

Greater Maple Valley Area Council
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Councilpeople,

We have completed our review of the recommendations of the recently concluded School Siting Task Force (SSTF). We wholeheartedly support those unanimously approved recommendations for both the existing sites reviewed and for future potential sites in the Rural Area. We strongly urge you to unanimously support the SSTF recommendations and incorporate them into the 2012 Update of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

Over the years the Area Council has consistently strongly opposed allowing urban-related schools sites in the Rural Area to be developed under policies that allow sewer hookups. We have repeatedly opposed policies that look on the Rural Area as a "land bank" for urban-related uses. Urban-related schools should be sited in those urban communities to which they serve to the benefit of all.

As studied, several proposed sites are inside or near to our service areas and, if developed according to School District plans, would have detrimental effects on the infrastructure and character of the Rural Area. We are heartened to hear Tahoma School District and King County are actively pursuing a land swap that could help both parties. Also, we are happy to see the Black Diamond City Council pass a resolution calling for all schools related to the proposed Yarrow Bay MPDs be sited within the city limits. This makes logical sense, as there is an abundance of undeveloped land within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) of the City and is readily available. We look forward to these win-win solutions reaching fruition.

The highly diverse, all-hands-at-the-table SSTF should be commended for an excellent job and in both respecting the Rural Area and its citizens, while working towards solutions that benefit school children, their parents, and their communities. We call for the King County Council to reflect in its decision our long-time motto: "Keep the Rural Area rural" and support and implement the SSTF recommendations.

Sincerely,

Steve Hiester (gmvac_chair@hotmail.com)
Chairman, Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council

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