

### Current Agricultural Resource Lands (ARL) Criteria

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Counties to identify and implement innovative measures to preserve resource lands including lands for agricultural purposes.

The Agricultural Resource Land (ARL) land use designation identifies these resource lands in Pierce County.

The current ARL designation criteria include, parcels must:

- Be located in Rural area of County (outside UGA)
- Be five acres or greater in size
- Contain 50% of "Prime Farmland" soils
- Have a grass/legume production yield of 3.5 tons per acre or greater
- Have no greater than 50% of abutting parcels that are less than 1 acre
- \*Landowner may request the designation.



### ARL Proposed Criteria Change

- The proposed change would remove the criterion that requires a grass/legume production yield of 3.5 tons per acre.
- The existing yield criterion does not account for a significant number of acres of actively farmed and highly productive land in Pierce County.
- This existing yield criterion is based on capacity to produce grass and legumes, an important factor for the County's livestock producers but immaterial for the many producers of fruits, vegetables, nursery stock, and other leading Pierce County agricultural products. Some of the County's most productive soil barely qualifies under the current criteria. Other similarly productive areas are excluded entirely.

### Frequently Asked Questions

***Why is the County changing the ARL designation criteria?***

In response to a request to review the ARL designation in 2013, the Pierce County Council, in Ordinance 2013-59, determined that the review of the ARL designation should be done as part of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update.

***What changes are proposed?***

Remove the requirement that parcels have a potential grass/legume production yield of 3.5 tons per acre or greater.

***How many acres meet the current ARL criteria based on size, soil types and grass/legume yield?***

There are currently 11,880 acres that meet the ARL criteria.

***How many acres will meet the ARL criteria with the proposed change?***

The proposed change would increase the total acreage that meets the ARL criteria from the existing 11,880 acres to a total of 65,362 acres.



## Frequently Asked Question Continued

***How do the ARL and other rural zones compare in terms of allowed uses?***

Uses may vary by Community Plan area. For the unincorporated, non-community plan areas, the following comparison is made:

**Residential Uses** – All zones generally allow the same Residential uses.

**Civic Uses** – Rural zones generally allow several more Civic uses than ARL such as daycare centers, education facilities, religious facilities and transportation facilities.

**Utilities Uses** – ARL and other rural zones allow similar Utility uses except some rural zones allow for facilities such as sewage treatment plants and public maintenance facilities.

**Office/Business Uses** – Generally ARL and other rural zones do not allow these uses.

**Resource/Commercial Uses** – ARL permits commercial uses associated with agriculture such as Agritourism Agricultural Services, Animal Production, Boarding and Slaughtering and Crop Production outright, while the other rural zones have some limitations on these uses. ARL does not allow other commercial uses while some rural zones allow for limited levels of Amusement and Recreation (racetracks, fishing ponds) and Lodging (campsites/RV parks, retreats).

**Industrial Uses** – ARL allows no industrial uses while other rural zones may allow for contractors yards and limited warehousing and storage use with a conditional use permit.

***Can I divide my property?***

**Agricultural Resource Lands (ARL):** Parcels 15 acres or larger could be divided.

**Rural 10 (R10) and similar rural zones:** Parcels 7.5 acres or larger could be divided with a dedication of 50% of the property for open space.

***What land use protections come with the ARL designation?***

The ARL designation comes with a Right to Farm protection. Under these protections, agricultural operations are presumed to be good agricultural practices not adversely affecting the public health and safety, and that such activities do not constitute a nuisance to surrounding non-agricultural uses. Regulated activities on surrounding properties must acknowledge the presence of adjacent agricultural activities.

***How will the change from a rural zone to ARL affect taxes?***

Assessor/Treasurer's Office:

- "A change in zoning may contribute to the assessed value of a property going up or down, when it's allowable uses change, so that a buyer would be willing to pay more or less for it."
- "A specific property that is rezoned from rural to ARL may not change in value while another does, depending whether the market at that location reacts negatively, positively, or not at all to the change in allowable uses."

