

Department of Community Development

Equestrian Facility Assessment
Board of County Commissioners
Work Study

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March 9, 2026



KitsapCounty



Agenda

Purpose, Background, Objectives, Key Partners, Scope of Work

Roundup Lane Case Study

Historic – Recent Code Information

Code Compliance Data

Existing Code

Cross Jurisdiction Code

Best Management Practices

Survey & Workshop

Equestrian Facility Working Group

Impact Assessment

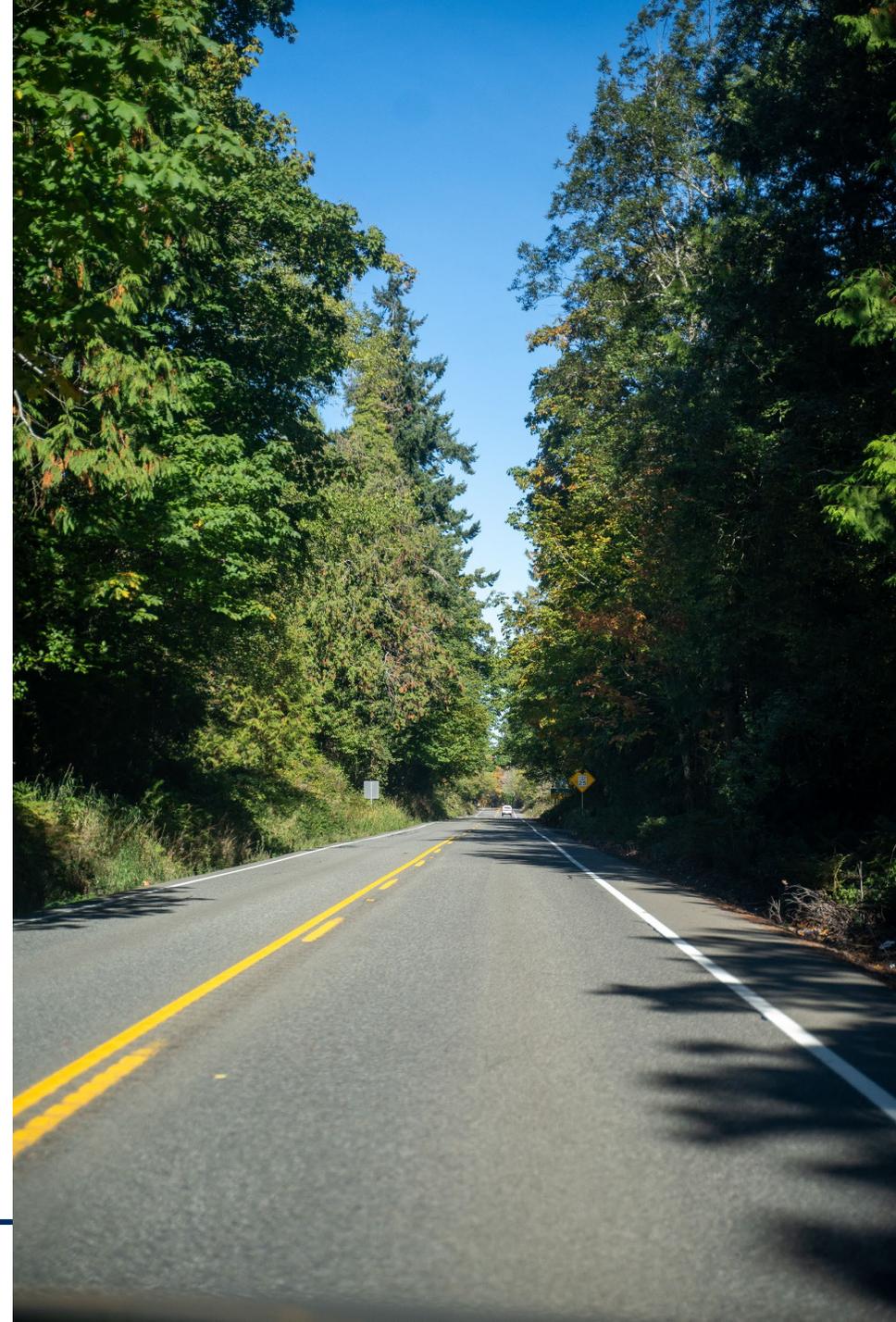
Initial Recommendations

Timeline



Purpose

To assess regulatory needs for future commercial equestrian facilities, considering rural impacts, economic viability, and the role of equestrian facilities in maintaining rural character.



Background

The Kitsap County Board of County Commissioners first identified regulation of equestrian facilities as a priority for 2025.

