

*Report to the King County Council:*

# **Unincorporated Area Councils**

April 15, 2011

**King County Council-adopted 2011 budget proviso related to Unincorporated Area Councils:**

*Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits and the Council adopts a motion that references the proviso's ordinance, section and number and states that the executive has responded to the proviso.*

*This proviso requires that the office of performance, strategy and budget provide a plan to consolidate the six unincorporated area councils into one unincorporated area commission along with legislation to effectuate the consolidation. The plan must be developed in collaboration with the existing unincorporated area councils and contain recommendations on: (1) how and to what level the unincorporated area commission should be funded; (2) the membership and oversight of the commission; (3) the goals, purpose, and role of the commission; (4) staff support of the commission; and (5) how and when the commission will report on its work to the council and the executive.*

*The executive must transmit to the council the required plan and associated legislation by April 15, 2011, filed in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the budget and fiscal management committee and the general government and oversight committee or their successors.*

**Executive Proviso Response Team**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report and its attachments constitute the Executive's response to a 2011 Council budget proviso related to Unincorporated Area Councils. This report contains 4 sections, as follows:

- I. Background
  - A. Public Engagement in King County
  - B. Citizen Participation Initiative (CPI)
  - C. Strategic Plan Goals
- II. 2011 Budget Proviso and Executive Response
  - A. 2011 Proviso
  - B. Interdepartmental Team Work
    1. Review Strategic Plan for Guidance
    2. Evaluation of CPI Framework and Alignment to Strategic Plan
    3. Development of Guiding Principles for a New Framework
    4. Development and Discussion of Options
  - C. Executive Recommendation
  - D. Timing of Implementation / Next Steps
- III. Relationship to Strategic Plan Implementation Work
- IV. List of Attachments

## I. BACKGROUND

### A. Public Engagement in King County

King County government provides a wide range of regional services (public health, courts, transit) to all 1.9 million county residents, and local services (parks, permitting, law enforcement) to the 284,100 residents who live in urban and rural unincorporated areas<sup>1</sup>. Under the Washington State Growth Management Act, urban unincorporated areas are to be annexed to cities, which are the appropriate providers of urban services. Rural unincorporated areas are to remain under King County's jurisdiction in perpetuity.

To better serve all county residents, King County employs a broad spectrum of public engagement and communication practices, including but not limited to:

- County boards and commissions
- Task forces and expert panels
- Unincorporated Area Councils and citizen advisory groups
- Countywide Community Forums
- Public meetings

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<sup>1</sup> Source: US Census 2010

- Newsletters
- Media releases
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Mailed and published notices
- Brochures and printed materials
- Email, websites and social media
- Elections

Use of these practices is guided by county codes, by policies established in council-enacted legislation and executive orders, and by administrative procedures, professional standards and other protocols.

## **B. Citizen Participation Initiative**

The Citizen Participation Initiative (CPI) was established by Executive Order in 1994<sup>2</sup>. As established in the Executive Order, the primary goals of the CPI are to:

- Improve citizen access to information and services provided by King County
- Make county services convenient to and available in local communities
- Improve opportunities for meaningful involvement by unincorporated area residents in decisions regarding the future of their communities

The CPI established a framework for public engagement in unincorporated areas that is composed of three main elements:

1. Unincorporated Area Councils, to provide a venue for ongoing communication between unincorporated area residents and King County
2. Community Service Centers, to provide convenient access to county services
3. Community Service Representatives, to act as liaisons between UACs and King County

In 1995, the King County Council adopted Motion 9643 establishing additional policy direction to guide implementation of the CPI<sup>3</sup>. The Council included methods to provide for Council interaction with UACs, including:

- Formal recognition of UACs through legislation adopted by the Council
- Use of the Council's Unincorporated Affairs Committee (or its successor) for matters related to UACs
- Council sponsorship of an annual public forum with all formally recognized UACs to discuss how the UAC process is working<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Attachment A: Executive Order PRE-7-1 (AEO)

