

To: King County

July 19, 2016

From: Hollywood Hill Association

Re: Sammamish Valley Wine and Beverage Industry Study

Overview Statement

The Sammamish Valley (the Valley) is an ongoing success story that brings the benefits of good growth management directly into the lives of our citizens, our industry and our visitors.

Amidst the storm of tremendous development pressures that are buffeting our region, we should hold firm the course of protecting the unique gem that is the Sammamish Valley agricultural district and the Rural neighborhood ambiance that cradles it.

There are certainly changes that could improve our stewardship, but the King County Executive's "**Sammamish Valley Wine and Beverage Industry Study**" (the Valley Study) **has been directed largely toward exploring options for loosening the protections that have that have so successfully nurtured the Valley environs.**

Many communities across our nation have been laid to waste by strip-mall sprawl because they have allowed short-sighted interests to have their way with their community development.

We can and should continue defending, clarifying and strengthening the successful policies that have brought us to this point in Rural Unincorporated King County.

The Hollywood Hill Association will provide a series of public comments, each addressing specific aspects of the issue pertinent to the Valley Study.

Our goals are to:

1 - Uphold and strengthen the existing policies that have been successful in nurturing the Rural Sammamish Valley environs.

2 - Pursue clarity and simplification to the existing codes for permitted and conditional uses.

3 - Be mindful that policy enacted here will extend or set precedent for Rural areas across King County and the State of Washington.

But first, we must address the elephant in the room:

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is the overarching issue that needs to be addressed, yet the Valley Study agenda has been directed away from discussion of that issue. It has only been due to its insertion by numerous panel members that it has received any attention at all.

We have had close to ZERO code enforcement of our zoning laws in regard to illegal commercial activities in our part of the County for some time now.

Code enforcement should be a primary responsibility of our governmental organizations. It protects our property rights, be they residential or commercial, from illegal actions that compromise the integrity of our law-abiding community and their investments.

King County has been negligent in upholding this primary duty. It is no surprise that this lack of code enforcement has encouraged some people to disregard the law.

While the vast majority of wineries in the Valley have successfully built their business in accordance with the law and zoning restrictions, lawbreakers upend the harmony of the business community.

Indeed, the Valley Study appears to be designed to legalize a handful of businesses located just outside of the City of Woodinville boundaries at the Hollywood Hill Schoolhouse intersection that are flagrantly violating the King County Code. Exactly what kind of message does this send to our citizens?

The following ongoing violations are located on six Rural RA zoned properties clustered on the east side of the Sammamish Valley. King County violation case numbers are included:

1. **Lerone Holdings LLC**. Owner: **Sal Leone**. Multiple illegal businesses, all owned by Mr. Leone, on parcel #1526059051. ENFR15-0287 (Mr. Leone is a long-time businessman in the Woodinville area. He owns property across the Valley, inside Woodinville, where his business operations would be legal. He purchased the referenced Rural parcel with full knowledge that his operations would be illegal there. He did significant new construction and remodeling without permits. He is operating a tavern and several tasting rooms without valid Washington State liquor licenses as they specifically state that they are valid only if the business complies with all local zoning and applicable codes. He is also violating several King County codes concerning signage.)
2. **Patit Creek & Forgeron** – retail tasting rooms and sales outlets for wineries located in Walla Walla, WA. Property owned by **SR 9 Investments** and leased to Patit Creek and Forgeron. P#3404700030. ENFR15-0486
3. **Feliciano** – retail tasting room and sales outlet for their winery located in Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Property owned by **Dale Carlson** (lives in Toppenish, WA) and leased to Feliciano. Parcel#3407700006. ENFR13-0143

4. **Cave B** – retail tasting room and sales outlet for their winery located in Quincy, WA (Columbia Valley). Property owned by **Larry Scrivanich/Camano LLC** and leased to Cave B. P#3404700026. ENFR15-0538

5. **Cougar Crest** – retail tasting room and sales outlet for winery located in the Walla Walla Valley. Property owned by **Steve Lee** and leased to Cougar Crest. P#3404700027. ENFR15-0525.

6. **Matthews** – retail tasting room and sales outlet for their winery located in Woodinville’s North Warehouse District. Residential house used for nightly rental – non-owner-occupied property, thus illegal “B&B”. Regularly hosts very large events. Property, B&B and tasting room owned by **Rubstello-Otis LLC**. P#1526059092. ENFR12-0239

It is important to keep in mind that the vast majority of the “wine and tourism” businesses around the Valley are operating in compliance with the applicable zoning laws. Legal businesses have lost tenants due to cheaper rents charged by some of the rogue property owners listed above.

King County’s failure to uphold the County Code has allowed these few exceptions to persist, building a false perception of legitimacy. These activities would not exist on these residential zoned parcels if we had a competent Code Enforcement division of King County’s Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER).

It is clear that these transgressions are an effort to sidestep the Urban Growth Boundary and extend “urban” uses into Rural King County.

Concluding comment:

When the consultants hired by King County for the Valley Study attempted to find examples of comparable wine-producing areas, they concluded is that the Sammamish Valley and its environs are unique.

There are no comparables.

If we want to leave our Valley as a legacy for which we can be proud, then we must be clear about what it will take to protect it. Capitulation to speculators and law-breakers will have predictable results: this beautiful Valley will be but a fond memory before we know it.