



## King County

# Metropolitan King County Council Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee

### STAFF REPORT

|                      |           |              |   |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|---|
| <b>Agenda Item:</b>  | 9         | <b>Name:</b> | Christine Jensen<br>Erin Auzins<br>Mary Bourguignon |
| <b>Proposed No.:</b> | 2016-0155 | <b>Date:</b> | June 7, 2016  |

### SUBJECT

A briefing on the proposed 2016 update to the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP).

### SUMMARY

This year marks a four-year, “major” update to the KCCP, which allows for consideration of substantive policy changes to the Plan and potential revisions to the Urban Growth Area (UGA). The Executive transmitted the proposed 2016 KCCP to the Council on March 1. The Council is in the process of reviewing and deliberating on the Executive’s proposal. The Council’s review will include briefings in the Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee (TrEE) over the next several months and possible final adoption in mid-to-late 2016.

Today’s briefing will cover Chapter 7 (Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources and Appendix C2 (Regional Trail Needs Report).

### BACKGROUND

The KCCP is the guiding policy document for land use and development regulations in unincorporated King County, as well as for regional services throughout the County, including transit, sewers, parks, trails, and open space. The King County Code dictates the allowed frequency for updates to the KCCP.

**Annual cycle.** On an annual basis, only technical changes and other limited amendments to the KCCP are allowed to be adopted.<sup>1</sup> This is known as the “annual cycle.” While the Code states that the KCCP “may be amended” annually,<sup>2</sup> it is not required to be reviewed or amended on an annual basis.

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<sup>1</sup> K.C.C. 20.18.030

<sup>2</sup> K.C.C. 20.18.030(B)

**Four-year cycle.** Substantive changes to policy language and amendments to the UGA boundary<sup>3</sup> are only allowed to be considered once every four years.<sup>4,5</sup> This is known as the “four-year cycle.” The Code requires the County to complete a “comprehensive review” of the KCCP once every four years in order to “update it as appropriate” and ensure continued compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA).<sup>6</sup> The Code requires the Executive to transmit to the Council a proposed ordinance amending the KCCP once every four years.<sup>7</sup> However, the Code does not require the Council to adopt a KCCP update during the four-year cycle.<sup>8</sup> This year’s four-year review of the KCCP is the fifth major review since 2000.

**GMA update requirements.** It is worth highlighting how the County’s KCCP cycles fit into the GMA planning cycles. The GMA requires cities and counties to update their comprehensive plans once every eight years.<sup>9</sup> The GMA authorizes, but does not require, cities and counties to amend their comprehensive plans annually.

For King County, the GMA-established plan update deadlines are in 2015 and 2023. For the purposes of the GMA, the 2012 update to the KCCP<sup>10</sup> satisfied the State’s requirement to update the County’s comprehensive plan by 2015. The GMA does not require the County to complete another comprehensive update until 2023. Under the County’s current policies and Code, the County will complete this update in the 2020 four-year cycle.

Under the County’s policies and regulations, the 2016 review of the KCCP constitutes a “four-year amendment.” However, under GMA requirements, the County’s 2016 review is subject to the rules applicable to an “annual amendment,” which is not a required action.

**Actions to date for the 2016 KCCP.** In May 2015, the Council adopted the Scoping Motion<sup>11</sup> for the 2016 KCCP update, a link to which is provided at the end of the staff

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<sup>3</sup> Note that Four-to-One UGA proposals may be considered during the annual cycle (see K.C.C. 20.18.030(B)(10), 20.18.040(B)(2), 20.18.170, and 20.18.180).

<sup>4</sup> From year 2000 and forward. Substantive updates to the KCCP can be considered on a two-year cycle, but only if: “the county determines that the purposes of the KCCP are not being achieved as evidenced by official population growth forecasts, benchmarks, trends and other relevant data” (K.C.C. 20.18.030(C)). This determination must be authorized by a motion adopted by the Council. To date, this option has not been used by the County.

<sup>5</sup> The annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Transportation Needs Report (TNR), and school capital facilities plans are elements of the KCCP but are adopted in conjunction with the County budget, and thus follows separate timeline, process, and update requirements (see K.C.C. 20.18.060 and 20.18.070).

<sup>6</sup> K.C.C. 20.18.030(C)

<sup>7</sup> K.C.C. 20.18.060

<sup>8</sup> If the Council decides not to adopt a four-year update, the County may still need to formally announce that it has completed the required review; the mechanism to do that, whether legislatively or not, would need to be discussed with legal counsel.

<sup>9</sup> Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.130

<sup>10</sup> Ordinance 17485

<sup>11</sup> Motion 14351, which was required to be transmitted by the Executive by K.C.C. 20.18.060. The Council approved the 2016 KCCP scoping motion after the April 30 deadline for Council action. However,

report. The Scoping Motion outlined the key issues the Council and Executive identified for specific consideration in the forthcoming KCCP update. While the scope of work approved through the Scoping Motion was intended to be as thorough as possible, it does not establish the absolute limit on the scope of issues that can be considered. Based on subsequent public testimony, new information, or Council initiatives, other issues may also be considered by the Executive or the Council – except for UGA expansion proposals, which must follow the limitations of KCCP policy RP-107<sup>12</sup> as discussed in the Area Zoning Studies and Land Use Map Amendments section of the March 15 staff report.<sup>13</sup>

King County Code (K.C.C.) 20.18.160 and RCW 36.70A.140 call for “early and continuous” public engagement in the development and amendment of the KCCP and any implementing development regulations. As part of that public engagement process, the Executive published a Public Review Draft (PRD) of the KCCP on November 6, 2015, which was open for public comment through January 2016.<sup>14</sup> During that time, the Executive hosted six PRD community meetings: one each in Fairwood, Skyway, Fall City, Issaquah, and two in Vashon. A summary of the Executive’s outreach efforts can be found in Appendix R “Public Outreach for Development of KCCP.” A detailed listing of all of the public comments received during development of the Plan can be found in the Public Participation Report that is located on the Council’s KCCP website.<sup>15</sup>

Council review of the transmitted 2016 KCCP began with a briefing of the Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee on March 15, 2016. Council review will continue with briefings on selected sections of the transmitted 2016 KCCP, as well as opportunities for public comment and engagement. As noted above, today’s briefing will cover Chapter 7 (Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources) and Appendix C2 (Regional Trail Needs Report).