Postponed proposed equestrian facility code update to 2026.

In 2026, DCD is providing focus and staffing needed to assess and present recommendations to stakeholders.



Kitsap County News

Board of County Commissioners Postpones Equestrian Facility Code to 2026 10/13/2025

The [Kitsap County Board of Commissioners](#) directed the [Department of Community Development \(DCD\)](#) today to separate the [Equestrian Facility Code](#) component from the rest of the [Year of the Rural](#) project. This decision allows the County and community to focus on other Year of the Rural topics during the 2025 public process while providing additional time for engagement, discussion, research, and refinement of the proposed Equestrian Facility Code.

Case Study

2018 new property owners

Established an Equestrian Facility Business

- Note – the threshold "Commercial" is not currently defined

The following Code Compliance cases were filed:

- 2018 – Barn remodel for horse boarding along with hay sales from semi trailers. Letter was sent requesting permit for remodel. Status is Closed.
- 2023 – Increase in number of animals, feed sales, fire evacuation issues. Staff did not identify violations under the ag code and noted that the road is private. Status is 'Closed – No Violation'.
- 2025 – Request for investigation of commercial retail sale of feed products. Staff visited the site and met with owners. Staff did not identify violations under the ag code. Status is 'Closed – No Violation'.

2024 Board of County Commissions requested assessment of Equestrian Facility regulations – using this case as a starting point.

Objectives

Identify and evaluate impacts

Assess existing County regulations and enforcement practices

Evaluate the applicability of the Washington State Right to Farm Act

Compile and assess best practices

Define and assess operational thresholds and intensity levels

Evaluate infrastructure and environmental impacts

Assess which impacts and intensity levels may warrant regulatory oversight

Gather stakeholder input

Assess alignment with existing county code and permitting frameworks



Bainbridge Island Review: A chestnut horse grazes on hay at Lazy K Stables



King 5 and Kitsap Sun

Key Partners

Stakeholders

- Equestrian Facility Working Group
- Commercial equestrian facility operators and equestrian associations
- Rural property owners near equestrian facilities
- Community and neighborhood representatives and customers

Research & Implementation

- DCD staff

Officials

- Board of County Commissioners
- Planning Commission



Scope of Work

Community Engagement

Research and Assessment

- Task 1. Project initiation and Data
- Task 2. Regulatory and Legal Framework Assessment
- Task 3. Best Management Practices and Comparative Review
- Task 4. Impact and Intensity Analysis
- Task 5. Threshold and Trigger Evaluation
- Task 6. Stakeholder Engagement
- Task 7. Regulatory Alignment and Options Assessment
- Task 8. Findings and Recommendations

Based on BOCC Direction

- Task 9. Public Process
- Task 10. Implementation

Historic Unclassified Use Permits

Other past approvals

1991 – LU 2510

- Conclusions (several)
 - 1. This is a proposal for a commercial operation in an area designated as rural. The site is a large acreage site surrounded by residential development on smaller parcels.
 - 4. Conditions may be imposed to assure the use will be compatible with existing and probable uses of surrounding properties
- Recommended Decision - Conditions (several)
 - 2. A plan for temporary storage and regular removal of animal wastes...
 - 3. Traffic/Engineering: The applicant will be required to construct a new road approach...
 - 5. The number of horses shall not exceed 20 on the site at any time.

1993 - LU 2635

- The applicant has given the following limits of the operation:
 - 1. The boarding stable has 25 stalls.
 - 2. There are 35 to 40 lessons given per week.
 - 3. There are only 10 to 12 visitors per day.
 - 4. 3 to 4 horse trailers visit the site per day.
- Conditions (several)
 - 4. Hours of operation shall be limited to daylight hours.
 - 9. Traffic/Transportation Division: The applicant will be required to construct a paved approach/apron...

Kitsap County Agriculture Code

2016

- Animal Density Table – removed

2020

- “Equestrian Events” – added
- “Equestrian Facility” – added

2024

- Best Management Practices and Farm Plan – further defined

2025 Proposed Equestrian Facility Code Feedback

Process

Setbacks and Screening

Small business

Existing facilities

Cost of permitting

- Agriculture ACUP
- CUP

Case Study

Code Compliance Data Analysis

- Analyzed code compliance requests and cases submitted from 2012 - November 2025 which included key search terms.
 - The raw data from Smart Gov included 679 requests and 588 cases over 565 properties.
- Further refinement of search terms identified 47 requests and 38 cases over 41 properties.
- Cases were categorized by topic (i.e. Ag Structure, Horses, Manure etc.)
- Eight cases regarding equestrian facilities and/or commercial feed sales were analyzed in greater detail.

