



King County Comprehensive Plan Update by Peter Rimpos, GMVUAC Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, July 10, the Area Council held its monthly meeting at the Maple Valley Fire Station at 22225 SE 231st St and online via Zoom. The *Public Review Draft* for the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Major (10-yr) Update was the only topic of discussion.

KCCP Major Update (Update)

The Area Council *coordinates* a Joint Team of nine KC Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils, Associations, and Organizations regarding the *ongoing* Update: *Enumclaw Plateau Community Association (EPCA)*, *Friends of Sammamish Valley (FoSV)*, *Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVUAC)*, *Green River Coalition (GRC)*, *Green Valley/Lake Holm Association (GV/LHA)*, *Hollywood Hill Association (HHA)*, *Soos Creek Area Response (SCAR)*, *Upper Bear Creek Unincorporated Area Council (UBCUAC)*, and *Vashon-Maury Island Community Council (V-MCC)*.

On June 1 King County released the *Public Review Draft (PRD)* of the Update: <https://publicinput.com/y8200>. On the righthand-side of that webpage there are links to all **12 Chapters** and **36 Appendices / Maps / Code Amendments**. The PRD is a fully marked-up KCCP with the County's proposed changes (additions underlined and deletions struckthrough).

The 2024 Update process started in January 2022 with *Scoping* followed by *Conceptual Proposals*—the Joint Team participated in reviews, comments, proposals. Then came the release of the *PRD* for which the Joint Team conducted an extensive review and developed detailed comments.

In general, the Joint Team found the PRD very good, but has issues in several areas. The County has many very good Policies and strong Code language, but all too often, either through poor interpretation, spotty followthrough, poorly funded and not-prioritized enforcement, and myriad exceptions / special considerations, it does not give justice to those Policies and Code in practice on the ground to serve its residents. Consequently, the County's failure to uphold and enforce its own Policies and Code has cost Rural Area residents hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal costs, untold hours of effort, and great frustration in having to fight their own local government—the County.

The Joint Team comments included several major *Themes* developed as it conducted its review:

- The County's *Guiding Principles* are well developed, but some are poorly followed.
- There are good Policies defining "*Rural Character*," but the County's followthrough is wanting.
- The County has excellent Policies to protect and enhance the environment.
- The County has excellent Policies to protect and enhance parks and open space.
- The financial system for County roads is broken; needs of unincorporated areas are neglected, and city-to-city traffic uses rural roads excessively.
- Urban or urban-serving facilities should not be sited in the Rural Area.
- The rural economy should not be endangered by allowing urban-serving businesses in the Rural Area.
- Implementation of many great policies and codes is inadequate regarding permitting, land use, code enforcement, and other issues impacting development and uses on rural parcels.

- Unfortunately Growth Targets cannot be enforced to keep *rogue* cities, such as Black Diamond, from grossly overgrowing and directly impacting County roads and rural residents.
- Changes to Code are needed, e.g., Special-Use Permits (SUPs), Temporary-Use Permits (TUPs), Conditional-Use Permits (CUPs), etc., must be focussed and limited.
- Permit exceptions should be just that—exceptions for a very specific purpose meeting very specific, temporary, and non-recurring situations or conditions, not the rule.
- Multi-family housing should not be allowed outright in Rural Towns.
- The “*fee in lieu*” concept does not provide equivalent creation of affordable housing.

The Area Council devoted its entire meeting to reviewing the Joint Team comments. After extensive discussion, it voted unanimously to approve them. All other Joint Team organizations are doing the same following their own internal processes. When fully approved, Joint Team comments will be submitted to King County by the July 15 due date. The next milestone of the Update process is the King County Executive’s *Recommend Plan* submittal to the King County Council this December. The Joint Team plans to again conduct an extensive review and submit its comments to the King County Council, which will spend all of next year to conduct its review and hold Public Hearings culminating in its approval of a final Update in December 2024.

For further information please see: <https://kingcounty.gov/sites/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/king-county-comprehensive-plan/KingCountyComprehensivePlan.aspx>.

Next Area Council Meeting

The next Area Council monthly meeting will be held Monday, August 7, from 7 - 9:30 PM at the Maple Valley Fire Station at 22225 SE 231st St (across from the KC Sheriff’s Precinct). **As a hybrid meeting, members of the public will be able to attend either in-person or virtually via Zoom.**

Meetings are held on the *first* Monday of the month (except for Holidays, when they are held on the *second* Monday), from 7 - 9:30 PM. Meeting announcements, Agendas, and Zoom information are published in the *Voice of the Valley*, the Area Council’s website (www.gmvuac.org) and local *NextDoor* platforms. You can also find us on our *FaceBook* page: <https://www.facebook.com/GMVUAC/>. Each meeting begins with an open Public Comment period where anyone can voice concerns, comments, etc. to the Area Council.

Area Council Membership

Your Area Council serves as an all-volunteer, locally recognized advisory body to King County on behalf of all rural unincorporated area residents living in the Tahoma School District. The Area Council’s *works to keep the Rural Area rural*. The Area Council also works *regionally* with other King County Rural Area organizations through both *Joint Planning* and its *Joint Transportation Initiative*.

The twelve-seat Area Council has four open seats. If you have an interest in joining, please send an e-mail to: info@gmvuac.org or attend (either in-person or virtually) a monthly meeting and express your interest. To be eligible to join the Area Council as a member you need to live *within* the Tahoma School District. Residents, even those who do not live *within* the Tahoma School District, are eligible to become *Associate Members* who can serve on any Area Council Committee: *Environment, Growth Management, Transportation, Public Relations, or Train Show*. Each committee votes for its own Chair and Vice-Chairs and *Associate Members* are eligible for those positions. The Area Council welcomes your participation. For information on each of these committees please see the Area Council’s web site: www.gmvuac.org and use the drop-down menu under *Committees*. All Monthly Meeting Summary Articles, such as this, can be found on the website—use the drop-down menu under *Correspondence*.