<sup>3</sup> See Attachment B: King County Motion 9643

<sup>4</sup> Over time, responsibility for hosting the annual forum has shifted from the Council to the Executive branch

### *Unincorporated Area Council responsibilities under the CPI*

Pursuant to the Executive Order and Council motion, the primary responsibilities of UACs are to:

- identify issues of concern to the community and suggest strategies for addressing them
- develop and recommend priorities for services and service delivery methods
- serve as a resource for citizen input and advice
- review proposed county spending in the community and recommend priorities or alternatives

In order for a UAC to be formally recognized by the County, community groups must:

- Adopt and maintain bylaws
- Establish geographic boundaries containing at least 7500 residents<sup>5</sup>
- Allow membership to any person or business within its recognized boundaries
- Provide a public and democratic process for choosing officers and board members
- Demonstrate sufficient size and breadth of citizen participation to adequately represent the interests of the community
- Abide by the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30)

In addition to these requirements, all of the formally recognized UACs are non-profit organizations under state law and must comply with applicable state requirements.

### *King County responsibilities under the CPI*

Pursuant to the Executive Order and Council motion, the County's primary responsibilities are to:

- Identify departmental liaisons to the UACs
- Provide information on County programs and plans regularly and in a manner that allows the UACs time to provide meaningful input
- Respond in a timely fashion to UAC requests for information
- Give due consideration to comments from UACs
- Provide Community Service Representatives to act as liaisons between King County and UACs

In addition to the Executive Order and Council motion governing the CPI, several King County Comprehensive Plan policies have been adopted that direct the County to work with the UACs on various topics including planning, annexation, economic development, and transportation<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, there are several sections of the King County Code that require UAC representation on various county boards and commissions, and notification to UACs of certain proposed actions<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Communities unable to meet the population requirement may request recognition under King County Motion 9643

<sup>6</sup> See King County Comprehensive Plan policies RP-102, U-202, R-101, R-102, T-504, T-506, ED-108, and ED-503

<sup>7</sup> See King County Code sections 2.98.060(A)(1b); 2.110.030(C3); 9.14.070(A7); 9.14.080(A8); 9.14.095(A8); 10.24.020(D); 20.18.030(D); 20.18.060(C); 20.18.070(B); 20.18.120(B); 21A.06.217; 21A.20.190(A); and 21A.20.190(C1)

In addition to these formal requirements, over the past several years, King County has interacted with UACs through mechanisms that are not explicitly required by the CPI. These include:

- Quarterly meetings with UAC representatives to discuss county work impacting unincorporated areas
- Annual meeting with the UACs and the Deputy Directors’ group
- Annual meeting between the UAC Presidents and the Executive
- Contracting with UACs for outreach and communication services

Through contracts with each UAC, the County has historically provided funding to these organizations. The contracts allow this annual funding to be used for general communication and outreach services (website hosting, printed materials and postage) administrative costs (insurance, elections, postage, office supplies), and special community events and activities. The County provides funding to UACs on a cost-reimbursable basis. Two conditions in the contracts create additional administrative requirements for the UACs. These include:

- Maintain general liability insurance
- Abide by the Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56)

*Unincorporated Area Councils Formally Recognized by the County*

King County currently recognizes six Unincorporated Area Councils<sup>8</sup>. Together, they represent approximately 96,110 unincorporated area residents out of a total unincorporated area population of 284,100, or 33% of the unincorporated area population. Geographically, their boundaries cover 221 out of 1728 square miles, or approximately 13% of the unincorporated land base<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 1. County-Recognized UACs**

<b>UAC</b>	<b>Council Approval</b>	<b>Approx Population<sup>10</sup></b>	<b>Square Miles<sup>11</sup></b>
Four Creeks	Motion 9977 (10/96)	16,500	38
Greater Maple Valley	Motion 9860 (5/96)	14,800	116
North Highline	Motion 9838 (4/96)	17,400	6
Upper Bear Creek	Motion 10708 (6/99)	21,140	22
Vashon-Maury Island	Motion 9859 (5/96)	10,620	37
West Hill	Motion 9858 (5/96)	15,650	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>96,110 (33%)</b>	<b>221 (13%)</b>

