

KING COUNTY SCHOOL SITING TASK FORCE

*Final Report and
Recommendations
to the King County Executive*
March 31, 2012



King County

March 31, 2012

Dow Constantine, King County Executive
King County Chinook Building
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Constantine,

With this letter we transmit to you the final report and recommendations of the School Siting Task Force. The critical issues of quality education, efficient use of taxpayer dollars, equitability, preservation of rural character, and sustainable growth made consideration of undeveloped rural school sites and all other future school siting a complex and important undertaking.

Together, we have worked diligently since December to craft these recommendations. We represent diverse perspectives and through our discussions we have reached agreement on specific solutions and recommendations that we believe to be in the best interests of all King County residents, particularly our schoolchildren. We are pleased to present to you these recommendations informed by accepted data collected by our Technical Advisory Committee.

We would be happy to serve as a resource in any way we can as you consider these recommendations. We look forward to your review, and we stand ready to assist in their implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Task Force. We look forward to having these recommendations incorporated in future planning.

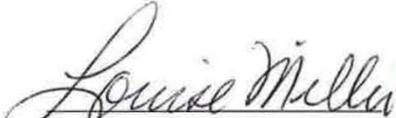
Sincerely,

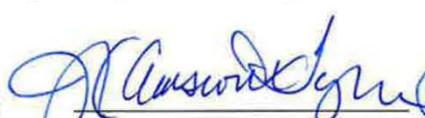
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(signatures on reverse)



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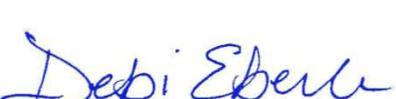

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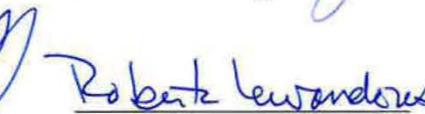

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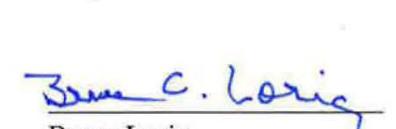

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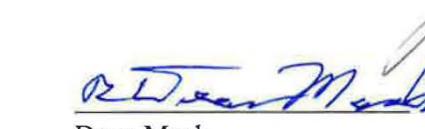

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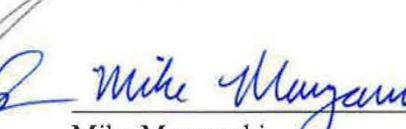

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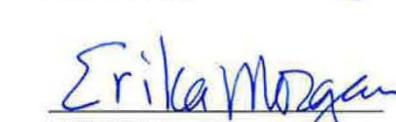

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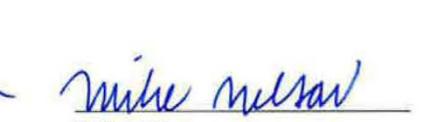

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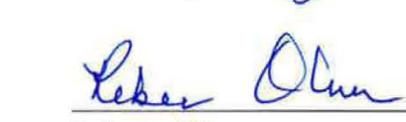

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SECTION 1: Acknowledgements

The School Siting Task Force thanks the King County Executive and the Growth Management Planning Council for the opportunity to provide input on an issue critical to supporting K-12 education and to preserving natural resources, public health, and quality of life in King County.

The Task Force would especially like to thank its members who agreed to serve on the Framing Work Group. This group met on multiple occasions throughout the process, generally twice between each Task Force meeting, to develop and frame issues and meeting approaches for the full Task Force. Without the considerable efforts of this group, the Task Force would not have been able to accomplish its work.

The Task Force also thanks the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), whose members worked throughout January, February, and March of 2012 to gather data and information on the undeveloped rural school sites and to compile additional information relevant to future school siting.

The Task Force also acknowledges the many members of the public who submitted comments and/or attended one or more Task Force or TAC meetings. Their contributions provided valuable insight for the Task Force's consideration.

Finally, the Task Force thanks Triangle Associates for their exemplary support throughout the process.

See Appendices A, B, and C for Task Force, Framing Work Group, and TAC membership.

SECTION 2: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Comprehensive Plan

A generalized coordinated land use policy statement of the governing body of a county or city that is adopted pursuant to 36.70A RCW. (*Washington State Growth Management Act*)

Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)

A written policy statement or statements used solely for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted pursuant to the Growth Management Act. (*Washington State Growth Management Act*)

Growth Management Act (GMA)

The GMA was enacted in 1990 in response to rapid population growth and concerns with suburban sprawl, environmental protection, quality of life, and related issues. The GMA requires the fastest growing counties and the cities within them to plan for growth. The GMA provides a framework for regional coordination; counties planning under the GMA are required to adopt county-wide planning policies to guide plan adoption within the county and to establish urban growth areas (UGAs). Local comprehensive plans must include the following elements: land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities,

transportation, and, for counties, a rural element. (*Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington*)

Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC)

The GMPC, which was established by an Interlocal agreement, is a 15-member council of elected officials from Seattle, Bellevue, suburban cities and King County. The GMPC has been responsible for the preparation and recommendation of the Countywide Planning Policies to the Metropolitan King County Council, which then adopts the policies and sends them to the cities for ratification. (*King County Comprehensive Plan*)

Identified Need

Identified need exists if a school district has determined the type of school needed and a timeframe for development on one of the 18 undeveloped school sites. (*Source: School Siting Task Force*)

Multi-County Planning Policies

An official statement, adopted by two or more counties, used to provide guidance for regional decision-making, as well as a common framework for countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans. (*Puget Sound Regional Council*)

