

Heritage Farm Sustainability Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #3

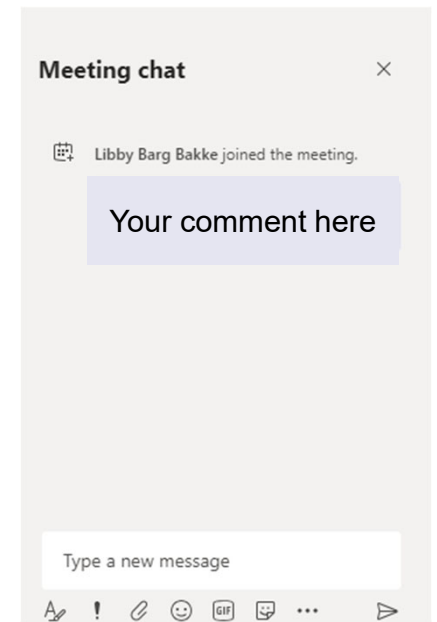
January 30, 2023



Welcome!

Joining us remotely? Here are some things to know—

- The meeting is being recorded.
- Committee members can use the chat or raised-hand tools to participate in the discussion.
- If you are guest, you can ask questions or comment using chat.



Introductions



Agenda

Recap December 14 Open House

Community Survey: Final Results

Community Leader Interviews

Financial Sustainability

Shaping the Sustainability Plan

Committee Discussion

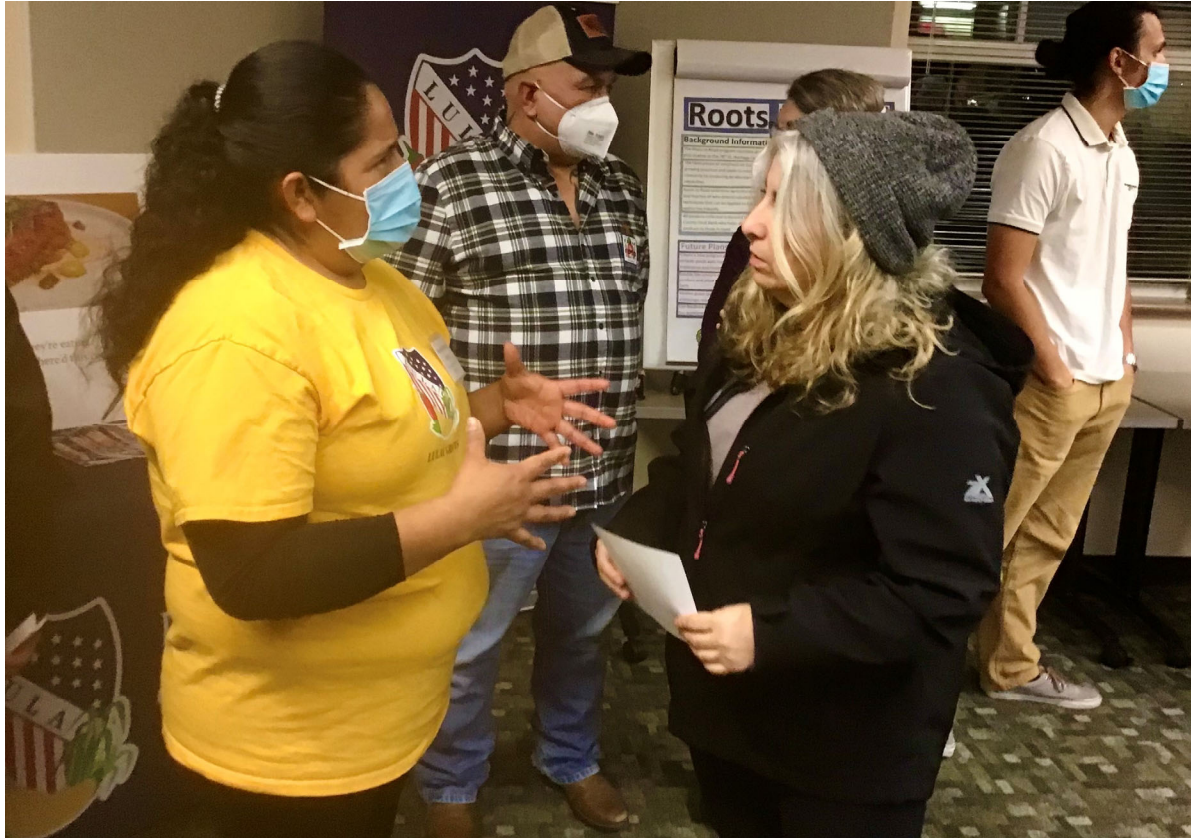
Next Committee Meeting

Adjourn



Public Open House

December 14, 2022



Community Survey Final Results

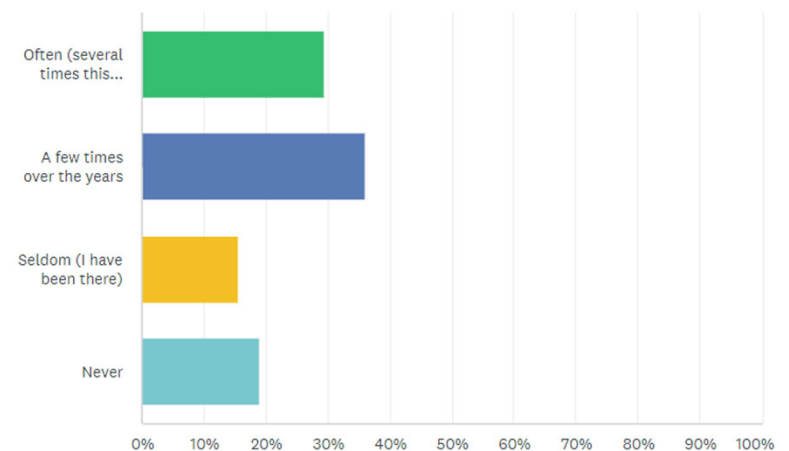


Community Survey: Final Results

- Survey sent to Heritage Farm interested parties list and shared on County webpage and social media
- *1,130 participants!*
- Survey helps provide an inclusive picture of community values and needs

How often have you visited the Heritage Farm site?

Answered: 1,127 Skipped: 3



Community Survey: Final Results

Who participated?

- 65% frequent Heritage Farm visitors
- 35% seldom or never visit



Community Survey: Final Results

Convergence of views between frequent users and seldom/never visitors

Top priorities for Master Plan improvements

	Frequent Users	Seldom/Never	Total
Outdoor classroom/shelter	68%	56%	64%
New greenhouses	64%	45%	57%
Interpretive trails	59%	65%	61%
Public access/parking	26%	46%	33%

Suggestions for new activities/programs

	Frequent Users	Seldom/Never	Total
Farmers market	70%	79%	73%
More educational opportunities	53%	41%	49%
Public events	53%	61%	56%
Farm to table business	40%	50%	47%



Community Survey: Final Results

There's broad support for finding new funding sources

Funding sources to be explored

	Frequent Users	Seldom/Never	Total
County General Fund	78%	56%	72%
Private contributions	75%	80%	76%
Rent	60%	63%	61%
