



King County

Ron Sims

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September 15, 2008

The Honorable Laure Iddings
Mayor, City of Maple Valley
P.O. Box 320
Maple Valley, WA 98038

Dear Mayor Iddings:

Over the past few years, King County and the City of Maple Valley have been engaged in a debate over the future of King County's road maintenance site known as the Summit Pit property, which is completely surrounded by the city. Although this debate has been intense on both sides, I believe we both have a desire to ensure that future development of this property is done in a way that benefits the residents of Maple Valley and the residents of King County.

As you know, the Summit Pit site is currently an industrial operation. Mining, filling, waste recycling, and emergency operations take place in the middle residential Maple Valley. Our road crews are excavating, screening, crushing, sorting, and hauling sand and gravel used for road repair and construction in the middle of residential neighborhoods. Together we have the opportunity to transform this incompatible industrial site to a vibrant and livable community. This redevelopment could be instrumental in revitalizing the community, encouraging housing for future generations, and transforming this area of your city into a thriving neighborhood, building upon Maple Valley's history as a great place to live, work and play. I wish to join with the City of Maple Valley and move forward in a cooperative effort to make this vision a reality and to transform this site into a true community asset to the city and county.

I have no doubt that this site should become urban. It makes no sense to have a rural island surrounded by urban land. As stated above, the uses are incompatible and service delivery is inefficient.

As you know King County has been actively trying to sell the Summit Pit property for more than two years. I am happy to inform you that we have reached a deal with the Yarrow Bay Group which is subject to council approval. My office is finalizing a transmittal package to the King County Council with a proposed Purchase and Sale Agreement for their consideration and approval. Now that we have a buyer for the property, we are ready to fully engage with the City of Maple Valley. We are also pleased to learn that representatives from the Yarrow Bay Group have followed our recent request to meet with your staff and to engage them in discussions regarding the future of the Summit Pit site. We understand that these discussions are progressing and ongoing.



Interlocal Agreement for Joint Planning

The City of Maple Valley has requested that future plans for the Summit Pit property be developed through joint planning between the city and King County. I thoroughly agree with that request. King County is willing to immediately begin drafting a binding Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Maple Valley to establish the parameters for joint-planning of the site and for the future Pre-Annexation Agreement.

Revenue to Maple Valley

As part of the ILA, King County expects to set a planning date for annexation of the Summit Pit property. We are proposing that any planning for the property be a joint effort between the City of Maple Valley's Department of Community Development and King County's Department of Development and Environmental Services. Additionally, we would like to discuss the financial benefit to the city that the future development would render through the Real Estate Excise Tax, sales tax, permit fees, business licenses, and various other fees. A preliminary analysis of the development potential from King County's proposed land use redesignation and upzoning of the site (Urban R-8, UPD overlay) indicates a minimum net fiscal benefit of twenty million dollars. We believe these projected revenues should go to the City of Maple Valley. We will support timely annexation of the site so that Maple Valley can receive the fiscal benefits and begin to plan and prepare for providing necessary urban services.

We are prepared to address these issues and many more in a formal binding ILA to be approved by King County's and Maple Valley's respective councils as soon as possible. By planning for the future together, we can make sure that this site becomes a showcase as a truly unique and vibrant urban development.

Public Involvement

As part of the joint planning process, I believe that a robust and inclusive public involvement process with the local community is essential. This would include holding design charrettes, in addition to public meetings and open houses, to solicit the best and most innovative ideas from the residents of Maple Valley, the general public, and design professionals. The Summit Pit property presents a fabulous opportunity to show how to plan for, design, and build a walkable urban community – a community built for the 21st Century that serves Maple Valley residents well and builds upon the quality of life in Maple Valley.

The King County Comprehensive Plan

The 2008 Update to the King County Comprehensive Plan is now before the King County Council. The version of the plan that was sent from the Growth Management and Natural Resources Committee to the full council contains competing amendments. One would change the Summit Pit property land use designation from Rural to Urban with a zoning identification of R-8 and Urban Planned Development (UPD) overlay. The other amendment would require joint planning but would change the land use from Rural to Urban Residential, Medium Density. In an effort to combine the best of both amendments, I propose that the amendment should redesignate the land use from Rural to Urban with the R-8 zone and UPD overlay, but require joint planning to realize any urban development on the site.

Vision 2040

The following excerpts of the region's recently adopted plan for the future, Vision 2040, offers guidance to us as we embark on a joint planning process:

MPP-DP-14: Support the transformation of key underutilized lands, such as brownfields and greyfields, to higher density, mixed-use areas to complement the development of centers and enhancement of existing neighborhoods. (While this really refers to properties already in the UGA it is relevant for this conversation.)

MPP-DP-43: Design communities to provide an improved environment for walking and bicycling.

DP-Action-15: Countywide planning bodies, in cooperation with their cities, will develop approaches to reconcile different standards for development and infrastructure in unincorporated urban areas, especially in areas already identified for future annexation. Such approaches should acknowledge and address the impacts of development in unincorporated areas on adjacent cities. Such cooperative efforts should also establish mechanisms to ensure that appropriate forms, densities, and mixes of uses identified and addressed in development occurs prior to annexation.

Throughout this two-year process, you have requested that we enter into a joint planning process for the future development of the Summit Pit site. I hope you will join us in negotiating an ILA and corresponding joint planning agreement for the Summit Pit property so that everyone with a stake in the future of this site can provide insight and be heard. Further, I trust that you share my excitement about making this site a true asset to the City of Maple Valley and King County. It is not often in our careers that we are presented with such an opportunity and I want us to make the best of it.

I will have Rod Brandon, of my staff, contact you to begin our discussion. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ron Sims
King County Executive

cc: Maple Valley City Councilmembers
Metropolitan King County Councilmembers
Christy A. Todd, City Manager, City of Maple Valley
Kurt Triplett, Chief of Staff, Office of the King County Executive (OKCE)
Rod Brandon, Director of Environmental Sustainability, OKCE