Nonconformance

Any use, improvement or structure established in conformance with King County rules and regulations in effect at the time of establishment that no longer conforms to the range of uses permitted in the site's current zone or to the current development standards of the code, due to changes in the code or its application to the subject property. (*King County Code*)

Regional Growth Strategy

An approach for distributing population and employment growth within the four-county central Puget Sound region (King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish). (*Puget Sound Regional Council*)

Rural Area

Outside the urban growth area, rural lands contain a mix of low-density residential development, agriculture, forests, open space and natural areas, as well as recreation uses. Counties and adjacent small towns provide a limited number of public services to rural residents. (*Puget Sound Regional Council*)

Rural Character

Rural Character refers to the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:

- a. In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- b. That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;

- c. That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
- d. That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
- e. That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- f. That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
- g. That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas
(*Washington State Growth Management Act*)

Rural Cities

A free-standing municipality that is physically separated from other cities and towns by designated rural lands. Also referred to as “Cities in the Rural Area.” The incorporated rural cities are Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall, Enumclaw, North Bend, Skykomish and Snoqualmie. (*Puget Sound Regional Council, King County Comprehensive Plan*)

Rural Towns

Rural towns are unincorporated areas governed directly by King County. They provide a focal point for community groups such as chambers of commerce or community councils to participate in public affairs. The purposes of rural town designations within the County’s Comprehensive Plan are to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in rural areas and to allow modest growth of residential and economic uses to keep them economically viable into the future. Rural towns in King County include Alpentel, Fall City and Vashon. (*King County Comprehensive Plan*)

Rural Zoning

The rural zone is meant to provide an area-wide, long-term, rural character and to minimize land use conflicts with nearby agricultural, forest or mineral extraction production districts. These purposes are accomplished by: 1) limiting residential densities and permitted uses to those that are compatible with rural character and nearby resource production districts and are able to be adequately supported by rural service levels; 2) allowing small scale farming and forestry activities and tourism and recreation uses that can be supported by rural service levels and are compatible with rural character; and 3) increasing required setbacks to minimize conflicts with adjacent agriculture, forest or mineral zones. (*King County Comprehensive Plan*)

Tightline Sewer

A sewer trunk line designed and intended specifically to serve only a particular facility or place, and whose pipe diameter should be sized appropriately to ensure service only to that facility or place. It may occur outside the local service area for sewers, but does not amend the local service area. (*King County Comprehensive Plan*)

Unincorporated Area

Unincorporated areas are those areas outside any city and under King County’s jurisdiction. (*King County Comprehensive Plan*)

Urban Growth Area (UGA)

The area formally designated by a county, in consultation with its cities, to accommodate future development and growth. Given that cities are urban, each city is within a county-designated urban growth area. Cities may not annex lands outside an urban growth area, nor may they formally identify additions to the urban growth area independently of the county designation process. Development that is urban in character is to occur within the designated urban growth area, preferably in cities. Development outside the designated urban growth area is to be rural in character. (*Puget Sound Regional Council*)

VISION 2040

VISION 2040 is the growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation vision for the central Puget Sound region. It consists of an environmental framework, a regional growth strategy, policies to guide growth and development, actions to implement, and measures to track progress. (*Puget Sound Regional Council*)

SECTION 3: Overview and Background Information

Overview

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties and cities to work together to plan for growth. In King County, the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) is the countywide planning body through which the County and cities collaborate. The GMPC is comprised of elected officials from King County, Seattle, Bellevue, the Suburban Cities Association, and special purpose districts. The GMPC develops and recommends Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) to the King County Council where they are reviewed, adopted, and sent to the cities for final ratification. The CPPs were initially adopted in 1992; certain elements of the policies have been updated over the years.

In 2010 and 2011, the GMPC undertook the first comprehensive evaluation of the CPPs since their initial adoption. A full set of updated policies is required to bring the CPPs into compliance with the multicounty planning policies (VISION 2040) adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council in 2008. VISION 2040 is the regional growth strategy for the four-county region including King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

On September 21, 2011 the GMPC completed its review and voted to recommend an updated set of CPPs to the King County Council. However, they could not reach consensus on policies governing the siting of public facilities and services. At issue was whether public schools serving primarily urban populations should be sited in rural areas, and whether such facilities should be served by sewers. The recent update of VISION 2040 included policies stating that schools and other community facilities serving primarily urban populations should be sited in the urban growth area, and that urban services (sewers) should not be provided in rural areas. In the interest of consistency, the GMPC was considering adding similar policies to the CPPs.

While the GMA is clear that sewers are not permitted in rural areas (except in limited circumstances), the CPPs have since 1992 contained a policy that allows public schools to be served by sewer when a finding is made that no alternative technologies are feasible. King County implements this policy by authorizing a tightline sewer connection after the finding is made.

This potential change in policy was of concern to school districts, many of which owned or had an interest in undeveloped rural properties. While some had acquired their properties before the adoption of the GMA and CPPs, most had not. Those school districts purchasing land after 1992 did so under a regulatory framework that permitted schools in rural areas and that allowed a tightline sewer if needed. At the time, with rising land costs in urban areas and rapid growth, choosing less expensive rural sites seemed the most judicious use of limited taxpayer funds. Many school districts pointed out the difficulty of finding large parcels in urban areas, and the importance of siting schools so that they are convenient for all students, including those in rural areas. School districts leaders testified that they do not distinguish between the urban and rural portions of their service areas; their planning takes into account the needs of their districts as a whole.