## **ANALYSIS**

**How the Analysis section is organized.** The analysis in this staff report includes a review of selected chapters of the transmitted 2016 KCCP. Analysis of other chapters in the transmitted plan has been provided already or will be provided at subsequent TrEE meetings, as noted in the schedule in Attachment 1 to the staff report.<sup>16</sup> Staff analysis of each chapter will include identification of what is new in the transmitted 2016 KCCP compared with the adopted 2012 KCCP, discussion of any issues or

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as noted in the adopted Motion, the Executive agreed to treat the scope as timely and would proceed with the work program as established in the Council-approved version of the motion.

<sup>12</sup> This policy is currently RP-203 in the adopted 2012 KCCP, and is proposed to be changed to RP-107 as part of the 2016 KCCP. Does not apply to Four-to-One proposals.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/2016compplan/materials.aspx>

<sup>14</sup> General public comment was open through January 6, 2016. Additional comments on the late addition of the East Cougar Mountain Potential Annexation Area to the Public Review Draft were allowed from January 27 to February 3.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/2016compplan.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> Subject to change.

inconsistencies with adopted policies and plans and/or the Scoping Motion, and highlights of any additional issues for Council consideration.<sup>17</sup>

This staff report includes:

Chapter 7 Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources Page 424

Appendix C2 Regional Trail Needs Report Page 430

## Chapter 7 Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources

The policies in Chapter 7 address King County's parks, recreation and open space system, as well as the County's cultural resources.

### What's new in the transmitted 2016 KCCP?

**Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC).** This chapter of the transmitted 2016 KCCP includes a new section on the ERC, noting that it provides a "rare and unique opportunity to develop a major north-south corridor that supports transit and non-motorized mobility, utilities, parks, recreation and cultural amenities, and encourages equitable access to these facilities in support of economic opportunity for all King County residents."<sup>18</sup>

Because of the multi-use vision for the ERC,<sup>19</sup> policies related to its planning and development can also be found in other chapters in the transmitted 2016 KCCP: in Chapter 1 Regional Growth Management Planning (policy RP-109), Chapter 2 Urban Communities (policies U-191, U-192, U-193), and Chapter 8 Transportation (policy T-507a). The policies in Chapter 7 Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources all relate to the planning and development of a regional trail in the ERC. In addition, ERC regional trail segments are identified as Regional Trails System Legacy Projects in the "Projects Listing Summary" of Appendix C2, the Regional Trails Needs Report, to the transmitted 2016 KCCP.<sup>20</sup>

New policy P-110 requires the County to include the planning and development of a regional trail in the ERC.

**P-110** King County shall include the planning and development of a regional trail in the Eastside Rail Corridor, to enhance regional recreation and nonmotorized mobility. This facility will be planned and developed in coordination with other owners, and in close coordination with King County

<sup>17</sup> For information on the Executive's rationale for the proposed changes, please refer to the Policy Amendment Analysis Matrix that was included in the 2016 KCCP transmittal package as required by policy I-207, which can be found here: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/2016compplan/transmittal.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> Transmitted 2016 KCCP, page 7-6

<sup>19</sup> Motion 14105

<sup>20</sup> These segments include ERC-RB (Mainline Renton-Bellevue), ERC-B (Mainline Bellevue Segment), ERC-NB (Mainline North Bellevue Segment), ERC-W (Mainline Woodinville), and ERC-Spur (Woodinville-Redmond Spur)

Transportation and other state and local agencies, in support of the multiple objectives of King County and the other owners. The trail will be identified in King County's regional trails plan, the Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR), as a priority capital facility.

New policy P-110a requires the ERC regional trail to be developed to enhance connectivity, including with other trails and to transit.

**P-110a** The Eastside Rail Corridor regional trail shall be developed to enhance non-motorized connectivity between regional growth centers, urban communities, other regional trails, and local and high-capacity transit. The trail will enhance the quality of life by providing important recreation and mobility options for adjacent land uses.

New policy P-110b requires the ERC regional trail to be developed to regional trail standards.

**P-110b** The Eastside Rail Corridor regional trail shall be developed to the most current regional trail standards, ensuring safe recreation and mobility in accessing trails, street and transit. The trail corridor will include high-quality landscaping and environmental features where appropriate to enhance the trail experience and to provide ecologic benefits to the region.

**Multi-Use sites.** A new section of text, as well as new policy P-110c stipulates that multi-use sites may include areas with environmental value but also accommodate public access and recreation opportunities. This proposed policy is consistent with the multi-use plan for the ERC.

**P-110c** Multi-use sites include lands that have areas of environmental value, but also may accommodate extensive public access and active and/or passive recreation opportunities.

**Open Space Plan.** King County's most recent Open Space Plan was adopted in 2010.<sup>21</sup> It is considered a functional plan of the KCCP, and, as such, it must "be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, define service levels, provide standards, specify financing methods which are adequate, stable and equitable, be the basis for scheduling facilities and services through capital improvement programs and plan for facility maintenance."<sup>22</sup>

Washington State's Recreation and Conservation Office<sup>23</sup> requires this Open Space Plan to be updated every six years to maintain eligibility for grant funding. As a result,

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<sup>21</sup> Ordinance 16857

<sup>22</sup> K.C.C. 20.08.132

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.rco.wa.gov/>

the Executive recently transmitted a proposed 2016 Open Space Plan.<sup>24</sup> Staff will work to ensure that the transmitted 2016 Open Space Plan is consistent with the KCCP. Language in the transmitted 2016 KCCP appears to anticipate the 2016 Open Space Plan. For instance, policy P-119 has been edited to remove language about the King County Open Space Plan, which Executive staff indicate is duplicative with the proposed 2016 Open Space Plan.

**P-119** Open space lands should be acquired to expand and enhance the open space system as identified in the King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Regional Trails and Natural Areas(~~(, or when needed to meet adopted local park and recreation guidelines, or to protect contiguous tracts of working resource lands or ecological resources under the Acquisition Criteria in the King County Open Space Plan))~~).

