

Fall City Subdivision Moratorium Work Plan Report

December 2023



King County

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I. Executive Summary

This report is transmitted in response to Ordinance 19613, adopted on May 16, 2023. The Ordinance directs the Executive to conduct a work program that analyzes development regulations affecting lot dimensions, building size, and building bulk on residentially zoned properties within the Rural Town of Fall City (Fall City). In addition, this work program evaluates land use patterns, architectural and natural features, and community-identified cultural assets within the Fall City. The purpose of the analysis is to determine if current development regulations are appropriate and consistent with adopted policies and law regarding rural character and rural growth. The Department of Local Services (DLS) developed this report.

Under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.390, King County is authorized to adopt a moratorium to implement the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), as was the case with Ordinance 19613, the ordinance that led to this work plan.^{1,2,3} Ordinance 19613 authorized a seven-month moratorium commencing upon its effective date. The moratorium is in effect from May 2023 to December 2023. During this time, the Executive completed this work plan to investigate whether additional regulation is necessary to preserve the rural character of Fall City. In accordance with Ordinance 19613, this work plan and its findings are to be attached to the ordinance adopting the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan (Subarea Plan) when transmitted to the King County Council (Council).

Fall City is an unincorporated rural area in King County designated as a Rural Town in the Comprehensive Plan.⁴ King County serves as the local government for Fall City, which is located northeast of the City of Issaquah, northwest of the City of Snoqualmie, and south of the City of Carnation (see Figure 1). Fall City is known locally and throughout the region as a small rural town.

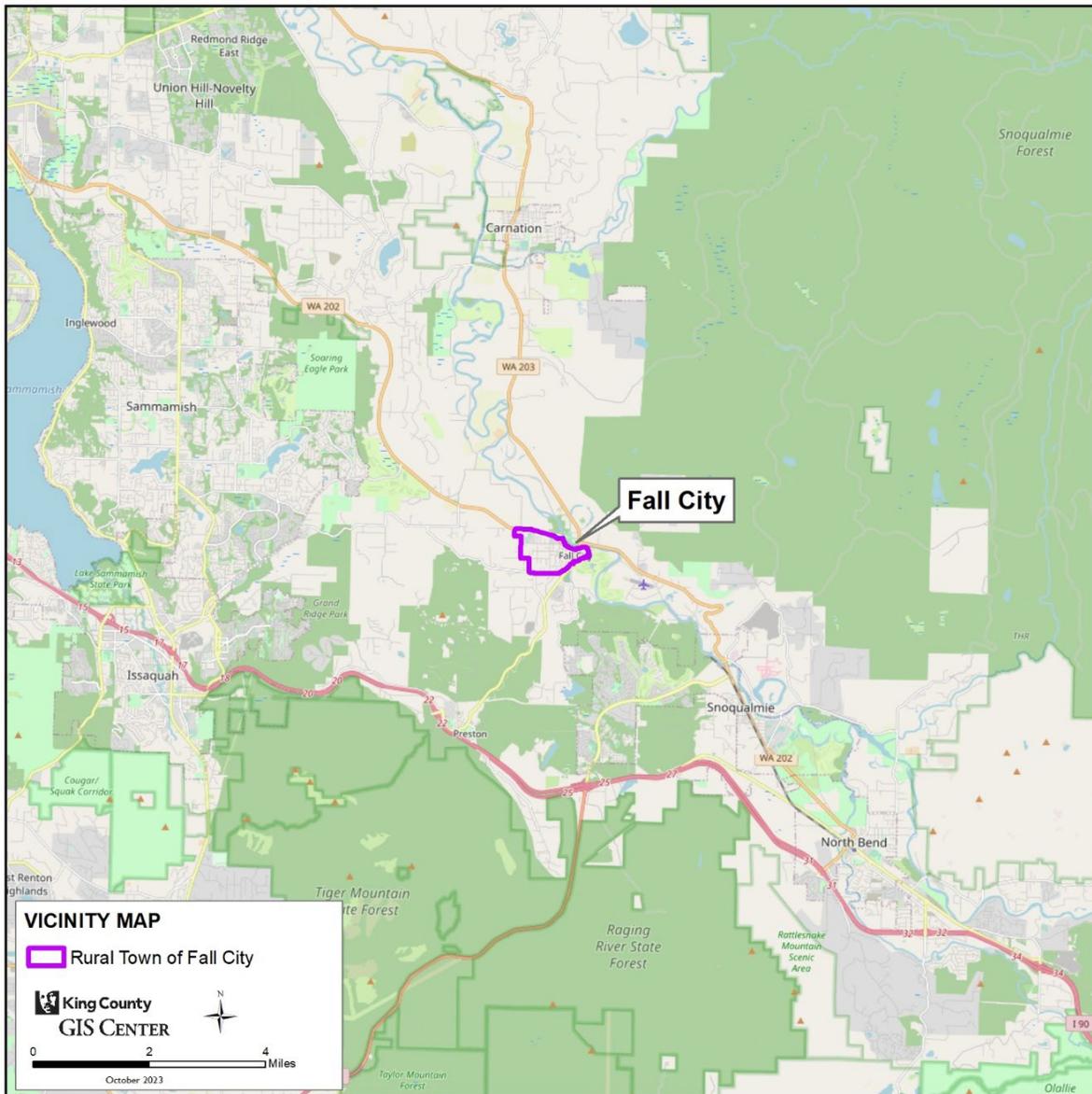
¹ Link to [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 36.70A.390](#)

² *The Growth Management Act refers to the guiding law for growth and development in Washington State.*

³ Link to [Ordinance 19613](#)

⁴ *Rural towns, as defined by the King County Comprehensive Plan, are unincorporated towns governed directly by King County. The purpose of the Rural Town designations within the Comprehensive Plan are to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in Rural Areas and to allow modest growth of residential and economic uses to keep them economically viable into the future.*

Figure 1. Fall City Vicinity Map



During the period of the development moratorium, the King County Department of Local Services (DLS) investigated whether additional regulation is necessary to preserve the rural character of Fall City. From that work, the Executive recommends development regulations to:

- better meet the intent of relevant King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) and King County Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan) policies, and
- address the concerns of the Fall City community and strive to preserve the rural character of the Rural Town.

The recommended regulations are in the form of a P-suffix development condition included in the Amendments to Land Use and Zoning Maps, which is Attachment C to Proposed Ordinance 2023-XXXX.

P-suffix development conditions apply to specific properties and generally limit the ability for land development.⁵ The P-suffix regulation recommended was informed through analyses and community engagement. One analysis method was a review of development regulations. King County regulations were analyzed, in addition to state and federal regulations to ensure DLS staff understood the full scope of regulations affecting subdivision development in Fall City. Regulations analyzed include the RCW, the Washington Administrative Code (WAC), United States Environmental Protection Agency Fact Sheet 13, King County Board of Health Code (BOH Code), King County Stormwater Code - King County Code (KCC) Chapter 9.04, the King County Stormwater Design Manual (KCSWDM), and King County Zoning Code - KCC Title 21A. The CPPs and the Comprehensive Plan were also reviewed to provide a deeper context of the policy framework.

A quantitative and qualitative analysis of rural character specific to Fall City was completed by DLS, with a focus on three sites representing various time periods of Fall City residential development. Framework, a consulting firm with an architectural background was hired to assist in this analysis.⁶ The sites analyzed include a 19th-century historic neighborhood, a post-World War II (post-war) neighborhood, and a recent development. The 19th-century and post-war neighborhoods represent the historic character of Fall City. The recent development is a manifestation of the current development regulations.

Input from the community was gathered regarding what they feel are their cultural assets and their ideas of rural character. These results are a culmination from both robust community engagement for over two years for the Subarea Plan and engagement specific to this work plan, specifically one virtual event, one in-person presentation and discussion, and emails.

DLS staff compared their findings of the analysis of the regulations, the community’s ideas of community character, and the findings of the site analysis to determine if additional regulations were needed. This effort resulted in the development of proposed P-suffix regulations. The purpose of the recommended regulations is to better align new development with the established rural character of Fall City, while protecting property rights and allowing reasonable development that contributes positively to the community. Table 1 summarizes the recommended P-suffix regulation.

Table 1. Recommended P-Suffix Regulations

Recommended Amendment	P-Suffix Amendment Basis
Establish criteria for creating more common open space.	To provide more outdoor recreation and open space, a regulation is recommended to guarantee that when recreation space is required, it will be an outdoor facility.
Modify dimensional standards to reduce building mass and create more space between buildings.	The recommended P-suffix regulation includes dimensional standards that would reduce building mass and increase yard setbacks, increasing more space between buildings. A new minimum lot size is recommended. The recommended larger minimum lot size of 12,500 square feet is the minimum lot size needed for an on-site septic system, as this area does not have access to a municipal wastewater system. On a 12,500 square foot

⁵ For more detail on P-Suffix regulations please see KCC 21A.04.15 and 21A.38.030. Link to [KCC Title 21A](#).

⁶ Link to [Framework \(weareframework.com\)](#)

Recommended Amendment	P-Suffix Amendment Basis
	<p>lot, minimum lot width would be increased from 30 feet to 60 feet. Minimum street setback would be increased from 10 feet to 15 feet. Minimum interior setback would be increased from 5 feet to 10 feet. Maximum impervious surface would be reduced from 55 percent to 40 percent.</p> <p>An additional 5% impervious surface percentage would be provided for driveways that lead to detached garages set beyond the house footprint. This encourages the use of detached, rather than attached garages, which reduces visual mass and driveway width, avoids having garage doors be the main architectural feature, and opens sightlines from the street.</p>
<p>Buildings should be proportional to parcel sizes at a scale similar to older developments of Fall City.</p>	<p>The recommended P-suffix regulations require larger setbacks, less impervious surface coverage, and reduced height. Detached garages are incentivized to reduce visual bulk, resulting in the development of homes that are proportional to parcel size at a scale similar to older developments in Fall City.</p>
<p>Encourage keeping stormwater on-site.</p>	<p>The recommended P-suffix regulations require a minimum lot size, rather than a maximum density. Treating stormwater on individual lots dramatically reduces the size of stormwater facility needed, allowing for dispersion of stormwater, versus the creation of engineered facilities such as vaults.</p>

II. Background

A. Department Overview

DLS works to promote the well-being of residents and communities in unincorporated King County by seeking to understand their needs and delivering responsive government services. This includes conducting outreach for and developing the County's subarea plans, which are community-driven plans that outline a 20-year vision and implementing policies for each of King County's six rural Community Service Areas and five large urban Potential Annexation Areas. Within DLS, the Permitting Division provides land use, building, and fire regulatory and operating permits; code enforcement; and a limited number of business licenses in unincorporated areas of the County.

B. Key Context

Fall City is an unincorporated rural area of King County, designated as a Rural Town in the Comprehensive Plan.^{7, 8} King County serves as the local government for Fall City, which is located northeast of the City of Issaquah, northwest of the City of Snoqualmie, and south of the City of Carnation. Fall City is composed primarily of a residentially zoned area, and a small commercial area. The residential portion of the rural town is zoned R-4, which is a medium-density residential zone. The purpose of the R-4 zone is to implement Comprehensive Plan goals and policies for housing quality, diversity, and affordability by providing for a mix of predominantly single detached dwelling units and other development types, with a variety of sizes. R-4 zoning is found in Rural Towns as well as within the Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) of the County. A recent development in Fall City consists of homes located only a few feet from each other, with minimal open space between homes. The density of homes in this subdivision is much greater than other parts of Fall City. The development looks like a development one would expect to find in a suburb within the UGA, rather than one in a rural town that should represent rural character. This development is the inspiration for the moratorium in effect for Fall City as of May 2023.

Regulatory Overview for Growth Planning

The guiding law for growth and development in Washington State is the GMA.⁹ The GMA requires the fastest growing cities and counties in the state to complete comprehensive plans and development regulations to guide future growth. The plans and regulations must protect critical environmental areas and conserve natural resource lands such as farms and forests. Comprehensive plans provide a vision and a blueprint for the future growth of a county or city. They provide goals and policies for elements of growth including land use, housing, transportation, and utilities. The goals and policies of a comprehensive plan must reflect multicounty planning policies (MPPs) and countywide planning policies (CPPs).

⁷ Rural towns, as defined by the King County Comprehensive Plan, are unincorporated towns governed directly by King County. The purpose of the Rural Town designations within the Comprehensive Plan are to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in Rural Areas and to allow modest growth of residential and economic uses to keep them economically viable into the future.

⁸ The King County Comprehensive Plan is the guiding policy document for land use and development regulations in unincorporated King County, and for regional services throughout the County including transit, sewers, parks, trails, and open space. It is adopted as a requirement of state law. [Revised Code of Washington Chapter 36.70A](#)

⁹ Link to [GMA Laws and Rules - Washington State Department of Commerce](#)

MPPs are regional policies that provide a region’s plan for growth. The Puget Sound Regional Council provides these plans in a document titled VISION 2050 that guides the growth of the central Puget Sound region including King County.¹⁰ The multicounty planning policies provide a framework for updating countywide planning policies.

The primary purpose of countywide planning policies is to ensure consistency between the comprehensive plans of cities and counties sharing a common border or related regional issues.¹¹ Subarea plans clarify, supplement, or implement comprehensive plan policies for a specific area or community. Zoning code and development regulations provide restrictions on land use and must be consistent with subarea plans and a comprehensive plan, both of which must be consistent with the CPPs and MPPs. There are various types of regulations and zoning codes including development review procedures codes, interim zoning ordinances, and moratoria. Unincorporated areas of King County, such as Fall City, are governed by the Comprehensive Plan and individual adopted subarea plans.

Subarea plans in King County are adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, addressing smaller geographies within King County and establish policies specific to the needs of those communities. Policies in the Comprehensive Plan and subarea plans are implemented through the KCC, which includes development regulations, and through other service-oriented plans and the County budget.

Though subarea plans are optional under the GMA, King County has chosen to complete subarea plans for the six rural Community Service Areas and five major Potential Annexation Areas as a part of the Comprehensive Plan.^{12,13,14} The Comprehensive Plan and its subarea plans must meet the GMA’s requirements, which include focusing development in urban areas and reducing sprawl.¹⁵ The Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Community Service Area Subarea Plan (Subarea Plan) covers the area of Fall City.

¹⁰ [Link to VISION 2050](#)

¹¹ [Link to King County Countywide Planning Policies](#)

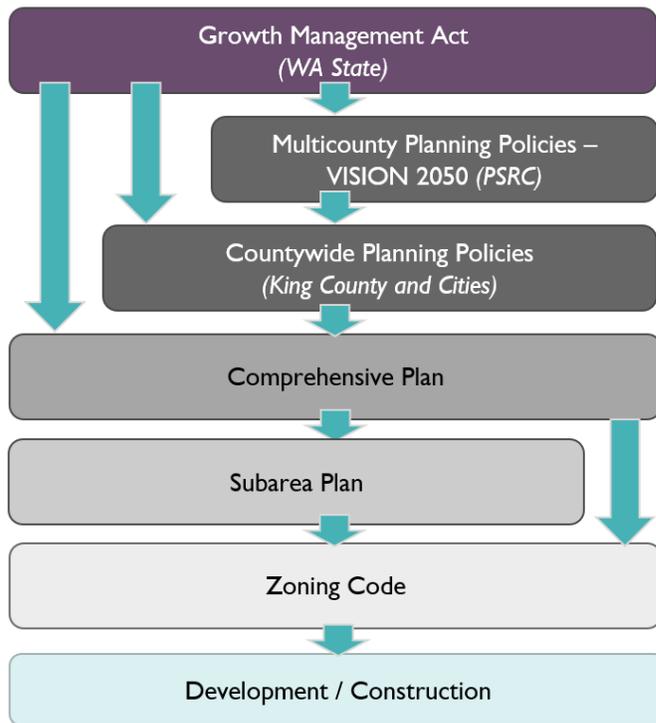
¹² [Link to King County Code 2.15.055.B.](#)

¹³ [Link to Community Service Areas - King County, Washington](#)

¹⁴ *Term definitions can be found in this link - [King County Comprehensive Plan](#)*

¹⁵ [Link to Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.020](#)

Figure 2. Regulatory Framework Under the Washington State Growth Management Act



Regulatory and Policy Background Specific to Ordinance 19613

State law under the GMA authorizes local governments to adopt a moratorium on land development.¹⁶ Moratoria halt specific actions for a specified amount of time, such as submitting an application for a residential subdivision.

