed values increased by 35-100%, varying with access to roads and the condition of existing buildings. The total value of land and buildings in the parcels is \$9.75 million.

FIGURE 6.5: ASSESSED LAND VALUE OF SUBJECT PARCELS, 2018-2024





SOURCE: Clark County Assessor, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

PROXIMITY OF MARKETS

Assuming hay or livestock production (more on this following), distance to markets can be variable. Hay is possible to sell locally, in rural areas of the county, to farmers with small numbers of animals. Larger amounts may be sold farther into the Willamette Valley, but this is less likely at the subject property. Commercial cattle slaughter facilities are farther and fewer in number as food safety regulations become stricter.

HAY/LIVESTOCK PRODUCTIVITY

Hay farming and livestock operations are the two possible options for farming at the subject property, especially given land capability and water availability. In Washington State, the average hay crop in 2022 yielded 3.1 to 5.2 tons per acre. County level data is not available, but a 2015 report to de-designate a property in Clark County estimated a yield of 2.0 tons per acre, so we estimate that actual productivity is at the lower end of the state average. The USDA Washington-Oregon Hay Report for early July 2024 estimates sale prices of \$250-300 per ton for good to premium quality hays. As of October 2024, sale prices are somewhat lower at \$150-280 per ton, but we will use July prices as a high estimate. From these we estimate maximum hay crop revenue to be \$1,300-1,560 per acre. If we assume exclusive hay production, selling all that is produced, and that there are about 95 acres usable for haying across the entire property, maximum revenue is \$123,500 to \$148,200 yearly. This figure only includes sales and does not consider any costs, which include labor, equipment, and fertilizer as well as transaction costs.

The second possible use of the subject property is pasture grazing. We use cow-calf pairs as an example. A single cow-calf pair needs about two acres for grazing, and a barn and equipment would also be needed. With these assumptions, up to 47 calf-cow pairs could be supported on the subject property. The operations analyzed in USDA budgets have 138 cows and an annual calf crop of 104, which is considered small scale, but is more than twice as large as what is possible on the subject property. The USDA budget estimates the net value per calf sold at a loss of \$359, removing this as a profitable option. Additionally, with cattle production comes concerns for mud, odor, and nuisance conflicts with nearby residential and commercial areas.

The most significant cost associated with farming the subject properties, however, is the cost of buying or renting the land. The assessed market value of the subject property that is available for farming, which excludes non-agricultural parcels with homes, is over \$7 million. While there are no comparable farm sales in the area, it is very unlikely that a farmer would pay that much for a small-scale farming operation. As it is not economically feasible to conduct agricultural operations on the subject property, it does not have long-term commercial significance for agriculture.

VII. THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN CLARK COUNTY

The Washington GMA specifies that a countywide analysis must be conducted for cities and counties to de-designate natural resource lands (including agricultural lands) within the county. This Comprehensive Plan is required by the Washington GMA to be updated by the end of 2025, after its last update in 2016. In lieu of this full countywide analysis, we include a summary of the state of agriculture and urban development in Clark County.

As of 2022, there were just over 1,900 farms in Clark County, according to the USDA. This includes 56,000 total acres, down 38% from 2017, when there were over 90,000 acres of land in farms. However, the number of farms in the county only decreased by 3%, suggesting that either a few large farms have ceased operations or that many farms have decreased in size.

On average, farms in Clark County are primarily small in size and scale: almost 70% of farms make less than \$5,000 in sales, and almost 90% of farms are smaller than 50 acres. Average farm-related income increased 132% from 2017 to

