

April 3, 2026

**OFFICE OF THE HEARING EXAMINER
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**
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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE KING
COUNTY COUNCIL FOR CURRENT USE
ASSESSMENT APPLICATION**

SUBJECT: Department of Natural Resources and Parks file no. **E25CT020**
Proposed ordinance no. **2026-0033**
Parcel no. **072507-9006**

CATHRYN BAERWALD

Open Space Taxation Application (Public Benefit Rating System)

Location: 7521 Ames Lake Carnation Road NE, Carnation

Applicant: **Cathryn Baerwald**
PO Box 418
Carnation, WA 98014
Telephone: (206) 963-0061

King County: Department of Natural Resources and Parks
represented by **Bill Bernstein**
201 S. Jackson Street Suite 5601
Seattle, WA 98104
Telephone: (206) 477-4643
Email: bill.bernstein@kingcounty.gov

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Department's Recommendation: Approve 19.92 acres for 80% reduction in appraised value.
Examiner's Recommendation: Approve 19.92 acres for 80% reduction in appraised value.

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND:

Per Ch. 20.36 KCC, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) transmitted the subject application along with its Report for Property Enrollment in the Public Benefit Rating System (PBRS) File No. E25CT020, to the Examiner.

The Examiner conducted a remote public hearing on the application on March 26, 2026. Bill Bernstein, representing DNRP, presented the application and DNRP’s recommendation.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS:

1. Except as modified herein, the facts set forth in DNRP’s staff report and testimony at the March 26, 2026, public hearing are correct and incorporated here by reference. We will provide copies of this report and DNRP’s staff report to the King County Council for final action.
2. The property at issue is at 7521 Ames Lake Carnation Road NE, Carnation, Parcel No 072507-9006, owned by the Applicant Cathryn Baerwald.
3. The Applicant timely filed an application with King County for current use assessment of the above identified property under the PBRS to begin in 2026.
4. Timely and proper legal notice of the public hearing on the application was provided. Ex 3.
5. The property is currently enrolled in the farm and agricultural land program. RCW 84.34.020(2). The purpose of this application is to reclassify the property and enroll it in PBRS. Any new open space taxation agreement must supersede the prior agreement.
6. A list of the PBRS Open Space Resource categories requested by the Applicant and identified by DNRP as relevant to the property are provided below. Categories that DNRP determined were eligible for credit are assigned the applicable number of points. In this case DNRP also recommended credit for a “bonus” category as indicated below.

PBRS categories:	Farm and agricultural conservation land	5
	<u>Bonus:</u>	
	Conservation easement or historic preservation easement	18
	Total points awarded	23

The DNRP-recommended score of 23 points results in an 80% reduction in the appraised value of the enrolled portion of the property. Each category where points are recommended is discussed below.

- A. **Farm and agricultural conservation land - 5 points.** The property contains more than five acres of traditional farmland that is being

managed according to an approved King Conservation District farm management plan.

- B. **Bonus: Conservation easement or historic preservation easement – 18 points.** The owners' 2014 King County Transfer of Development Rights Agricultural Conservation Easement is included in the record as Exhibit 7. The conservation easement protects valuable natural resources and restricts further development of the property in perpetuity. The property therefore qualifies for this category. However, points for this category are dependent on ongoing qualification for the farm and agricultural conservation land category.
7. Contingencies, Conditions, and Requirements. The Examiner incorporates all conditions and requirements identified in the PBRS Staff Report. Ex. 1.
 8. Enrollment Acreage. The Applicant requested 19.92 acres and DNRP recommends 19.92 acres of the subject property be enrolled in the PBRS program. (Enrollment acreage is the entire parcel less the excluded area, as calculated by DNRP. In the event the County Assessor's official parcel size is revised, the PBRS acreage shall be administratively adjusted to reflect that change).
 9. Approval of 23 points and a current use valuation of 80% of assessed value for 19.92 acres is consistent with Ch. 20.36 KCC and with the purposes and intent of King County to maintain, preserve, conserve, and otherwise continue in existence adequate open space lands and to assure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of King County and its citizens.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE a current use valuation of 80% of assessed value for the 19.92-acre enrolled portion of the property, subject to any contingencies, conditions and requirements listed herein or incorporated from the DNRP staff report.

DATED April 3, 2026.



Devon Shannon
Hearing Examiner

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

A party may appeal an Examiner report and recommendation by following the steps described in KCC 20.22.230. By **4:30 p.m.** on *April 27, 2026*, an electronic appeal statement must be sent to Clerk.Council@kingcounty.gov to hearingexaminer@kingcounty.gov, and to the party email addresses on the front page of this report and recommendation. Please consult KCC 20.22.230 for the exact filing requirements.

If a party fails to timely file an appeal, the Council does not have jurisdiction to consider that appeal. Conversely, if the appeal requirements of KCC 20.22.230 are met, the Examiner will notify parties and interested persons and will provide information about next steps in the appeal process.

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 26, 2026, HEARING ON THE APPLICATION OF CATHRYN BAERWALD, FILE NO. E25CT020

Devon Shannon was the Hearing Examiner in this matter. A verbatim recording of the hearing is available in the Hearing Examiner's Office.

The following exhibits were offered by DNRP and entered into the record:

Exhibit no. 1	DNRP staff report
Exhibit no. 2	<i>Reserved for future submission of the affidavit of hearing publication</i>
Exhibit no. 3	Legal notice and introductory ordinance to the King County Council
Exhibit no. 4	Arcview/orthophotograph and aerial map
Exhibit no. 5	Application signed and notarized
Exhibit no. 6	Farm management plan
Exhibit no. 7	Conversation easement, submitted March 26, 2026