**Land Conservation and Preservation.** In November 2015, the Council asked the Executive to develop and transmit a work plan by March 30, 2016, for implementing a program to protect and conserve land and water resources.<sup>25</sup> The Executive's transmitted work plan<sup>26</sup> identifies a \$1.3 billion estimated cost over the next 30 years to protect remaining natural land corridors, contiguous forests, farmland, regional trail connections, and river corridors. This estimate includes both the cost of initial preservation (acquisition of fee ownership or an easement) as well as 30 years of operations and maintenance expenses.

The Council was briefed on this proposed work plan, as well as the Executive's proposal to convene an advisory group to evaluate potential funding strategies to protect and conserve the identified land and water resources.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime, several policies in the transmitted 2016 KCCP include changes that conform to the language in the Executive's proposed preservation and conservation work plan.

Policy P-103, for instance, adds the concept of "contiguous" forest land, which the Executive's preservation and conservation work plan identifies as key to identifying forest lands to be conserved.

**P-103** King County will preserve wildlife corridors, ~~((and))~~ riparian habitat, contiguous forest land, as well as open space areas separating Urban and Rural Areas as part of its open space system.

As discussed at the May 3 TrEE briefing, in Chapter 1 Regional Growth Management Planning, Guiding Principle policy RP-202<sup>28</sup> has been edited to remove economic feasibility as a qualifier to preservation activities, and to add language focusing

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<sup>24</sup> Proposed Ordinance 2016-0249

<sup>25</sup> Motion 14458

<sup>26</sup> 2016-RPT0045

<sup>27</sup> 2016-B0092

<sup>28</sup> This policy is currently GP-102 in the adopted 2012 KCCP, and is proposed to be changed to RP-202 as part of the 2016 KCCP.

preservation and maintenance activities on “remaining high-priority forest, agriculture, and other open space lands.

~~((GP-102))~~ **RP-202** King County shall pursue ~~((economically feasible))~~ opportunities to preserve and maintain remaining high-priority forest, agriculture, and other open space lands.

In Chapter 7, policy P-120, which relates to regional trail corridors, has been edited to note that trail corridors should be acquired when identified in the Regional Trails Needs Report (Appendix C2 to the transmitted 2016 KCCP) or “other trails plans.” This reference could contemplate development of new trail acquisition plans as part of the long-term conservation and preservation effort. In fact, the Executive’s proposed work plan on conservation and preservation identifies a need for \$80 million over the next 30 years to acquire, operate and maintain regional trail corridors. The work plan notes that lands selected in this category were identified because they are included in the Regional Trails Needs Report, are new trail corridor opportunities to enhance the network and provide network connectivity, or could facilitate new regional trail interconnections.<sup>29</sup>

**P-120** ~~((Trails))~~ Regional trail corridors should be acquired when identified in King County’s ~~((Trails Plans, the))~~ Regional Trails Needs Report or other trails plans ~~((when identified as part of a regional community trail network))~~ .

**Public/private funding.** The Parks Business Transition Plan<sup>30</sup> adopted in 2002 contemplated removing King County’s parks and recreation system away from General Fund support, and required the Parks and Recreation Division to seek ways to recoup business revenues from parks facilities and to engage in partnerships with public and private partners to support parks and recreation activities.

The transmitted 2016 KCCP includes new policy language emphasizing the use of public-private partnerships for trail development and maintenance.

~~((P-107))~~ **P-109** King County shall complete a regional trail system, linking trail corridors to form a countywide network. King County will continue to primarily own the land necessary for the operation and management of the trail system and pursue public-private funding opportunities for development and maintenance.

**Management Plans.** The transmitted 2016 KCCP includes a new policy requiring the County to develop management plans (such as master plans, forest stewardship plans, etc.) for open space sites as appropriate and as budget and staffing resources allow.

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<sup>29</sup> 2016-RPT0045, pages 14, 17 and 19

<sup>30</sup> Ordinance 14509

**P-128a** King County shall develop management plans (such as master plans, forest stewardship plans or site management guidelines) that outline goals and objectives and management recommendations for sites within the open space system as appropriate and as budget and staffing resources allow.

**Pesticides.** The transmitted 2016 KCCP also includes a new policy relating to King County's use of integrated pest management principles.

**P-128b** King County's use of pesticides and fungicides will be based on integrated pest management principles.

**Public Participation.** The transmitted 2016 KCCP includes a new section on public participation that indicates the County's intent to involve and seek input from a wide array of stakeholders, consistent with the County's ESJ policies. ESJ issues will be discussed in more detail at a future committee meeting.

**P-133** King County will encourage and seek input, advice and participation from the public in decisions about management of the open space system that relate to key issues such as funding, planning, acquisition, development and stewardship.

**P-134** King County will work to invite and involve a wide variety of interests via a diversity of individuals, groups and agencies consistent with the County's economic and social justice policies.

**P-135** King County will use a variety of methods to ensure public involvement from all county residents such as public meetings, advisory groups, surveys, web and social media postings, news releases, park site signage, mailing lists, newsletters and through various community groups (including Community Service Areas). These methods will allow for early, continuous and broad public participation.

**Equity and Social Justice (ESJ).** The transmitted 2016 KCCP includes several policies related to equity and social justice. These ESJ-related policy changes will be evaluated as part of the 2016 KCCP briefing on ESJ issues at a future TrEE briefing on the transmitted 2016 KCCP.

Changes to policy P-105 include the expectation that King County will facilitate "affordable and culturally-accessible" recreational programs at its facilities.

**P-105** King County should facilitate affordable and culturally-accessible educational, interpretive and aquatic programs on county-owned properties that further the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the park system and the region.



Policy P-121, which specifically related to equity in the location of open space sites as a means of reducing health disparities was deleted in the transmitted 2016 KCCP. Executive staff have noted that this deletion was not intended to remove this concept, but rather to reflect the fact that most open space acquisitions today occur in rural areas. However, the open space system includes regional trails and parks in urban areas, in addition to open space lands in rural areas. This concept – of the parks and recreation system being used as a means to reduce health disparities – does not appear elsewhere in this chapter. A similar policy that had been part of the 2010 Open Space Plan was removed in the proposed 2016 Open Space Plan.

~~((P-121 King County shall consider equity in the location, development and acquisition of its open space system to help in the reduction of health disparities and in the promotion of social and environmental justice. ))~~

Changes to policy P-129 add the concept of equity and social justice to the County's work on the regional parks, recreation, and open space system with its partners from other jurisdictions.

