

Sustainability 2030 Plan Brief

Conservation Futures CAB/TAC Meeting

03/24/22

Background

On March 23rd, 2021 Pierce County Council committed to reducing Pierce County greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030 and adopted the Sustainability 2030 Plan as a set of strategies to reach this goal. The Sustainability 2030 Plan includes 71 strategic actions across 5 focus areas that not only help our community meet its emission reduction target, but also bring additional benefits like improved health, resilience, and green jobs.

One focus area of the Plan is carbon sequestration – these are actions that help us draw carbon dioxide out of the air and store carbon in the soil and plants in perpetuity. Projects like planting trees and amending soil with compost increase carbon storage, mitigate our contribution to climate change, and improve our lands and waters. Including carbon sequestration potential in our long-term land use decisions is a powerful tool for climate change preparedness and sustainable land management practices.

Conservation Futures plays a pivotal role in conserving land for the benefit of future generations and, therefore, County leadership approved Carbon Sequestration Action 5 of the Plan: “in the next update of Conservation Futures, include carbon sequestration potential as a metric in scoring criteria.” Adding carbon sequestration as a priority in Conservation Futures land conservation decisions will help us protect our community from the impacts of climate change while improving soil health, access to green space, and healthy ecosystems.

Action

Sustainability 2030 Plan, CS-5: In the next update of Conservation Futures, include carbon sequestration potential as a metric in scoring criteria.

- Update Conservation Future code to include carbon sequestration potential as a priority in land conservation
- Define “carbon sequestration potential” in code

Proposal: Add Carbon Sequestration Potential as “Bonus Points” to Applications

- Add carbon sequestration potential definition to Section 2.97.020 Definitions.
- Add carbon sequestration potential to Program Goals in Exhibit A, Table 2.97.110-1. Conservation Futures Evaluation Categories and Points.

Potential Code Changes:

2.97.020 Definitions

“Carbon sequestration potential” means the amount of atmospheric carbon that could be converted to organic matter and stored indefinitely in the soil or biota contained within a land parcel given a change in the land’s use or land management practices

Exhibit A, Table 2.97.110-1. Conservation Futures Evaluation Categories and Points

PROGRAM GOALS (25% of available points)	The Conservation Futures property is within a designated Urban Growth Area (UGA).	5 points
	The Conservation Futures property is 40 acres or greater in area.	0 to 5 points
	The Conservation Futures property is contiguous with (abuts) or creates linkage with another preserved open space property.	0 to 5 points
	The Conservation Futures property is threatened by development as defined in PCC 2.97.020 .	0 to 5 points
	The Conservation Futures property is designated Agricultural Resource Land.	5 points
	The proposed land use change(s) to the property, as outlined in the Sponsor’s application, demonstrate carbon sequestration potential in alignment with County climate goals.	0 to 5 points