Farm user fees	46%	56%	50%



Community Survey: Recurring Themes

1. Heritage Farm must be preserved as a unique asset to honor and celebrate Clark County's agricultural roots.

"It is important to preserve this valuable place to help community members learn how to grow food for themselves and commercially."

"Please don't screw it up and develop it beyond anything related to agriculture. We are losing way too much farmland."

"It needs to be preserved for the future. People need more connection with our food sources and how to feed themselves with the small amount of land that they might have."



Community Survey: Recurring Themes

2. Better publicity about Farm activities could increase public use.

“This site is for farmers and gardeners. More communications and advertising for this site would be helpful to reach those in the greater community.”

“I only knew about it because I live in Hazel Dell and drive by it.”

“Community advertising would be great. We live just down the road and had no idea this was even open to the public.”

“I don’t think people are really aware of this site and what it offers. There needs to be more public outreach.”



Community Survey: Recurring Themes

3. New facilities and activities should be considered for the Heritage Farm site—without displacing the current uses.

“I would love to see a year-round farmers market there that supported incubator business on-site and partnered with other farms to preserve farmland in the county”

“Please make accessible trails”

“It is worth figuring out a good purpose(s) for the farmland to continue to exist. Don’t be afraid to try many different things on a small scale—learn from the ones that fail and grow the ones that succeed.”

“Farm-to-table dinners, festivals, etc. More community events please!”



Community Survey: Recurring Themes

4. New funding sources can be considered to support Heritage Farm—recognizing this is a public space that will always require some public funds.

