



# 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update

## Community Meeting #6 East Cougar Mountain Potential Annexation Area

**January 27, 2015 – There were approximately seventy attendees.**

Note: On December 8, 2015, the City of Issaquah submitted a letter to King County requesting that the East Cougar Mountain area be removed from the City's Potential Annexation Area (PAA). Were this to occur, the land use on all or a portion of these properties would change from urban to rural. As this was submitted during the Public Comment Period, King County held an additional public meeting to solicit community input, with public comment accepted until February 3, 2016.

Twenty attendees testified during the meeting.

- Question: If the Urban Growth Area is decreased here, does it increase the likelihood that other PAAs would be expanded?

Answer: No. King County does not have a provision in its Comprehensive Plan, or in the Countywide Planning Policies, with a 1-to-1 change in the Urban Growth Area, although it does have a discretionary Four to One program. The applicable Countywide Planning Policy states:

*DP-18 Allow redesignation of Urban land currently within the Urban Growth Area to Rural land outside of the Urban Growth Area if the land is not needed to accommodate projected urban growth, is not served by public sewers, is contiguous with the Rural Area, and:*

- a) Is not characterized by urban development;*
- b) Is currently developed with a low density lot pattern that cannot be realistically redeveloped at an urban density; or*
- c) Is characterized by environmentally sensitive areas making it inappropriate for higher density development.*

Also, both the City and the County have adequate capacity for growth within existing areas and, in the case of the city, within its core and new urban center.

- Support for removal of land from PAA; and thank you to City of Issaquah for making this decision. The City, and the area, cannot handle urban services, development would

harm natural areas, and development on steep slopes and critical wetlands would be inappropriate and dangerous. As the region grows, the need for open spaces all grows and this change will help accommodate that need. Ability to be in nature is important. Continue to focus growth into the existing City. (A couple of subsequent commenters simply stated their concurrence with this testimony, or made similar comments).

- Concerned about City oversight to keep these safe; Talus Parcel Nine hillside is an example of the challenge and that will affect resident's tax bills. These parcels are even steeper and wilder. The expense of water, sewer and other services would be very high for limited gain to residents. Support for change to Rural Area. Thank you City to taking this position.
- Third generation owner, with a number of other family members. Support for previous comments, but wants the development potential retained on one parcel, number 2924069011, so that it can either be sold (perhaps to King County) or developed and the value used to take care of elderly parents. The lot potentially supports 2 to 3 developable lots. May want to connect to adjacent parcel which is slated for future development (the Bergsma development) that was annexed into the City although were not aware of this. This new development may provide road access, or they might have road access through the adjacent park parcel. (A couple of subsequent commenters stated their concurrence with this testimony).
- Need to protect these areas, help homeowners adjust their expectations. Maybe they can use tools to reduce taxes since their development potential is lower. There has been a lot of development outside the city core, and there is interest in slowing development overall. We should not even consider growth in this area.
- Lives in edge of PAA, support for additional land to be added to Cougar Mountain Park. Additional density would harm the area. Grow inside core of city. Work with owners to annex areas into the park, and make it affordable to them. Look at other areas, such as SR 900, for more trailheads and park access.
- Question: How could County decide whether to take all or a part of the area?  
Answer: No decisions have been made yet. There are different current zoning and land use categories. Some parcels are developed and some are vacant. Some have steep slopes and some are flatter. These are all factors in King County's decision. The testimony tonight and subsequent comments will help us make a recommendation.
- Student at Green River Community College suggested this decision and subsequent activities are related to King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan, which calls for conservation of open space lands.
- Resident from East Renton Area – When making this decision, King County needs to weigh affect on other similar areas, such as the East Renton Plateau Potential Annexation Area. By shrinking the Urban Growth Area, this could create additional pressure for development in other rural or edge communities. This could affect areas such as the E. Renton Plateau which is adjacent to rural. Need to make decision intelligently, residents voices are heard, talk about longer-term impacts in other similar areas.

- Question: would this be the only "Rural Island" if approved? These areas have different needs to protect them.

Answer: No. there are pockets of Rural Area zoned properties in the county that are surrounding by other land uses, near locations such as Woodinville, Duvall, Sammamish, Snoqualmie, North Bend, Black Diamond, Auburn, and Enumclaw. Rural Area zoned properties can be surrounded by mining, open space, agriculture, cities, and forest lands.