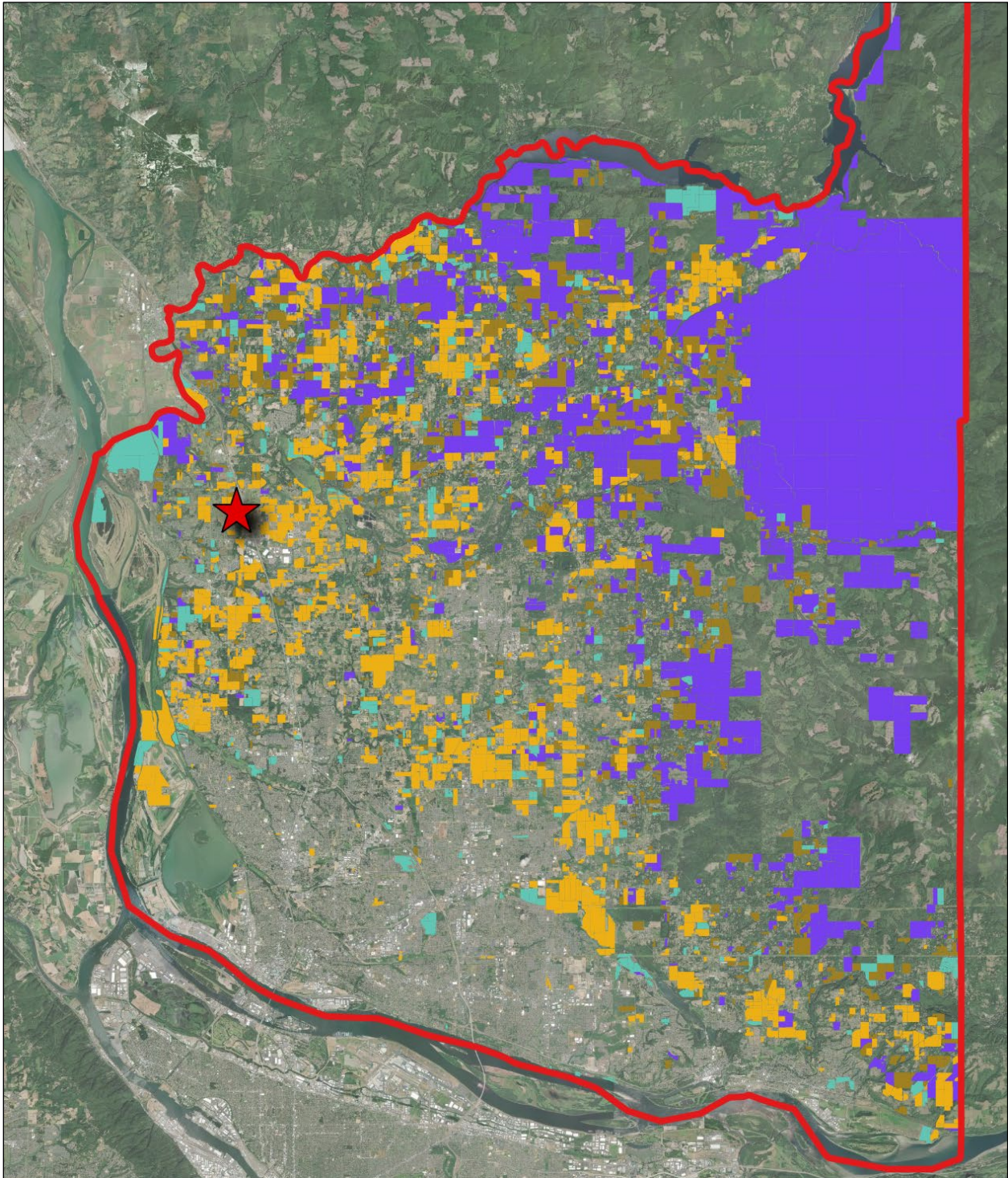


2022, but average net cash farm income is still negative at -\$230. The most produced crops in Clark County, by acreage, are hay (13,500 acres), Christmas trees (910 acres) and berries (855 acres).

Natural resource lands in Clark County are designated under the Current Use program, as described earlier in this report. About 36% of the county's land by area is classified under this program. Of the total land in Current Use, 25% is agricultural land (yellow), and the rest is open space (teal), designated forest land (purple), or timber land (brown). The subject property includes about 0.5% of the total Current Use designated agricultural land area and 0.1% of the total Current Use designated open space land area in Clark County.