King County is interested in evaluating the size and scale of residential development in Fall City Rural Town to ensure that the range of development is compatible with the County’s goals for the Rural Area and is consistent with rural character. In contrast to past land segregations where each home has an on-site septic systems and stormwater management, a recent subdivision used a large on-site sewage system (LOSS) and shared stormwater tracts, which resulted in smaller residential lots and houses tightly clustered. This development pattern contrasts the rural character of the area, which is what the GMA was established, in part, to protect. The Council issued a moratorium on acceptance of residential subdivision applications in Fall City, to assess whether relevant zoning and development regulations are consistent with the GMA, the Comprehensive Plan, and other environmental land use laws. The moratorium is for a seven-month period from May 2023 to December 2023, providing DLS staff with time to investigate whether additional regulation is necessary. This report was prepared as part of that investigation.

According to the RCW 36.70A.030, ‘Rural character’ refers to the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:

¹⁶ Link to [Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.390](#)

- A. In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- B. That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
- C. That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
- D. That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
- E. That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- F. That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
- G. That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas.¹⁷

RCW 36.70A.030 defines "rural development" as:

...development outside the urban growth area and outside agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170.¹⁸ Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential densities, including clustered residential development, at levels that are consistent with the preservation of rural character and the requirements of the rural element of a comprehensive plan. Rural development does not refer to agriculture or forestry activities that may be conducted in rural areas.

King County Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies

Fall City is one of the three Rural Towns within the Rural Area geography identified by the Comprehensive Plan.¹⁹ The Comprehensive Plan states the purposes of Rural Town designations are "to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in Rural Areas and to allow modest growth of residential and economic uses to keep them economically viable into the future." Rural Towns "are considered part of the rural area for the purposes of the Growth Management Act, do not provide significant growth capacity, and are not subject to the growth targets adopted for the Urban Growth Area."²⁰

The Rural Area policy section goal statement in the CPPs is "the Rural Area Geography is stable and the level and pattern of growth within it provide for a variety of landscapes and open space, maintains diverse low-density communities, and supports rural economic activities based on sustainable stewardship of land."²¹ Although there are no growth targets identified in the CPPs for the rural area, recent development trends show minimal growth is expected to occur in King County's rural area.²²

The Comprehensive Plan defines "rural growth" as "growth that is scaled to be compatible with and maintains the traditional character of the Rural Area." Comprehensive Plan Policy R-201 established a framework for rural character in King County, stating that "it is a fundamental objective of the Comprehensive Plan to maintain the character of its designated Rural Area" and "in order to implement

¹⁷ [Link to Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 36.70A.030](#)

¹⁸ [Link to Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 36.70A.030](#)

¹⁹ [Link to King County Comprehensive Plan](#)

²⁰ [Link to King County Comprehensive Plan](#)

²¹ [Link to King County Countywide Planning Policies](#)

²² [Link to King County Urban Growth Capacity Report](#)

the Growth Management Act, it is necessary to define the development patterns that are considered rural, historical or traditional and do not encourage urban growth or create pressure for urban facilities and service.” Policy R-201 outlines attributes associated with rural character and the Rural Area that the King County’s land use regulations and development standards must protect and enhance.

Comprehensive Plan Policy R-301 states that a low growth rate is desirable for the Rural Area, including Rural Towns, to comply with the GMA, to prevent sprawl and the overburdening of rural services, to reduce need for capital expenditures, to maintain rural character, to protect the environment, and to reduce transportation-related gas emissions. Policy R-302, states that residential development in Rural Towns should occur at a variety of densities and housing types that are compatible with the maintenance of historic resources and community character.

[Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Community Service Area Subarea Plan](#)

The King County Executive transmitted the Subarea Plan and an update of the Comprehensive Plan in December 2023, with anticipated adoption by the Council in December 2024. As part of the Subarea Plan, the Executive evaluated the size and scale of residential development in Fall City to ensure that the range of development is compatible with the County's goals for the Rural Area and is consistent with rural character.

[Interim Zoning Ordinance](#)

The Council is contemplating the adoption of an interim zoning ordinance (Proposed Ordinance 2023-0202), which would commence at the expiration of the moratorium adopted in Ordinance 19613 and would end at the anticipated adoption of the Subarea Plan.^{23,24} The interim zoning ordinance includes provisions for minimum lot size and setbacks that are intended to ensure consistency with rural character on an interim basis while the County evaluates whether additional regulation is necessary.

C. Report Methodology

DLS staff conducted the analysis and community engagement, identified recommendations, and developed this report with the help of a consultant, Framework. Framework is a consulting firm that specializes in planning, urban design and architecture.²⁵

The recommendations in this report were informed by community engagement with residents of Fall City, review of development regulations, and an analysis of three development sites in Fall City that span three development periods from the early 19th-century to the 2020s. This report is also informed by conversations with public health authorities from King County and the State of Washington, the Comprehensive Plan, the BOH Code, the WAC, and the RCW.

[Community Engagement Specific to this Work Plan](#)

Engagement with Fall City on the Subarea Plan lasted almost two and a half years, and consisted of many activities, such as: focus groups, community meetings, virtual surveys, and individual discussions with community members. Beyond engagement associated with the Subarea Plan, DLS staff and the consultants conducted engagement activities with the community specific to this work plan. On August

²³ An interim Zoning Ordinance is a set of temporary development regulations that are in effect while new regulations are being developed.

²⁴ Link to [Proposed Ordinance 2023-0202](#)

²⁵ Link to [Framework \(weareframework.com\)](#)

21, 2023, DLS Staff and the consultant team hosted an online open house to share the preliminary findings of this report and collect community input. This was followed by an in-person presentation and discussion at a monthly Fall City Community Association meeting on September 5, 2023. In total, approximately 40 community members attended the two meetings in-person or virtually and shared their thoughts. DLS invited Community members follow-up with staff through email; comments were received through email from five community members.

The community engagement process identified four community priorities for future residential growth, including:

1. Providing open sightlines and proper proportions of homes to size of lots
2. Provision of usable open space within a development
3. Retaining trees
4. Maintaining neighborhood connectivity

III. Report Requirements

This section is organized to align with the requirements for this Report outlined in Ordinance 19613, Section 2.C.

A. Describe all development regulations that affect lot dimensions, building size, and bulk for residentially zoned properties in the Rural Town of Fall City

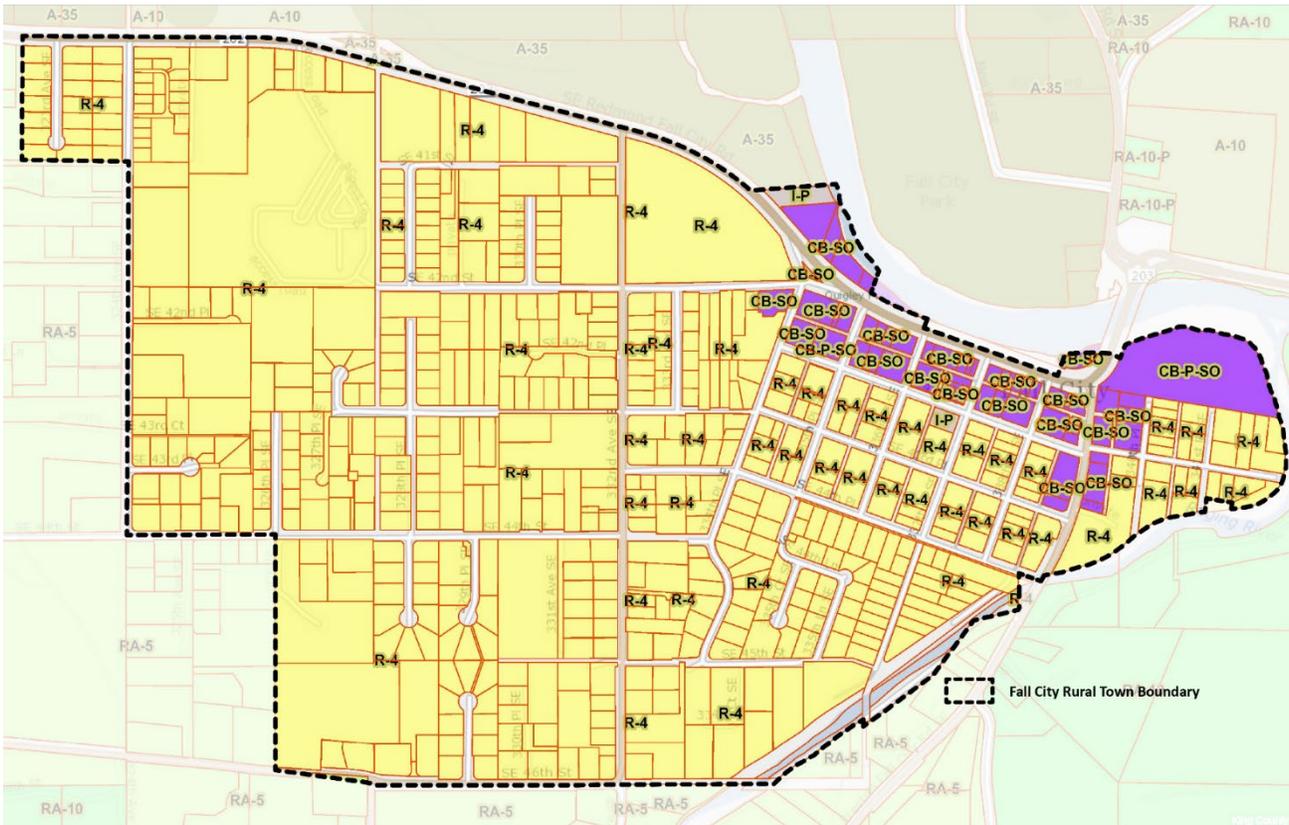
This sub section summarizes the current development regulations, as of 2023, affecting lot dimensions and building size and bulk for residentially zoned properties in Fall City. This includes regulations from the KCC, BOH Code, and RCW.

Per Ordinance 19613:

- Lot dimensions may include but are not limited to minimum building lot size, lot width, and minimum and maximum density.
- Building size and bulk may include but are not limited to minimum building lot size, lot width, and minimum and maximum density. Building size and bulk may include but are not limited to base and maximum height, impervious surface maximums, on-site septic standards, or landscaping or stormwater requirements that affect the overall size and scale of buildings and structures.

The residential portion of Fall City, outside of its commercial district, is comprised entirely of a zone titled R-4. The purpose of the R-4 zone is to provide a mix of predominantly single detached residential dwelling units. Residential development within Fall City outside of its commercial district is subject to the regulations for the R-4 zone. This study is considering whether the R-4 development regulations are preserving the rural character of Fall City. The R-4 zone classification is used in other parts of unincorporated King County (urban areas and other Rural Towns), and most of the standards are not specific to Fall City. The R-4 zone in Fall City has a maximum of four dwelling units per acre and no minimum density. Parcel sizes are determined during development based on gross density, with land for common open space, stormwater facilities, and community drain fields counting towards the project density. The gross density approach therefore allows for smaller parcel sizes. Other standards applicable to the R-4 zone in Fall City are summarized below.

Figure 3. Fall City Zoning Map



King County Code Chapter 21A.12 Development Standards²⁶

- Maximum density four dwelling units per acre
- No minimum density
- Minimum lot area for construction: 2,500 square feet
- Minimum Street Setback: 10 feet
- Minimum Interior Setback: 5 feet
 - These standards may be modified under the provisions for zero-lot-line and townhouse developments
 - Garages, carports and fenced parking areas must be set back 25-feet from the property line when using a joint use driveway
- Minimum Lot Width: 30 feet
- Base Height: 35 feet; Max Height: 75 feet with additional setback
- Maximum Impervious Surface: 55 percent of lot area
 - Impervious surface does not include access easements serving neighboring property and driveways to the extent that they extend beyond the street setback due to location within an access panhandle or due to the application of KCC requirements to locate features over which the applicant does not have control

²⁶ Link to [King County Code Title 21.A](#)

King County Code (KCC) 21A.08.030 Residential Land Uses

One accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is allowed per single detached home or townhouse. In most circumstances ADUs cannot exceed 1,000 square feet. They cannot exceed base height unless constructed wholly within an existing dwelling unit. Off-street parking is not required for ADUs.

King County Code (KCC) 21A.18.030 Computation of Required Off-Street Parking Spaces

Single detached house/townhouse – 2 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit

- Apartment studio units - 1.2 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit
- Apartment one-bedroom units - 1.5 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit
- Apartment two-bedroom units - 1.7 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit
- Apartment three-bedroom units or larger - 2 off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit

King County Code (KCC) 21A.14.180 On-Site Recreation – Space Required

KCC 21A.14.180 requires on-site recreation space for residential developments. Each recreation space is owned and managed by the homeowners association (HOA). Recreation space may provide amenities such as playground equipment, sport courts, sport fields, picnic areas, and trails. KCC 21A.14.180.C.9. states that any recreation space located outdoors (except for recreation space that is part of some stormwater tracts) must be located adjacent to, and be accessible by, trail or walkway to any existing or planned municipal, county, or regional park, public open space, or trail system. This requirement results in connectivity with the neighborhood. KCC 21A.14.185 allows a fee-in-lieu of on-site recreation space if the recreation space provided within a county park in the vicinity will be of greater benefit to the prospective residents of the development.

King County Board of Health Code (BOH Code) 13.24.020

This Code outlines the requirements for small on-site septic systems (OSS).

- The minimum lot size when creating new lots using OSS must be established by the health officer based on the information submitted and any on-site inspections by the health officer. These requirements include:
 - All lots created must be at least 12,500 square feet and shall not exceed a maximum flow density of 1,570 gallons of sewage per acre per day.
 - Lots utilizing an individual private water source must be at least five acres.
- Factors are listed that may be considered when determining the type of on-site system, connection to sewers, or establishing minimum lot size area. These factors include soil conditions, drainage, setbacks from property lines, water supplies, rights of way, easements, and more.

Public Health – Seattle & King County On-Site Sewage/Septic System Program

According to the Public Health – Seattle & King County's On-site Sewage/Septic System Program, landscaping on or near the on-site septic tank should be avoided to make pumping and monitoring visits easier.²⁷ It is a best management practice (BMP) to not place plants over the septic system as they may be disturbed or destroyed with repair work. The septic tank, drain field, and reserve area should be clear

²⁷ Link to [WAC 246-272A-0238\(1\)](#) and [KCBOH 13.36.030\(E\)](#)

of facilities and play structure such as decks, patios, sports courts, or utility storage sheds, swing sets, sand boxes, or parked vehicles.²⁸

Care must be taken when a home uses an on-site septic system or is in a community that shares a LOSS.²⁹ It is imperative that fats, grease, and oils do not enter the system.³⁰ Households must spread out their water use throughout the day so the system is not overwhelmed, and heavy water usage fixtures such as soaking tubs should not be installed in houses with septic systems.³¹ Household size must not exceed the designed capacity of the septic system.³²

Washington State Department of Health – Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Chapter 246-272B³³

The WAC regulates LOSS. The regulations in WAC Chapter 247-272B can impact the rural character of developments by determining where a LOSS can be located within a development site, and by limiting the density of a development due to the amount of flow the system is able to accommodate. There are horizontal setbacks that determine the distance a LOSS must be sited from specific soil types. There are also vertical setbacks that require the LOSS to be sited specific distances from specific soil types as well as the water table. LOSS systems serve an entire project site, and flows are limited based on the size and soil type of the project area. For example, the limit for project areas with certain soil types is 900 gallons per day per acre (GPD/acre), while the limit for project areas with other soil types could be 1,475 GPD/acre.