The policy debate generated testimony from rural residents, many of whom expressed concerns about the impacts of siting schools in rural areas, including traffic congestion, environmental degradation, and loss of rural character. They pointed out that while initial land costs might be lower in rural areas, the total costs to society of siting schools in non-urban areas might be greater. In addition to the impacts of transporting large numbers of urban students to schools in rural areas, the cost of transportation investments needed to support new schools are borne only by unincorporated area residents. These community impacts and financial burdens are not shared equally by residents in incorporated areas. Much of the testimony from rural residents questioned the fairness and sustainability of siting in rural areas infrastructure supporting primarily urban development.

In order to address these concerns, to acknowledge the changing environment and to support school districts in their obligation to provide quality education for the children of King County, the GMPC agreed to set aside the policies related to siting public facilities and postpone their consideration until a task force made up of school districts, cities, King County, rural residents, and other experts could study the issue and report back to the King County Executive.

GMPC Guidance for the Task Force

The GMPC established guidance for formation of the School Siting Task Force in their Motion 11-2 (Appendix E) on September 21, 2011.

The Task Force was given the Mission to:

Develop recommendations to better align city, county, and school districts' planning for future school facilities in order to provide quality education for all children and maximize health, environmental, programmatic, fiscal, and social objectives.

-GMPC Motion 11-2, School Siting Task Force Work Plan, Task Force Mission

To fulfill this Mission, the GMPC recommended a specific scope of work. As described in GMPC Motion 11-2, the Task Force’s primary task is “to evaluate the current inventory of rural properties owned by King County school districts” and to make recommendations as to their use or disposition. Collectively, the Task Force identified 18 undeveloped sites in rural areas. To further support the fulfillment of its Mission, it was anticipated that the Task Force might recommend legislative and other strategies.

The GMPC established a set of eight principles to guide the Task Force in its work. All of the solutions recommended by the Task Force in this Report reflect the Guiding Principles established by GMPC:

- *Academic Excellence:* Educational facilities should promote and support the academic achievement of students.
- *Equitable:* All children should have access to quality educational facilities.
- *Financially Sustainable:* School siting should be financially sustainable for each impacted jurisdiction (school districts, cities, county unincorporated areas, and sewer/water districts) and make the most efficient use of total tax dollars.
- *Support Sustainable Growth:* Planning for school facilities shall comply with state law and be integrated with other regional and local planning, including land use, transportation, environment, and public health.
- *Community Assets:* Schools should unite the communities in which they are located and be compatible with community character.
- *Based on existing data and evidence:* The Task Force process shall utilize recent demographic, buildable lands inventory, and other relevant data and information.
- *Public Engagement:* The Task Force process should include robust community engagement with impacted communities. Meetings will be transparent and open to the public for observation. The Task Force shall provide opportunities for public comment.
- *Best Practice and Innovation:* Lasting recommendations should serve the region well for years to come and support education, health, environmental, programmatic, fiscal, and social objectives.

SECTION 4: The Task Force Process

Appointing the Task Force

The GMPC designated categories of membership in Motion 11-2, but did not specify individual members. Task Force members were appointed by the King County Executive (see Appendix A).

Hiring a Facilitator

Public Health - Seattle King County hired Triangle Associates as the independent facilitator to help coordinate the work of the Task Force, including conducting initial assessment interviews of all Task Force members, organizing Task Force meetings, facilitating development of recommendations by the Task Force and providing support through drafting and production of the Task Force’s Final Report and Recommendations.

Structure and Roles of the Task Force

The Task Force established two workgroups to assist in the effort: the Technical Advisory Committee, (also recommended by the GMPC) and the Framing Work Group. Both are described below.

Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was comprised of representatives from King County, the Puget Sound Regional Council, school districts, water and sewer districts, and the Suburban Cities Association. A membership list is included in Appendix C. The TAC met throughout the beginning and middle stages of the Task Force process; its role was to provide data and information to support Task Force decision making. TAC meetings were open to the public and included dialogue with those who attended. Meeting summaries (Appendix P) were developed to provide a record of their work.

The primary work product of the TAC involved compiling a matrix containing information related to the 18 undeveloped school sites (Appendix F). In addition to populating the matrix with site-specific information, the TAC was asked to collect data and information in several other areas of inquiry, which collectively were referred to as the “13 Tasks”. This included subject areas such as demographic trends and school enrollment projections. A complete list of the 13 tasks is included as Appendix F.

The TAC work and products enabled swift evaluation of, and development of solutions for, specific sites by the Task Force. The breadth and detail of the data compiled by the TAC, and that Committee’s timely response to Task Force requests, played a critical role in the accomplishments of the Task Force.

Framing Work Group

Due to the short timeline for the Task Force to complete its work, the Task Force created a Framing Work Group (Appendix B) to frame issues for its consideration. Prior to each meeting of the full Task Force, the Framing Work Group met to review information gathered by the TAC and to discuss how best to organize information and issues for discussion. Doing so helped the Task Force have focused and substantive discussions and stay on task to meet their deadlines.

The Framing Work Group made recommendations on process to the Task Force; however, all decision-making power remained with the full Task Force. Framing Work Group members were appointed by the Task Force Chair from the general Task Force roster. The group met on average twice between each Task Force meeting, and meeting summaries (Appendix P) were included in the materials that the Task Force received.