Code Compliance Review

The eight cases included concerns regarding Large Events, Manure Management, Commercial Equestrian Facilities, and Commercial Wholesale of Ag Products.

Takeaways

- Events: Noise and parking requirements apply.
- Manure Management: Issues were addressed by multiple agencies (Conservation District, Health District, Humane Society).

Code Compliance Review

Takeaways (Cont'd)

- Commercial Equestrian Facilities – UUP/CUPs were required to operate but today this is no longer in code.
- Commercial Wholesale of Ag Products – Enforcement difficulties stem from lack of clarity in the farm stand definition.
 - The distinction between farm stands and moderate home businesses warrants further examination.

Existing Code Analysis

Relevant Existing Code Sections

- Farm Stand – [KCC 17.455.060](#)
- Moderate Home Business – [KCC 17.415.275](#), [7.410.042](#)
- Manure/BMPs – [KCC 17.455.070](#)
- Noise/Hours – [KCC 10.28.040](#)
- Ag Structure Setbacks – [KCC 17.455.080](#)
- Role of the Health District – [KCC 9.52.030](#)

Cross-Jurisdiction Analysis

List of Jurisdictions

- Clallam County
- Snohomish County
- Thurston County
- Pierce County
- Mason County*
- Bainbridge Island*

*Not part of initial analysis

Focus

- Commercial equestrian facility definitions (or equivalent)
- Rural Residential equivalent zones
- Animal density regulations

Best Management Practices

Per Kitsap County Code 17.455, “Best management practices (BMPs)” means established management practices that farmers use to provide for the economic, environmental and agronomic efficiency of a farm when raising crops and/or livestock to achieve the least possible adverse impact on the environment, and to minimize possible adverse impacts on human, animal and plant health. ...”

- [Conservation Practice Standards | Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)
- [Conservation Practice Standard Dust Management for Pen Surfaces \(Code 375\)](#)

No oversight or enforcement for Best Management Practices.

Survey Findings

399 Participants - Descriptions

- 34% Property owner with horses (non-commercial)
- 28% Neighbor of an equestrian facility
- 38% Customer/client/rider
- 37% Rural landowner

Primary relationship to equestrian activities

- 51% Recreational
- 31% Residential/neighbor

Commercial equestrian facilities are mostly:

- 86% Beneficial
- 10% Mixed (both benefits and challenges)

Significant and Very Significant Benefits

- Sense of community, recreational opportunities, physical and mental health, revenue to surrounding communities

At what point does an equestrian operation become “commercial”?

- 63% Existing regulations are sufficient
- 16% Amount of vehicle traffic
- 16% Frequency of assembly events

Workshop Findings

Farm Stand
Definition

Agriculture
Registration
Program

Education and
Enforcement of
Best Management
Practices

Tiered Structure
for Commercial
Equestrian
Facilities

Equestrian Facility Working Group

Concerned with the lack of complaints and county-wide regulation

Feel this is a site-specific issue-and code violation cases on this site are closed

Right to Farm – including growth/expansion and associated dust, noise, odor

Increased regulations will negatively impact the equestrian community in Kitsap County

Whose burden is it if the existing code is not enforced?

The current Farm Stand code assessment is not related to equestrian stakeholders – it is an outlier