King County Code (KCC) Chapter 9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control

Stormwater requirements found in the King County Surface Water Design Manual (KCSWDM) do not limit the size or density of lots, but County requirements to mitigate stormwater runoff may limit the use of a lot.³⁴ When stormwater thresholds are exceeded, the developer is required to install flow control best BMPs or flow control facilities, such as stormwater ponds, detention vaults, etc. The placement of flow control BMPs or facilities may reduce the area available for development. Section 1.2.2.3 (page 1-36) of the KCSWDM requires the screening of aboveground stormwater facilities, making these visual amenities. Aboveground stormwater facilities such as ponds sometimes serve as wildlife habitat, and stormwater vaults are often used as pocket parks offering amenities such as sport courts or children's play equipment. The most common thresholds that would result in a Fall City subdivision mitigating for stormwater runoff are:

- a. The development installs or replaces more than 2,000 square feet of impervious surface on the lot.
- b. The development installs or replaces more than 5,000 square feet of impervious surface on the lot.

²⁸ Link to [KCBOH 13.60.005\(A\)\(6\)](#)

²⁹ Link to [KCBOH 13.60.005\(A\) and KCBOH 13.60.020\(D\)](#)

³⁰ Link to [USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Technology Fact Sheet 13](#)

³¹ Link to [USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual \(Subsurface wastewater infiltration system design in a restricted area page 5-28\), USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual 3.3.3 \(Variability of wastewater flow page 3-7\), and USEPA Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Manual 3.5.1 \(Minimizing residential wastewater volume page 3-12\)](#)

³² Link to [KCBOH 13.60.005\(A\)\(7\)](#)

³³ Link to [Large on-site sewage system regulations](#)

³⁴ Link to [King County Surface Water Design Manual](#)

If a development installs or replaces more than 2,000 square feet of impervious surface (threshold a), flow control BMPs are required. If a development installs or replaces more than 5,000 square feet of impervious surface (threshold b), in addition to flow control BMPs one or more flow control facilities is required. When threshold b is exceeded, an exception to providing a flow control facility is available. Projects may qualify for this exception if hydrologic modeling shows that stormwater runoff after development is only slightly more than the runoff existing prior to the development. The details of this exception can be found in the KCSWDM. Impervious surfaces on a lot are also controlled by zoning standards.

B. Evaluate Rural Character, consistent with the Growth Management Act definition, of Rural Town of Fall City through an evaluation of typical land use patterns, architectural and natural features, and community-identified cultural assets

The consultant, Framework, a firm that specializes in planning, urban design and architecture, assisted DLS staff with analyses of the residential areas of Fall City. Framework analyzed land development patterns, landscaping, architecture, and cultural assets including natural features in Fall City to evaluate the rural character. Based on that data, they analyzed whether recent development in the area is consistent with such character.

As noted above in the Key Context section, rural character as defined in the Comprehensive Plan refers to patterns of land use and development that includes features such as open space and vegetation predominating over the built environment, that fosters traditional rural lifestyles, and that prevents the conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low density development. Please refer to the discussion of rural character in the Background section of this report.

Methodology and Reference of Sites Selection for Residential Development Study

Framework performed a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the residential patterns for a study area consisting of three example neighborhood sites in Fall City within the R-4 zone. The purpose of the analysis was to compare the existing development patterns against the current development regulation requirements. This was done to evaluate typical land use patterns and architectural features in Fall City. This study is used as a base to recommend potential development regulation amendments.

The three example sites were selected based on the Fall City Historic Residential District Report (King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission, February 2002), input from the community, a review of recent developments, and the King County Geographic Information System.³⁵ These sites represent different development periods in Fall City: the early 19th-century historic neighborhood (Site 1), the post-war neighborhood (Site 2), and the recent development (Site 3).

³⁵ [Link to Landmarks Commission - Historic Preservation - King County, Washington](#)

Figure 4. Study Areas Zoning

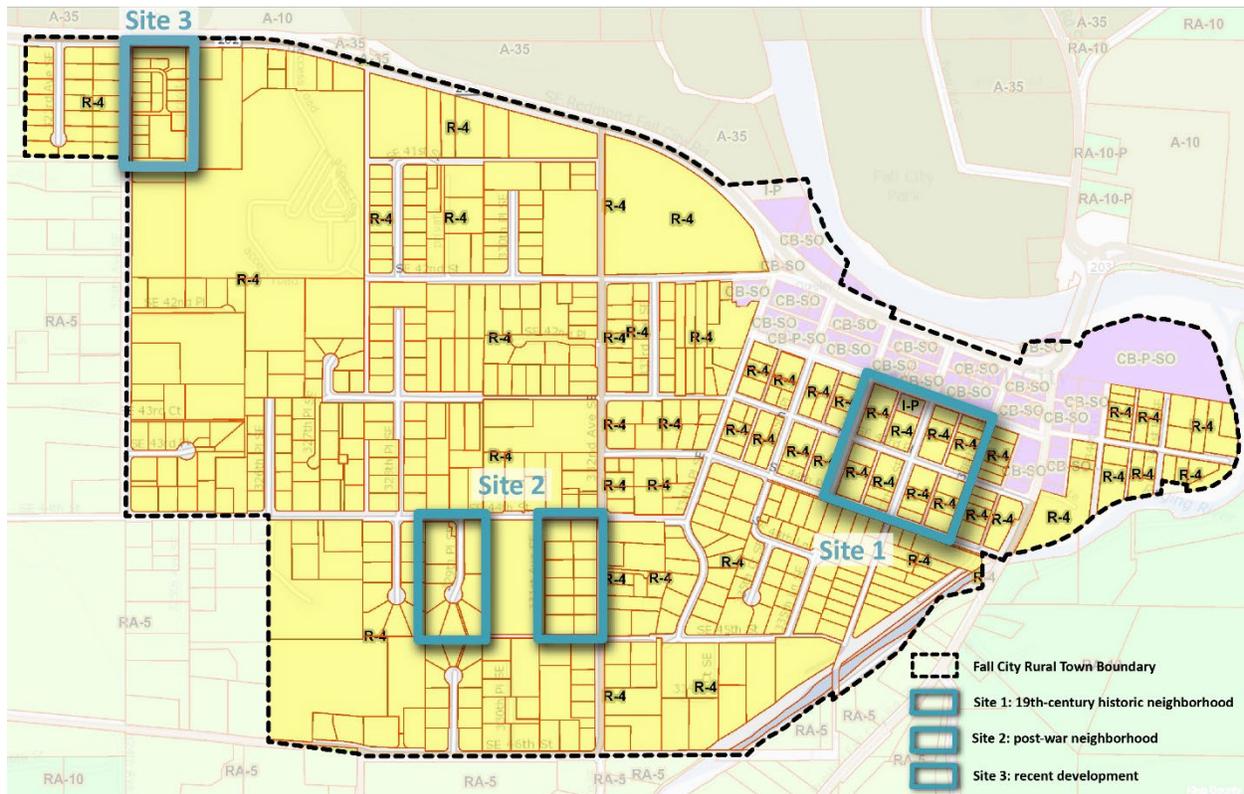


Table 2. Fall City Lot Size Analysis

	R-4 Zoned area overall	Site 1 19th-century historic neighborhood	Site 2 Post-war neighborhood	Site 3 Recent development
Lot amount	552	20	19	20
Median lot size	0.32 acres (14,094 sf*)	0.24 acres (10,500 sf*)	0.38 acres (16,474 sf*)	0.14 acres (6,299 sf*)
Median FAR**	0.11	0.1	0.15	0.58
Range FAR	(0.00-0.61)	(0.04-0.42)	(0.05-0.26)	(0.41-0.7)
Gross density (du/ac)**	1.81	2.1	2.07	3.40
Median net density (Range net density) (du/ac)**	3.11 (0.14-8.82)	4.15 (1.56-6.22)	2.64 (1.17-6.43)	6.95 (5.19-8.82)
Average building footprint	1,336 sf*	1,070 sf*	1,501 sf*	1,216 sf*

*SF = square feet

**FAR = floor area ratio

***du/ac = density units per acre

Site 1 Analysis

Site 1 is located within the Fall City historic residential district, which was designated as a Community Landmark District by the King County Landmarks Commission in 2002. The 15-block district was originally platted in 1887 and contains 32 buildings that the commission identified as "contributing buildings," representative of the early twentieth-century rural character. Specifically:

- Lots are of various size
- Buildings placed on large open lots, set back 20 feet from the street
- Architectural styles vary between Late Victorian, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman/bungalow
- Building heights range from one to two stories, and frequently include, small, detached garages or barns on the rear alley side or adjacent side of the street
- There are few short segments of paved sidewalk along the public streets throughout the Site 1 neighborhood
- Alleys are unique to this area of Fall City and are wide, providing access to the rear yards and allowing for rear detached garages
- Open spaces on these lots are generous, open, and continuous, allowing views into and across property lines

Table 3. Site 1 Existing Conditions of Built Form: Lot and Property Characteristics

Net site density	3.2 du/ac*
Gross site density	2.1 du/ac*
Median lot size	0.24 acres (10,500 sf**)
Typical lot dimensions	140 feet x 100 feet; 140 feet x 75 feet
Average lot coverage	10.07%
Building height	1 story
Average building footprint	1,062 sf**
Typical buildings	Various architecture style, gabled roof
Landscape feature	Tall mature trees
ROW width***	75 feet
Sidewalks	Yes (no curbs)
Alley access	Yes
Street parking	Yes

*du/ac = density units per acre

**sf = square feet

***ROW = right of way

Figure 5. Site 1 Aerial View



Generous landscape and tree coverage.

Wide alleys provide access to the rear yards and view picturesque at mid-block.

Figure 6. Various Building Styles - Historic Victorian Style Building



Figure 7. Various Building Styles - Cottage with Attached Garage



Figure 8. Wide Paved Street without Curbs



Figure 9. Detached Garages or Barns on the Rear



Site 2 Analysis

Site 2 was developed in the post-war era in Fall City, with buildings constructed over time, primarily between the 1960s and 1990s.

- Most of the buildings are large, one-story structures situated on generously sized, wide lots, typically around 100 feet wide
- Homes feature ample setbacks, ranging from 20 to 40 feet
- The neighborhood is characterized by large, mature trees, contributing to its rural and natural landscape
- Informal, decorative plantings along the frontage and hedge corners are frequent
- Streets have a sidewalk area designated by a white stripe on one side
- Although the neighborhood is connected to major roads, connectivity is impacted by the presence of a cul-de-sac

Table 4. Site 2 Existing Conditions of Built Form: Lot and Property Characteristics

Net site density	2.57 du/ac*
Gross site density	2.07 du/ac*
Median lot size	0.38 acres (16,474 sf**)
Typical lot dimensions	160 feet x 100 feet
Average lot coverage	9.08%
Building height	1 story
Average building footprint	1,500 sf**
Typical buildings	One- and two-story ranch homes, gable and valley roof
Landscape feature	Large mature trees
ROW width***	60 feet, 80 feet
Sidewalks	Yes (no curbs)
Alley access	No
Street parking	Yes

*du/ac = density units per acre

**sf = square feet

***ROW = right of way

Figure 10. Site 2 Aerial View



Figure 11. Small Cottage on Open Lot



Figure 12. One-Story Ranch Home with Attached Garage



Figure 13. Cul-de-Sac



Figure 14. Lush Evergreen Trees in this Area



Site 3 Analysis

Site 3 is the recent subdivision development that uses the LOSS system, located on the northwest side of Fall City along Redmond Fall City Rd SE (SR 202). It subdivided an original 4.25-acre parcel to create 17 single-family homes, featuring a shared open space on the south side (41,238 square feet) and a stormwater pond (24,632 square feet) on the north side of the site.

- The built form on this site is characterized by large buildings on small, narrow lots, ranging from 5,000 to 8,000 square feet, with lot widths varying from 50 to 60 feet
- All buildings were constructed during the same period, and their architectural styles are repetitive, with most being the same floor plan varying only by color
- The road has a six-foot-wide marked sidewalk area
- Development uses minimal 10-foot setbacks, maximizing the building area with little area for landscape at the front yard
- A 12-foot landscape buffer fronts the 324th Avenue parcel line

Table 5. Site 3 Existing Conditions of Built Form: Lot and Property Characteristics

Net site density	7.08 du/ac*
Gross site density	3.40 du/ac*
Median lot size	0.14 acres (6,299 sf**)
Typical lot dimensions	105 feet x 50 feet; 107 feet x 60 feet
Average lot coverage	20.16%
Building height	2 story
Average building footprint	1,200 sf**
Typical buildings	Two-story ranch style
Landscape feature	Small lawn with some short shrubs
ROW width***	90 feet
Sidewalks	Yes (no curbs)
Alley access	No
Street parking	No