Meeting Structure and Process

The Task Force met six times from December 2011 through March 2012, using the process schematic (Appendix R) as a visual guide for navigating its work effort:

1. The first meeting, December 14, 2011, focused on introducing Task Force members, establishing a process for the work effort, and hearing Task Force member perspectives on hopes and desired outcomes from the process.
2. The second meeting, January 25, 2012, focused on learning information from the TAC and creating a set of interests (Appendix S) based on the Task Force’s Guiding Principles as established in the GMPC Motion 11-2. The Task Force also agreed upon a set of Operating Protocols (Appendix Q).
3. On February 16, 2012, the Task Force held a 4-hour workshop to begin developing solutions for the 18 undeveloped rural school sites and for future school siting. The Technical Advisory Committee presented data on each of the 18 sites, and each school district was given the opportunity to present additional information on their sites. The Task Force reached consensus on an approach for evaluating sites that was developed by the Framing Work Group. This approach involved identifying the critical or “threshold” factors that would allow Task Force members to create four categories into which the 18 sites would eventually be sorted. The first step was to brainstorm potential solutions for each category.
4. On March 1, 2012, the Task Force met for the fourth time, also in a 4-hour workshop. Working in small groups, Task Force members accepted possible solutions for the four categories of sites. They then sorted the 18 sites into the four categories and also considered future school siting. The Task Force reached consensus agreement on several items, including:
 - The “Solutions Set and Criteria” document (Document 1 in the Recommendations section), with agreement that a few items needed additional definition, clarification, and confirmation at its next meeting
 - The placement of all school sites in appropriate quadrants of the solutions table
5. On March 15, 2012, the Task Force accepted by 100% consensus:
 - A final version of the “Solutions Set and Criteria” document
 - Recommended and prioritized solutions for 12 specific sites
 - The following technical documents: Matrix of school sites, list of 13 tasks, population and demographic information, enrollment trends by school district, public health aspects of school siting.
 - Recommendations to the Growth Management Planning Council and Washington State legislature related to school siting
6. On March 29, 2012, the Task Force accepted the Recommendations Report to be submitted to the King County Executive.

Decision Making: A Consensus Approach

At the second Task Force meeting, the Task Force members accepted the Operating Protocols (Appendix Q). This document established roles for all non-Task Force members involved in the process, clarified communications protocols and workgroup composition, and defined a specific decision-making approach.

The Task Force defined consensus as obtaining the full acceptance of all members; short of that, decisions and recommendations would move forward with the approval of at least 70% of the Task Force members present, with at least one member from each primary interest group (county, cities, school districts, and residents) voting in favor to accept a document or decision.

Public Process

The GMPC Motion stated that the Task Force process should include robust public engagement. All Task Force meetings and TAC meetings were open to the public. All written materials (agendas, meeting summaries, and other information) were made available on the Task Force website, and public comments were accepted throughout the process at Task Force meetings, through the Task Force website and via email. Comments from the public were summarized by the facilitator at the beginning of every Task Force meeting, and the compiled comments were emailed to Task Force members after each meeting (see Appendix U).

Information Considered by the Task Force

As Task Force members studied the issues associated with siting schools in rural areas, they considered a range of data and information. The majority of this information was provided by the TAC. It included the following documents, reports and policy frameworks, many of which are included in the appendices to this Report.

- **18 undeveloped rural school sites.** The TAC prepared a matrix containing factual information related to each of the 18 sites including: general site information (e.g., zoning, acreage, assessed value), land use and transportation considerations (e.g., landscape position, distance to UGA, distance to sewer/water connection, environmental features), and the school districts' plans (e.g., intended use, development timeline). School districts were given the opportunity to correct and/or augment the information about their school sites.
- **Planning context.** King County staff provided the Task Force with a brief history of the land use planning in two areas where many of the undeveloped sites are located: the Bear-Evans Corridor and the Soos Creek Basin. The county's land use strategy in both areas employed zoning and development regulations on an area-wide basis so the cumulative impact of development would not cause environmental degradation. A summary of this history is included as Appendix O.
- **GMA policy framework.** There is a strong policy basis in Washington State for focusing growth in urban areas, protecting rural areas and the environment, and the efficient provision of government services and facilities. The growth management framework considered by the Task Force included GMA, VISION 2040, the Countywide Planning Policies, King County Comprehensive Plan and King County Code. Relevant portions of these documents can be found in Appendix M.
- **Demographic information.** The Task Force was presented with information from the 2010 census that identified population trends in the urban and rural portions of each school district, and

also district-wide. Significant demographic shifts have occurred in the past decade: from 2000 to 2010, the overall rural population in King County declined by 1%, and the rural population under the age of 18 declined by 18.4%. During the same time, the urban population saw an overall increase of 12.1% and under-18 increase of 8.3%. This information can be found in Appendix H.

- **School district enrollment projections.** The Task Force was presented with information related to current and projected school enrollment, which illustrates that district populations will continue to grow to varying degrees and that urban students will continue to comprise the majority of those populations. The anticipated enrollment for students from rural areas generally failed to materialize in the vicinities of the sites owned by school districts. The enrollment projections can be found in Appendix I.
- **Funding for school construction.** Although there was no formal presentation on this topic, it came up on several occasions and was an important consideration for the Task Force. The State of Washington does not provide funding to school districts for acquisition of properties; school districts must rely on their own funding sources (through bonds, levies, grants, and donations). Once properties are acquired, school districts can apply for state assistance for school construction as part of a state match program.
- **Current criteria and process for school siting.** Using both state regulations and locally adopted standards, school districts consider many factors when locating a site to develop a public school facility. Following guidance set forth by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Washington Administrative Code (392-342-020 WAC), districts look at site quality, cost, projected enrollment, distance to students/ transportation, and timing of school construction. The WAC guidelines can be found in Appendix L.
- **Funding for county road maintenance.** The TAC determined that the cost for upgrading, operating and maintaining county roads to serve future schools on the 18 undeveloped sites could range from \$30-35 million over 20 years. This is important to consider because the County road fund has become severely strained, and because that cost would be borne solely by unincorporated area residents through the county road levy. In addition to cost of road infrastructure and tax equity issue, there are climate impacts associated with transporting large numbers of students to schools in rural areas, in the form of increased greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Public health aspects of school siting.** One member of the TAC and one member of the Task Force presented information on the public health aspects of school siting. In recent years, best practices in school siting have evolved to reflect a more community-centered approach, placing schools in urban areas where children can walk to school and where school facilities can serve as community assets. The major themes identified in this research (included in Appendix J) include:
 - a. School siting determines the proximity of schools to a student's home and larger community and can affect whether children achieve and maintain good health,
 - b. Physical activity is key to children's health,
 - c. School travel impacts children's health in multiple ways, and

- d. Education policy is also health policy.