<sup>8</sup> See Attachment C: King County Motions recognizing Unincorporated Area Councils

<sup>9</sup> See Attachment D: UACs at a Glance

<sup>10</sup> Source: US Census 2010

<sup>11</sup> Source: King County GIS

### C. King County Strategic Plan Goals: Public Engagement, Service Excellence and Financial Stewardship

In 2010, the Executive proposed and the Council adopted a countywide Strategic Plan to direct the County in all areas of its work. The County is currently working to realign its policy and management systems with the Strategic Plan.

#### *Guidance from the King County Strategic Plan*

The Strategic Plan contains many goals that are relevant in this discussion. This includes goals that articulate *what* the County will do, and goals that articulate *how* King County will do it. While the “what” goals are important because they relate directly to services that are delivered to unincorporated area residents, this report focuses primarily on the “how” goals:

**Table 2. King County Strategic Plan Goals**

<b>WHAT King County Delivers</b>	<b>HOW King County Delivers</b>
Justice and Safety	Service Excellence
Health and Human Potential	Financial Stewardship
Economic Growth and Built Environment	Public Engagement
Environmental Sustainability	Quality Workforce

Additionally, while the goals of the CPI are still relevant, the Strategic Plan public engagement goals, objectives and strategies provide a new, unifying framework for the County’s public engagement processes:

**Table 3. King County Strategic Plan - Public Engagement Goals**

<b>Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities</b>
OBJECTIVE 1: Expand opportunity to seek input, listen and respond to residents
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop communication channels that allow all residents ongoing opportunities to be heard and receive a timely and appropriate response</li> <li>b. Increase and improve the use of new technology and social media tools for citizen involvement</li> <li>c. Ensure that communication, outreach and engagement efforts reach all residents, particularly communities that have been historically under-represented</li> </ul>
OBJECTIVE 2: Empower people to play an active role in shaping their future
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide accurate, secure and accessible elections</li> <li>b. Promote meaningful community participation in decisions that affect their community</li> </ul>
OBJECTIVE 3: Improve public awareness of what King County does
Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop guidelines and standards for public engagement and education for use by all county agencies</li> <li>b. Create a countywide plan to coordinate communication across different lines of business</li> <li>c. Use public outreach to better communicate who we are and what we do</li> </ul>

In addition to the public engagement goals, some of the goals, objectives and strategies around service delivery and financial stewardship are also relevant. These include:

- Improve local service delivery
- Strengthen King County’s collaborative role with cities and communities
- Improve collaboration internally, including among the county’s elected leadership, across departments, and with employees
- Create single points of contact for residents, clients, and other partners
- Encourage entrepreneurship, grant-seeking, and leveraging private sector talent and resources

## **II. 2011 BUDGET PROVISIO and EXECUTIVE RESPONSE**

### **A. 2011 Budget Proviso**

As part of the 2011 budget, the Council adopted the following proviso related to Unincorporated Area Councils:

*“This proviso requires that the office of performance, strategy and budget provide a plan to consolidate the six unincorporated area councils into one unincorporated area commission along with legislation to effectuate the consolidation. The plan must be developed in collaboration with the existing unincorporated area councils and contain recommendations on: (1) how and to what level the unincorporated area commission should be funded; (2) the membership and oversight of the commission; (3) the goals, purpose, and role of the commission; (4) staff support of the commission; and (5) how and when the commission will report on its work to the council and the executive.”*

Executive staff communicated with Council regarding the intent of the proviso and the Executive’s interest in considering other options in addition to an unincorporated area commission. The commission option, along with several others, is included in this report.

To develop a response to the proviso, the Executive convened an interdepartmental team that included staff representatives from the Executive’s Office and all Executive departments. The Executive also invited the King County Sheriff and the County Council to each appoint a staff representative to attend the meetings, and both did so. The staff team met regularly from January-March, 2011. As directed by the Council proviso, members of the staff team consulted with the UACs by holding three public meetings and by meeting with the UAC Presidents individually and in small groups<sup>12</sup>. During this time, the annual meeting between the Executive and the UAC Presidents took place.