**P-129** King County shall be a leader in establishing partnerships with cities, adjacent counties, tribes, state and federal agencies, school and special purpose districts, community organizations, non-profit organizations, land owners and other citizens. The county and these partnerships should work to promote and protect all aspects of environmental quality and address social and economic justice goals ~~((and))~~ to complete the regional parks and open space system through joint planning and management of ~~((, linking))~~ local and regional ~~((lands))~~ sites and facilities.

**Definition clarifications.** The transmitted 2016 KCCP also includes a number of policy language changes in to provide clarification to definitions. These clarifications, which are consistent with the adopted 2010 Open Space Plan, include:

**P-116** ~~((F))~~ Working forest land and conservation easements owned by King County shall provide large tracts of forested property in the Rural Forest Focus Areas, ~~((and))~~ the Forest Production District (FPD) and Rural Area that will remain in active forestry, protect areas from development or provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development.

**P-122** Lands preserved for public parks, regional trails or other open space should provide multiple benefits whenever possible.

**P-123** Decisions on acquisition and development of park, regional trail, and other open space sites should consider funding needs for long term maintenance and operations.

**P-124** A variety of measures should be used to acquire, protect, manage and develop regional and local parks, regional trails and open space. Measures can include: county funding and other funding mechanisms, grants, partnerships, incentives, regulations, dedications and contributions from residential and commercial development based on their service impacts and trades of lands and shared development activities.

Consistency with adopted policies and plans

**Equity and Social Justice (ESJ).** Proposed changes regarding ESJ, including the proposed deletion of policy P-121, will be reviewed at a future briefing on the 2016 KCCP.

**Open Space Plan.** The committee will review and consider the proposed 2016 Open Space Plan on June 7, 2016. Staff analysis of that plan has indicated that the proposed 2016 Open Space Plan is consistent with both the existing (2012) Comprehensive Plan, as well as with the proposed (2016) Comprehensive Plan.

Consistency with the Scoping Motion

No issues identified.

Other issues for Council consideration

**Land Conservation and Preservation.** With the Council's adoption of Motion 14458 in November 2015, the Executive was requested to prepare a work plan for implementing a preservation and conservation program to identify, protect and conserve water and land resources, including farmland and forest lands, ecological lands, river and stream corridors, trail corridors and historic resources on farmlands, consistent with the purposes of this motion.

As noted above, the Executive transmitted the requested work plan, and the Council was briefed on it earlier this spring. Ongoing efforts related to preservation and conservation could potentially include updates to policies that address open space priorities, criteria, management practices, and coordination and partnerships.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Appendix C2</b><br/><b>Regional Trails Needs Report</b></p> |
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Technical Appendix C2 is a subset of Appendix C, Transportation, and provides information about future regional trails projects in broad programmatic categories. Each identified project lists project title, general description, project status and preliminary cost estimate.

### What's new in the transmitted 2016 KCCP?

**Updates.** The transmitted 2016 KCCP proposes a variety of updates to the regional trails network and the trail segments listed for future development to reflect current data, adopted plans, and available funding.

### Consistency with adopted policies and plans

No issues identified.

### Consistency with the Scoping Motion

No issues identified.

### Other issues for Council consideration

No issues identified.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2016 KCCP Schedule, updated as of June 1, 2016
2. Frequently Used Acronyms
3. Comprehensive Plan Comments, updated as of June 1, 2016

## **LINKS**

Proposed Ordinance 2016-0155, the underlying ordinance for the proposed 2016 KCCP, can be found at:

<http://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2594294&GUID=050D99B0-CE2F-4349-BD0D-46D46F673458&Options=ID%7cText%7c&Search=2016-0155>

The Council's Scoping Motion, Motion 14351, can be found at:

<http://mkcclegisearch.kingcounty.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2233471&GUID=8A16CD C8-8A9A-455D-A9E6-00CF10E055A9&Options=ID|Text|&Search=2015-0104>

All components of the proposed 2016 KCCP can be found at:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/2016compplan/transmittal.aspx>

These components include:

- Proposed Ordinance 2016-0155
- 2016 KCCP
- Land Use and Zoning Changes
- Appendix A: Capital Facilities
- Appendix B: Housing
- Appendix C: Transportation
- Appendix C1: Transportation Needs Report
- Appendix C2: Regional Trails Needs Report
- Appendix D: Growth Targets and the Urban Growth Area
- Appendix R: Public Outreach for Development of KCCP
- Attachment: Skyway-West Hill Action Plan
- Attachment: Area Zoning Studies
- Attachment: Development Code Studies
- Attachment: Policy Amendment Analysis Matrix
- Attachment: Public Participation Report

**INVITED**

- Ivan Miller, KCCP Manager, Performance, Strategy and Budget

**King County Council**  
**Schedule for 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan**  
*(As of 6/1/16, Subject to change)*

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|------------------------------|--|
| <b>March 1</b>               | Transmittal of King County Executive's proposed 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan.   |
| <b>March 15</b><br>9:30 a.m. | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Committee review process overview</i></li> <li>• <i>Land use proposals/Area Zoning Studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Chapter 11 Community Service Area Planning</i></li> <li>• <i>Chapter 12 Implementation, Appendix D Growth Targets</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>  |
| <b>April 6</b><br>6:30 p.m.  | <b>Committee of the Whole Town Hall - Special Evening Meeting</b><br><b>Location: Gracie Hansen Community Center at Ravensdale Park (Rock Creek Sports) - 27132 SE Ravensdale Way, Ravensdale WA</b><br><b>Opportunity for public comment on proposed 2016 Comprehensive Plan</b>  |
| <b>May 3</b><br>9:30 a.m.    | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chapter 1 Regional Planning</i></li> <li>• <i>Chapter 3 Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands</i></li> <li>• <i>Chapter 8 Transportation, Appendix C Transportation, C1 Transportation Needs Report</i></li> <li>• <i>Chapter 10 Economic Development</i></li> <li>• <i>Development code updates (Proposed Ordinance 2016-0155)</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b> |
| <b>May 17</b><br>9:30 a.m.   | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chapter 2 Urban Communities</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>   |
| <b>May 31</b><br>9:30 a.m.   | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chapter 4 Housing and Human Services, Appendix B Housing</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>  |
| <b>June 7</b><br>9:30 a.m.   | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chapter 7 Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources, Appendix C2 – Regional Trail Needs Report</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>   |
| <b>June 21</b><br>9:30 a.m.  | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chapter 5 Environment</i></li> <li>• <i>Chapter 6 Shorelines</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>  |