FIGURE 7.1: CLARK COUNTY LAND UNDER CURRENT USE, 2024



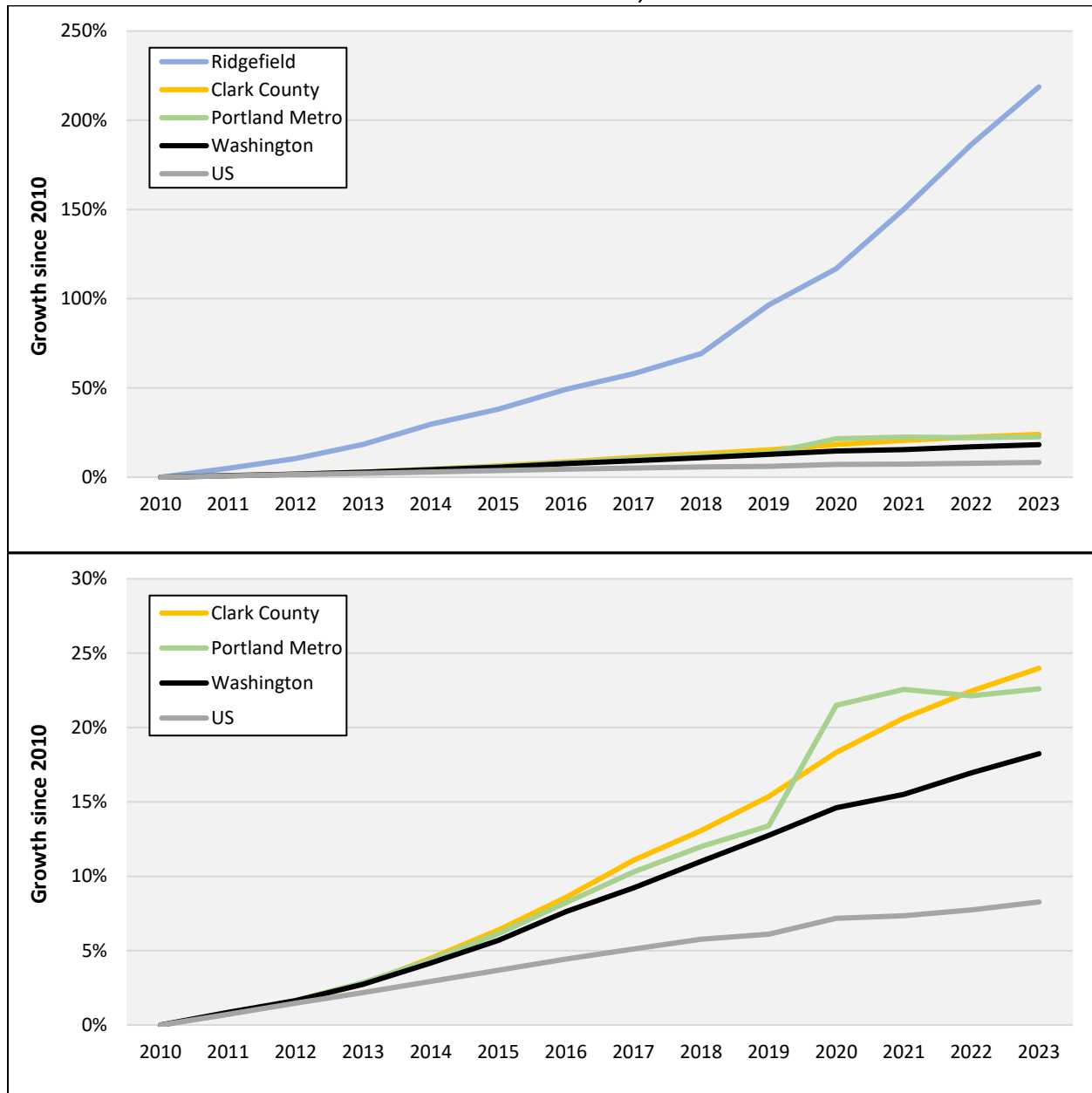
SOURCE: Clark County, JOHNSON ECONOMICS



POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The county has seen population growth of almost 25% since 2010, which is equivalent to just over 100,000 people. Over that same period, Ridgefield saw a 219% increase in population, or just over 10,000 people. This is exceptionally fast compared to larger geographies, illustrated in the graphs below.