- Question: Proposal makes a lot of sense, and can probably support removal of PAA but want to know what this means for my land use. What uses would change? Would livestock be allowed? Can residents add onto their houses? Can we still have a community well? (Subsequent commenters asked similar questions).

Answer: Land uses may change as a result of the removal of PAA. Typical zoning designation in East Cougar Mountain Area is primarily Residential 1. The land use table below indicates the difference between the current Urban Residential zoning of R1 and the potential future Rural Area zoning designation of RA-5. (This is used for illustrative purposes only. Please review KCC Title 21A for additional footnotes that apply to specific sized parcels).

21A.12.030 Densities and Dimensions- Residential and Rural Zones	<b>R-1</b>	<b>RA-5</b>
Base Density: Dwelling Unit/Acre:	1 du/ac	0.2 du/ac
Minimum Lot Area:	N/A	3.75 ac
Minimum Lot Width:	35 ft.	135 ft.
Minimum Street Setback:	20 ft.	30 ft.
Minimum Interior Setback:	5 ft.	10 ft.
Base Height:	35 ft.	40 ft.
Maximum Impervious Surface:	30%	20%

- City of Bellevue Resident – there are three different types of areas: developed area, large lots, undeveloped (the Precipice). There are unique old growth properties in the areas; these are special areas that should not be developed. There is a property owner currently platting some parcels to the East for development (Bergsma) that will leave a lot of steep slopes undeveloped. It's too steep; they cannot put in any houses and cannot put in roads. Precipice is fully surrounded by King County park land. The whole area should remain as rural.
- Commenter has been involved in city leadership for many years; this involved 18 years on City Council they discussed addressing this for many years. It's time to face reality - the city cannot afford to support development of these parcels. Getting water to and from the property. Getting the roads to urban properties would bankrupt the city. Agrees that attention needs to be paid to parcel number 2924069011. It's right next to the park and the Bergsma property which has homeless camps on their property.
- Question: What effect would this change have on the Edgehill Addition's water system; would they be able to participate in the Cascade Water Alliance? Closest water line is in Bellevue; how would this affect ability to connect to their system?

Answer: What will not change is your zoning; the Urban Reserve is 1 unit per 5 acres, and the zoning would likely be RA-5 which is also 1 unit per 5 acres. We allow public water, but not sewers. Could keep your well, could bring in piped water. This would not affect your ability to have piped water, but ability to connect to City water would be a decision of the decision. The County approves water plans in unincorporated, meaning we would work with City to replace wells if they fail.

Answer: Regarding allowed uses, provided below are descriptions of Urban Residential zones and Rural Area zones identifying the purposes of each of these categories of zoning. Also below are some examples of the most common permitted Residential uses in RA-5 zoning classification, and are as follows: (Please Note that this is used for illustrative purposes only and does not capture all specific land use tables in KCC 21A.)

***King County Code 21A.04.060 Rural area zone.***

*A. The purpose of the rural zone (RA) is to provide for an area-wide long-term rural character and to minimize land use conflicts with nearby agricultural or forest production districts or mineral extraction sites. 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 sites 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 that are compatible with rural character;*
- 3. Increasing required setbacks to minimize conflicts with adjacent agriculture, forest or mineral zones; and*
- 4. Requiring tracts created through cluster development to be designated as permanent open space or as permanent resource use.*

*B. Use of this zone is appropriate in rural areas designated by the Comprehensive Plan as follows:*

- 1. RA-2.5 in rural areas where the predominant lot pattern is below five acres in size for lots established prior to the adoption of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan;*
- 2. RA-5 in rural areas where the predominant lot pattern is five acres or greater but less than ten acres in size and the area is generally environmentally unconstrained;*
- 3. RA-10 in rural areas where the predominant lot pattern is ten acres or greater but less than twenty acres in size. RA-10 is also applied on land that is generally environmentally constrained, as defined by county, state or federal law, to protect critical habitat and regionally significant resource areas (RSRAs). The RA-10 zone is also applied to lands within one-quarter mile of a forest or agricultural production district or an approved long-term mineral extraction site. On Vashon-Maury Island RA-10 zoning shall be maintained on areas zoned RA-10 as of 1994 and on areas with a predominant lot size of ten acres or greater that are identified on the Areas Highly Susceptible to Groundwater Contamination map; and*
- 4. RA-20 in Rural Forest Focus Districts designated by the King County Comprehensive Plan.*