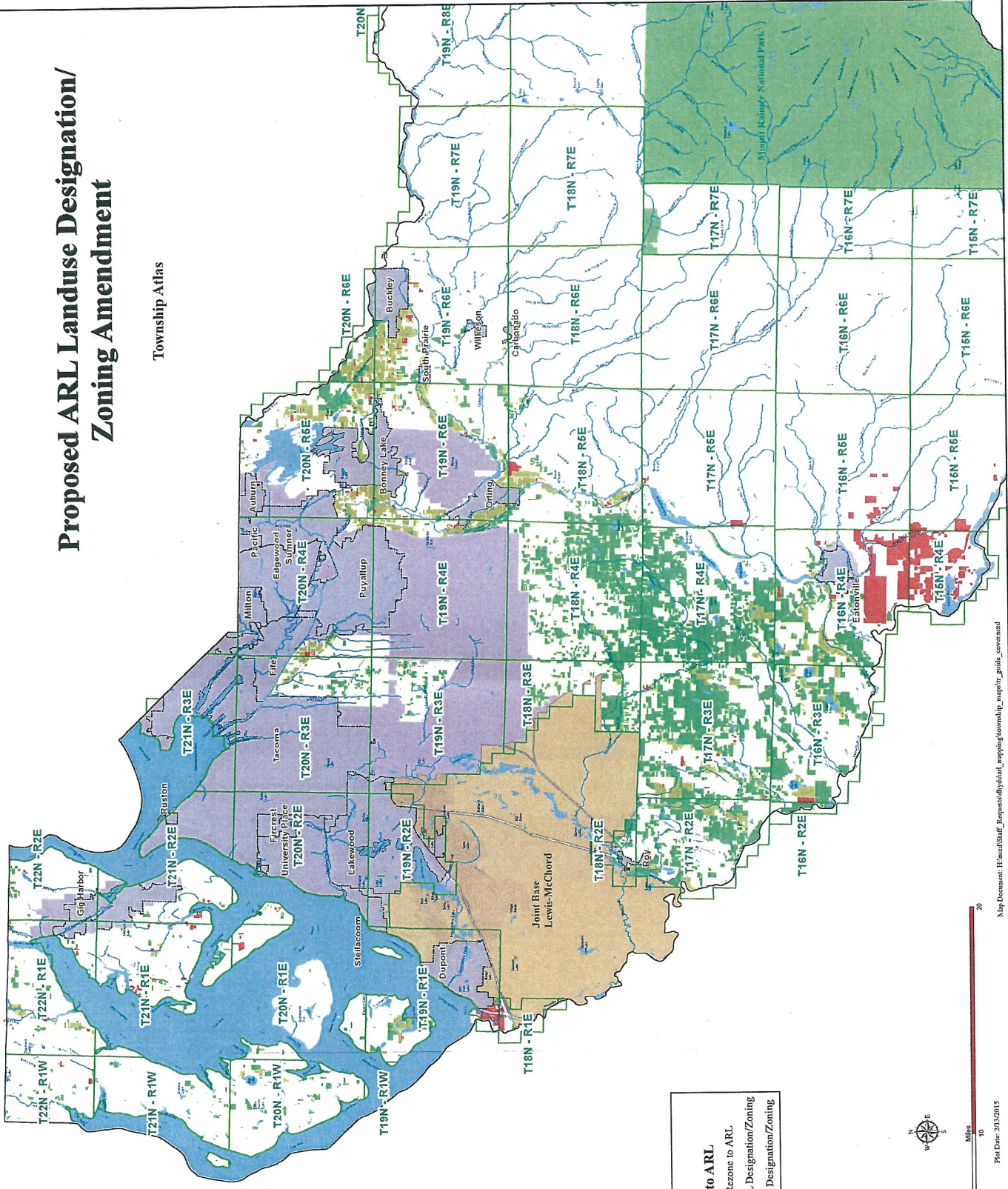
***Once a property is designated ARL can you change it to another rural zone?***

ARL is a resource land designation which requires that the County preserve these lands for resource purposes. Current County regulations do not permit a property owner to opt out of the ARL designation unless the property no longer meets the ARL criteria.



# Proposed ARL Landuse Designation/ Zoning Amendment

Township Atlas



**Legend**

**Proposed Edits to ARL**

- Redesignate/Rezone to ARL
- Maintain ARL Designation/Zoning
- Remove ARL Designation/Zoning



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