

Master Planned Developments in SR-169 Corridor

by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

The Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVAC) has deep reservations regarding the adverse impacts that two massive Master Planned Developments (MPDs) proposed by Yarrow Bay in and around the City of Black Diamond. These include: (1) The Villages: 3,600 single-family and 1,200 multi-family units for a total of 4,800 dwelling units on 535 acres, and 775,000 square feet of commercial and office space and (2) Lawson Hills: 930 single-family and 320 multi-family units, for a total of 1,250 dwelling units on 156 acres, and 390,000 square feet of commercial and office space. These two proposed outsized developments total 4,530 single-family and 1,520 multi-family units for a total of 6,050 dwelling units on 691 acres, and 1,165,000 sq ft of commercial and office space.

These MPDs are proposed on the rural/suburban fringe of the Urban Growth Boundary along the Black Diamond-Maple Valley-Renton corridor where existing transportation infrastructure already is severely strained. The GMVAC has monitored traffic patterns and volumes in and around the greater Maple Valley area for decades. We remain concerned with the inadequate options associated with our existing transportation infrastructure, as our major roadways and minor arterials throughout the area already are used near capacity for a good part of each weekday.

We have specific concerns regarding the adverse transportation impacts on SR-169 (Maple Valley Highway) and SR-516 (Kent-Kangley Road), as well as King County roads, major intersections, and local arterials throughout the greater Maple Valley area. Estimates of impacts on traffic flow on SR-169 show a near doubling of vehicles when the proposed developments are complete. In addition, major intersections throughout the area will be unduly clogged--even more than they already are. Clearly, these proposed MPDs will adversely impact the movement of people, goods, and services.

There are an inordinately large number (1,000's) of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) involved. TDRs are normally used for shifting higher densities into the areas which can best handle that growth. Unfortunately, relatively remote Black Diamond, is a poor choice to be a receiver of such a number of TDRs. We also are concerned with proposed improper siting of schools and storm water facilities in the Rural Area. Urban developments cannot rely on Rural Area citizens to shoulder the adverse impacts of siting their needed facilities.

Another issue of concern to all residents along the SR-169 corridor is unsustainable growth. The King County Growth Management Planning Council (Oct. 09) provides household growth targets. For the City of Black Diamond the 2006-2031 growth target is 1900 households. Black Diamond is categorized as one of 19 "small cities" which together a growth targets allocation of 10,922 new housing units (Black Diamond's 1,900 is 17% of the total small city allocation). The two Yarrow Bay proposals, by themselves, represent more than three times the Black Diamond allocation, and thus, by themselves, take up 55% of the allocation for all 19 of the small cities.

Greater Maple Valley area citizens have consistently recognized transportation as a key issue. In addition, the Area Council believes the proposed Yarrow Bay MPDs do not meet the Transportation Concurrency requirements of both the King County Comprehensive Plan and the State Growth Management Act. Consequently, we are asking King County and the State to hold Yarrow Bay and the City of Black Diamond to those requirements, respectively. We cannot allow the associated adverse impacts that greatly increased traffic will do to paralyze our existing clogged major transportation infrastructure.

Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEISs) for the MPDs were issued last fall. Very comprehensive comments were submitted by the public, government agencies, local groups, and the Muckleshoot Tribe. Many of these comments parallel our concerns. Final Environmental Impact Statements (FEISs) were issued in December. Unfortunately, after reviewing the FEISs, it is clear that many of these comments were not fully addressed by Black Diamond officials.

Several concerned Black Diamond citizens have submitted formal appeals, which will be heard before a Hearing Examiner starting on Saturday, March 6, 10 AM - 5 PM (Black Diamond Elementary School at 25314 Baker St.) and continuing on Monday, March 8, and Tuesday, March 9, both from 7 - 10 PM (Black Diamond City Council Chambers at 25510 Lawson Street). Public Hearings on the MPDs themselves are scheduled for Wednesday, March 10, and Thursday, March 11, both from 7 - 10 PM (Black Diamond Elementary School) and continuing on Friday, March 12, starting at 10 AM (Black Diamond City Council Chambers). [The City of Black Diamond website](#) provides links to the FEISs and MPD Application documents. We urge concerned citizens throughout the area to attend any and all these hearings. NOTE: Public comments will only be taken at the Public Hearings on the MPDs.

We request that King County and State officials critically assess the proposed MPDs and push for a delay in this rapidly moving process so that further study can be made of the severe ramifications of these proposals and the City of Black

Diamond's inadequate responses to many DEIS comments. We wish to ensure the City of Black Diamond meets the requirements of the King County Comprehensive Plan and the State Growth Management Act, especially Transportation Concurrency requirements and Level of Service standards to ensure that adequate transportation infrastructure is in place prior to any approvals of each development phase, as is required.

In conclusion, the proposed MPDs must be strictly held to the multiple applicable provisions of the King County Comprehensive Plan and the State Growth Management Act and must acknowledge other projects currently in planning that would only exacerbate the adverse impacts of these two massive projects.