**du/ac = density units per acre

**sf = square feet

***ROW = right of way

Figure 15. Site 3 Aerial View

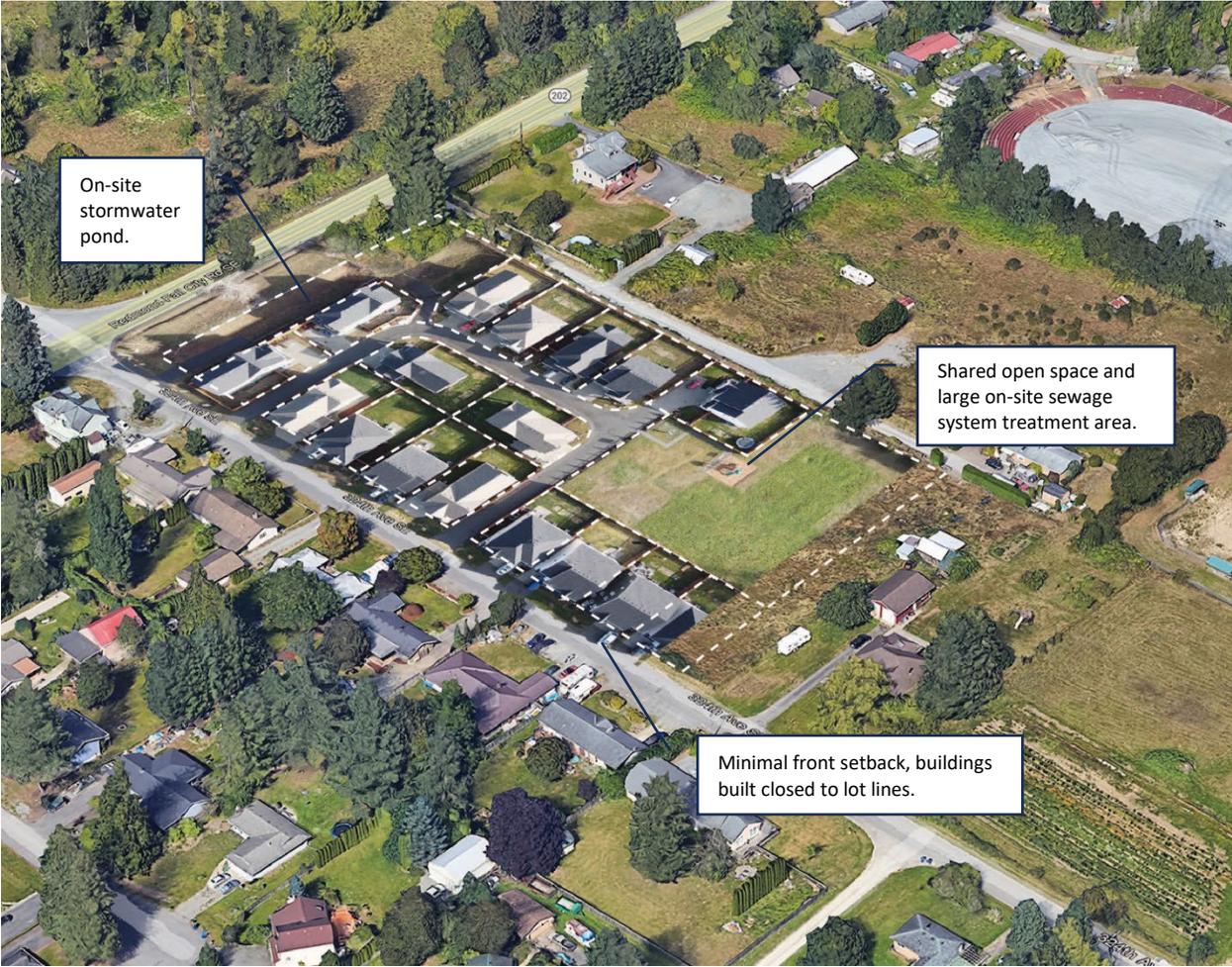


Figure 16. Repetitive Architectural Style



Figure 17. Minimal Landscape or Open Space at the Frontage



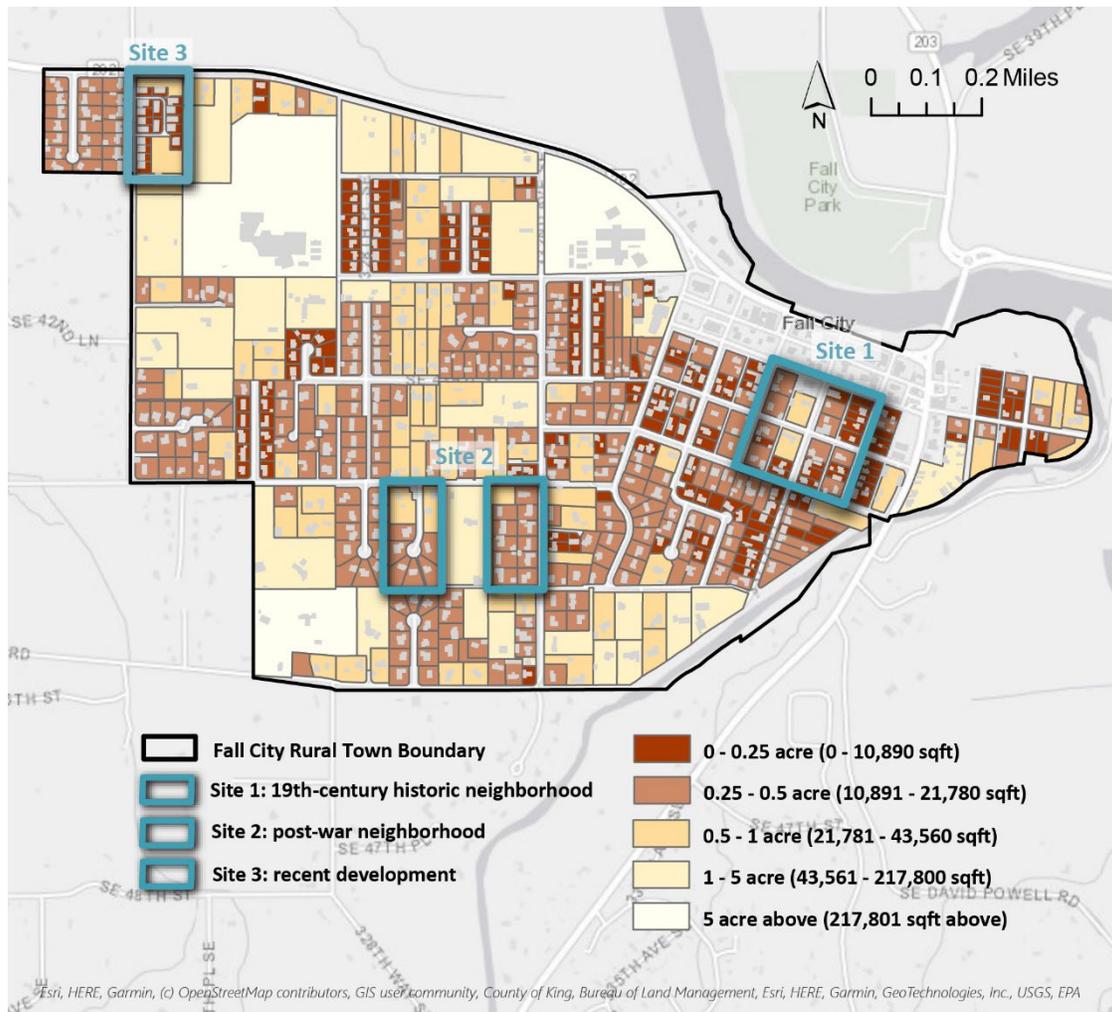
Figure 18. Wide Paved Street without Curbs



Figure 19. On-site Stormwater Pond



Figure 20. Fall City Lot Size Analysis Map



At the conclusion of the consultant’s development site analysis of the three development sites, the following conclusions were made.

Pattern of Residential Areas – RCW 36.70A.030 partially defines rural land use patterns as one in which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment, and one that provides visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities. The pattern of Fall City’s residential areas reflects its rural origins.

With limited large-scale urban development, most Fall City’s residential areas are characterized by low-density development, featuring one- or two-story single-family homes scattered throughout the open landscape, usually with a 20-foot or more setback from the street. The median lot size in Fall City is about 14,000 square feet. In the post-war era and historic neighborhood areas, the median lot sizes are 16,000 square feet and 10,500 square feet, respectively. The average lot size in the recent development is 5,825 square feet. This data, in addition to feedback from members of the community through

engagement, revealed the pattern of recent development is not consistent with the rural character of Fall City as it departs from the typical land use patterns found in the residential areas.

Architecture and Landscape – Fall City's historic downtown area retains its small-town charm, with buildings dating to the early 19th century. Fall City has been gradually expanding from the original townsite since that time. The architecture in Fall City is a mix of styles, reflecting the variety of architectural trends popularized over the past decades.

While the RCW and Comprehensive Plan policies do not directly speak to architecture, they do refer to open space, vegetation, and visual landscapes. In the older developments of Site 1 and 2, building mass was often distributed throughout each lot, with square footage provided in the form of detached garages, barns and other outbuildings, rather than all square footage of built area contained in the home structure, as is the case in the recent development. Additionally, the older developments have larger setbacks, resulting in a feeling of more open landscape as sightlines are open between buildings. These open spaces provide space to maintain existing vegetation or plant new vegetation, resulting in mature trees and shrubs on the older lots. Recent development does not leave space for mature landscaping, such as large trees typically seen in older developments. Recent developments maximize space for tightly clustered buildings, which is not conducive for the footprint of large trees.

C. Analyze whether the development regulations in Subsection IV.A are appropriate and consistent with adopted policies regarding rural character and rural growth

This section provides a review of CPPs and policies within the Comprehensive Plan relevant to rural character related to subdivisions and residential zoning within the Rural Town of Fall City. It includes a comparison between this body of relevant policies and how existing regulations, including KCC, relates to the policies. Finally, this section identifies potential changes in regulations to bridge gaps between developments and the body of relevant policies.

Review of Policies Relevant to Rural Character of the Residential Areas of the Rural Town of Fall City

Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)

The CPPs create a shared and consistent framework of growth management planning for all jurisdictions in King County. In accordance with RCW 36.70A.210, the CPPs provide the countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted.³⁶ The following CPPs are relevant to rural character and rural growth as it applies to the residential areas of Fall City.

DP-4 Focus housing growth in the Urban Growth Area within cities, designated regional centers, countywide centers, locally designated local centers, areas of high employment, and other transit supported areas to promote access to opportunity. Focus employment growth within designated regional and countywide manufacturing/industrial centers and within locally designated local centers.

DP-47 Limit growth in the Rural Area to prevent sprawl and the overburdening of rural services, minimize the need for new rural infrastructure, maintain rural character, and protect open spaces and the natural environment.

DP-50 Establish rural development standards and strategies to ensure all development protects the natural environment, including farmlands and forest lands, by using seasonal and maximum clearing limits for vegetation, limits on the amount of impervious surface, surface water management standards that preserve natural drainage systems, water quality and groundwater recharge, and best management practices for resource-based activities.

The CPPs direct housing and employment growth to cities and locally designated centers and away from rural areas, demonstrating that Fall City, even as a Comprehensive Plan designated Rural Town, is not a place to designate growth (DP-4). Per the Comprehensive Plan, the study area is rural and is not designated as a local center. Residential areas and future subdivisions of Fall City need to fit the existing rural character of the community (DP-47). Subdivision and residential development in Fall City should take into consideration its impacts to natural systems in the rural area, particularly regarding levels of impervious surface allowed which directly affects surface water management, water quality, and groundwater recharge (DP-48, DP-50).

Comprehensive Plan Policies

As noted previously in Background section of this report, the Comprehensive Plan is the long-range guiding policy document for all land use and development regulations in unincorporated King County.

³⁶ More detail on Countywide Planning Policies can be found in the subsection B. Key Context in Section III. Background.

The following are the most relevant Comprehensive Plan policies relative to the residential areas of Fall City.

RP-203 King County shall continue to support the reduction of sprawl by focusing growth and future development in the Urban Growth Area, consistent with adopted growth targets.

R-101 King County will continue to preserve and sustain its rural legacy and communities through programs and partnerships that support, preserve, and sustain its historic, cultural, ecological, agricultural, forestry, and mining heritage through collaboration with local and regional preservation and heritage programs, community groups, rural residents and business owners including forest and farm owners, rural communities, towns, and cities, and other interested stakeholders.

R-102 King County will continue to support the diversity and richness of its rural communities and their distinct character by working with its rural constituencies through its Community Service Areas program to sustain and enhance the rural character of Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.

R-201 It is a fundamental objective of the King County Comprehensive Plan to maintain the character of its designated Rural Area. The Growth Management Act specifies the rural element of comprehensive plans include measures that apply to rural development and protect the rural character of the area (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.070 (5)). The Growth Management Act defines rural character as it relates to land use and development patterns (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.030 (15)). This definition can be found in the Glossary of this Plan. Rural development can consist of a variety of uses that are consistent with the preservation of rural character and the requirements of the rural element. In order to implement Growth Management Act, it is necessary to define the development patterns that are considered rural, historical or traditional and do not encourage urban growth or create pressure for urban facilities and service.

Therefore, King County's land use regulations and development standards shall protect and enhance the following attributes associated with rural character and the Rural Area:

- a. The natural environment, particularly as evidenced by the health of wildlife and fisheries (especially salmon and trout), aquifers used for potable water, surface water bodies including Puget Sound and natural drainage systems and their riparian corridors;
- b. Commercial and noncommercial farming, forestry, fisheries, mining, home-occupations and home industries;
- c. Historic resources, historical character and continuity important to local communities, as well as archaeological and cultural sites important to tribes;
- d. Community small-town atmosphere, safety, and locally owned small businesses;
- e. Economically and fiscally healthy Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers with clearly defined identities compatible with adjacent rural, agricultural, forestry and mining uses;
- f. Regionally significant parks, trails and open space;
- g. A variety of low-density housing choices compatible with adjacent farming, forestry and mining and not needing urban facilities and services;

- h. Traditional rural land uses of a size and scale that blend with historic rural development; and
 - i. Rural uses that do not include primarily urban-serving facilities
- R-301** A low growth rate is desirable for the Rural Area, including Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers, to comply with the State Growth Management Act, continue preventing sprawl and the overburdening of rural services, reduce the need for capital expenditures for rural roads, maintain rural character, protect the environment and reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. All possible tools may be used to limit growth in the Rural Area. Appropriate tools include land use designations, development regulations, level of service standards and incentives.
- R-302** Residential development in the Rural Area should occur as follows:
- a. In Rural Towns at a variety of densities and housing types, compatible with maintenance of historic resources and community character; and
 - b. Outside Rural Towns at low densities compatible with traditional rural character and uses, farming, forestry, mining and rural service levels.
- R-330** New subdivisions in the Rural Area should strive to maintain the size and scale of traditional development patterns and rural character.
- R-331** New subdivisions in the Rural Area should be designed and developed to maximize conservation of existing forest cover and native vegetation, and to minimize impervious surfaces within individual lots and in the subdivision as a whole. King County shall develop additional site design standards for new subdivisions that further reduce the impacts of new homes in the Rural Area on the natural environment, resource uses and other adjacent land uses.
- R-516** Within Rural Towns and larger Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers, non-motorized connectivity, where consistent with rural character, should be encouraged to promote walking and bicycling and to improve public health.
- T-316** King County shall support and encourage the preservation and enhancement of scenic, historic, and recreational resources along the designated Washington Scenic and Recreational Highways located in the county, including I-90 (Mountains to Sound Greenway), US 2 (Stevens Pass Greenway), State Route 410 (Chinook Pass Scenic Byway), and State Route 202 (Cascade Valleys Scenic Byway). The corridor management plans established for these highways should be considered in the development and implementation of King County's plans, projects and programs.
- F-262** Collective on-site systems may be used only in the following circumstances in the Rural Area and Resource Lands:
- a. Existing on-site systems are failing within an area and the Seattle/King County Department of Public Health concurs that long-term individual on-site system repairs are not feasible or water quality is threatened by the presence of or potential for health hazards resulting from inadequate on-site wastewater disposal methods;
 - b. An authorized public agency will manage the community system; and

- c. **The community system is designed only to serve existing structures and lots and cannot be used as a basis to increase density or to expand permitted nonresidential uses. Substandard vacant lots must be combined to the extent feasible to meet rural density policies. Management of the community system must be by an authorized public agency.**

F-280 King County shall continue to promote the preservation of native vegetation and soils and the restoration of disturbed soils on rural residential zoned parcels to the maximum extent feasible. Minimized impervious areas and the dispersion of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces into native vegetation in accordance with the Surface Water Design Manual are the preferred methods of stormwater management in the Rural Area.

CP-535 The zoning for Fall City adopted in the 1999 Fall City Subarea Plan reflects the community's strong commitment to its rural character, recognizes existing uses, provides for limited future commercial development, and respects natural features. Additionally, it recognizes the current and long-term foreseeable rural level of utilities and other public services for the area. The land use implications of a major change in the water supply or a public health requirement for community-wide wastewater collection and treatment may be evaluated in a new community-based planning process; however this does not mean that zoning will change to allow more intense development beyond that adopted in the 1999 Fall City Subarea Plan. The rural character of Fall City should be preserved.

The Comprehensive Plan policies address concentration of growth, reduction of sprawl, and preservation of the existing rural character of Fall City (CP-535). The Comprehensive Plan's rural area policies that relate to residential development call for Fall City's residential areas to retain their existing rural character, discourage urban densities that could create pressure for urban facilities and services (R-101, R-102, R-201), and call for most of the growth to be outside of the rural area (RP-203). The zoning and infrastructure within this area are to support low growth rates and rural service levels which reduces sprawl and focuses development and supporting infrastructure within the UGA (R-301, R-302). LOSS are allowed to serve only existing structures and lots.