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<sup>12</sup> See Attachment E: List of meetings with Unincorporated Area Councils.



## **B. Interdepartmental Team Work**

The team's general approach to developing a proviso response was to 1) seek guidance from the King County Strategic Plan; 2) evaluation of the CPI framework and alignment with the Strategic Plan; 3) development of guiding principles for a new framework; and 4) development and discussion of options.

### *1. Seeking guidance from the King County Strategic Plan*

There are many goals, objectives and strategies in the Strategic Plan that provided guidance to the team in its work. The most relevant include Public Engagement, Service Excellence and Financial Stewardship.

### *2. Evaluation of the CPI Framework and Alignment with the Strategic Plan*

Evaluating the CPI framework within the three months the Interdepartmental team had to complete its work was challenging, as no performance measures were ever developed to gauge its success. No task force or commission has ever been specifically tasked with evaluating it. The one known instance of a commission looking at any part of the CPI is the 2007-2008 Charter Review Commission. The commission created a Rural and Local Issues subcommittee that examined Unincorporated Area Councils as part of its work<sup>13</sup>. The findings of the subcommittee were mixed:

*"The comments received about the UACs indicated that these bodies are not fully meeting the expectations of citizens and lawmakers. A number of citizens stressed that better methods for more direct representation were needed, noting that UACs do not represent everyone in the county, and that they lack decision-making power. Some people argued that the UACs should not be treated as governmental entities, given the small numbers of people voting in often- uncontested UAC elections, and the UACs' lack of representation of the citizens in their areas."*

*-King County 2007-2008 Charter Review Commission (Rural /Local Issues Subcommittee)*

The work of the Charter Review Commission, in addition to information gathered from council and executive staff, UACs and members of the public, provide insight as to the strength and weaknesses of the CPI framework.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses of the CPI Framework*

Some of the major strengths and weaknesses of the CPI framework are listed below. While not an exhaustive list, the team found these to be among the most relevant considerations.

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<sup>13</sup> See Attachment F: Selected text from the Rural/Local Issues Subcommittee Report (2007-2008 Charter Review Commission)

Strengths of the CPI framework include:

- UACs provide a local forum for residents. UACs provide a local place for residents to air their interests and concerns, and for the community (and County staff) to hear those interests and concerns. For many, this is seen as a more desirable alternative to driving into Seattle to meet with County staff or to testify before the King County Council.
- UACs encourage community action. Perhaps the most successful aspect of the CPI is in creating community action. These volunteers undertake many activities on behalf of their communities. Examples include: sponsoring clean-up and graffiti removal events, hosting community events such as outdoor movies and concerts, conducting community opinion polls and surveys, hosting candidate forums, reviewing and commenting on proposed county policies and regulations, sitting on other county boards and commissions, and providing umbrella support for other community organizations that lack insurance or non-profit status<sup>14</sup>.
- UAC funding leverages many hours of community volunteerism. The funding that the County provides to the UACs is seen by many UAC members as an efficient use of taxpayer dollars because it supports and leverages the work of many volunteers.
- UACs help facilitate relationships between residents and King County. In many cases, the existence of UACs has helped to improve relations between residents and King County. UACs can help bridge communication gaps and build trust in county government. For some residents, UAC meetings are a more comfortable place to express their opinions than a County-sponsored meeting.
- Single Point of Contact The UACs have indicated that having a County staff liaison to serve as a single point of contact is tremendously helpful in navigating the County organization, obtaining information and resolving issues.
- Community Service Centers. In general, the establishment of service centers throughout the county has allowed easier access to county services and is popular with residents.
- Community Service Representatives. In general, the UACs have been very appreciative that the County provides Community Service Representatives. Having a single point of contact is much easier than trying to navigate the County unassisted.