Task Force Report

This Report was drafted by the independent facilitation team. The Framing Work Group refined the initial draft document, which the Task Force considered at the March 15th meeting. Between the March 15th and March 29th meetings, the Framing Work Group, project team, and facilitation team refined iterations of the Report, with a final draft presented to the Task Force at its last meeting on March 29, 2012. The Task Force accepted the document, with revisions, at that meeting. The facilitation team made final revisions based on Task Force input before submitting this Report to the King County Executive.

SECTION 5: Recommendations

Introduction

The GMPC and King County Executive requested that the Task Force recommend solutions for the 18 undeveloped rural sites and guidelines for future school siting. The Task Force analyzed data and information to create and prioritize specific solutions for each of the sites and to develop recommendations for future sites. These are encapsulated below in *Recommended Solutions for Undeveloped Sites* and *Recommendations for Future School Siting*, respectively. Throughout the process, Task Force members identified other recommendations in support of its Mission; the other recommendations are listed under *Recommendations for Future School Siting*.

Recommended Solutions for Undeveloped Rural Sites

The Task Force focused the major part of its effort on the 18 undeveloped sites, seeking logical and sustainable solutions. Once the Task Force process was underway, the Task Force surveyed all the school districts to ensure the Task Force's scope included the universe of undeveloped rural property with a school district interest. No other undeveloped rural sites were identified by the school districts.

The Task Force, with guidance from the Framing Work Group, decided to use a "threshold" approach for determining solutions for each of the 18 undeveloped sites. This threshold approach identified two specific criteria; a site must possess one or the other in order to be considered for development. After some refinement, the Task Force accepted the following criteria for decision making:

- 1) **Does the school district have an identified need for a school site?** (*Identified need exists if a district has identified a type of school and a time frame in which the school is needed.*)
- 2) **Does the site border the Urban Growth Area (UGA) or have an existing sewer connection?** (*Bordering the UGA means the site is directly contiguous to the UGA. An existing sewer connection means sewer line is on site. This does not include sites with sewer on an adjacent parcel or across the street.*)

Based on these criteria, the Task Force accepted the threshold approach for sorting the 18 sites and created the *Solutions Table*, which separated the school sites into four quadrants:

- **Box A**, in the upper left corner, includes sites that border the UGA and/or have an existing sewer connection and for which school districts have an identified need.
- **Box B**, in the upper right corner, includes sites that do not border the UGA and have no sewer connection and for which school districts have an identified need.
- **Box C**, in the lower left corner, includes sites for which school districts do not have an identified need and that border the UGA and/or have an existing sewer connection on site.
- **Box D**, in the lower right corner, includes sites for which school districts do not have an identified need and that do not border the UGA and have no existing sewer connection on site.

Any and all other undeveloped rural school sites (those not among the 18 recognized sites) fall into “future school siting” in Box E of the Solutions Table. Future school siting issues are addressed in greater detail in the section entitled *Recommendations for Future School Siting*.

The Task Force then developed possible solutions for each box and ranked these possible solutions in order of preference, recognizing that circumstances for specific sites within each category might merit a different order.

The recommended Solutions Set and Criteria are shown here as Document 1.

Document 1—Solutions Set and Criteria

Existing Undeveloped School Sites in the Rural Area

Assumptions for Solution Set:

- For any solution that would result in a school district not being permitted to use a site for a school, the Task Force recommends options through which the school district could receive fair and appropriate value.
- All solutions resulting in site development should mitigate impacts and provide community benefits.
- Any solutions that involve a change in the UGA or allow/prohibit sewer service shall be governed by the laws, policies, and/or administrative procedure(s) in place at the time.
- Additional solutions may apply; detailed analysis may be required to determine optimal solution for any site.
- All sites, site conditions, and identified needs are included in the Matrix. School districts were asked to bring forward any additional sites and no other sites emerged so the full and final list of specific sites is shown in Documents 2-3.

NOTE: Solution Sets in each box is listed in priority order.

	Site borders UGA or has sewer connection. <i>“Sewer connection” defined as having sewer on site already (not adjacent).</i>	Site does not border UGA and has no sewer connection.
<p>School district has an identified need for a school site.</p> <p><i>“Identified need” exists if district has identified a type of school and a time frame in which they need the school.</i></p>	A	B
<p>School district does not have an identified need for a school site.</p>	C	D

All Other Undeveloped School Sites (Future)

Future School Siting	E
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Once the Task Force accepted these criteria and categories plus the prioritized solution sets for each quadrant, members considered each undeveloped school site. At the March 1st meeting, the Task Force reached consensus agreement for the placement of each site in accordance with the accepted criteria.

The accepted placement of each rural school site is shown below as Document 2.