This policy results in the requirement for each lot to be large enough for an on-site sewer system (OSS), of which the minimum lot area needed is 12,500 square feet. Dense, small lot subdivisions are not allowed per this policy in Fall City (F-262). Under the current Rural Area land use designation of the Comprehensive Plan, traditional rural development patterns that match the size and scale of residential development in surrounding rural areas should be allowed, while preserving vegetation and not impacting stormwater quality and flows (R-330, R-331, F-280). The historic aesthetics of Fall City should be preserved, as it contributes to the Cascade Valleys Scenic Byway/State Route 202 (T-316).

Comparison Between Relevant Policies and Existing Code

The following tables cross-reference the CPPs (Table 6) and Comprehensive Plan (Table 7) to existing development regulations as manifested in the subdivision that composes Site 3.

Table 6. Relevant Countywide Planning Policies Related to Development Regulations

Policy	Considerations to Fall City Subdivisions	Relevant Development Regulation
DP-4	Density should be focused in urban areas, away from Fall City	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface
DP-47	Limit growth, prevent sprawl and overburdening of services and infrastructure, maintain rural character, protect open spaces	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface <p>21A.14.180 On-site recreation – space required.</p> <p>13.24 Water and Sewer Comprehensive Plans</p> <p>BOH Code 13.24.020 – requirements for on-site septic systems</p> <p>9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control</p>
DP-48	Limitation of residential development in areas outside of Fall City – development in the Rural Town should be compatible with surrounding rural character	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface <p>21A.14.180 On-site recreation – space required</p>

Policy	Considerations to Fall City Subdivisions	Relevant Development Regulation
DP-50	Limit impervious surface, and other standards to ensure protection of natural environment and adjacent resource lands, specifically through vegetation and surface water management	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Impervious surface <p>21A.14.180 On-site recreation – space required</p> <p>9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control</p> <p>Future tree regulations that are in-progress for the UGA could be applied to Rural Towns</p>

Table 7. Relevant Comprehensive Plan Policies Related to Development Regulations

Policy	Considerations to Fall City Subdivisions	Relevant Development Regulation
RP-203	Density is to be focused in urban areas. Allowed density within Fall City subdivisions should be limited as to support reducing sprawl in the rural area.	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface
R-101, R-102, R-201	The rural legacy of Fall City and its residential areas should be preserved by maintaining development regulations that result in new residential developments that match the existing size, scale and general aesthetic of lots	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface <p>21A.14.180 On-site recreation – space required.</p> <p>9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control</p> <p>Future tree regulations that are in-progress for the UGA could be applied to Rural Towns</p>

Policy	Considerations to Fall City Subdivisions	Relevant Development Regulation
R-301, R-302	Minimize growth rate through development controls such as allowed density and dimensions, reducing need for infrastructure improvements and reducing environmental impacts	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface <p>9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control</p> <p>Future tree regulations that are in-progress for the UGA could be applied to Rural Towns</p>
R-330, R-331	Maintaining size and scale of traditional developments and rural character; and minimize environmental impact through conserving forest cover and native vegetation and minimizing impervious surfaces	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface <p>9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control</p> <p>Future tree regulations that are in-progress for the UGA could be applied to Rural Towns</p>
T-316	The historic aesthetics of Fall City should be preserved, as it contributes to the Cascade Valleys Scenic Byway (State Route 202)	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface <p>Future tree regulations that are in-progress for the UGA could be applied to Rural Towns</p>
F-280	Promote native vegetation and soil preservation, minimize impervious surface and disperse stormwater runoff in new subdivisions	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width

Policy	Considerations to Fall City Subdivisions	Relevant Development Regulation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building height • Impervious surface <p>9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control</p> <p>Future tree regulations that are in-progress for the UGA could be applied to Rural Towns</p>
CP-535	Maintain Fall City’s rural character by encouraging the concentration of growth, reduction of sprawl, the preservation of the existing utilities and infrastructure	<p>21A.12 Development Standards – Density and Dimensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum density of dwelling units • Minimum lot size • Street and interior setbacks • Minimum lot width • Building height • Impervious surface <p>21A.14.180 On-site recreation – space required</p> <p>13.24 Water and Sewer Comprehensive Plans</p> <p>BOH Code 13.24.020 – requirements for on-site septic systems</p> <p>9.04 Stormwater Runoff and Surface Water and Erosion Control</p>

Policy Analysis Findings - Whether the Development Regulations in Subsection IV.A are Appropriate and Consistent with Adopted Policies Regarding Rural Character and Rural Growth

Comparing the study sites to the policies identified above, Sites 1 and 2 meet the intent of rural character in Fall City's residential areas. Sites 1 and 2 consist of neighborhoods at densities consistent with the rest of Fall City, the retention of these development patterns is mentioned in several Comprehensive Plan policies. Site 3, as the application of current codes to an R-4 zoned residential subdivision, does not meet the intent of the policies relevant to Fall City's residential areas, where densities are much higher than existing development, with little space between homes. The below subsections connect the recent subdivision Site 3 with DLS staff findings, connecting gaps in where the zoning code does not reflect the intent of the abovementioned policies.

Figure 20 shows consistencies in lot size, the relationship of the home size to lot size, and the density of homes in Site 1 and Site 2. Quantitatively, these demonstrate the existing rural character for residential areas because the density of housing and home and lot dimensions are like the majority of Fall City. Secondly, Sites 1 and 2 have similar aesthetics to the rest of Fall City, with mature vegetation and generous open spaces between homes and the road. When comparing the older Sites 1 and 2 to newer Site 3, a manifestation of the County's existing codes, gaps become obvious regarding the intent of the policies and current development regulations.

The combination of density and dimensional standards (zoning regulations including lot size, lot line setbacks, height, and impervious surface percentage coverage), the lack of tree preservation regulations, and large areas of land used for stormwater management facilities leads to a character that does not fit the existing development patterns of the residential areas of Fall City, and subsequently does not align with Comprehensive Plan policies R-301 and R-330. The recommendations below address this gap between the intent of the policies and current development regulations, by examining how potential changes to the County's development regulations through the Comprehensive Plan and CPPs could bring future subdivision developments closer to Fall City's existing rural character.

Area-based density allowances lead to development patterns not appropriate to the rural character of Fall City

This analysis finds the current base residential zoning of R-4 is not consistent with King County's adopted policies related to rural character and rural growth in Fall City. The development result of subdivisions in R-4 areas is a denser look and feel than what is seen in elsewhere in Fall City. The current King County zoning code that contains R-4 zone regulates gross density, allowing four dwelling units per acre, including shared open space for the subdivision residents and infrastructure within the gross residential acreage. The resulting developments, as manifested with Site 3, do not fit the existing character of Fall City.

While all three study sites meet the R-4 zone gross density requirements, the median densities of Site 1 and Site 2 are around 2-2.5 units per acre, which is notably below the allowances.³⁷ When considering net density, which only considers the net lot area, Site 3 stands out in net density calculations.³⁸ Site 3 achieves a significantly higher median net density of 6.95 units per acre, compared to Site 1 at 4.15 and

³⁷ See Table 2. Fall City Lot Size Analysis for a comparison of densities and dimensions between the three sites.

³⁸ Net lot area, versus gross lot area, generally excludes portions of the original lot dedicated to uses other than individual private properties, such as rights-of-way, and tracts covering such things as stormwater, open space and other common areas, native growth protection.

Site 2 at 2.64 (see Table 8). This results from Site 3's development capitalizing on the gross density approach, which reduces lot sizes and increases unit count by adding the area of LOSS treatment and shared open space into the overall gross residential area.

Table 8. Fall City Median Net Density

	Site 1 19th-century historic neighborhood	Site 2 Post-war neighborhood	Site 3 Recent development
Median net density (du/ac)*	4.15	2.64	6.95

*du/ac = density units per acre

The resulting subdivision does not maintain the existing rural character, is not compatible with its surroundings, and has higher levels of impervious surfaces, so it is not aligned with CPPs DP-47, DP-48, and DP-50. The rural legacy of Fall City and its associated residential densities are not preserved with the current development regulations, which is in opposition to Comprehensive Plan Policies RP-203, R-101, R-102, R-201, R-301, R-302, R-330, and R-331.

Historic rural residential development in Fall City typically has larger lots and more landscaping

The median lot sizes of Site 1 and Site 2 are approximately 10,000 square feet to 16,000 square feet. Compared to Site 3, buildings are setback further from side property lines and are accompanied by more landscaping and mature trees. Parking and garage access have minimal impact on the bulk of each lot as many garages are detached or driveways enter from alleys behind the lots. In Site 3, lot yields are between 5,000-6,000 square feet and almost no vegetation is present on the lots. Driveways consume a significant area of each front yard due to the narrow width of each lot compared to Sites 1 and 2. Common open spaces are absent, except for public parks. This shows that KCC Chapter 21A.12 and the resulting residential subdivision of Site 3 do not meet the intent of Comprehensive Plan Policies R-330, R-331, and R-280, where native vegetation and soil should be preserved, impervious surfaces should be minimized, and the scale of traditional development should be preserved.

Architectural sameness within new developments is not consistent with the Rural Town design elements in Fall City

The new developments in Site 3 frequently feature buildings with similar architecture but varying colors. Neighborhoods within all other parts of Fall City contain a variation of architectural types, even in areas where subdivisions developed during the same period are largely intact. Because of this, Site 3 and the related development regulations do not meet the intent of Comprehensive Plan Policy T-316, where the historic aesthetics of the areas of Fall City along the Cascade Valleys Scenic Byway (State Route 202) should be preserved.

D. Community engagement, as part of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plan, specific to the Rural Town of Fall City on rural character and community identity and implementing policies and development regulations

One of the most discussed topics raised by community members during the public process for the Subarea Plan was the desire to preserve rural character as it applies to the residential areas and future subdivisions in Fall City. This focus is consistent from early discussions with the Fall City community in 2021 to the end of the Subarea Plan public review period, July 15, 2023. A large portion of this engagement was with the Fall City Community Association, specifically a subgroup of the Association that named themselves the ‘subarea stewards’, which is a group of active community members dedicated to the plan process. Engagement included in-person and virtual events, individual conversations, and surveys, designed to reach a range of community members, with the bulk of direct discussion with the subarea steward group. This subgroup and the Fall City Community Association led most of these events, controlling the topics covered, and enabling the community to work together with the County on developing Fall City-specific content.

The most frequently discussed topic when engaging Fall City community members on the Subarea Plan was residential developments and subdivisions as they relate to rural character. Specifically, community members were not content with the subdivision that composes Site 3, stating the development was too dense, lots were too small, the look and feel was too homogeneous and urban feeling, and the subdivision was too inward facing. Often community members shared their thoughts on how development regulations should be changed, the most common comment in this regard was there should be a minimum lot size of a quarter acre (10,890 square feet).

Beyond the efforts related to the Subarea Plan, specific engagement took place for this work plan. On August 21, 2023, DLS staff and the consultant team hosted an online open house to share the preliminary findings of this report and collect community input. This was followed by an in-person presentation and discussion at a monthly Fall City Community Association meeting on September 5, 2023. In total, approximately 40 community members attended the two meetings and shared their thoughts. Community members were given the opportunity to follow-up with DLS staff through email. DLS staff received five comments through email from community members. The meetings discussed the following questions:

- What features do the community members like the most about the residential areas of Fall City?
- How could regulations reinforce development to preserve the features they like?
- Are there types of residential developments/home styles they would like to see more of, or that don’t currently exist in Fall City?
- Should regulations allow for a smaller lot size in exchange for open space, with new criteria for open space?
- What are the community-identified cultural assets important to them?

The common themes of feedback resulting from the community answering these questions and providing further comments are summarized in the sections below.

Community-Identified Cultural Assets

The following is a summary of the key assets, both physical and cultural, that community members said were important to them. The summary reflects feedback collected during Subarea Plan engagement and engagement specific to this work plan.

Open sightline and proper proportion

The results of community engagement indicate that that community participants greatly appreciate the open sightlines, generous landscape, and setbacks and generous spaces around their homes. The proportion of building footprints to lot areas is important to create the feeling of openness in Fall City, in addition to limiting building heights. The participants feel smaller homes, like cottage housing, on proportionally smaller lots could keep the open landscape feeling, while large homes with small lots would have no privacy or feeling of space. Features like low fences and alleys also create open views in the neighborhood and the surrounding hills, including Mount Si. One community member voiced the desire for duplexes and triplexes if their typologies met the above community desires.

Usable open space

The community participants also expressed a desire for open spaces to be functional, for recreational activity amenities to be added in developments and better integrated with passive open spaces like septic fields and stormwater treatment areas. The participants believe the definition of open space eligible for inclusion in density standards should be refined to ensure more usable open spaces in future developments.

Community participants say they enjoy large yards, wide alleys, and wide safe streets where children can play, and neighbors can connect closely. These features in the historic and post-war neighborhoods contribute to the rural lifestyle and remedy for limited park spaces.

Tree retention

The community participants desire the preservation of mature trees in the new developments and want more comprehensive regulations for tree retention, potentially incentivized through the County's tree code.

Neighborhood connectivity

The community participants like the current trails and small pedestrian connections in the community, including informal pedestrian paths that connect cul-de-sacs; they are well-used by the community.

The community participants are concerned about pedestrian safety as, in the denser area, vehicles will park in the walking area. They would like to see dedicated safe walking routes with curbs and signs, especially near schools.

Architectural variation

Community members voiced their distaste for the monotony of the architecture and site layouts of the homes within Site 3 and stated their preference for variation in home styles and site layouts.

E. Recommended amendments to development regulations, the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan, King County Comprehensive Plan policies, zoning, or any combination thereof that would address the impacts and concerns identified in Ordinance 19613, Section 1

The below table explores development regulations recommended by the consultant, and the Executive response. These recommendations and responses were informed through several analyses:

- review of current development regulations,
- the analysis of rural character specific to Fall City,
- the analysis of sites in Fall City and their context to the larger area, and
- input from the Fall City community.

The table that follows the consultant recommendations and Executive responses shows the current dimensional standards in KCC Title 21A next to the dimensional standards found in the recommended P-suffix, referencing the differences. The P-suffix development condition is included in the Amendments to Land Use and Zoning Maps which is Attachment C to Proposed Ordinance 2023-XXXX.

The goal of the recommendations is to better align new development with the established rural character in Fall City, while protecting property rights and allowing reasonable development that contributes positively to the community.