“If it’s mixed use, cost coverage should also be mixed—there are plenty of sources and might be nice to look at partners. Grants, there are a lot of grants for food-related topics. I also think a small portion could come from taxpayers, especially if it grows to support education programs.”

“I think that if you charge farmers market vendors a small fee it would draw a lot of attention and be a centerpiece to the Hazel Dell area.”

“Do whatever it takes to stay there forever! Thank you for being there for our community. We need our farms.”



Community Leader Interviews



Community Leader Interviews—Overview

Who participated?

- 11 community leaders: a cross-section of site neighbors, farm users, community partners, and County staff associated with Heritage Farm

Why interview community leaders?

- Listen to perspectives from community members who share an interest in Heritage Farm
- Learn more about project opportunities and constraints
- Continue to build a project culture of collaboration



Community Leader Interviews—Highlights

1. The persons interviewed cherish Heritage Farm—but some worry about its future.

“Honor the history of the Poor Farm and the site’s agricultural heritage.”

“This is an important piece of real estate. Proceed with care and caution to be sure the plan brings value to the community.”

2. Even those observers who frequent the site aren’t familiar with all of the current activities and uses.

“I work with the Snap Ed team and Food Bank but am not familiar with much else.”

“It is a large site with some educational and research opportunities.”



Community Leader Interviews—Highlights

3. This group’s preferred future for the Heritage Farm is to continue and expand on today’s assorted activities.

“I talk less about what it is now and more about what it could be. The farm is an underrealized opportunity.”

“I want to use my voice and role to amplify everything LULAC is working on as it directly connects to supporting public health.”

4. Participants generally concur with the County Council’s goals for the site.

Council Goals for Heritage Farm

- ✓ Implement the Master Plan
- ✓ Increase public access
- ✓ Improve financial sustainability



Community Leader Interviews—Highlights

5. The overarching question raised for Heritage Farm’s future—is it a farm or a park?

“The County is confused about Heritage Farm’s role. Is it a farm or a park?”

“Keep it a farm! It is not a park!”

6. What’s missing from Heritage Farm today? Observers say there’s a need—and room—for more programs and facilities that serve children and youth.

“A youth center and innovative urban farming learning opportunity.”

“We desperately need more preschool opportunities. A farm could be an excellent place for early learning.”

“More learning opportunities for students who otherwise wouldn’t have access to outdoor learning.”



Community Leader Interviews—Highlights

7. **New farm and food-related uses also seem like a natural fit.**

“People want to farm but can’t afford to buy land in our community. Incubator farms are one way to help.”

“LULAC could potentially operate most of the farm as an actual working farm so people could see how a real farm works.”

“Host events like outdoor movies or dinners.”

8. **To achieve financial sustainability alternative funding sources are thought to be acceptable. Leases, user fees, grants, partnerships and private contributions are all mentioned as potential funding sources.**

“Allow the farm to actually start farming and there will be lots of opportunity for cost recovery.”

“The Cowlitz Tribe’s Gardening Dept. is looking to expand and might be interested in farming portion of the Heritage Farm site.”



Community Leader Interviews—Highlights

9. The Heritage Farm site is still identified primarily with WSU Extension.

“It is my understanding it was the Poor Farm and is now owned by the County. I know that the WSU Extension has operations there as well as the Master Gardeners and there is a community garden and greenhouses.”

“It’s a shared use of the site: WSU Extension and many groups.”

10. Heritage Farm may be able to draw from lessons learned at peer facilities. Observers point to several peer parks in the Pacific Northwest and across the U.S. Examples given include:

- Luscher Farm (Lake Oswego)
- Zenger Farm (Portland)
- Kelsey Creek Farm (Bellevue)
- WSU Research Farm (Mt. Vernon)