Document 2—Site Categorization

Task Force breakout groups identified the sites in each category. The full Task Force reached 100% Consensus on March 1, 2012 on the following site categorization:

Existing Undeveloped Sites in the Rural Area (18 sites)

	Site borders UGA or has sewer connection.	Site does not border UGA and has no sewer connection.
School district has an identified need for a school site	<i>A</i> <u>Sites:</u> Enumclaw A, D Lake Washington 2, 4 Snoqualmie Valley 1 Tahoma 1	<i>B</i> <u>Sites:</u> Enumclaw B Issaquah 1
School district does not have an identified need for a school site	<i>C</i> <u>Sites:</u> Kent 4	<i>D</i> <u>Sites:</u> Auburn 1, 2, 3 Kent 1, 2, 3 Lake Washington 1, 3 Northshore 1

All Other Undeveloped School Sites (Future)

Future School Siting	<i>E</i> All future school siting should be consistent with Vision 2040.
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Once the Task Force accepted the threshold criteria and site categories, developed the basic solution sets for each quadrant, and placed the school sites in categories based on the threshold criteria, members brainstormed possible solutions for each site. Task Force members developed a preferred solution for each site, with a prioritized list of additional solutions. Where appropriate, they included notes, considerations, and rationale to support each site’s recommended solution(s).

The Task Force recognized that VISION 2040, the CPPs, the King County Comprehensive Plan, and the King County Code will ultimately govern what happens on both current undeveloped school sites and on any other future school sites in rural areas. In addition, school districts will control the timing and specific actions within that framework. The involvement of cities is needed to facilitate siting within urban areas.

Document 3 below shows the recommended solution(s) for each school site, along with site-specific considerations.

Document 3—Site-Specific Solutions

Box A

	SITE BORDERS UGA or HAS SEWER CONNECTION
<p>School district has an identified need for a school site.</p>	<p><u>Overview:</u></p> <p>In general, while the Task Force’s preference is to find alternative sites in the UGA, the Task Force finds that for the sites in Box A the particular site conditions and circumstances facing the impacted school districts may warrant other solutions. Thus the recommended solutions vary by site. For any recommendations that allow for development on a site, the Task Force recommends that the district work with the county and community to minimize impacts on the rural surroundings and rural residents.</p> <p>Because of the identified need by the school districts, the Task Force recommends that these sites receive prioritized attention from city, county and school district decision makers.</p> <p><u>Sites and their Solutions:</u></p> <p>Snoqualmie Valley 1</p> <p>1. Allow school district to connect to existing sewer</p> <p><i>Site specific: The high percentage of floodplain land in this school district makes finding an alternate site very challenging. The site does not have significant conservation value. The site has an existing school, which was developed with the intent that another school would be built on the site. The district has undertaken site preparation for the addition of an elementary school on the site. The school district invested in the Local Improvement District that enabled the sewer to reach the site.</i></p> <p>Tahoma 1</p> <p>1. Find alternative site in the UGA</p> <p>2. Allow school district to connect to existing sewer</p> <p><i>Site specific: The Task Force encourages the district to work with the county and cities in the district to explore opportunities for finding an alternative site in the UGA that would meet the pressing need for additional capacity that development of another school would provide. If no viable alternative site that fits within the district’s financial plans can be expeditiously found, the availability of sewer and an existing school on the site present compelling reasons for development of the site to meet the district’s needs. The site does have conservation value and the Task Force recommends that any new development on the site occur adjacent to the existing school so that impacts to the site’s forest cover are minimized.</i></p> <p>Lake Washington 2</p> <p>1. Find alternative site in the UGA</p> <p>2. Incorporate site into adjacent UGA</p> <p><i>Site specific: The site borders the Redmond watershed and has conservation value. The Task Force therefore encourages the school district, the county and the City of Redmond to find an alternative site within the UGA that would meet the district’s need for additional capacity that development of another school would provide. The parties should identify other partners and funding mechanisms that would allow for purchase of the property (perhaps in conjunction with the Lake Washington 1 site) for permanent conservation as well as provide resources to the district for purchase of an alternative site. If no viable alternative site can be expeditiously identified, the Task Force recommends that the school district develop the site in a manner that preserves as much of the conservation value of the site as</i></p>

possible. This may be accomplished through, for example, incorporation of a small developable portion of the site (about five acres) into the UGA for a small environmental school* while placing the remainder of the site into permanent conservation. The district should also work closely with the county and community to minimize other impacts, such as transportation. The Task Force does not recommend extension of sewer to any portion of that site that remains outside of the UGA. If the site is proposed for incorporation into the UGA, it shall go through the King County docket process.

*Environmental School will have sustainable or “green” buildings and grounds (refer to State RCW 39.35D, “High Performance Public Buildings – Guidelines for School Districts”).

Lake Washington 4

1. Allow school district to connect to existing sewer

Site specific: The Task Force recognizes the school district’s need for additional capacity in the eastern portion of the district, which straddles the City of Redmond, the rural area, and an unincorporated urban “island” surrounded by rural area. The site is part of a large parcel on which there is an existing elementary and middle school, both already connected to sewer. The undeveloped portion of the site was previously used as a mink farm and portions of the site are cleared. The Task Force recommends that the district work closely with King County and the community to minimize both existing and additional impacts on the area surrounding the parcel, particularly the transportation impacts related to several facilities being located or developed on the site.

Enumclaw A & D:

1a. Find alternative site/s in the UGA

1b. Place all school buildings and impervious surfaces on the *urban* side of the UGB and place ballfields/playfields on the *rural* side of the UGB.

Site specific (1a): This joint site lies on the south-eastern boundary of the Black Diamond UGA and a master-planned development (MPD) that has yet to be constructed. The identified need of the school district is associated primarily with the population projections of the MPD and with students residing outside of the MPD but in the northern part of the district; the sites are planned for an elementary and a middle school. The fee title to both sites is held by the developer, with the district’s property interest recorded as an encumbrance on title, and would only be conveyed to the school district if the MPD materializes. The Task Force recommends that no sewer be extended to the rural portion of the site and that the City of Black Diamond and county work with the developer and the school district to site all schools associated with the MPD completely within the UGA. The Black Diamond City Council supported this solution in a resolution passed 3-1-12. The Black Diamond City Council previously approved the Comprehensive School Mitigation Agreement identifying Enumclaw Sites A, B, and D as agreed-upon school sites.

