County-Wide Planning Policies (CPPs)

Transportation

Good afternoon. My name is Peter Rimbos. I serve as the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council’s (GMVUAC’s) Growth Management Committee Chair. Although I will talk specifically about Transportation policies, I will preface my comments with some specific concerns the GMVUAC has been dealing with regarding the outsized, mis-located, and overburdening Master Planned Developments (MPDs) currently being contemplated in Black Diamond.

The concept of MPDs is not the issue, but rather placing them in the Rural/Suburban Fringe—Black Diamond—with little or no accompanying infrastructure, especially transportation infrastructure. The GMVUAC has worked with King County to address the many problems associated with these MPDs, such as placing facilities such as Schools, Stormwater Detention “Lakes”, and Sewer Facilities in the Rural Area strictly to serve adjacent Urban development. This exploits the Rural Area, provides no benefits to its residents, and overburdens Rural Area roads. In fact, the Black Diamond MPDs will overburden all major arterials and many minor roads in SE King County, as well.

Transportation Concurrency could and should be used to downsize these MPDs and mitigate the traffic nightmares that will last for generations to come. But there seems to be confusion in the minds of City officials on Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS). SR-169 is a major north-south backbone of SE King County’s transportation infrastructure. It is labeled a HSS, meaning that it is exempt from Transportation Concurrency. However, the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCP) states the County has the discretion to apply Transportation Concurrency to those HSSs that are undivided and thus act like County arterials. That must be done when the County evaluates any permits for School, Water Detention, and other Urban facilities proposed with the Black Diamond MPDs. Black Diamond must also be encouraged to modify its Comprehensive Plan to allow it the same discretion afforded in the KCP. This is a large loophole in Transportation Concurrency that continues to be exploited to the detriment of all citizens.

Now I’ll address specific Transportation Chapter CPPs.

The Staff Proposals on Supporting Growth: T-04 and T-05 address Growth Targets.

T-04: Ensure State capital improvement policies and actions are consistent with the regional growth strategy and support VISION 2040 and the Countywide Planning Policies. (from existing CPP T-21)

T-05: Support adopted growth targets with both regional and local transportation investments, including investments in transit, freight mobility, state highways in key regional transportation corridors, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, improved access to Urban Centers, and other facilities that complement and provide access to regional transportation facilities. (from draft CPP DP-15)

These are good, but there must be a way to use a “carrot-and-stick” approach when it comes to compelling a municipality to not exceed its Growth Targets. Unfortunately, Black Diamond with the MPDs will greatly exceed its growth targets. In fact, the MPDs will quintuple the size of Black Diamond’s 4,000 population to 20,000!

The new Staff Proposals on Systems Operations: T-17 and T-20 to use transportation demand management decreasing vehicle miles traveled. are good, please adopt them.

T-17: Apply technologies and transportation demand management programs that optimize the use of existing infrastructure in order to reduce the need for new infrastructure. (NEW)

T-20: Support the planning and development of a countywide transportation system that reduces greenhouse gas emissions by advancing strategies that shorten trip length or replace vehicle trips to decrease vehicle miles traveled. (NEW)

With respect to existing Transportation Policies, I will briefly address four sections:
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In Section 3 -- Freeways/Highways/Arterials FW-22 and Section 4 -- Transportation Level-of-Service (LOS) T-9 level of service and concurrency requirements must be consistently applied and enforced and should inform future financial planning.

FW-22 Where appropriate, King County and its cities shall adopt a clear definition of level-of-service and concurrency requirements and establish a consistent process for implementing concurrency, including accountability for impacts for adjacent jurisdictions.

T-9 Level-of-service standards shall be used as a tool to evaluate concurrency for long-range transportation planning, development review and programming of transportation investments.

In Section 5 -- Reassessment T-15 to compel "local governments to reassess land use and transportation elements if transportation adequacy and concurrency cannot be met" is not being followed in the case of the Black Diamond MPDs.

T-15 Local governments shall work together to reassess regional land use and transportation elements if transportation adequacy and concurrency cannot be met. Should funding fall short for transportation improvements or strategies needed to accommodate growth, the following actions should be considered:

a. Adjust land use and level-of-service standards to better achieve mobility and the regional vision;

b. Make full use of all feasible local option transportation revenues authorized but not yet implemented; and

c. Work with Washington State Department of Transportation, METRO, and the private sector to seek additional State transportation revenues and local options to make system improvements necessary to accommodate projected employment and population growth.

Finally, in Section 7 -- State Transportation Role T-20 thru T-22 are good. However, the 6-year "lag" time built into Concurrency often serves as a "loophole." The GMVUAC has lobbied KCDOT through the KCCP Update process to eliminate or alter that language, because quite often a project is listed on a long-range plan, but then never sees funding or simply keeps getting moved out to the right, even though the development was approved based on that project being funded and built on time. This simply becomes a game of playing catch-up in which we all lose, except the developers, because we never do catch up.

T-20 Consistent with the Countywide vision, local governments shall coordinate with the State on land use and transportation systems and strategies which affect State facilities and programs.

T-21 State capital improvement decisions and policy actions shall be consistent with regional and Countywide goals and plans. The State shall ensure its transportation capital improvement decisions and programs support the adopted land use plans and transportation actions.

T-22 The State and local governments shall use the same capital programming and budgeting time frame that all local governments and the County use, a minimum of six years, for making capital decisions and for concurrency management.

Thank you.

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