***King County Code 21A.04.080 Urban residential zone.***

*A. The purpose of the urban residential zone (R) is to implement comprehensive plan goals and policies for housing quality, diversity and affordability, and to efficiently use urban residential land, public services and energy. These purposes are accomplished by:*

1. Providing, in the R-1 through R-8 zones, for a mix of predominantly single detached dwelling units and other development types, with a variety of densities and sizes in locations appropriate for urban densities;

2. Providing, in the R-12 through R-48 zones, for a mix of predominantly apartment and townhouse dwelling units, mixed-use and other development types, with a variety of densities and sizes in locations appropriate for urban densities;

3. Allowing only those accessory and complementary nonresidential uses that are compatible with urban residential communities; and

4. Establishing density designations to facilitate advanced area-wide planning for public facilities and services, and to protect environmentally sensitive sites from over development.

B. Use of this zone is appropriate in urban areas, activity centers, or Rural Towns designated by the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

1. The R-1 zone on or adjacent to lands with area-wide environmental constraints where development is required to cluster away from sensitive areas, on lands designated urban separators or wildlife habitat network where development is required to cluster away from the axis of the corridor on critical aquifer recharge areas, and on Regionally and Locally Significant Resource Areas (RSRAs/LSRAs) or in well-established subdivisions of the same density, which are served at the time of development by public or private facilities and services adequate to support planned densities;

2. The R-4 through R-8 zones on urban lands that are predominantly environmentally unconstrained and are served at the time of development, by adequate public sewers, water supply, roads and other needed public facilities and services; and

3. The R-12 through R-48 zones next to Unincorporated Activity Centers, in Community or Neighborhood Business Centers, in mixed-use development, on small, scattered lots integrated into existing residential areas, or in Rural Towns, that are served at the time of development by adequate public sewers, water supply, roads and other needed public facilities and services.

<b>P-Permitted</b> <b>C-Conditional</b> <b>S-Special Use</b> <b>KCC 21A.08.030 Residential Land Uses</b>			
SIC #	SPECIFIC LAND USE	R1-8	RA-5
	<b><u>DWELLING UNITS, TYPES:</u></b>		
*	Single Detached	P-C12	P-C12
*	Townhouse	P11-C12	C4
*	Apartment	P5-C5	C4
*	Mobile Home Park	C8	S13
*	Cottage Housing	P15	
	<b><u>GROUP RESIDENCES:</u></b>		
*	Community Residential Facility-I	P14-a c	C
*	Community Residential Facility-II	P14-b	
*	Dormitory	C6	C6
*	Senior Citizen Assisted Housing	P4	
	<b><u>ACCESSORY USES:</u></b>		
*	Residential Accessory Uses	P7	P7

*	<i>Home Occupation</i>	<i>P18</i>	<i>P18</i>
*	<i>Home Industry</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>
	<b><u>TEMPORARY LODGING:</u></b>		
7011	<i>Hotel/Motel (1)</i>		
*	<i>Bed and Breakfast Guesthouse</i>	<i>P9</i>	<i>P9</i>
7041	<i>Organization Hotel/Lodging Houses</i>		

See King County Code 21A.08.030 for additional information on the meaning and terminology for these zoning categories.

- Long-time resident; we bought this property (the Bergsma property) for development and, even with slopes, we have some development potential that we want to realize. This has been in family for generations and extended family is interested in selling. Understands his neighbor's concerns, and supports some areas to remain rural, but he wants his property to remain urban so his family can see return on investment.
- Resident from East Renton Area – Knows some of the problems with annexation to cities. Advises residents to figure this out on their own. Need to consider how this affects roads. He serves on the King County Roads and Bridges Task Force is recommending that areas move forward on annexation to get better road services; this area may go in the opposite direction. Probably would make sense to stay with Issaquah to get better road service.
- Question: Resident noted that he had not heard of the meeting until just today and some of his neighbors in the PAA did not know about the meeting; how did the County notify people?

Answer: King County notified community members in a number of ways – about 550 postcards were sent to properties in the PAA as well as the surrounding 500 feet, an email was sent to the Comprehensive Plan mailing list which has almost 600 emails, and an advertisement was placed in the weekly Issaquah Valley Reporter. Last, the City of Issaquah mailed to their mailing list which included an additional 600 emails. The advertising for this meeting was larger than any other individual meeting, given the shorter timeframe.