

June 13, 2011

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
Chair, King County Growth Management Planning Council
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104

Subject: Comments on Draft Revisions to Countywide Planning Policies

Dear Executive Constantine,

Regional Council staff has reviewed the *Public Review Draft* of the King County Countywide Planning Policies (April 27, 2011). The large amount of work that has been invested in the project is impressive and the quality of the draft is excellent. The draft countywide policies show great progress toward implementing VISION 2040, including aligning with the multicounty planning policies and establishing growth targets based on the Regional Growth Strategy.

We also recognize that King County and its cities have used the update of the countywide planning policies as an opportunity to not only address VISION 2040, but to create a fully revised set of countywide policies. This includes reorganizing the structure of the policy document in a thoughtful manner, bringing in new and emerging issues into the countywide policies, as well as updating the body of policies to reflect changes to the Growth Management Act and progress in local and regional planning over the last two decades. All of this work will provide guidance to the next generation of local comprehensive plan updates.

Particularly noteworthy is the more complete treatment of the natural environment and the commitment which King County and its cities are making to environmental stewardship, including habitat protection, improving water quality, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The inclusion of more detailed provisions for addressing vibrant communities, health and well-being, economic development, food production, and urban design also offer the specific guidance for planning in King County as envisioned in VISION 2040.

We would also like to recognize the important step the King County Countywide Planning Policies have taken to ensure that services and facilities primarily serving urban populations – including schools, institutions, and other community facilities – are located within the designated urban growth area. This reinforces the commitment the County and its cities are making to implement the countywide growth targets and the countywide vision for more sustainable development. VISION 2040 also speaks to this as important for creating a sense of community, better serving people with opportunities for walking, bicycling, and using transit, and providing a long-term benefit of increasing efficiency and cost-effectiveness. There are also clearer provisions in the countywide policies that speak to not providing urban services in the rural area, including prohibiting sewers. These are key to bending past trends and practices, preventing sprawl, and implementing the Regional Growth Strategy.

In our review of the April 2011 draft countywide planning policies, we have identified only one remaining issue we would like to bring to your attention. Both state law and VISION 2040 speak to the importance of planning for compatible land uses adjacent to general aviation airports. In many instances, such airports straddle jurisdictional borders and it is important to address land uses and impacts through interjurisdictional collaboration and agreement. To that end, this is an issue that should be addressed in the King County Countywide Planning Policies with specific guidance to address intergovernmental cooperation among King County jurisdictions with airports or adjacent to airports. We would ask that policies for airport compatible land uses be addressed in your final set of countywide policies transmitted for action and ratification.

Once the policies have completed the adoption process, PSRC staff will work with the Interjurisdictional Team to craft a certification report which will be transmitted to PSRC's policy boards for their consideration.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the draft King County Countywide Planning Policies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norman A. Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Norman A. Abbott , Ph.D., FAICP
Director of Growth Management Planning

cc: Lisa Voight, King County Strategic Planning, King County Interjurisdictional Team