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| <b>June 30</b><br>1:30 p.m.      | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Climate Change (all chapters)</i></li> <li>• <i>Equity and Social Justice (all chapters)</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b> |
| <b>July 5</b><br>9:30 a.m.       | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chapter 9 Services, Facilities and Utilities, Appendix A – Capital Facilities</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>            |
| <b>July 19</b><br>9:30 a.m.      | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Real Property Asset Management Plan (Proposed Ordinance 2016-0159)</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>                       |
| <b>August 16</b><br>9:30 a.m.    | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Follow up on identified issues</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>   |
| <b>August 24</b><br>1:30 p.m.    | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Follow up on identified issues</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>   |
| <b>August 30</b><br>9:30 a.m.    | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Follow up on identified issues</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>   |
| <b>September 6</b><br>9:30 a.m.  | <b>Briefing in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee.</b> Anticipated topics (subject to change): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chair's Striking Amendment</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>   |
| <b>September 20</b><br>9:30 a.m. | <b>Possible vote in Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Includes consideration of possible amendments</i></li> </ul> <b>Opportunity for public comment</b>  |
| <b>November 28</b><br>Time TBD   | <b>Anticipated public hearing at full Council</b><br><b>Opportunity for public comment</b>  |
| <b>December 5</b><br>Time TBD    | <b>Possible vote at full Council</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Includes consideration of possible amendments</i></li> </ul>   |

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings will take place in the Council Chambers on the 10<sup>th</sup> Floor of the King County Courthouse, at 516 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Seattle WA.

## 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan Frequently Used Acronyms

|      |  |
|------|--|
| APD  | Agricultural Production District         |
| CIP  | Capital Improvement Program              |
| CPP  | Countywide Planning Policy               |
| ESA  | Endangered Species Act                   |
| FCC  | Fully Contained Community                |
| FPD  | Forest Production District               |
| GMA  | Growth Management Act                    |
| GMPC | Growth Management Planning Council       |
| HOT  | High Occupancy Toll                      |
| HOV  | High Occupancy Vehicle                   |
| ITS  | Intelligent Transportation Systems       |
| KCCP | King County Comprehensive Plan           |
| KCSP | King County Strategic Plan               |
| LID  | Low Impact Development                   |
| LOS  | Level of Service                         |
| LSRA | Locally Significant Resource Area        |
| MPP  | Multi-county Planning Policies           |
| MPS  | Mitigation Payment System                |
| PAA  | Potential Annexation Area                |
| PBRs | Public Benefit Rating System             |
| PSRC | Puget Sound Regional Council             |
| RSRA | Regionally Significant Resource Area     |
| RWSP | Regional Wastewater Services Plan        |
| SCAP | Strategic Climate Action Plan            |
| SPPT | Strategic Plan for Public Transportation |
| SPRS | Strategic Plan for Road Services         |
| SEPA | State Environmental Policy Act           |
| TAM  | Transportation Adequacy Measure          |
| TDR  | Transfer of Development Rights           |
| TDM  | Transportation Demand Management         |
| TNR  | Transportation Needs Report              |
| TOD  | Transit Oriented Development             |
| UGA  | Urban Growth Area                        |
| UGB  | Urban Growth Boundary                    |
| UPD  | Urban Planned Development                |
| UTRC | Utilities Technical Review Committee     |

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# Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

*Creating choices for elders and adults with disabilities in Seattle-King County*

Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle, WA 98124-4215

Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, 51<sup>st</sup> Floor

Tel: 206-684-0660 TTY: 206-684-0274 FAX: 206-684-0689

[www.adsadvisorycouncil.org](http://www.adsadvisorycouncil.org)

May 9, 2016

The Honorable Dow Constantine  
401 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Suite 800  
Seattle, WA 98104

Ms. Lauren Smith  
Deputy Director for Regional Planning  
401 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Suite 810  
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Executive Recommended 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan

Dear Executive Constantine and Deputy Director Smith:

The Seattle-King County Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Executive Recommended 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide for King County in responding to the needs of an increasingly diverse community, including residents of all ages and abilities, through the plan's emphasis on equity, social justice, and the social determinants of health; inclusion of a new chapter on Housing and Human Services; and policies that promote built and social environments that work for everyone. The County's commitment to serving older adults and people with disabilities is demonstrated by the Plan's support for and recognition of the following policies and programs:

- Sustainable neighborhoods that allow people to age in place (p 1-16–1-17)
- Affordable housing and diverse housing choices, including policies designed to address the impending severe shortage of affordable rental housing for low-income seniors (ch 4)
- Integration of service-enriched housing into community-based settings (ch 4)
- Affordable housing subsidy programs for older adults and people with behavioral health, cognitive, physical or developmental disabilities (policy H-152)
- Standards for healthy and accessible housing (policy H-166)
- Equitable transportation opportunities and amenities for seniors and people with disabilities (p 8-6; policy T-104)
- Consideration of equity impacts and benefits when planning, developing, and implementing transportation programs, projects, and services (policy T-104a)
- Workforce development programs to retrain economically displaced older workers (policy ED-301).

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In association with the Area Agency on Aging for Seattle-King County and sponsored by:

Co-sponsored by:



Our review of the plan identified several opportunities to expand and strengthen this commitment, including:

- Add language to Chapters 3 and 7 acknowledging the value of rural lands, parks, open spaces, and cultural resources to older adults in promoting health, wellness, and connectedness to our natural and cultural heritage.
- Coordinate and align with other regional planning efforts, such as the Area Plan on Aging and King County and PSRC's Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan.
- Maximize innovative approaches to solve the County's housing challenges by increasing the stock of housing that works for people of all ages and abilities.
- Continue to integrate health throughout all chapters of the Plan and conduct a Health Impact Analysis of the Plan to better account for the intersection between public health and growth management planning.