Table 9. Fall City Consultant Recommendations and Executive Response

Consultant Recommendation	Executive Response
<p>Establish criteria for allowing land used for publicly accessible common open space and amenities to count toward project density. Infrastructure would need to be designed as a visual or physical amenity to count toward project density. Publicly accessible trails could count.</p>	<p>Does not concur.</p> <p>Development regulations require developments to provide on-site recreation space to be owned and managed by the HOA. HOAs must purchase insurance for their recreation areas and insurers will not allow anyone except HOA members and their guests to use the recreation areas. To make these areas publicly accessible, County Parks or Fall City Parks District would need to take ownership. DLS staff spoke with representatives of both. County Parks is unable to take ownership, as all its funding comes from the parks levy, and that money is allocated for specific activities that do not include managing pocket parks in subdivisions. It would also be inconsistent with their structure as a regional parks provider. Fall City Parks District stated that they were not interested in taking ownership of the pocket parks.</p>

Consultant Recommendation	Executive Response
	<p>In addition, the standard for lot creation in the P-suffix is recommended to be a minimum lot size rather than a maximum lot density, so this negates the need for a developer to provide amenities for density credit.</p> <p>The community wants trails to connect cul-de-sac developments to neighboring developments. If these trails were managed by the HOAs, as all park amenities would be, they would not be publicly accessible, so this would defeat their purpose. The trails would have to be public right-of-way to be publicly accessible.</p> <p>To comply with the requirement of RCW 36.70A.030 that open space must predominate over the built environment, the recommended P-suffix provides a recommended regulation that requires all recreation space provided in a development to be outdoor rather than indoor recreation space, except in the case of senior housing.</p>
<p>Density credit could be provided for the preservation of significant trees or forested or natural areas that provide public benefit.</p>	<p>Partial Concurrence.</p> <p>As directed by the 2023-2024 King County Biennial Budget, the Executive is beginning work on new tree regulations that are scheduled to be complete by summer 2024.³⁹ The budget directs the focus of this work be within the UGA. It is recommended that the County evaluate whether the reach of these regulations should also apply in Rural Towns.</p> <p>Preserving existing trees and ensuring that new trees are planted throughout new developments is consistent RCW 36.70A.030, which states that rural patterns are ones in which natural landscape and vegetation predominate over the built environment and that rural patterns provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities. During such an evaluation, considerations to other regulations</p>

³⁹ [Link to Ordinance 19546, Section 90, Proviso 2](#)

Consultant Recommendation	Executive Response
	must be made, for example new codes adopted to address the wildland-urban interface regarding wildfire safety.
For lot sizes below ¼ acre, require a master planning process that combines the subdivision and site planning process. Site planning would include landscape and design review.	<p>Does not concur.</p> <p>. Additional procedures associated with a master planning process is not required to ensure rural character. P-suffix regulations are recommended as part of this work plan so that review conducted by the County will result in projects consistent with rural character.</p>
Modify dimensional standards to reduce building mass and create more space between buildings, including the reduction of the maximum impervious surface limit and exempting longer driveways to encourage detached garages, increasing the front yard setback to 20 feet. Increase side yard setbacks to 15 feet and requiring one to be at least 20 feet to allow access into the rear yard and increasing the minimum lot width but allowing flexibility for irregular shaped lots.	<p>Partial Concurrence.</p> <p>The recommended P-suffix includes minimum lot size of 12,500 square feet. This is the minimum lot size needed for an on-site septic system. See Table 10 below for a comparison of current dimensional standards and recommended dimensional standards.</p> <p>These recommended regulations will result in areas on each lot to accommodate landscaping that can predominate over the built environment, and provide a landscape traditionally found in rural areas and communities, as required by RCW 36.70A.030. The standards will also be consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy R-302, which states that residential development in Rural Towns should occur at a variety of densities and housing types that are compatible with the maintenance of historic resources and community character.</p>
Establish Floor to Area (FAR) limits to right size buildings to parcel sizes and reduced building mass. ⁴⁰	<p>Does not concur.</p> <p>Rather than using FAR, the P-suffix recommends the use of a minimum lot size, larger setbacks, lower height, and less impervious surface and incentivizes detached garages to limit bulk and provide open sightlines between homes which should result in future developments reflecting the existing rural character. Adding a FAR</p>

⁴⁰ A floor to area ratio is the amount of square footage in a building compared to the size of a parcel.

Consultant Recommendation	Executive Response
	<p>regulation to the existing recommendations would be redundant.</p> <p>These recommended regulations will result in areas on each lot that can accommodate landscaping that can predominate over the built environment, and provide visual landscape traditionally found in rural areas and communities as required by RCW 36.70A.030. The standards will also be consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy R-302, which states that residential development in Rural Towns should occur at a variety of densities and housing types that are compatible with the maintenance of historic resources and community character.</p>
<p>Reduce building mass by incentivizing detached garages.</p>	<p>Concurs.</p> <p>Detached garages set back beyond the home reduce bulk at the street-facing portion of a lot but are often discouraged because they often require a long driveway which counts against the impervious surface limit. The recommended P-suffix would provide an additional 5% impervious surface for driveways that provide access to a detached garage that is set beyond the footprint of the home. This will eliminate a barrier that discourages detached garages.</p> <p>This recommended P-suffix language is consistent with RCW 36.70A.030, providing visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities. Detached garages will reduce visual mass from the street, making lots appear to have more open space between each other which is consistent with the rural development pattern in Fall City.</p>
<p>Require or incentivize keeping stormwater on-site for sites with larger parcels.</p>	<p>Partial Concurrence.</p> <p>The recommended P-suffix language uses minimum lot size as a standard to create new lots for Fall City rather than maximum density. Using lot size as the standard requires a developer to minimize the size of infrastructure, maximizing land area available to create new lots. When minimum lot size is used, developers often treat</p>

Consultant Recommendation	Executive Response
	<p>as much stormwater on each lot as is possible, so they can minimize the size of a stormwater pond or vault, saving cost and maximizing available land for homes. Also, the P-suffix recommends a minimum lot size of 12,500 square feet. Large lots that include larger setbacks and less impervious surface coverage provide space for on-site stormwater infrastructure.</p> <p>The recommended P-suffix regulation is consistent with RCW 36.70A.030 which states rural development patterns must not require the extension of urban governmental services (such as extensive stormwater systems) and must be consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and surface water discharge areas. It is also consistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy R-301 that requires preventing the overburdening of rural services, reducing the need for capital expenditures.</p>
<p>Consider adopting stronger tree preservation standards.</p>	<p>Partial Concurrence.</p> <p>As directed by the 2023-2024 King County Biennial Budget, the Executive is beginning work on new tree regulations that are scheduled to be complete by summer 2024.⁴¹ The budget directs the focus of this work within the UGA. It is recommended the County evaluate whether the reach of these regulations should also apply in Rural Towns.</p> <p>Preserving existing trees and ensuring that new trees are planted throughout new developments is consistent RCW 36.70A.030 which states that rural patterns are ones in which natural landscape and vegetation predominate over the built environment, providing visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities. During such an evaluation, considerations to other codes must be made, for example new codes adopted to address the wildland-urban interface regarding wildfire safety.</p>

⁴¹ [Link to Ordinance 19546, Section 90, Proviso 2](#)

Consultant Recommendation	Executive Response
	DLS staff has drafted a very simple set of tree regulations for Fall City, based mostly on incentivizing retention of existing trees, if the Council wishes to adopt tree regulations as part of Fall City's new P-suffix.

Table 10 compares current development standards to the three options for density and dimensional standards within the recommended P-suffix.

Table 10. Comparison of Dimensional Standards

Dimensional Standard	Existing Code	Recommended for 12,500 sf* lots
Base density	4 du/ac**	Minimum lot size used, resulting in approximately 3 du/ac
Minimum lot width	30 feet	60 feet
Minimum street setback	10 feet	15 feet
Minimum interior setback	5 feet	10 feet
Base height	35 feet	35 feet
Maximum impervious surface percentage		40%; an additional 5% impervious surface percentage is provided for driveways that provide access to a detached garage setback past the footprint of the house

*sf = square feet

**du/ac = dwelling unit per acre

IV. Conclusions/Next Actions

DLS staff and consultants reviewed current development patterns in Fall City, analyzed development regulations and policies, and conducted public engagement. The study of three residential areas in Fall City representing different development periods found that recent development under current regulations is not consistent with the existing rural character of Fall City. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.030, some of the characteristics of rural character include a built environment in which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate, which are characteristics of most Fall City residential areas. Engagement through both the Subarea Plan and specific to this work plan proved the community appreciates and desires to preserve these visual landscapes. The recent development examined consists of home dimensions and densities higher than what is seen in other parts of Fall City, with minimal open space between homes, resulting in a density character one would expect to find in suburbs within UGAs, not Fall City. The development is almost void of natural vegetation; plantings are almost exclusively grass. In sum, current development regulations do not meet the intent of policies that pertain to Fall City's rural character, nor are they compatible with the existing physical environment.

The Executive recommends changes to development regulations by way of a P-suffix development condition to address the abovementioned differences between recent and preexisting residential developments, to preserve the rural character of Fall City. The P-suffix development condition is in the Amendments to Land Use and Zoning Maps which is Attachment C to Proposed Ordinance 2023-XXXX, transmitted as part of the Subarea Plan, along with this work plan. The proposed regulations address Fall City community members' concerns related to retaining existing rural character. The proposed regulations also improve the connection between policies relevant to rural character preservation and existing development regulations. This rural character preservation is accomplished by revising lot sizes, building setbacks, impervious surface percentage standards, and requiring more open space.

The process of developing the P-suffix recommendations reflects the Executive's True North Values, specifically focusing on the customer, driving for results, being responsible stewards, and solving problems.⁴²

⁴² [Link to *King County's True North and values*](#)

V. Appendices

F. Ordinance 19613

AN ORDINANCE declaring a seven-month moratorium prohibiting subdivisions of residentially zoned land in the Rural Town of Fall City; directing the executive to produce a work plan to address the issues and circumstances necessitating the moratorium; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Findings:

A. King County has the authority, under to constitutional police powers, home rule authority, and the Washington state Growth Management Act, including chapter 36.70A RCW to establish a moratorium to preclude the acceptance of certain new development applications while the county studies related land use issues.

B. In 1990, the Washington state Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act in order to, in part, facilitate the preservation of rural character. Rural character, in part, refers to patterns of land use and development in which open space, the natural landscape and vegetation predominate over the built environment, that fosters traditional rural lifestyles and rural-based economies, that provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities, and that reduces the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

C. The Countywide Planning Policies states that the goal as follows "the Rural Area Geography is stable and the level and pattern of growth within it provide for a variety of landscapes and open space, maintains diverse low-density communities, and supports rural economic activities based on sustainable stewardship of land." Although there are no growth targets identified in the countywide planning policies for the rural area, King County's rural area is anticipated to grow minimally, by 1 percent or less annually.

D. The King County Comprehensive Plan, as amended by Ordinance 19555, defines "rural growth" as "growth that is scaled to be compatible with, and maintains the traditional character of the Rural Area." King County Comprehensive Plan Policy R-301 states that a low growth rate is desirable for the Rural Area including Rural Towns to comply with the Growth Management Act, continue preventing sprawl and the overburdening of rural services, reduce need for capital expenditures, maintain rural character, protect the environment, and reduce transportation-related gas emissions.

E. The King County Comprehensive Plan identifies three rural towns within the Rural Area geography: Vashon, Fall City, and Snoqualmie Pass. The King County Comprehensive Plan states the purposes of Rural Town designations are "to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in Rural Areas and to allow modest growth of residential and economic uses to keep them economically viable into the future." Rural towns are considered part of the rural area for the purposes of the Growth Management Act, do not provide significant growth capacity, and are not subject to the growth targets adopted for the Urban Growth Area.

F. Consistent with King County Comprehensive Plan Policy R-302, residential development in Rural Towns should occur at a variety of densities and housing types that are compatible with the maintenance of historic resources and community character.

G. King County is preparing the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan as well as an update of the King County Comprehensive Plan, scheduled to be adopted in December 2024. As part of those updates, King County is interested in evaluating the size and scale of residential development in the Fall City Rural Town to ensure that the range of development is compatible with the county's goals for the Rural Area and is consistent with rural character.

H. King County is completing an environmental impact statement with the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan update to identify and analyze environmental impacts, alternatives, and potential mitigation associated with policy and code changes. The environmental impact statement will evaluate options that address the issues necessitating the interim zoning ordinance.

I. King County is contemplating the adoption of an interim zoning ordinance, which would commence at the expiration of this moratorium and end at the adoption of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan and King County Comprehensive Plan update. The interim zoning ordinance includes provisions for minimum lot size and setbacks that are intended to ensure consistency with rural character on an interim basis while the County studies whether additional regulation is necessary.

J. King County is reviewing several applications for residential subdivisions in the Rural Town of Fall City and has received notice that property owners seek to subdivide additional lots in the Rural Town of Fall City. In contrast to past land segregations, those subdivisions now rely on the use of large on-site sewage systems and shared stormwater tracts, which is resulting in smaller residential lots and houses tightly clustered to one area of the subdivision. Those developments place a great deal of pressure on the intended rural character of the area, which is what the Growth Management Act was established, in part, to protect.

K. It is in the public interest that any zoning and development regulations are consistent with the Growth Management Act, the King County Comprehensive Plan, and other environmental land use laws.

L. It is in the public interest to establish a moratorium on acceptance of applications for the subdivision of residentially zoned land in the Rural Town of Fall City for a seven-month period in order to investigate whether additional regulation is necessary.

M. Under RCW 36.70A.390, King County is authorized to adopt a moratorium to implement the Growth Management Act.

N. It is necessary that this ordinance go into effect immediately in order to avoid a rush of applications for new subdivisions on residentially zoned land in the Rural Town of Fall City.

SECTION 2. A. A seven-month moratorium commencing upon the effective date of this ordinance is declared on the acceptance of applications for the subdivision of residentially zoned land in the Rural Town of Fall City. Any land use approvals or other permits that are accepted as a result of error or by use of vague or deceptive descriptions during the moratorium are null and void and without legal force or effect. Applications for alteration of final plats may continue be accepted consistent with K.C.C. 19A.16.070.

B. Within sixty days of the effective date of this ordinance, the council shall hold a public hearing on the moratorium.

C. During the moratorium, the executive shall complete a work plan for residential lots in the Rural Town of Fall City and attach the findings to the ordinance adopting the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plan. The work plan shall, at a minimum:

1. Describe all development regulations that affect lot dimensions and building size and bulk for residentially zoned properties in the Rural Town of Fall City. Lot dimensions may include but are not limited to: minimum building lot size, lot width, and minimum and maximum density. Building size and bulk may include but are not limited to: base and maximum height, impervious surface maximums, on-site septic standards, or landscaping or stormwater requirements that affect the overall size and scale of buildings and structures;

2. Evaluate the rural character, consistent with the Growth Management Act definition, of the Rural Town of Fall City through an evaluation of typical land use patterns, architectural and natural features, and community-identified cultural assets;

3. Analyze whether development regulations in subsection B.1. of this section are appropriate and consistent with adopted policies regarding rural character and rural growth;
4. Complete, as part of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plan, community engagement specific to the Rural Town of Fall City on rural character and community identity and implementing policies and development regulations; and
5. Propose as part of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plan, any recommended amendments to development regulations, the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plan, King County Comprehensive Plan policies, zoning, or any combination thereof, that would address the impacts and concerns identified in section 1 of this ordinance.

C. The executive shall electronically transmit the work plan as an attachment to the ordinance adopting the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plan, and proposed amendments to the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plan, the King County Comprehensive Plan, development regulations, zoning, or any combination thereof, no later than December 31, 2023, as part of the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan update, with the clerk of the council who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the chief policy officer and the lead staff for the local services and land use committee, or its successor.

SECTION 3. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid or should any portion of this ordinance be preempted by state or federal law or regulation, the remainder of the ordinance or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

SECTION 4. A. The county council finds as a fact and declares that an emergency exists and that this ordinance is necessary for the immediate preservation of public peace, health or safety or for the support of county government and its existing public institutions.

B. Enactment of this temporary moratorium as an emergency under Section 230.30 of the King County Charter waives certain procedural requirements, including SEPA review under chapter 43.21C RCW and K.C.C. chapter 20.44, notice to the state under RCW 36.70A.106 and published notice under K.C.C. 20.18.110.

G. Consultant's Report

The following report was written by Framework, a consulting firm that specializes in planning, urban design and architecture. Framework assisted Executive staff with an assessment and evaluation of rural character in Fall City by assisting with community engagement to hear the community concerns about recent development in Fall City. They conducted a study of three development sites in Fall City to assess development across three time periods over a timeframe of over one hundred years. Framework also provides recommendations for development regulation revisions that could result in future development reflecting rural character typical in Fall City.

I. Development Regulations and Policies Overview

A. Rural Character Definitions and Related Policies

According to RCW [36.70A.030](#), "Rural character" refers to the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:

- a. In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- b. That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
- c. That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
- d. That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
- e. That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- f. That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
- g. That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas.