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<sup>14</sup> See Attachment G: UAC actions and accomplishments

Some weaknesses of the CPI framework include:

- Many unincorporated area communities are not represented by a UAC. As noted earlier in this report, current UAC boundaries only cover about 13% of the unincorporated area land base, and represent only 32% of the unincorporated population. Despite repeated efforts by King County staff to generate interest in forming new UACs among unincorporated area residents, no new UACs have been formed in over a decade.
- UACs have varying levels of participation and representation. Although UACs are required to demonstrate sufficient size and breadth of participation, there is no definition as to what comprises sufficient participation, and no metrics have been identified to assess and track it. This can result in less than adequate community consultation if county staff feels their work is complete once they have met with a UAC.
- The CPI does not adequately engage all branches of County government. Because it is established by Executive Order, the CPI applies only to executive departments, and does not sufficiently engage the Council or other branches of County government, although the team did note that the Sheriff has successfully engaged the UACs through its community policing efforts.
- General administrative requirements. The administrative requirements of the UACs under the CPI are significant, which often causes UAC members to turn to the County with questions about bylaw interpretation, Robert's Rules, state laws governing non-profits, electronic records management, public disclosure laws and other legal questions and concerns. There have also been requests to host website domains, provide county email addresses, host document archiving, conduct public records searches, and provide more funding and staffing. The County lacks sufficient resources to provide such advice and assistance to the UACs. This has led to frustration among UAC members, who feel that the County created the administrative requirements and should provide assistance in meeting them. Feedback from Community Service Representatives indicates that the requirements for running a UAC have in the past kept new UACs from forming.
- Compliance with public disclosure laws. After receiving a formal inquiry from one of the UACs, the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office concluded that UACs are likely subject to the Washington State Public Records Act<sup>15</sup>. A similar finding was made by the Washington State Attorney General's Office<sup>16</sup>. Compliance with public disclosure laws requires a clear understanding of the law and careful records management. Full compliance with the PRA is beyond the capacity of most small non-profit organizations. Although UACs are required to carry insurance, their

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<sup>15</sup> Attachment H: King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office legal opinion.

<sup>16</sup> Attachment I: Washington State Attorney General's Office findings.

policies more than likely do not provide coverage for fines and penalties of a claim stemming from a public disclosure violation. This presents an unacceptable risk for some residents, and led directly to the resignation of an entire UAC board. If this requirement continues, it may significantly hinder future participation.

- Organizational framework. While the Department of Community and Human Services has ably led the CPI for the past 17 years, asking a single department to lead a countywide initiative has proven challenging when it comes to promoting countywide knowledge of UAC issues, and coordinating outreach and service integration among departments.

### *Conclusion*

As individuals and groups, all of the UACs are providing important services in their communities. The question is not so much whether UACs are producing value, but whether the CPI as an overall engagement strategy is broad enough to meet the County's responsibilities under the Strategic Plan. There are at least four areas where it may not be:

1. Expand opportunities to seek input, listen and respond to residents
2. Ensure that engagement efforts reach all residents, particularly communities that have been historically under-represented
3. Improve public awareness of what King County does
4. Employ consistent public engagement practices across all branches of government

Expand opportunities to seek input. To meet the public engagement goals of the Strategic Plan, the County should provide residents with more engagement opportunities across a spectrum of public participation. Examples along this spectrum range from attending a County information fair (broad engagement) to sitting on a County board or commission (deep engagement). While the UACs do provide opportunities for engagement with the County, they alone cannot ensure adequate participation. With most of the unincorporated area unrepresented by a UAC, there are many communities the County is not actively engaging. Broader engagement with unincorporated area residents is a County responsibility and it is work the County must commit itself to.

Engaging under-represented groups. The Strategic Plan requires the County to make particular efforts to engage with traditionally under-represented groups. As the County grows ever more diverse, this work becomes more critical and is something that takes dedicated time and resources<sup>17</sup>. The UACs do not have the technical resources or capacity to do this type of engagement, which is the County's responsibility.