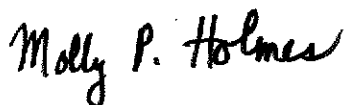
The need to plan and prepare for King County's aging population is acute:

- Individuals over the age of 60 will approach 25 percent of the total population by 2040.
- The fastest-growing segment of the total population is the oldest old – those 85 and over who are most in need of older adult services.
- Older populations living in south and east areas of King County are growing most rapidly.

This growth presents challenges, including ensuring that both the built environment and transportation systems are prepared to address the needs of older adults. However, the aging population also presents tremendous opportunities for King County. Older adults support their communities and families by providing care and resources, volunteering and making charitable contributions. Older adults in the workforce have a positive impact on productivity, economic development and other business outcomes. Communities that plan for and design safe and accessible communities that support people of all ages and abilities will be well positioned to benefit from these contributions.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan. We would be happy to respond to questions you may have about these comments or provide more information about issues facing older adults and people with disabilities. You may contact me directly at the email below, or through the staff liaison for our Advisory Council: Gigi Meinig, [gigi.meinig@seattle.gov](mailto:gigi.meinig@seattle.gov), 206-684-0652.

Sincerely,



**Molly Holmes, Chair**

Seattle-King County Advisory Council for Aging & Disability Services  
[AdvisoryChair@AgeWiseKingCounty.org](mailto:AdvisoryChair@AgeWiseKingCounty.org)

Cc: King County Council Transportation, Economy, and Environment Committee Chair Rod Dembowski and Committee Members Claudia Balducci, Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Kathy Lambert, Joe McDermott, Dave Upthegrove, and Pete von Reichbauer

**From:** FRCV Friends of Rock Creek Valley [friendsofrockcreekvalley@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 01, 2016 8:22 AM  
**To:** Balducci, Claudia; Upthegrove, Dave; Kohl-Welles, Jeanne; McDermott, Joe; Lambert, Kathy; Gossett, Larry; von Reichbauer, Pete; Dunn, Reagan; Dembowski, Rod  
**Cc:** [kcexec@kingcounty.gov](mailto:kcexec@kingcounty.gov); Smith, Lauren; Miller, Ivan; Vane, Linda; Goff, Tom; LaBrache, Lisa  
**Subject:** Friends of Rock Valley Statement of Position: Reserve Silica Rural Mining Site Conversion Project

**To:** King County Councilmembers

**From:** Friends of Rock Creek Valley

**Re.: Reserve Silica, Reserve Rural Mining Site Conversion Project**

As the only community group to support the I-203 Mining Site Conversion Demonstration Project amendment in 2012, we would like to formally go on record as withdrawing that support. Further, we endorse the County Executive's proposal to drop this provision from the 2016 Comp Plan; and we unequivocally oppose the draft Reserve Rural Mining Site Conversion Project proposal currently being circulated by Reserve Silica Corporation, Frank C. Melfi, President.

The Mining Site Conversion Project not only utterly fails to meet the provisions under which we were willing to support the I-203 Amendment in 2012, but in our opinion, it in no way "demonstrates" either the intent or spirit of this last minute compromise amendment crafted by then Councilmember Larry Phillips in 2012.

Following extensive review, we believe this site to be totally inappropriate for the upzone and siting of a residential housing development. Aside from the numerous County Codes such an upzone and development would violate, the site has significant environmental and health hazards stemming from its use as an industrial mining and hazardous waste dump site. The potential risks to future residents on this site if the proposed Mining Site Conversion Project is allowed to proceed are real, and we believe that any entity approving or endorsing such development on this site, knowing the risks, could be subjecting themselves to future legal action for exposing residents to those risks.

While we agree the forestry potential of this property is not appealing to a large-scale “industrial” timber company (i.e., a Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek, Hancock type investor), the reclamation of the site – that is, restoring its ability to sustain a viable forest with all the associated benefits of such a forest, within the Forest Production District – is highly feasible and economically practical. And such reclamation should be the minimum requirement of any reclamation effort, i.e., to return the site to its pre-mining condition to the maximum extent reasonable, and allowable given the hazardous waste mitigations on the site.

For the last 30 years this property has been continuously managed and operated by Reserve Industries, Inc. through their wholly owned subsidiaries, L-Bar Products, Inc. (1986-ca. 1990) and Reserve Silica Corporation (ca. 1990-present). Photo evidence demonstrates that as late as ca. 1985 much of the property supported well-stocked stands of timber. The decision to not manage the forest resources on portions of the property outside the silica sand strip mining areas since 1986 was a business decision made by the current owners of the property, i.e., Reserve Silica. As such, the fact that these portions of the property do not currently have commercially valuable timber stands is solely a consequence of the property owner’s actions or inactions, and in no way should these conditions justify rewarding the owner with an upzone and housing development because they now state it is too time consuming and costly to remedy their actions.

Additional comments addressing specific aspects of the Reserve Silica Rural Mining Site Conversion Project will be forthcoming once the final proposal is formally submitted for Council consideration. However, in the meantime, we would encourage Council Members and the County Executive to research the history, past legal actions and practices of the Reserve Industries organization, including its numerous subsidiaries, before committing to support this proposal.

Lastly, to reiterate: **The Friends of Rock Creek Valley STRONGLY OPPOSES any Mining Site Conversion/Demonstration Project plan to upzone and create a housing development on the Reserve Silica property in Ravensdale.**

Michael A. Brathovde, Acting Chair

Friends of Rock Creek Valley



## **King County**

### **Rural Forest Commission**

201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600  
Seattle, WA 98104-3855

206-296-8042 206-296-0192 Fax

June 1, 2016

**Nate Veranth**  
Chair  
Forest Landowner

**Bernie McKinney**  
Vice Chair  
Green River Coalition

**Andy Chittick**  
Forest Landowner

**Daryl Harper**  
Forest Landowner

**Amy LaBarge**  
Forest Ecologist

**Doug McClelland**  
Washington Department  
of Natural Resources

**Steven Mullen-Moses**  
Snoqualmie Indian Tribe

**Monica Paulson Priebe**  
Green River College

**Brandy Reed**  
King Conservation District

**Dick Ryon**  
Forester

**Doug Schindler**  
Mountains to Sound  
Greenway Trust

**Marti Schramm**  
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie  
National Forest

**Grady Steere**  
Campbell Global

**Rex Thompson**  
Cascadia Pacific Group

The Honorable Rod Dembowski  
Chair, Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee, King County Council  
King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Dembowski:

I write on behalf of the King County Rural Forest Commission (Commission) to comment on the Executive's proposal to strike Policy I-203(b) from the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan).