Site specific (1b): The Enumclaw School District and the developer have identified as an alternative to 1a the placement of a portion of the proposed school-related facilities on rural lands. If attempts to site each of these schools fully within the UGA are unsuccessful, alternative 1b may be contemplated. Alternative 1b consists of siting all school buildings, storm water detention and other support facilities, and all parking and impervious surfaces within the UGA and limiting any development in the adjacent rural area to ballfields/playfields. The Task Force further recommends maintaining significant forest buffers between the ballfields/playfields and adjacent rural lands including the Black Diamond Natural Area. Recommendation of this urban/rural alternative by the Task Force is meant to address the unique circumstances of the Enumclaw A & D sites and is not to be construed as a precedent for locating schools on adjacent rural lands. Consequently, it is not recommended for any other sites.

Box B

	SITE DOES NOT BORDER UGA and HAS NO SEWER CONNECTION
<p>School district has an identified need for a school site.</p>	<p><u>Overview:</u></p> <p>The Task Force recommends that alternative sites in the UGA be found for all sites in this box and that sewer not be extended to these sites. Because of the identified need by the school districts and the recommendation to find alternative sites, the Task Force recommends that these sites receive prioritized attention by school district, county and city decision makers.</p> <p><u>Sites and their Solutions:</u></p> <p>Issaquah 1</p> <p>1. Find alternative site in the UGA <i>Site specific: The site is a large parcel (80 acres) on May Valley Road between Squak Mountain to the north and Cedar Hills Landfill to the south. The site has conservation value. The Task Force recommends that the school district work expeditiously with King County, the City of Issaquah and the City of Renton. These partners shall work diligently to find an alternative site within the UGA that would meet the school district's need for additional capacity that development of another school would provide. The county, cities and school district should identify other partners and funding mechanisms that may allow for purchase of the property for permanent conservation or other rural-related uses while also providing resources to the district for purchase of an alternative site.</i></p> <p>Enumclaw B:</p> <p>1. Find alternative site in the UGA <i>Site specific: The site is in the rural area west of the Black Diamond UGA and a master-planned development (MPD) that has been approved but is yet to be constructed. The identified need of the school district is associated with the population projections of the MPD; the site is planned for a middle school. The fee title for the site is held by the developer, with the district's property interest recorded as an encumbrance on title, and would only be conveyed to the school district if the MPD materializes. The Task Force recommends that no sewer be extended to the site and that the City of Black Diamond and the county work with the developer and the school district to site schools associated with the MPD in the UGA.</i></p>

Box C

	SITE BORDERS UGA or HAS SEWER CONNECTION
School district does not have an identified need for a school site.	<p><u>Overview:</u></p> <p>Because the site in this box is not associated with an identified need, the Task Force recommends that the school district plan to develop the site consistent with Vision 2040 or manage the site as part of its capital portfolio.</p> <p><u>Site and its solution:</u></p> <p>Kent 4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sell, or hold with the understanding that any future development must be consistent with Vision 2040 as implemented by King County code.

Box D

	SITE DOES NOT BORDER UGA and HAS NO SEWER CONNECTION
<p>School district does not have an identified need for a school site.</p>	<p><u>Overview:</u></p> <p>Because sites in this box are not associated with an identified need, the Task Force recommends that school districts plan to develop the sites consistent with Vision 2040 or manage the sites as part of their capital portfolio. The Task Force also recommends that while the school districts will ultimately determine how sites are handled, the county, cities, and other interested parties should investigate whether sites may be suitable for permanent conservation or other public purposes; if so, these entities should work to facilitate the acquisition of the properties for the identified public purposes.</p> <p><u>Solutions for sites with conservation value:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the site is of value to the county, cities or community, facilitate the purchase, sale, or land swap of property <p>The Task Force recommends that the county, cities and school districts investigate whether the properties may be appropriate for permanent conservation or acquisition for other public purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auburn 1: <i>The site has value for flood hazard reduction.</i> • Kent 3: <i>The site has forestland of value for environmental, social, and potentially economic benefits.</i> • Lake Washington 1: <i>The site has value for flood hazard reduction and regionally significant aquatic or terrestrial natural resources. Facilitating the sale of the property into conservation may assist with solutions for other Lake Washington sites in Box A.</i> • Northshore 1: <i>The site has forestland of value for environmental, social, and potentially economic benefits.</i> <p><u>Solutions for sites without identified conservation value:</u></p> <p>Auburn 3, Kent 1, and Lake Washington 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sell, or hold understanding that any future development must be consistent with Vision 2040. <i>The Task Force recommends that school districts plan to develop the sites consistent with Vision 2040 or manage the sites as part of their capital portfolio.</i> <p><u>Solution for Auburn 2:</u></p> <p>Auburn 2: <i>The site has an existing elementary school, but no sewer extension. The school district plans to redevelop the existing elementary school or build a middle school to replace the elementary school. No time frame has been specified. The Task Force recommends that the school district be allowed to redevelop, if no sewer connection is needed and as allowed by development regulations in place at the time of development.</i></p>

Note: In developing the above recommendations for schools sites, Task Force members reached out to all school districts whose service area includes rural land, even those districts not represented on the Task Force. To make sure the solutions recommended by the Task Force would encompass all known sites and create lasting solutions, school districts were asked if they owned or had interest in any rural sites not already under consideration in this process. School district representatives stated there were no additional rural sites needing to be addressed at this time. Therefore, no other sites are included and all future school siting should be guided by the recommendations below.