FIGURE 7.2: POPULATION GROWTH SINCE 2010, GEOGRAPHIC COMPARISON



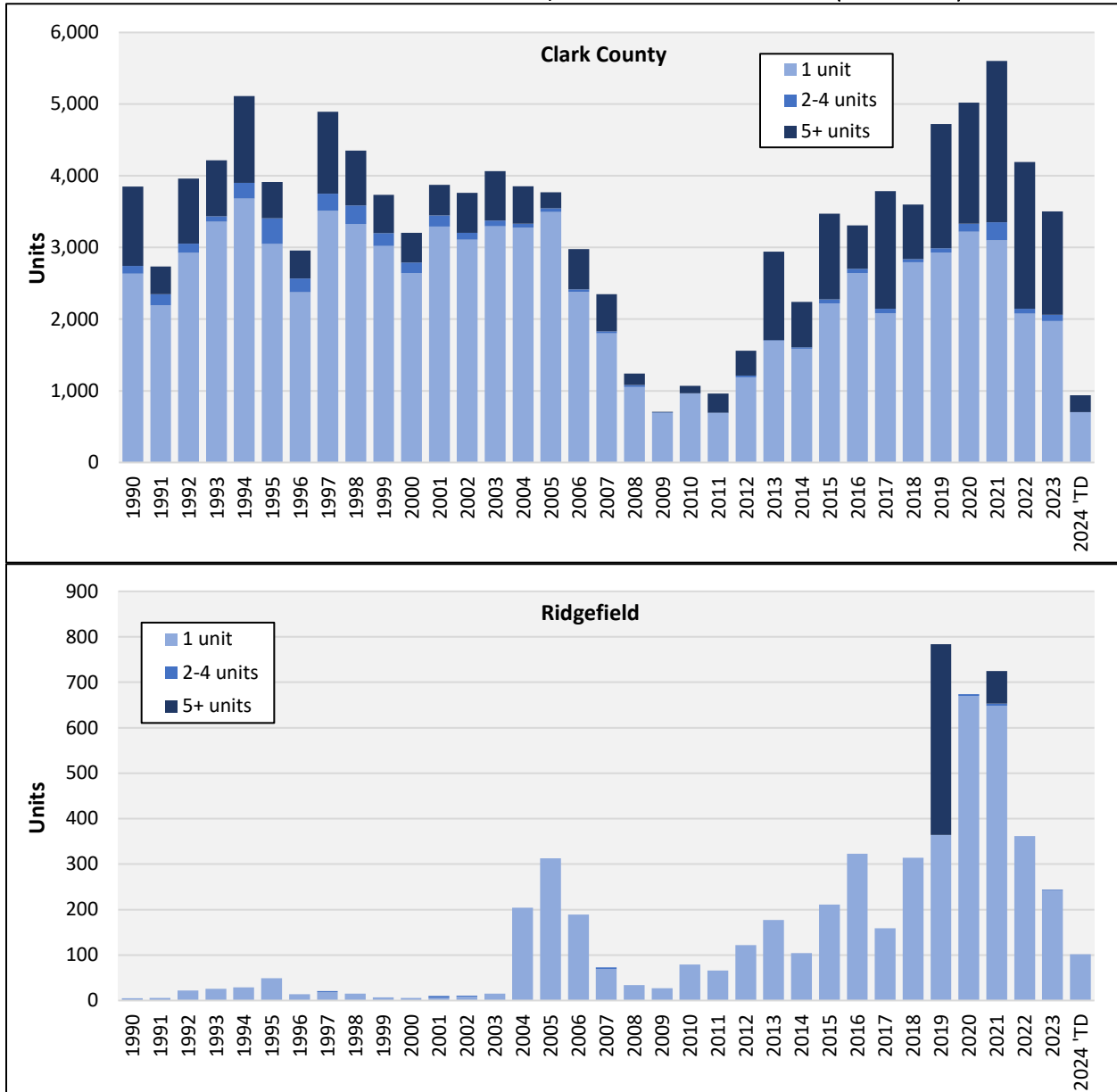
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Portland State University, WA Office of Financial Management, JOHNSON ECONOMICS

The increasing population in the county indicates a need for more housing, especially in fast-growing areas such as Ridgefield. Recent housing construction in Clark County has roughly been on par with the 1990s, when the county experienced a suburban boom. However, the share of multifamily units has increased considerably, while single-family construction is below the 1990s level.



The pattern is different in Ridgefield, which saw little development until the early 2000s. At that point, it began to reflect the larger county trend, though residential development is mostly in single-family homes. The city has seen a few larger multifamily projects since 2018, reflecting its increased density.

FIGURE 5.15: RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS, CLARK COUNTY & RIDGEFIELD (1990-2024)



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Johnson Economics

As Ridgefield continues to develop, and as the city's population continues to grow at rates significantly above Portland and the broader metro area, more land will be needed for residential and commercial use. The city will not be able to plan for large new subdivisions or commercial centers without de-designating some of its agricultural land.



VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, it is our opinion that the subject property does not meet the criteria of agricultural land as laid out in the Washington Growth Management Act. It is therefore recommended for de-designation:

- The property has characteristics conducive to urban growth. It is adjacent to the Ridgefield UGB and in proximity to multiple new subdivisions and commercial/industrial sites. Parcels nearby that were previously designated as agricultural land are now selling as commercial or industrial land. Ridgefield is a fast-growing city characterized by a lack of residential and commercial land; its population has grown by over 200% since 2010. The GMA requirement for designation as agricultural land is that “the land is not already characterized by urban growth;” the property fails to meet this requirement.
- While parts of the property are technically being farmed, meeting the second GMA requirement of “the land is used or capable of being used for agricultural production,” farming has been greatly reduced in recent years. Only five out of the eleven parcels in Current Use are being farmed at all.
- The property no longer has “long-term commercial significance for agriculture,” which is the third requirement in the GMA. The market value of this land for residential or commercial use is far higher than its assessed value for agricultural use. The values of these parcels reflect residential development values and are much higher than what a farmer would reasonably pay to use the land for farming. Additionally, the current hay crop is only produced to preserve the land’s tax status, not for commercial purposes. The parcels that are not being farmed are currently unsuitable for haying, and even less suitable for any alternative crops. Farming these parcels would require additional investment.