Initial Impacts Assessment

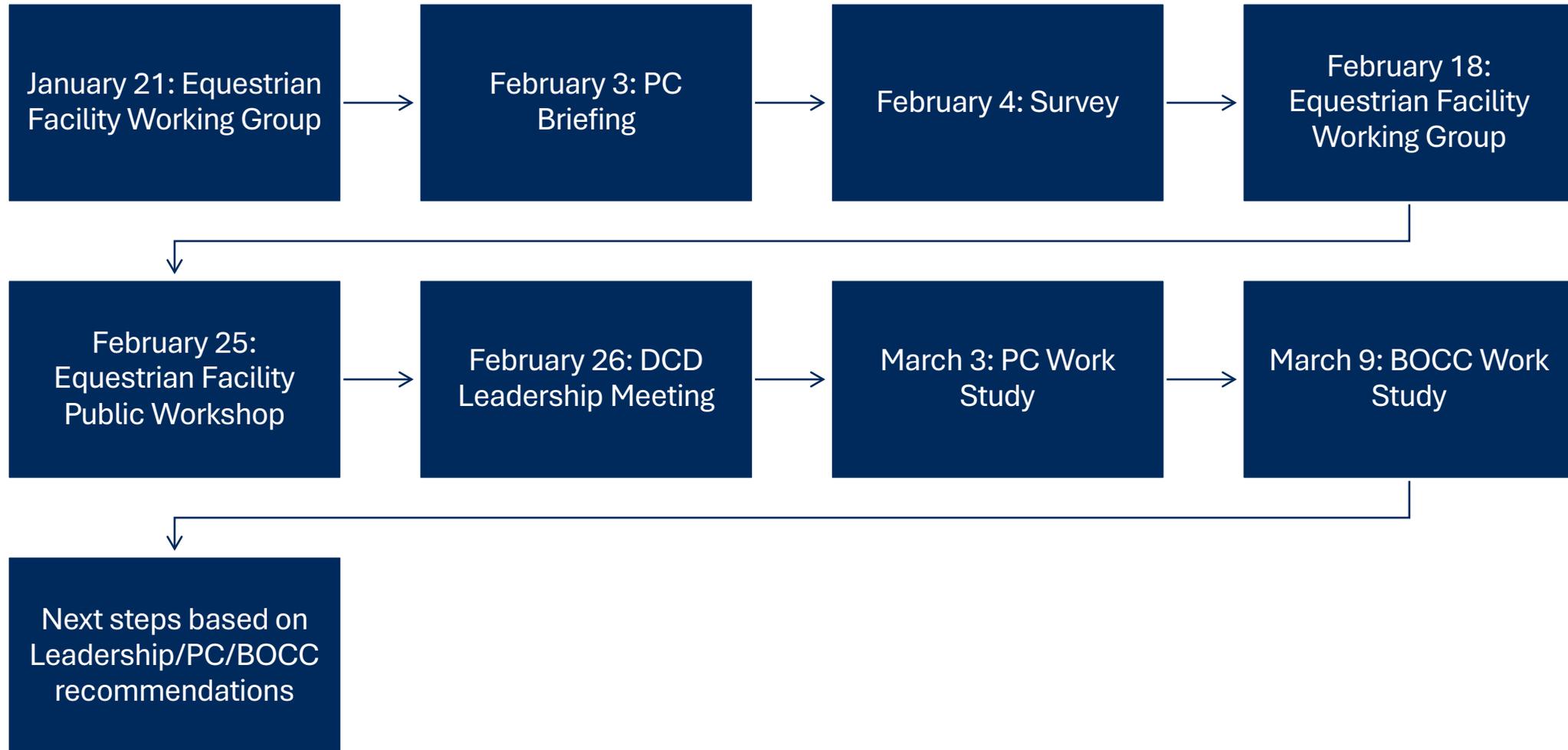
Adjacent Properties

- Noise, Dust, and Odor
- Traffic and Customers
- Runoff and Water Pollution
- Emergency Evacuation and Access
- Enforcement

Equestrian Community

- Increased Regulation – Land Conversion
- Existing Equestrian Facilities and Impact
- Cost of Administrative Conditional Use or Conditional Use Permit
- Economic Viability (Growth)
- Clear Thresholds
- Setbacks and Animal Density vs Best Management Practices
- Rural Character and Community

Timeline



Direction Needed - Potential Courses of Actions

Status Quo

Refine "Simple" Options (Examples)

- KCC 17.455.060.A Director's Interpretation and subsequent code update for "Farm Stand"
- BMP education/coordination for Equestrian Facilities
- Agriculture support for Code Compliance

Undertake Longer Term (not "Simple") Projects

- Registration for existing agriculture and commercial equestrian facilities
- Define "Commercial" Equestrian Facilities
- Tiered thresholds for Commercial Equestrian Facilities
- NEW! Create Use Standards for Equestrian Facility Events - like Agritourism Assembly Events

NEW! Underway-Exists

Current Process	Method	Impact this addresses
Farm Plan	Kitsap Conservation District, Kitsap Public Health District, and WA DOE	Runoff and Water Pollution, Odor
	KCD will add information on farm and stable emergency planning	Emergency Evacuation and Access
Phone Tree	"Cowgirl" 911 program to assist in emergencies (formalize?)	
KCD Coordination Grant (pending)	Coordination between farms, stables, and Kitsap County DEM	
Agriculture specific support	Connection with Agriculture Advisory Council	Enforcement
Civil Dispute	Reiterate this is a civil matter. To engage is to set precedent for other private road issues	Private Roads

NEW! Simple Options

Option	Method	Impacts this would address
DI or Code Update	Using Farm Stand and Moderate Home Business Code	Traffic and Customers
Farm Plan Education	Workshops – Collaboration with KCD	Runoff and Water Pollution, Odor
Best Management Practices Education		Dust and Noise
Business Specific Guidance on Dust and Noise		
Mediation	Explore mediation program/options	Enforcement
Notifications	TBD	Topic for Agriculture Advisory Council

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Thank you!

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