Recommendations for Future School Siting

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) comprehensively updated VISION 2040 in 2008. In preparation for the update, the PSRC developed an issue paper regarding Rural Areas that included a discussion on Special Purpose Districts and Institutional Uses (Appendix N). The issue paper noted that special purpose district planning is disconnected from GMA, and that many facilities (including schools) had expanded into rural areas, taking advantage of relatively low land values and large tracts of land. The issue paper recommended that policies be established that provide regional guidance on siting special purpose districts within rural areas. Thus, the following policies were established and incorporated into VISION 2040:

MPP-PS-4 Do not provide urban services in rural areas. Design services for limited access when they are needed to solve isolated health and sanitation problems, so as not to increase the development potential of the surrounding rural area.

MPP-PS-5 Encourage the design of public facilities and utilities in rural areas to be at a size and scale appropriate to rural locations, so as not to increase development pressure.

MPP-PS-21 Site schools, institutions, and other community facilities that primarily serve urban populations within the urban growth area in locations where they will promote the local desired growth plan.

MPP-PS-22 Locate schools, institutions, and other community facilities serving rural residents in neighboring cities and towns and design those facilities in keeping with the size and scale of the local community.

Also in 2008, VISION 2040 incorporated new policies integrating public health considerations into land use and transportation planning, and addressing climate change through the regional growth strategy (reducing greenhouse gas emissions by focusing growth in urban centers).

Consistent with all of the above, VISION 2040 now encourages the siting of public facilities in urban areas, and states that “*Schools should be encouraged to become the cornerstone of their communities by locating in more urban settings and designing facilities to better integrate with their urban neighborhoods.*”

Given the adopted policies in VISION 2040 and after consideration of the wide range of technical information presented, the Task Force recommends that all future school siting be consistent with VISION 2040.

Box E

The Task Force recommends that all future school siting be consistent with VISION 2040.

In support of this recommendation, the Task Force further recommends:

1. The Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) should develop policies and adopt a work program that commits jurisdictions to working together to identify future school sites within the UGA. These policies shall direct jurisdictions to use zoning and other land use tools to ensure a sufficient supply of land for siting schools.
2. King County should work with the school districts, community representatives, and other stakeholders to address any future redevelopment of existing schools on rural sites to accommodate school districts' needs while protecting rural character.
3. The Growth Management Planning Council should add a school district representative to its membership.
4. The Puget Sound Regional Council should collaborate with counties and cities in working with school districts to ensure coordination in regional (4-county) growth management discussions (per VISION 2040 PS-Action-6).
5. The Washington State Legislature and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction should examine, together with the State Department of Commerce, how state laws, guidelines, policies and administrative procedures can influence school siting decisions, including:
 - a. Reconsideration of existing transportation policies and funding that incentivize busing and siting schools away from population centers
 - b. Identifying new funding for school land acquisition, including incentives for purchases, land swaps, and other avenues for obtaining land inside the UGA
 - c. Revising existing guidelines for school siting such that districts who build on small sites in urban areas are eligible for state match funds
 - d. Increasing the compensation to school districts for the construction costs of schools sited within the UGA

Note: The Task Force did not specifically consider redevelopment of existing schools on sites in the rural area. Redevelopment issues were not included in the Task Force scope of work. Information emerged late in the Task Force process regarding redevelopment and will be passed on to appropriate officials for consideration at a future date. Redevelopment is addressed in #2 in Box E.

Communicating Task Force Findings to Stakeholders

To help communicate its findings, Task Force members are available to speak with interested parties (school boards, city councils, etc.) to discuss its work, its process, and its recommendations.

SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Implementation of these recommendations will require additional work by and ongoing coordination between King County, the cities, school districts, and other stakeholders. For this reason, the Task Force has recommended including school districts in regional planning bodies.

Recognizing that the Task Force's recommendations will require school districts to reconsider their real estate portfolios and/or financial plans, one of the first implementation items should be to explore the recommended solutions for specific sites, including:

- Finding alternative sites in the UGA
- Exploring land swaps for undeveloped sites
- Exploring acquisition of undeveloped rural sites for public purposes, including conservation, recreation, or other rural-based uses

The Task Force suggests that this work commence immediately, and defers to the King County Executive on identifying the appropriate forum(s).

Next Steps

The following are the next formal steps in the development of new policies to support the Task Force's recommendations:

1. The King County Executive will review this Task Force Report and propose new Countywide Planning Policies for Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) consideration
2. The GMPC will review the Executive's proposal, and recommend new Countywide Planning Policies to the King County Council for their consideration
3. The King County Council will review the GMPC's recommendation, adopt new Countywide Planning Policies, and send them to the cities for ratification
4. The King County Council will adopt new Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations that are consistent with the new Countywide Planning Policies

Appendices (Attached)

- A. Task Force Membership**
- B. Framing Work Group Membership**
- C. Technical Advisory Committee Membership**
- D. Map of 18 Undeveloped School Sites**
- E. GMPC Motion 11-2**

Appendices (on CD)

- F. Matrix of Technical Information on Undeveloped Sites**
- G. Maps of Undeveloped Sites**
- H. Demographic Information**
- I. Enrollment Projections**
- J. Public Health Aspects of School Siting**
- K. Technical Advisory Committee Work (13 Tasks)**
- L. State School Siting Guidelines**
- M. Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework**
- N. Excerpt from PSRC Issue Paper on Rural Areas**
- O. Land Use Planning Overview**
- P. Meeting Summaries**
- Q. Operating Protocols**
- R. Process Schematic**
- S. Task Force Member Interests**
- T. Interview Summary**
- U. Public Comments**