

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: King County Countywide Planning Policies Update

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SUMMARY

The King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) were adopted in 1992. Absent comprehensive review since their inception, several factors have emerged that call for a comprehensive update of the CPPs by the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). These factors include, primarily, adoption of VISION 2040 and the Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs) by the Puget Sound Regional Council. The update is also an opportunity to ensure consistency of the CPPs with current state law and state agency guidelines as well as to bring the language and references in the policies up to date.

This staff report describes the work since the establishment of this work program by GMPC last year. Following GMPC direction, staff convened a CPP Update Committee—consisting of city, county and Regional Council staff—and has begun review of the CPPs. The committee anticipates the work to be accommodated by existing staff time. This staff report serves as a briefing of the committee’s progress and proposes an analytical framework for the work program.

FRAMEWORK FOR COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICY REVIEW

In establishing a scope of work, staff proposes a framework around four principal criteria for reviewing the body of policies. The proposed criteria include:

- Address statutory compliance
- Ensure consistency with Multicounty Planning Policies
- Insert language to implement Multi-County Planning Policies county-level action items [Vision 2040]
- Complete general modernization of references and language

This framework allows staff to ensure that the CPPs reflect state requirements and guidelines, are consistent with the regional vision put forth in VISION 2040 and provide appropriate and relevant guidance to local comprehensive planning efforts. The four criteria are discussed in turn below.

Address Statutory Compliance

This criterion ensures that the CPPs accurately reflect current state law, state agency guidance, and recent hearings board decisions. Staff will identify relevant RCW amendments and evaluate WAC updates to ensure consistency of the updated CPPs with state requirements and guidelines.

The Revised Code of Washington is the compilation of all permanent state laws in effect. Chapter 36.70A RCW—the Growth Management Act—requires local jurisdictions to manage growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, preparing comprehensive plans and implementing them through capital investments and development regulations. The RCW have been amended several times since their adoption in 1990. The CPP update process will capture the amendments to reflect current law.

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED) is now in the process of updating the administrative guidelines implementing the Growth Management Act (GMA); specifically WAC 365-190 (guidelines to classify agriculture, forest, mineral lands and critical areas) and WAC 365-195 (procedural criteria for adopting comprehensive plans and development regulations). CTED released a draft of the updated guidelines in early 2009. The updated WAC, which is anticipated to be adopted in 2009, will likely provide new and expanded substantive guidance for countywide planning policies.

Ensure consistency with Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs)

In April 2008 the Puget Sound Regional Council General Assembly adopted VISION 2040, the long-range growth, economic and transportation strategy for the four-county central Puget Sound region. VISION 2040 established a regional vision for the desired pattern of population and job growth through 2040 and contains new and amended MPPs that provide a regional framework and guidance for other regional plans, CPPs and local comprehensive plans.

The MPPs specifically call for the update of Countywide Planning Policies in 2010 to address the newly adopted MPPs where necessary. Organized around six overall categories, the policies reflect VISION’s commitment to “protect the environment, to create vibrant, livable, and healthy communities, to offer economic opportunities for all, to provide for safe and efficient mobility, and to use the region’s resources wisely and efficiently (VISION 2040, p. 30).” Staff has begun to cross-reference VISION with the existing body of CPPs to propose a set of recommended policy amendments that are consistent with VISION and the MPPs.

Example: As adopted, the MPPs include six new policies which collectively speak to the goal of reducing the region’s overall production of harmful elements that contribute to climate change. As the CPPs do not currently include any policies addressing climate change, staff has identified climate change as a theme for further consideration. To be considered are MPPs that call for the reduction of energy use and the development of energy management technology, the reduction of carbons and greenhouse gases through conservation of alternative sources of energy as well as the anticipation of the region’s contribution to climate change impacts on the natural environment.

Insert language to implement MPP county-level action items

VISION 2040 identifies three key roles for the MPPs: “(1) give direction for implementing the Regional Growth Strategy, (2) create a common framework for planning at various levels within the four-county region, including countywide planning, local plans, transit agency plans, and others, and (3) provide the policy structure for the Regional Council’s functional plans (VISION 2040, p. 29).” Countywide planning policies are intended to complement multicounty policies and provide a more specific level of detail that guides county and local comprehensive planning as appropriate.

VISION 2040 includes actions that relate to the implementation of each policy section. The actions are organized by level of responsibility: regional level actions are directed primarily at the Puget Sound Regional Council, county-level actions are directed at counties or their countywide growth management planning body, and local-level actions call for action at the individual jurisdiction level. Staff has identified nine county-level actions that should be incorporated in the following sections: Public Services (3 actions), Economy (1 action), Development Patterns (2 actions), and Environment (3 actions). These actions provide direction and suggest specific outcomes. Staff will review the county-level actions in the MPPs to ensure they are incorporated appropriately within the body of CPP policies.

Example: PS-Action-7 calls on counties and cities to collaborate with special service districts to identify opportunities for co-location of facilities and services—such as parks adjacent to schools. This short-term action references those MPPs that are immediately relevant to its implementation and calls for the establishment of specific recommendations to districts and local governments for facility siting criteria. Staff will consider language revisions that will encourage appropriate interjurisdictional collaboration and recommendations.

Complete general modernization of references and language

As originally drafted, the CPPs described a vision for the county for the 1992-2012 planning period that was a departure from patterns of development prior to the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA). The CPPs established a framework for the initial round of local comprehensive plans under GMA that were adopted in the mid-1990’s.

To maintain the CPPs as a living and relevant document, the CPP update will incorporate current information on the county and its cities. In addition, with local governments moving into a third round of comprehensive planning under GMA, the focus of the CPP document will shift from initial plan adoption to the ongoing and evolving implementation of GMA and countywide policies. This item will require revisions to data references, terms and language as well as general modernization of the CPP narrative.

Example: Several CPPs reference the role of METRO in regional transportation planning (for example, CPP T-2 calls for King County, its cities, adjacent counties, METRO, and the Washington State Department of Transportation to support the continuous, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning process conducted by the Puget Sound Regional Council). Subsequent to the drafting of the original CPPs, the Washington State Legislature authorized King, Pierce and Snohomish counties to create a single agency—the Central Puget

Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit)—to plan, build and operate a high-capacity transit system in the three-county area. In 1996, the Sound Transit Board adopted its comprehensive regional transit plan. Staff will review the CPPs to ensure that appropriate reference to Sound Transit's role in transportation planning is made within the body of policies.

NEXT STEPS

MPP-G-2 calls for the CPP update to be complete by December 31, 2010. As presented in September, 2008 the update of CPP text and policy language constitutes the second phase of the CPP Update (*phase I* focuses on the establishment of appropriate job and housing targets for the county's 40 jurisdictions). Staff anticipates no change to the proposed timeline, with key milestones including:

- *September 16, 2009:* Draft of comprehensive scope of work for GMPC consideration
- *Spring 2010:* Draft of initial amendment package for GMPC consideration
- *Summer/ Fall 2010:* Presentation of proposed final amendments for GMPC adoption
- *Year-end 2010:* Ratification of the amended Countywide Planning Policies

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends affirmation of the four review criteria presented in this staff report. In observance of the above timeline, staff will continue to brief GMPC through the course of this work, with anticipated completion in 2010.