RCW [36.70A.030](#) describes "Rural development" as development outside the urban growth area and outside agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands designated pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170. Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential densities, including clustered residential development, at levels that are consistent with the preservation of rural character and the requirements of the rural element. Rural development does not refer to agriculture or forestry activities that may be conducted in rural areas.

Under RCW 36.70A.390, King County is authorized to adopt a moratorium to implement the Growth Management Act, as was the case with Ordinance 19613 adopted on May 16, 2023.

King County Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies

Fall City is one of the three rural towns within the Rural Area geography identified by the King County Comprehensive Plan. The King County Comprehensive Plan states the purposes of Rural Town designations are "to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in Rural Areas and to allow modest growth of residential and economic uses to keep them economically viable into the future." Rural towns are considered part of the rural area for the purposes of the Growth Management Act, do not provide significant growth capacity, and are not subject to the growth targets adopted for the Urban Growth Area.

The Countywide Planning Policy Rural Area policy section goal statement is "the Rural Area Geography is stable and the level and pattern of growth within it provide for a variety of landscapes and open space, maintains diverse low-density communities, and supports rural economic activities based on sustainable stewardship of land."⁴³ Although there are no growth targets identified in the countywide planning policies for the rural area, King County's rural area is anticipated to grow minimally, by 1 percent or less annually.

⁴³ [Link to 2021 Adopted CPPs \(kingcounty.gov\)](#)

The King County Comprehensive Plan, as amended by Ordinance 19555, defines "rural growth" as "growth that is scaled to be compatible with, and maintains the traditional character of the Rural Area." King County Comprehensive Plan Policy R-201 established a framework for rural character in King County, stating that "it is a fundamental objective of the King County Comprehensive Plan to maintain the character of its designated Rural Area" and "in order to implement the Growth Management Act, it is necessary to define the development patterns that are considered rural, historical or traditional and do not encourage urban growth or create pressure for urban facilities and service." Policy R-201 outlines attributes associated with rural character and the Rural Area that the King County's land use regulations and development standards shall protect and enhance.

Consistent with King County Comprehensive Plan Policy R-301 states that a low growth rate is desirable for the Rural Area including Rural Towns to comply with the Growth Management Act, continue preventing sprawl and the overburdening of rural services, reduce need for capital expenditures, maintain rural character, protect the environment, and reduce transportation-related gas emissions. Policy R-302, residential development in Rural Towns should occur at a variety of densities and housing types that are compatible with the maintenance of historic resources and community character.

Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan

The King County Executive is transmitting the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan and an update of the King County Comprehensive Plan in December 2023, with an anticipated adoption by the County Council in December 2024. As part of those updates, King County is interested in evaluating the size and scale of residential development in the Fall City Rural Town to ensure that the range of development is compatible with the county's goals for the Rural Area and is consistent with rural character.

Interim Zoning Ordinance

King County is contemplating the adoption of an interim zoning ordinance, which would commence at the expiration of the moratorium and end at the adoption of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan and King County Comprehensive Plan update. The interim zoning ordinance includes provisions for minimum lot size and setbacks that are intended to ensure consistency with rural character on an interim basis while the County studies whether additional regulation is necessary.

Environmental Impact Statement

King County is completing an environmental impact statement with the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan update to identify and analyze environmental impacts, alternatives, and potential mitigation associated with policy and code changes. The environmental impact statement will evaluate options that address the issues necessitating the interim zoning ordinance.

B. Development Regulations

Below summarizes all current development regulations that affect lot dimensions and building size and bulk for residentially zoned properties in the Rural Town of Fall City. The R-4 Zoning District is used in other parts of King County and most of the standards are not specific to Fall City. The R-4 zoning district in Fall City has a maximum of four dwelling units per acre and no minimum density. Parcel sizes are determined during development based on gross density with land for common open space, stormwater facilities, and community drainfields counting towards the project density. The gross density approach

therefore allows for smaller parcel sizes. Other standards applicable to the R-4 Zoning District in Fall City are summarized below.

King County Code (KCC) - 21A.12 Development Standards

- R-4 Zoning District
- Max Density 4 units/acre (about 10,890 sq ft per lot, no minimum lot size)
- No minimum density
- No minimum lot area
- Front Setback 10'
- Minimum Interior Setback 5'
 - These standards may be modified under the provisions for zero-lot-line and townhouse developments.
 - Vehicle access points from garages, carports or fenced parking areas shall be set back from the property line on which a joint use driveway is located to provide a straight-line length of at least twenty-six feet as measured from the center line of the garage, carport or fenced parking area, from the access point to the opposite side of the joint use driveway.
- Minimum Lot Width 30'
- Base Height 35'; Max Height 75' with additional setback. (With the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan update, max height in Fall City could be exempted in updated regulations)
- Maximum Impervious Surface 55%
 - *Impervious surface does not include access easements serving neighboring property and driveways to the extent that they extend beyond the street setback due to location within an access panhandle or due to the application of King County Code requirements to locate features over which the applicant does not have control.*
- Allowable uses: residential uses, with allowances for parks, hospitals, some small-scale retail, cultural uses.
- Accessory dwelling units are permitted with limitation that the accessory dwelling units and accessory living quarters shall not exceed base heights, except that this requirement shall not apply to accessory dwelling units constructed wholly within an existing dwelling unit.
- Parking Requirements:
 - Single detached/Townhouse - 2.0 per dwelling unit
 - Studio units - 1.2 per dwelling unit
 - One-bedroom units - 1.5 per dwelling unit
 - Two-bedroom units - 1.7 per dwelling unit
 - Three-bedroom units or larger - 2.0 per dwelling unit

King County Code (KCC) - 13.24 Water and Sewer Comprehensive Plans

The residential area in Fall City is currently serviced by on-site sewage/septic systems. KCC 13.24.134 prohibits sewer services in rural and natural resource areas, , except under the following conditions: 1) when the facilities are needed to address specific health and safety problems threatening the use of existing structures or to serve a new school authorized to be located in the RA zone by King County comprehensive plan policies, provided it's tightlined; 2) when a finding is made by the utilities technical review committee that no cost-effective alternative technologies are feasible.

King County Code 13.24.020 outlines the requirements for small on-site septic systems (OSS). The minimum lot size when creating new lots utilizing OSS shall be established by the health officer based on the information submitted and any on-site inspections by the health officer. These requirements include: 1) All lots created must be at least twelve thousand five hundred square feet and shall not exceed a maximum flow density of one thousand five hundred seventy gallons of sewage per acre per day; 2) Lots utilizing an individual private water source shall be at least five acres.

Code 13.24.020 also lists factors that may be considered when determining the type of on-site system, connection to sewers, or establishing minimum lot size area. These factors include soil conditions, drainage, setbacks from property lines, water supplies, rights of way, easements, and more.

Public Health – Seattle & King County On-site Sewage/Septic System Program

According to the Public Health – Seattle & King County On-site Sewage/Septic System Program, landscaping on or near the on-site septic tank should be avoided to make pumping and monitoring visits easier. Plants over the septic system may be disturbed or destroyed with repair work. The septic tank, drainfield and reserve area should be clear of facilities and play structure such as decks, patios, sports courts, or utility storage sheds, swing sets, sand boxes, parked vehicles.

II. Existing Development Analysis

C. Overview

Pattern of Residential Areas – The pattern of Fall City's residential areas reflects its rural origins. With limited large-scale urban development, the majority of Fall City's residential areas are characterized by low-density development, featuring one- or two-story single-family homes scattered throughout the open landscape, set back from the street. The median net density of Fall City is approximately 3.11 du/ac. The lot sizes are generous relative to other rural neighborhood developments in the region. The median lot size in the Fall City is about 14,000 square feet, while in the historic neighborhood area the median lot size is around 10,500 square feet. The earlier plats on the northwest side, along the south bank of the Snoqualmie River, where the original townsite took shape in the early nineteenth century, are oriented toward the riverfront and influenced by the railroad alignment. The street grid developed later is north-south oriented.

Architecture - Fall City's historic downtown area retains its small-town charm, with buildings dating back to the early 19th century. The town has been gradually expanding outwards from the original townsite. The architecture in Fall City showcases a mix of styles, reflecting the variety of architectural trends popularized over the past decades.

Landscape and Streets - Fall City's landscape mirrors its rural character, with mature trees and shrubs and local gardening decorations commonly observed. With less emphasis on extensive urban infrastructure such as sidewalks, roads in Fall City are generally wide, measuring 60' to 90', and lack curbs and gutters in most locations, contributing to the area's more rustic feel.

Mobility and Parking - Driving is a major transportation mode in this area. Public transportation is located along Redmond-Fall City Rd SE (SR 202), and there is little public transportation in the Rural Town. On-street parking on the street shoulder is often seen. The street grid in Fall City is inconsistent, with some residential areas having cul-de-sacs.

Recent Development Pattern - Recently, a new subdivision has relied on the use of large on-site sewage systems and shared stormwater tracts, resulting in smaller residential lots and houses tightly clustered in one area of the subdivision. It is largely felt by members of the community that these developments pattern might place a pressure on the rural character of Fall City.

D. Methodology and Reference of Sites Selection

The following sections contain a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the residential patterns for Fall City as a whole, as well as three example neighborhood sites within the R-4 zone. The purpose is to compare the existing development patterns against the current development regulation requirements to identify gaps and potential solutions, guiding future development in Fall City while preserving its rural character.

The three example sites are selected based on the Fall City Historic Residential District Report (King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission, February 2002), input from the community, a review of recent developments, and the King County Geographic Information System. These sites represent

different development periods in Fall City: the early 19th-century historic neighborhood (site 1), the post-war neighborhood (site 2), and the recent development (site 3).

Figure 2. FALL CITY CONTEXT MAP



Zoning Map Here Figure 3. STUDY AREAS ZONING

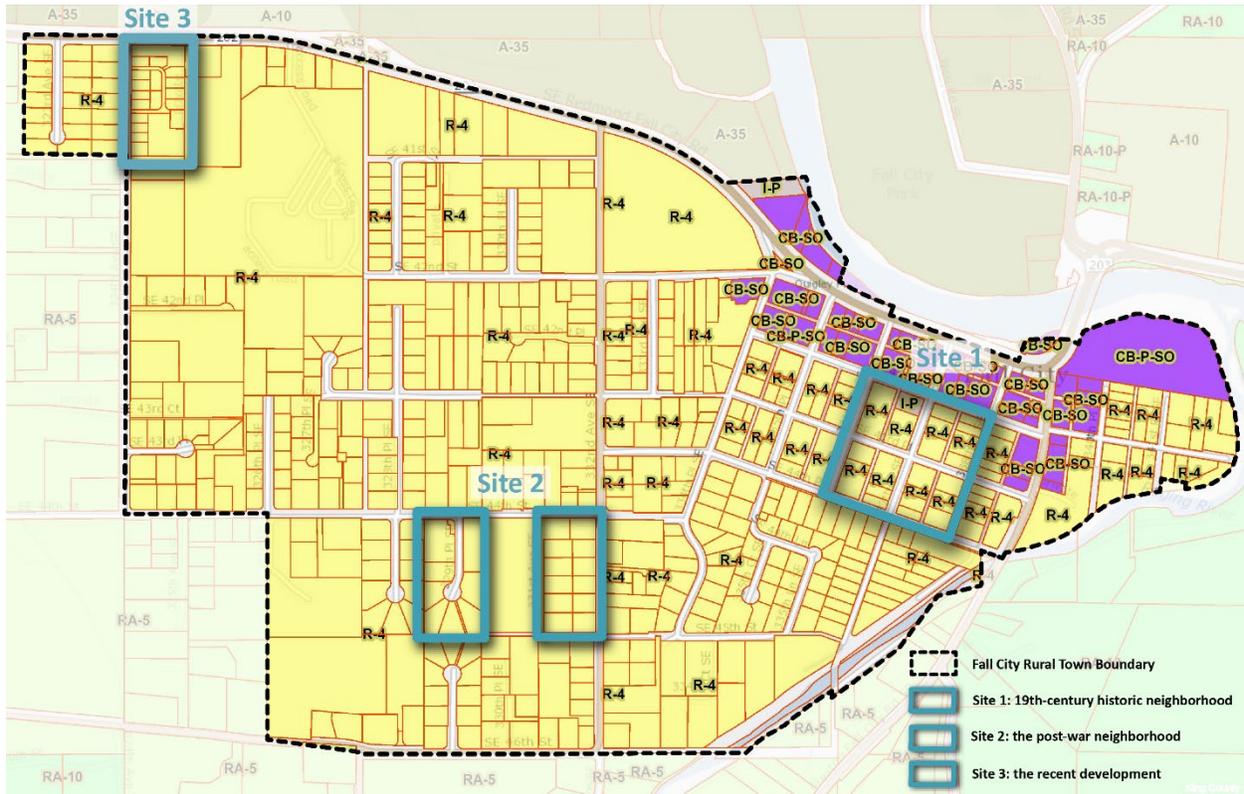


Figure 4. FALL CITY LOT SIZE ANALYSIS MAP

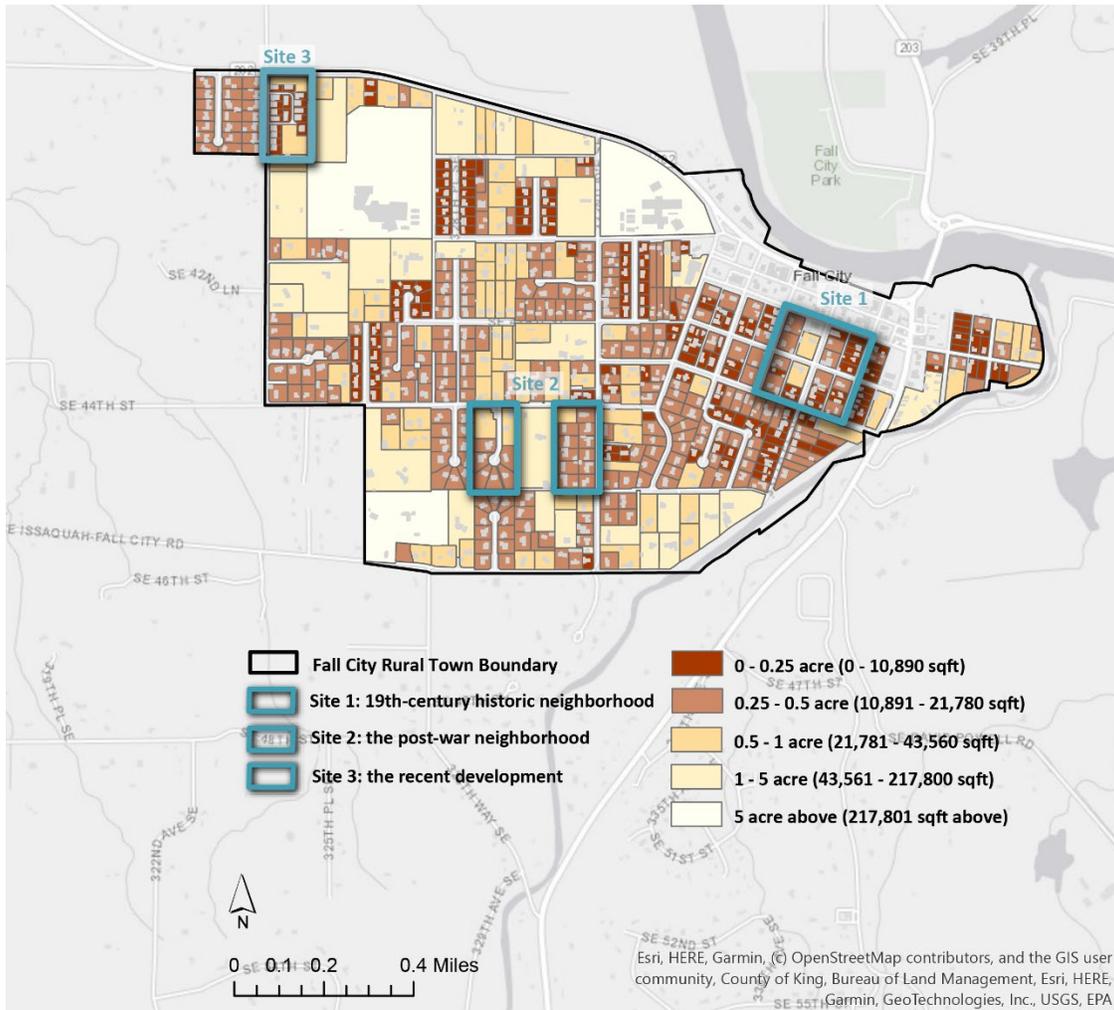


Figure 5. FALL CITY LOT SIZE ANALYSIS

	R-4 Area Overall	Site 1 19th-century historic neighborhood	Site 2 The post-war neighborhood	Site 3 The recent development
Lot Amount	552	20	19	20
Median Lot Size	0.32 acres (14,094 SF)	0.24 acres (10,500 SF)	0.38 acres (16,474 SF)	0.14 acres (6,299 SF)
Median FAR	0.11	0.1	0.15	0.58
Range FAR	(0.00-0.61)	(0.04-0.42)	(0.05-0.26)	(0.41-0.7)
Gross Density (du/ac)	1.81	2.1	2.07	3.40
Median Net Density (Range Net Density) (du/ac)	3.11 (0.14-8.82)	4.15 (1.56-6.22)	2.64 (1.17-6.43)	6.95 (5.19-8.82)
Average Building Footprint	1336 SF	1070 SF	1501 SF	1216 SF

E. Site Analysis 1

Site 1 is located within the Fall City historic residential district, designated a Community Landmark District by the King County Landmarks Commission in 2002. The 15-block district was originally platted in 1887 and contains 32 buildings that the commission identified as "contributing buildings," representative of the early twentieth-century rural character. Site 1 also contains three individually designated King County Landmarks, subject to different regulations than the district.