Improve public awareness of what King County does. While most UAC members are aware of the range of services King County provides, there are always new residents to engage, and even many existing residents do not know the County well. The County must find new

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<sup>17</sup> Non-whites currently make up 29.7% of the unincorporated area population. Source: US Census 2010.

and effective ways of making sure residents know what the County does and who they should contact with service delivery issues and concerns.

Consistent Public Engagement Practices. The CPI only applies to the Executive branch, which does not meet the Strategic Plan’s guidance for a consistent engagement strategy across county branches and agencies. The King County Strategic Plan motto of “Working Together for One King County” means that residents should experience consistent interactions by the County, not variable responses and service delivery.

For the above reasons, it is important that the County develop a new framework for a public engagement strategy that aligns more fully with the Strategic Plan.

### *3. Development of Guiding Principles for a New Framework*

The interdepartmental team found the guidance in the Strategic Plan to be very helpful and used it to evaluate how well the CPI aligns or does not align to the Strategic Plan. Review of the Strategic Plan and this analysis assisted the team in identifying characteristics of a successful public engagement program. These characteristics were shared with the Unincorporated Area Councils at a public meeting in January 2011 and revised based on their input:

1. Provide all unincorporated area residents with an opportunity to participate
2. Make it easier for people to interact with King County
3. Empower residents to choose their level of involvement across a spectrum of public participation
4. Acknowledge and respect the unique characteristics of communities: geographic, cultural and otherwise
5. Help the County transition to being a rural service provider, and ease the transition for residents
6. Involve the cities that will eventually annex urban unincorporated areas
7. Make efficient use of limited public resources
8. Integrate the County’s public engagement, service delivery and customer service frameworks
9. Engage the County Council and other branches of County government

### *4. Development and Discussion of Options*

The interdepartmental team considered options suggested by UACs, the County Council, the Executive staff, and in previous reports on King County government. A more detailed examination of each of these options is included in an attachment to this report<sup>18</sup>. These options included:

- A. Maintain the Citizen Participation Initiative. After consulting with the UACs, it is clear that a majority of their members would like to see the CPI continue, with

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<sup>18</sup> See Attachment J: Alternative frameworks for public engagement approaches

greater participation by other branches of county government and with more administrative support from the County.

- B. Create an Unincorporated Area Commission. As required by the Council budget proviso, the interdepartmental team considered this option. However, as mentioned above, each of the UACs operates as an independent non-profit organization under state law. Therefore, the County does not have the legal authority to dissolve the UACs and subsume them into one commission. Additionally, after consulting with the UACs it became clear that many UAC members felt that creating another organizational layer would dilute their voices and lead to participation fatigue. The team concluded that creating an umbrella commission was not by itself an adequate substitute for local community-based organizations. Lastly, it was unclear what the mission of such a commission would be.
- C. Create a King County Board or Commission for each unincorporated area community. This option was suggested by some UAC members, primarily as a way of having the County shoulder more of the administrative burdens. The trade-offs for residents include the County having greater control over the agenda and work items, which would need to be closely linked to King County operations. Generally, membership on county boards and commissions requires Executive appointment and Council confirmation; although a new appointment process could be created. In the current fiscal environment, the County does not have the resources to support six new Boards or Commissions<sup>19</sup>.
- D. Create a King County Planning Commission. The team considered this option because it has been considered on at least two occasions by other commissions and consultants, most recently by the 2007-2008 Charter Review Commission. Land use and comprehensive planning are among the most important issues to unincorporated area residents, and establishing a planning commission composed of unincorporated area representatives is one method of giving residents a greater say in county policy and regulatory matters.
- E. Identify and engage with many groups, including the existing UACs (without creating new Boards or Commissions). This option was seen as a viable way for the County to comply with the increased requirements for public engagement in the Strategic Plan, while continuing to build on the strong relationship with the UACs. Creating a new framework aimed at broadening the County's outreach might initially be more staff intensive, but if well coordinated could be accomplished with existing staff resources and within existing budgets.

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<sup>19</sup> Presumably, some number greater than six new Boards or Commissions would be needed to represent all unincorporated areas, including those which currently have no UAC.