Financial Sustainability

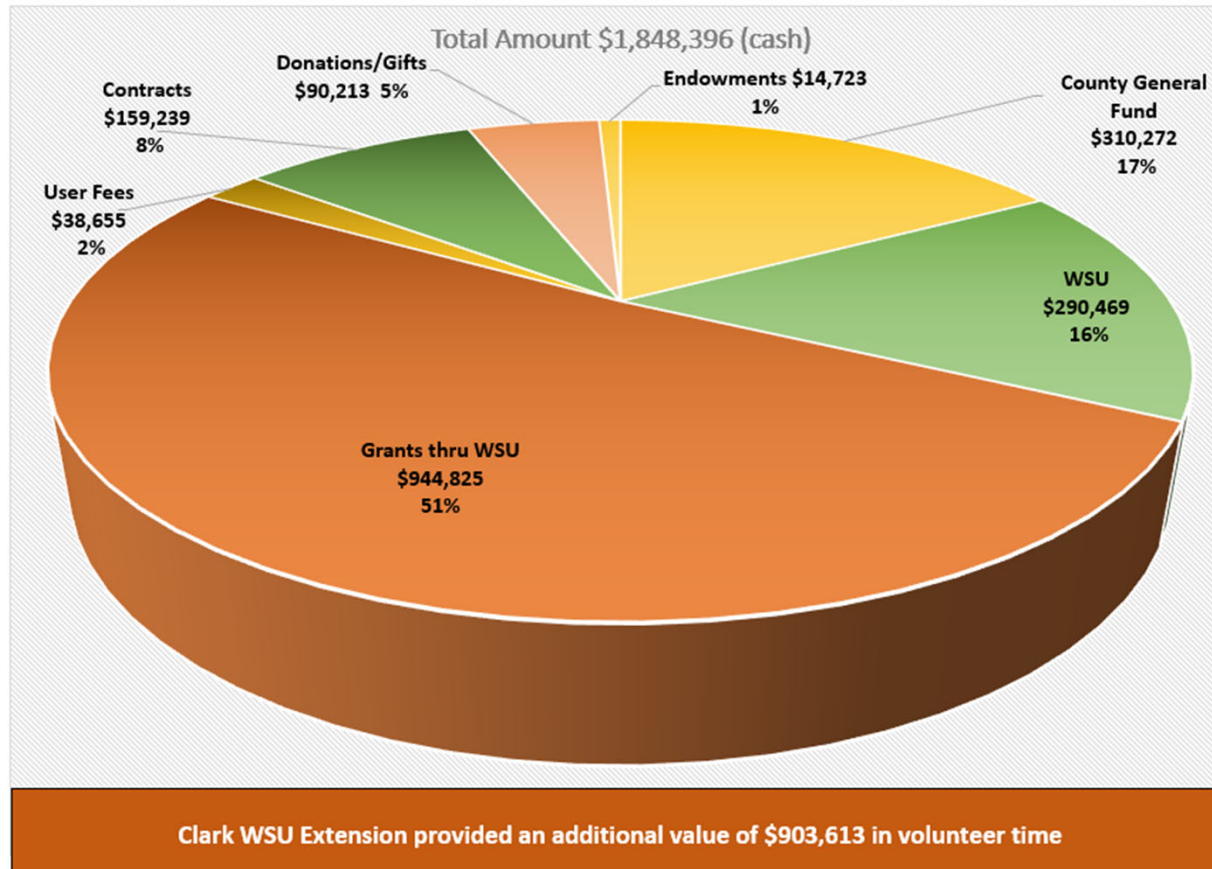


Heritage Farm Expenses 2016-2021

Expense Type	WSU Extension	County Farm Expenses
IT	\$213,587	\$ -
Materials & Supplies	\$104,857	\$33,732
Other	\$20,130	\$37,874
Services	\$213,877	\$26,294
Staffing	\$227,699	\$606,199
Utilities	\$161,987	\$11,184
WSU Extension Services Contract	\$1,861,632	\$ -
Capital Investments	\$489,987	\$290,000
	\$3,293,756	\$1,005,283
Average Expense Per Year	\$548,959	\$167,547



WSU Extension Funding Sources 2022



Information provided by Washington State University



Heritage Farm Revenues 2016-2021*

Revenue Summary	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Heritage Farm Comm. Garden Fees	\$5,296	\$5,621	\$4,239	\$30	\$-	\$-	\$15,186
Monthly or Annual Space & Facilities Rents/Leases	\$ -	\$-	\$-	\$7,033	\$4,456	\$4,549	\$16,038
Rents and leases	\$ -	\$830	\$830	\$523	\$1,148	\$616	\$3,947
REET 2 Project Revenue			\$201,260	\$88,740			\$290,000
General Fund (Tax Dollars)*	\$50,046	\$75,048	\$156,247	\$141,394	\$122,797	\$134,943	\$680,112
Total	\$100,211	\$160,775	\$362,576	\$ 237,980	\$ 128,401	\$140,108	\$1,005,283

*WSU Extension excluded.



Heritage Farm—Financial Sustainability

Goal:

Reduce Heritage Farm's reliance on the County General Fund to support farm operations (currently about \$170,000 per year).