The Commission includes representatives from a variety of constituencies involved with forest land in King County, including private forest landowners, professional foresters, environmental organizations, the timber industry, affected Indian tribes, and governmental agencies. The Commission's purpose is to provide rural perspectives to King County decision-makers in the interest of preserving the forest land base and the viable practice of forestry in King County. With that in mind, we have reviewed Policy I-203(b) and support deleting it from the Comp Plan for the following reasons.

In our view, the Comp Plan is a critical tool that protects our unique Pacific Northwest quality of life by crafting a long-term vision for the growth and development of King County through a careful and deliberative process. It is for good reason that Policy I-203 generally requires that substantive changes to the Comp Plan and development regulations, and changes to the Urban Growth Area Boundary, be considered on the four-year, and not the annual, amendment cycle. The four-year cycle is necessary to sufficiently evaluate the potential impacts such changes may have on our environmental and economic interests. Our Forest Production District (FPD) is integral to both of these interests and, therefore, deserves vigilant protection.

Land in the FPD requires substantial separation and buffering from other lands to protect them from large operations that generate or involve noise, dust, light, glare, heavy machinery, and other comparable impacts and hazards. In addition, forest practices are implemented more efficiently, and therefore more viably, on larger, less fragmented tracts of forest lands. For these reasons, King County policy is clear

that mining sites surrounded by the FPD should be returned to forestry, and placed in the FPD, upon conversion of the mine. We support that policy.

We understand that some mining sites may not provide optimal conditions for growing timber and that landowners may prefer to convert such sites to residential use rather than make the investment necessary to rehabilitate the land for long-term forestry. But, in many cases, such suboptimal growing conditions are the direct result of the very extraction activities from which mine owners have already benefited. It seems that Policy I-203(b) may actually discourage good stewardship of mining sites by allowing landowners the more profitable option of residential conversion only when they have managed to degrade the site to the point that long-term forestry is no longer economically optimal.

We think that I-203(b) presents a direct threat to the forests of King County by allowing expedited review of proposals that deviate from King County policy by converting mining sites to residential use, rather than forestry, even when such sites are surrounded by the FPD. Such deviations would carry a high risk of fragmenting the FPD and introducing irregularity to its boundary. But, even if we accept the questionable proposition that such a proposal had merit, we see no reason that King County should deprive itself of the opportunity to give the proposal the same careful consideration it gives other proposals for substantive changes to the Comp Plan pursuant to Policy I-203.

Demonstration projects are not a new concept. In fact, King County Code (KCC) Ch. 21A.55 outlines the process for implementing such projects. Under current code, demonstration projects must be consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan and must not require nor result in amendment of the comprehensive plan nor the comprehensive land use map. KCC 21A.55.030. Significantly, current code provides that “[d]emonstration projects shall be located in urban and/or rural areas which are deemed most suitable for the testing of the proposed alternative development regulations.” KCC 21A.55.010. Accordingly, it seems that Policy I-203(b) departs from current code and policy on a number of fronts: it expedites review of substantive policy decisions and focuses the impacts of these decisions outside the urban and rural areas, all to the probable detriment of our forests.

In 2012, we reviewed a proposal to rezone a mining site surrounded on three sides by the FPD from Mineral to the Rural zone. As it happens, that proposal touched on many of the same issues as Policy I-203(b) does today. In our letter to the Honorable Larry Gossett, dated October 17, 2012 (2012 Letter), we explained why that proposal should be rejected and find that much of our rationale then, is applicable here. That being the case, I have attached a copy of that letter for your reference.

For all of these reasons, including those set forth in our 2012 Letter, we find that Policy I-203(b) is flawed policy and should be stricken from the Comp Plan. Of course, the Commission is happy to discuss any of these issues with you or the King County Council if you would like.

Councilmember Dembowski

June 1, 2016

Page 3

Thank you for considering the recommendations of the Rural Forest Commission. Please let me know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nate R. Veranth', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Nate R. Veranth, Chair  
King County Rural Forest Commission

Attachment

cc: King County Rural Forest Commission members  
The Honorable Dow Constantine, King County Executive  
King County Councilmembers  
ATTN: Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council  
Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff  
Carrie S. Cihak, Chief of Policy Development, Policy and Strategic Initiatives, King  
County Executive Office  
Christie True, Director, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
(DNRP)  
Bob Burns, Deputy Director, DNRP  
Mark Isaacson, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD),  
DNRP  
John Taylor, Assistant Division Director, WLRD, DNRP



## **King County**

### **Rural Forest Commission**

201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600

Seattle, WA 98104-3855

206-296-8042 206-296-0192 Fax

October 17, 2012

**John Chaney**

Chair  
Forest Landowner

**Doug McClelland**

Vice Chair  
Washington Department  
of Natural Resources

**Ron Paul Baum**

Forest Landowner

**Jim Franzel**

Mt. Baker/Snoqualmie  
National Forest

**Daryl Harper**

Forest Landowner

**Bernie McKinney**

Middle Green River Coalition

**Sandy Miller**

Forest Landowner

**Brandy Reed**

King Conservation District

**Dick Ryon**

North Bend resident

**Doug Schindler**

Mountains to Sound  
Greenway Trust

**Cindy Spiry**

Snoqualmie Indian Tribe

**Rex Thompson**

Cascadia Pacific Group

**Nate Veranth**

Forest Landowner

The Honorable Larry Gossett  
Chair, King County Council  
516 Third Avenue, Room 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

I am writing on behalf of the King County Rural Forest Commission (Commission) to comment on the Council's proposed amendments to the 2012 Comprehensive Plan. The Commission briefed the Transportation, Economy and Environment Committee on Comprehensive Plan issues related to forestry during the summer. In general, we are pleased that the Council not only has supported the Executive's proposed policy changes related to forestry and forest-based businesses, but in its Striking Amendments have recognized the value of forestry technical assistance to small forest landowners.