In addition to these engagement methods, the team discussed some administrative and programmatic elements that could be incorporated with any of the above models. These include:

- Community Service Areas. Establish these areas as an organizing and coordinating service delivery in the unincorporated area.
- Community Grant Program. Such a program could be used to fund community activities, events and services in the unincorporated area.
- Community Service Centers. Examine service delivery statistics and consider whether changes are warranted.
- Community Liaison Program. Identify existing employees to serve as liaisons to specific unincorporated area communities.
- Maintain a central list of community-based organizations. Such a list could serve as a resource for public engagement staff, and ensure the County is engaging with the right groups on the right issues.

A more detailed examination of each of these options is included in an attachment to this report<sup>20</sup>

### **C. Executive Recommendation**

Consistent with the above analysis, the Executive recommends replacing the Citizen Participation Initiative with a new framework for public engagement in unincorporated areas beginning January 1, 2012. Under this framework, the County would establish between 8-12 unincorporated Community Service Areas with logical boundaries that together cover all of unincorporated King County.

Within each service area, the County would:

- Identify a single point of contact for residents
- Broadly advertise and host public meetings at least once each year
- Identify, engage, and follow up with community based organizations such as unincorporated area councils, community councils, community development associations and other groups
- Annually develop, in collaboration with residents and community based organizations, an interbranch work program to address the needs of unincorporated area residents, and for transmittal to the Council
- Create interbranch teams to better coordinate public outreach and service delivery across King County government
- Provide regular opportunities for unincorporated area residents to meet with King County elected officials and senior management
- Develop mechanisms to involve cities in public engagement and work programs that are within cities' potential annexation areas (for urban service areas only)

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<sup>20</sup> See Attachment J: Alternative frameworks for public engagement approaches

Under this proposal the County would:

- Continue to engage with UACs, but expand its engagement practices to include other incorporated areas, residents and groups
- Eliminate annual contracts with the UACs
- Provide one-time, transition funding to each UAC in the amount of \$2500
- Rescind Executive Order PRE-7-1 and legislation related to the Citizen Participation Initiative

#### **D. Timing of Implementation / Next Steps**

If this approach is favorable to the Council, it may be implemented in three phases:

1. Council adoption of the attached ordinances, establishing a framework for unincorporated area public engagement and providing one time transition funding to the UACs. (Spring, 2011)
2. Executive transmittal and Council adoption of any additional legislation necessary to implement the new public engagement framework concurrent with the 2012 budget.
3. Executive transmittal and Council adoption of any Comprehensive Plan policies necessary for implementation concurrent with the 2012 update to the Comprehensive Plan.

### **III. Relationship to Strategic Plan Implementation Work**

The Executive is in the process of establishing high level goal teams for each of the goals of the King County Strategic Plan, in order to facilitate accountability and coordination by all branches, departments, agencies and offices of county government regarding implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Public Engagement goal sets forth broad objectives and strategies to guide county activities across all branches and lines of business. The objectives and strategies are applicable to the unincorporated areas but do not specifically address the unique characteristics and needs of the unincorporated areas and the county's role as local service provider.

The Executive's recommended framework for public engagement in unincorporated areas in this report and attached ordinance will be integrated in to the work of the Public Engagement goal team.

The Public Engagement goal team will support the county's application of public engagement practices through:

- Articulating a operational vision for the Public Engagement Goal to facilitate implementation
- Inventorying current public engagement practices across the county



- Identifying immediate priorities and opportunities for improvement
- Developing appropriate performance measures to monitor performance and outcomes

#### **IV. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

- A. King County Executive Order PRE-7-1 (AEO)
- B. King County Council Motion 9643
- C. 2011 Recognized Unincorporated Area Councils
- D. List of meetings between Interdepartmental Team and UACs
- E. Rural/Local Subcommittee report (2007-2008 Charter Review Commission)
- F. King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office Legal Opinion
- G. Washington State Attorney General's Office findings
- H. Matrix of alternative frameworks for public engagement