Heritage Farm—Sustainability

Goal: Reduce Heritage Farm’s reliance on the County General Fund to support farm operations (currently about \$170,000 per year).

Cost Recovery Strategies:

- Lease unprogrammed portions of the site for compatible uses.
- Have tenants’ leases based on cost to operate.
- Develop a fee schedule for services and acreage.
- Enact/increase lease payments/fees paid by individual site users: e.g., annual rent for community garden plots.
- Establish/collect fees for public events: admission, parking, etc. Hold more events.



Cost Recovery—Reality Check

- Cost recovery totals only about 1% of revenues
- Farmland in Clark County currently leases for about \$200 per acre per year. (80 acres= \$16,000 per year)
- Peer facilities don't rely heavily on cost recovery



Heritage Farm—Sustainability

Goal: Reduce Heritage Farm’s reliance on the County General Fund to support farm operations (currently about \$190,000 per year).

Contributions:

- Create a voluntary “Friends of Heritage Farm” memberships.
- Enlist the Heritage Farm Foundation to conduct fundraising campaigns periodically for capital projects to support programs.

Alternate Funding:

- Partner with educational institution(s) to develop programs that increase public use and assist in meeting Farm operating costs.
- Support a share of the site operating costs with parks funding (requires a portion of the site to be designated as a Clark County MPD park).

New Management:

- Transfer management of the Farm operations to a non-profit that assumes responsibility for capital & operating costs.



Heritage Farm—Finding the Formula for Financial Sustainability

\$ Cost Recovery

\$ Contributions

\$ Alternative Funding

\$ New Management



Shaping the Sustainability Plan



Heritage Farm—Decision-making

How do we take your collective vision and determine the best strategy to meet the project goals?

Alternative Analysis

1. Identify and define the alternative strategies, or combinations of strategy elements
2. Define criteria for strategy evaluation
3. Compare the alternatives
4. Report the results

Criteria	Alternative Strategies				
	Strategy 1	Strategy 2	Strategy 3	Strategy 4	Strategy 5
	Continue operation of farm as is with no changes.	Strategy description	Strategy description	Strategy description	Strategy description
Increase public access					
Celebration of Clark County's agricultural heritage					
Maintain WSU's presence on the site thru programs, research & offices					
Showcase & promote sustainable agriculture and building practices					
Enhance community wellness and inspire life-long learning					
Promote community volunteerism					
Integrate a variety of activities and resources that provide community access					
Reflect sound fiscal policy and decision-making matters					



Heritage Farm—Plan Development Timelines

The Process:

Step	Description	Timeline
1	Discuss strategies & evaluation criteria	Today
2	Confirm strategies & evaluation criteria	February 13
3	Draft Plan including the alternative analysis framework & economic analysis	~ March 20
4	Review the draft plan & alternative analysis at Public Meeting. Check-in with Park Advisory Board & County Council	April – May
5	Provide public comment, PAB & Council feedback to Committee & complete the evaluation	June – July



Heritage Farm—Strategy Vision Elements

Priorities identified during the November Steering Committee Meeting— Visioning Exercise:

- Maintain the agricultural heritage of the site
- Use site to support the future of urban farming
- Involve youth
- Increase public awareness and access to the site through community events, classes, tours, and controlled trail areas



Heritage Farm—Alternative Analysis (Criteria)

Community Guiding Principles from 2020 Master Plan Update

- Celebrate Clark County’s agricultural heritage
- Maintain WSU’s presence on the site through programs, research and office facilities.
- Showcase and promote sustainable agricultural and building practices.
- Support agricultural research that supports sustainable farming practices.
- Enhance community wellness and inspire life-long learning.
- Promote community volunteerism.
- Integrate a variety of activities and resources that provide community access
- Reflect sound fiscal policy in decision-making matters.



Heritage Farm—Decision Making

Homework

- Consider the alternative strategies and also evaluation criteria from the master plan.
- Touch base with your community group or organization and obtain their feedback.
- Come prepared to propose/support/oppose strategies.
- Come prepared to discuss evaluation criteria and weighting of criteria. Are any missing from the master plan?



Committee Discussion



Next Committee Meeting

Save the date!

Monday, Feb 13, 2023

1:00- 3:00 PM

Bud Van Cleve Room

Luke Jensen Sports Complex

4000 NE 78th Street



Thank you!

Comments and questions