The purpose of this letter is twofold. First, at the end of our briefing to the TrEE Committee, Councilmember Hague asked questions related to the timber industry that we will respond to here. Second, a proposal to rezone the Reserve Silica property from Mining to Rural has now returned for consideration by the Council and warrants a response from the Commission. The Commission recommends that this proposal, M5a-Reserve Silica Map Amendment, be rejected and that the Council support the Executive's proposal to rezone the Reserve Silica mine to Forest.

First, here are Councilmember Hague's questions and our responses:

#### **1) Where is the economic value for forestry right now?**

Forestry is an active, viable economic activity in King County now and in the foreseeable future. Timber markets, while they fluctuate, are a significant source of income for forestland owners. Timber harvest volumes in King County have been increasing for the last several years and in 2011 were valued at over \$30 million. In addition, we see potential long term markets for ecosystem services such as water supply, stormwater management and carbon sequestration. There are also potential markets for a variety of commodities such as mitigation banking, forest recreation concessions and non-timber forest products.

#### **2) What you would do with soils that are not conditioned for good growth of harvestable timber?**

A variety of organic amendments including biosolids compost have been shown to improve the properties of highly disturbed soils, including mine sites. For



example, biosolids compost has been used in King County for years in a program to reclaim and revegetate old logging roads where there is little or no topsoil remaining. In addition, biosolids compost and other organic amendments are widely known to improve soil properties and the success of revegetation efforts on mine tailings, which present considerably harsher conditions than logging roads. ([Bergeron and Henry](#), 2005) The County has pilot projects and research currently underway to test new approaches to the use of biosolids in soil remediation.

### **3) What can be done in situations where property owners do not wish to manage their land for timber harvest?**

The King County Comprehensive Plan and Code provide for more than 48 land use activities other than forest management that provide business opportunities in the Forest Zone. Many of these are commonly associated with forest land uses, such as wood products manufacturing, biomass processing, non-timber forest product sales and log storage. Furthermore, diverse uses unrelated to timber such as campgrounds, RV parks, agriculture, hydroelectric generation and mining are also allowed uses within the Forest Zone.

### **Commission response to M5a-Reserve Silica Map Amendment**

During the Commission's review of the Comprehensive Plan issues, King County staff briefed us on proposed rezone of the Reserve Silica property. The Commission has heard from the property owners, received and reviewed new property reports from the owners and heard from the Friends of Rock Creek Valley. Our initial advice to the Executive and Council was that if mining were no longer the use and the predominate zoning and land use on adjacent properties was forestry, then it was appropriate to designate the property as Forest. After reviewing the owner's additional information, the Commission has not chosen to change that advice.

In coming to this conclusion we considered the case made by Reserve Silica for changing the zoning to Rural to allow for a clustered residential development in the future. We have the following comments on the proposal and its supporting documents.

### **Expense of reclamation**

The International Forestry Consultants and Gordon Bradley reports to the Reserve Silica owners conclude that it would be prohibitively expensive to restore soil productivity to the level required for timber production on the site. Some, but not all, parts of the site are affected. Both reports appear to assume that restoration of the affected forest land would be too expensive as a forest investment, without providing analyses of potential restoration methods and alternatives along with related economic analyses and cost estimates. From our perspective, the cost of reclamation should be viewed as a cost of mining. Since these lands were originally mostly timbered, it is reasonable to assume that mining activities were the main cause of soil productivity decline. The mining operation, not the future owners of the property, should bear the responsibility and costs for restoring site and soil productivity to pre-mining values.

### **Health and safety**

The Commission has concerns regarding remediation of potentially harmful compounds or materials on the site, including but not limited to cement kiln dust and coal tailings. The Gordon Bradley report points to “significant liabilities” present on the site: open mines, buried coal and cement tailings and test mine pits throughout the forest. The ultimate purpose of the proposed rezone is to make way for a clustered suburban residential development associated with an open space with the potential for recreational use. If there is any possibility of risk to health and safety from the mining operations, then clearly residential development or recreational use of the land is inappropriate.

### **Land use policies**

Because of its location within the Forest Production District the Reserve Silica site should be zoned Forest. King County policy is clear that when zoning changes are being considered for mining sites the new land use and zoning should be compatible with the surrounding properties. The Reserve Silica mine is bordered on three sides by Forest-zoned properties and on the north by the County’s Black Diamond Natural Area.

A combination of site, soil and climatic characteristics are important criteria for designating Forest zoning, but equally important is the size of contiguous ownerships and compatible land uses. Ownership within the Forest Zone usually require abundant separation from owners of smaller parcels who require protection from large operations which generate noise, dust, light and glare. Restricting the amount of residential and commercial development within and adjacent to the Forest zone helps protect the integrity and viability of forests and those that rely on them.

### **Precedent**

The argument that the Reserve Silica site is now not suitable for growing timber is an admission of poor planning and execution of a comprehensive reclamation plan required in the permitting documents for the mining operation. It is insufficient reason to set a precedent of moving the Forest Zone to accommodate poor planning by a permittee. If the Council approves the Reserve Silica amendment in its present form, a serious precedent may be set. It would open the door for any forest or agricultural owner to pursue practices that degrade site productivity while extracting value, and then move to rezone to rural or urban development intensity. This would reward damaging actions that are entirely within the owner’s control.

### **Conclusion**

Reserve Silica is planning for the eventual conclusion of their extraction operations. No doubt they have earned every hard dollar ever made on this site. It was a tough and vital business. They have a reputation as a good employer within the region, providing family wage jobs, and giving families a chance to settle in the community.

In our view, this land has economic potential if zoned Forest. There are dozens of alternative land uses available to the Reserve Silica. Some are unique. Some are exclusive from other zones. Parts of the site are currently appropriate for commercial timber use.

We find the Reserve Silica request for a rezone from Mining to Rural is not warranted and should be rejected.

Thank you for considering the recommendations of the Rural Forest Commission. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of additional assistance.

Sincerely,



John Chaney  
Chair, King County Rural Forest Commission

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: Michael Woywod, Chief of Staff  
            Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council  
Kendall Moore, Legislative Analyst, Transportation, Economy and Environment  
Committee  
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)  
Mark Isaacson, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD),  
DNRP  
Paul Reitenbach, Comprehensive Plan Update Manager, Department of Development  
and Environmental Services  
King County Rural Forest Commission Members