FILE

The City of
MAPLE VALLEY

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RECEIVED SEP 20 2011
KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
TO:
DUE DATE:
AUTHOR:
SUBJECT:
ACTION
RESPONSE FOR EXEC. SIG.
RESPOND FOR EXECUTIVE
REVIEWED BY
F.Y.I.

September 20, 2011

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
King County Chinook Building
401 5th Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, Washington 98104

King County Growth Management Planning Council Department of Development & Environmental Services
900 Oakesdale Avenue SW
Renton, Washington 98057-5212

RE: Countywide Planning Policy Update – School Siting

Dear Executive Constantine and Members of the Growth Management Planning Council:

We, the members of the Maple Valley City Council, are writing to express our concerns regarding the negative impacts of the currently proposed 2011 King County Countywide Planning Policies on our local school district. The City has a vested interest in the how our community develops and how the children within our community are educated.

Since its incorporation in 1997, the City's population has grown from 11,000 to 23,000. This growth has been with families. Therefore, without question, the Tahoma School District has met the challenge of educating the fast growing student population. However, since Maple Valley has a high number of families, our school district has particular needs at the elementary level, where the existing elementary schools are all well over capacity and continue to receive growth. For this reason, our district has been planning over the past ten years to meet this growing demand by constructing an elementary school on property owned by the district in the rural area adjacent to Tahoma Junior High School and nearly adjacent to the City limits. This property was purchased in good faith under existing land use policies for the specific purpose of siting our community's next elementary school. The district does not have an alternative to this site. Without the construction of this school, the deficiency in elementary school capacity is expected to increase to nearly 600 students, the size of an elementary school, by 2016. The tightline sewer for this school has already been built.

We understand that King County separates the area inside the urban growth boundary from the area outside of the urban growth boundary, but school district boundaries and services areas do not follow these same geo-political lines. This is a function of public education as determined by

state law. School districts must by law serve every child residing in their district. We expect that our school district will operate its programs in a manner that is not only equitable to all of our students, regardless of their address, but also in a way that makes best use of its limited public funding. As our state faces a continuing budget crisis, we can only expect that public education funding will be further diminished. As elected leaders of Maple Valley, we are deeply concerned that King County, through its land use policies, would add to this crisis by prohibiting use of existing purchased school sites to meet the educational needs of our community's children. By and large, we see that the current CPP proposal the County is considering is a very poor example of stewardship of our public resources.

From our perspective as elected local officials, we are dismayed that our student's education may be compromised by King County's adoption of policies that do not consider long-term education planning and programming, limited school district resources, and taxpayer interests. The existing King County Countywide Planning Policies authorizing schools to be built in the rural area and to be connected to a tightline sewer work. They provide school districts with the tools to plan effectively for our students' needs and they do not lead to growth. Schools are not built prior to growth; schools are a response to growth.

However, we do support compromise language supported by the Suburban Cities Association (SCA) which supports countywide planning policies that protect the rural and resource lands in the county by focusing urban growth and land uses within the UGA, and that support strict limits on locating urban public facilities and infrastructure outside the UGA, and support amending the CPPs to prohibit the extension of sewer lines into the rural area, including to schools, on the condition that such prohibition not extend to rural area properties currently owned by public school districts and intended to be developed as schools. If a school district sells its property outside of the UGA to a third party, the prohibition of the extension of sewer lines should be applied. We can also support a position that the affected school districts collectively, King County, and affected municipalities through their SCA representation agree to, if that position is consistent with Vision 2040 policies and the Growth Management Act.

Before the GMPC takes action on the policies affecting schools, we urge you to analyze the impacts of the proposed polices on public education and the taxpayers' interests.

Sincerely and on behalf of the entire Maple Valley City Council,

Noel T. Gerken, Mayor