At Site 1, the street grid is oriented toward the Snoqualmie River and the Redmond-Fall City Road (SR 202). The lots have various sizes, with buildings centrally placed on large open lots, set back 20 feet from the street. Architectural styles vary from Late Victorian, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman/Bungalow. The building height ranges from one to two stories, and frequently, there are small, detached garages or barns on the rear alley side or adjacent side of the street.

The streets are wide, measuring 50-60 feet, and are paved without curbs and gutters. There are few short segments of paved sidewalk. Parking can be found on the street or in the garage. Alleys are unique to this area of Fall City and are wide, providing access to the rear yards. The turf-covered alleyways offer picturesque view corridors at mid-block.

Open spaces on these lots are generous, open, and continuous, allowing views into and across property lines. There are no fences or only low rural fences and hedges. Property boundaries and corners are often marked by trees or ornamental shrubs.

Figure 6. SITE 1 EXISTING CONDITIONS OF BUILT FORM: LOT AND PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Net Site Density	3.2 du/ac
Gross Site Density	2.1 du/ac
Median Lot Size	0.24 acres (10500sf)
Typical Lot Dimensions	140'x100';140'x75'
Average Lot Coverage	10.07%
Building Height	1 story
Avg. Bldg. Footprint	1,062 SF
Typical Buildings	various architecture style, gabled roof
Landscape feature	Tall mature trees
ROW width	75'
Sidewalks	Yes (no curbs)
Alley Access	Yes
Street Parking	Yes

Figure 7. SITE 1 LOCATION KEY MAP



**Parcels were excluded from the calculation as they do not represent the originally platted form.*

Figure 8. SITE 1 PLAN DIMENSION MEASUREMENT



Figure 9. Site 1 Ariel View



Figure 10. Low Rural Fences



Figure 11. Low Rural Fences



Figure 12. Various Building Styles - Historic Victorian Style Building



Figure 13. Various Building Style - Cottage with Attached Garage



Figure 13. Wide Pave Street without Curbs



Figure 14. Detached Garages or Barns on the Rear



Figure 15. Wide Setback from the Street



Figure 16. Hedge Corner

F. Site Analysis 2

Site 2 was developed in the post-war era in Fall City, with buildings constructed over time, primarily in the 1960s and 1990s.

Most of the buildings are large, one-story structures situated on generously sized, wide lots, typically around 100 feet wide. The homes feature ample setbacks, ranging from 20 to 40 feet.

The neighborhood is characterized by large, mature trees, contributing to its rural and organic landscape. There are often informal decorative plantings by the locals along the frontage and hedge corners.

The paved streets are wide, lacking curbs or gutters, and they have marked sidewalk area on one side. On-street parking is observed. On-site parking is also available, with garage access from the street.

Although the neighborhood is connected to major roads, there is room for improvement in its connectivity due to the presence of cul-de-sacs.

Figure 16. SITE 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS OF BUILT FORM: LOT AND PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Net Site Density	2.57 du/ac
Gross Site Density	2.07 du/ac
Median Lot Size	0.38 acres(16474sf)
Typical Lot Dimensions	160'x100'
Average Lot Coverage	9.08%
Building Height	1 story
Avg. Bldg. Footprint	1,500 SF
Typical Buildings	1-2 story ranch homes, Gable & Valler roof,
Landscape feature	Large mature trees
ROW width	60', 80'
Sidewalks	Yes (no curbs)
Alley Access	No
Street Parking	Yes

Figure 17. SITE 2 LOCATION KEY MAP



Figure 18. SITE 2 PLAN DIMENSION MEASUREMENT





Figure 19. Site 2 Ariel View



Figure 20. Small Cottage on Open Lot



Figure 21. One-Story Ranch Home with Attached Garage



Figure 22. Cul-de-sac



Figure 23. Lush Evergreen Trees in this Area



Figure 24. Paved Street without Curb



Figure 25. Hedge Frontage and Vernacular Landscaping

G. Site Analysis 3

Site 3 is a recent development located on the northwest side of Fall City along Redmond Fall City Rd SE (SR 202). It subdivided an original 4.25-acre parcel to create 17 single-family homes, featuring a shared open space on the south side (41,238 sqft) and a stormwater pond (24,632 sqft) on the north side of the site.

The built form on this site is characterized by large buildings on small, narrow lots, ranging from 5000 to 8000 square feet, with lot widths varying from 50 to 60 feet. The buildings are clustered and oriented toward the north-south 324th Avenue with an internal half loop circulation. All the buildings were constructed during the same period, and their architectural styles are monotonous tract homes.

The road is paved without curbs and gutters, and there is a 6-foot-wide sidewalk area marked on the road. The development uses minimal 10-foot setbacks, maximizing the building area with little landscape at the front yard. There is a 12-foot landscape buffer fronting the 324 Avenue parcel line. There is no on-street parking; instead, cars park in the garage or on the driveways with garage access is from the street.

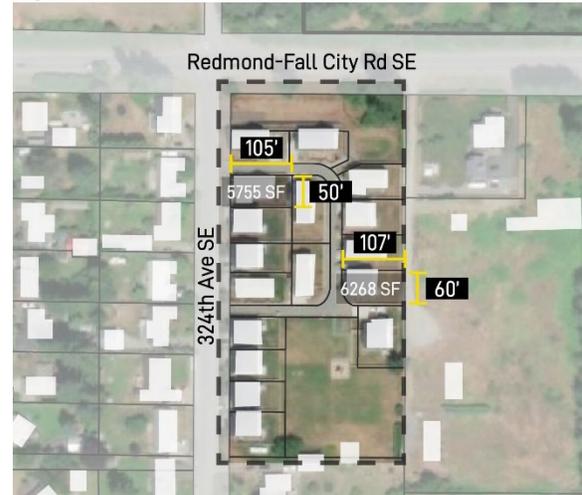
Figure 26. SITE 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS OF BUILT FORM: LOT AND PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Net Site Density	7.08 du/ac
Gross Site Density	3.40 du/ac
Median Lot Size	0.14 acres (6299sf)
Typical Lot Dimensions	105'x50'; 107x60'
Average Lot Coverage	20.16%
Building Height	2 story
Avg. Bldg. Footprint	1,200 SF
Typical Buildings	2 story ranch style
Landscape feature	Small lawn with some short shrubs
ROW width	90'
Sidewalks	Yes (no curbs)
Alley Access	No
Street Parking	No

Figure 27. SITE 3 LOCATION KEY MAP



Figure 28. SITE 3 PLAN DIMENSION MEASUREMENT



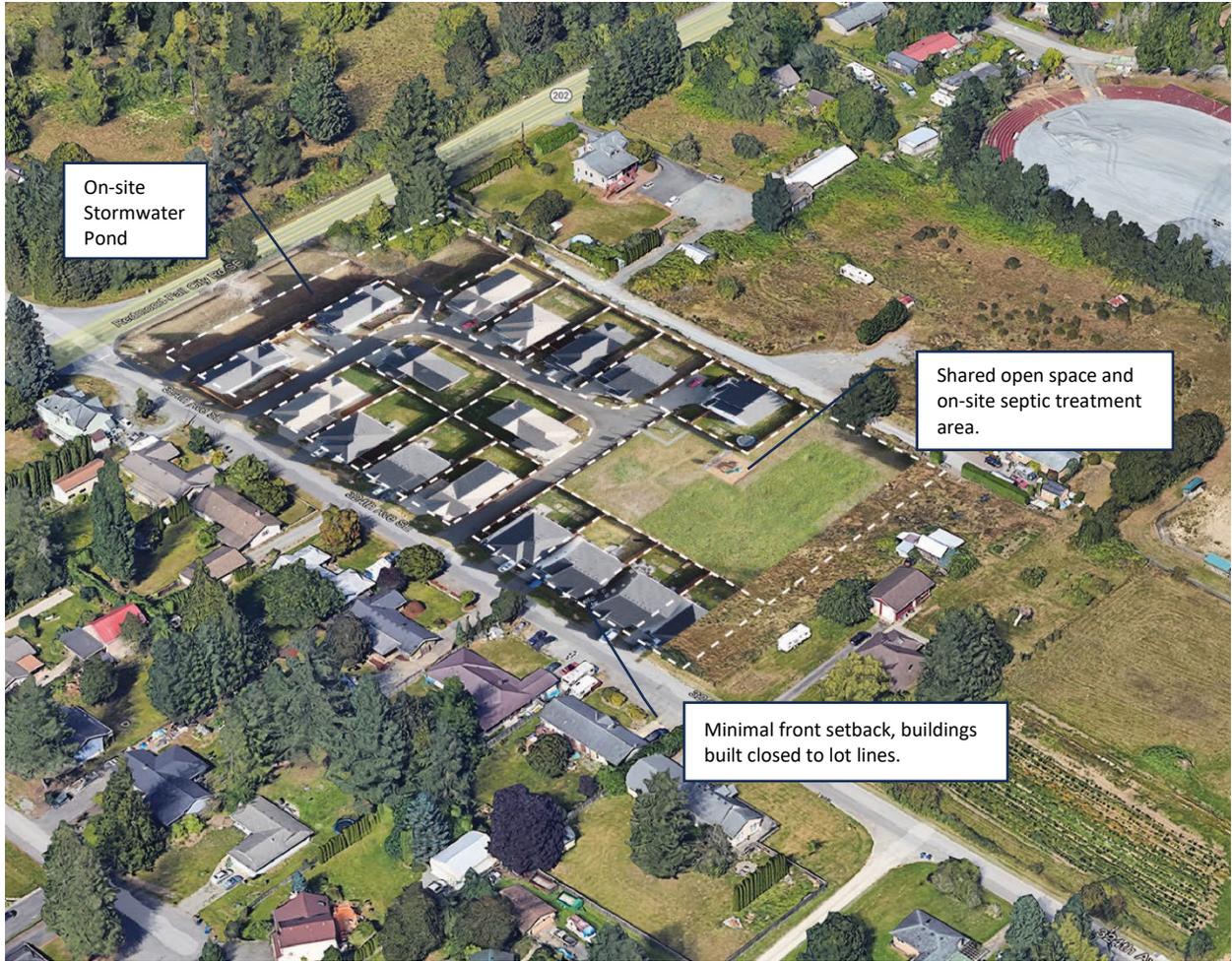


Figure 29. Site3 Ariel View



Figure 30. Monotonous Architectural Style



Figure 31. Minimal Landscape or Open Space at the Frontage



Figure 32. Wide Paved Street without Curbs



Figure 33. On-site Stormwater Pond



Figure 34. Paved Internal Circulation



Figure 35. Attached Garage with Driveway Access from the Street

H. Summary of Findings

The area-based density allowances are the key driver of recent development patterns. The current R4 zone regulates gross density, allowing a maximum of 4 dwelling units per acre, including shared open space and infrastructure within the gross residential acreage, with no specific criteria for the function of shared open space.

The R4 density allowances may not precisely reflect the development pattern in Fall City. While all three study sites meet the R4 gross density requirements, the median densities of Site 1 and Site 2 are around 2-2.5 units per acre, which is notably below the allowances. When considering net density, which only takes into account the net lot area, Site 3 stands out in net density calculations. Site 3 achieves a significantly higher median net density of 6.95 compared to Site 1 at 4.15 and Site 2 at 2.64. This results from Site 3's development capitalizing on the gross density approach, which reduces lot sizes and increases unit count by adding the area of on-site septic treatment and shared open space into the overall gross residential area.

Smaller lots and increased shared open space constrain future infill possibilities for smaller units or accessory units that align with the rural character.

Historic Rural Residential Development in Fall City typically has larger lots and more landscaping. The median lot sizes of Site 1 and Site 2 are about 10,000 SF to 16,000 SF. Buildings are centered on the lots with greater spacing between them, accompanied by more landscaping and mature trees around the structures. Common open spaces are absent, except for public parks. Parking and garage access have minimal impact on the building frontage.

Architectural sameness within new developments is not consistent with the rural town design elements in Fall City. These developments frequently feature buildings with similar architecture but varying colors. The lack of a side setback requirement leads to minimal space between buildings, as developers maximize frontage width with large attached garages and prominent driveways. This approach escalates FAR ratios, resulting in "bulky" frontages that diverge from the open rural landscape characteristic of Fall City.

I. Community Feedback

On August 21st, 2023, and September 5, 2023, the County staff and the consultant team hosted an online open house to share the preliminary findings of this report and collect community input. In total, about 30 community members attended the two meetings and shared their thoughts. The meetings discussed the following questions, and the themes and feedback from the community are summarized in the sections below.

- What features do the community members like the most about the residential areas of Fall City?
- How could regulations reinforce development to preserve the features they like?
- Are there types of residential developments/home styles they would like to see more of, or that don't currently exist in Fall City?
- Should regulations allow for a smaller lot size in exchange for open space, with new criteria for open space?
- What are the community-identified cultural assets important to them?

[Placeholder for community feedback during September 5, 2023 Fall City Community Association Meeting.]

Open Sightline and Proper Proportion

Most of the community participants indicated that they love the open sightline, generous landscape, and setbacks and spaces around their homes. The proportion of building footprint and lot area is important to create that openness feeling in the Fall City. The participants think smaller homes like cottage on proportionally smaller lots could keep the open landscape feeling, while large homes with small lots that would have no privacy or feeling of space. Features like low fences and alleys also create open views in the neighborhood and expand to the surrounding hills to Mount Si.

Usable Open Space

The community participants also expresses a desire for open spaces to be functional, for recreational activity amenities to be added in developments and better integrated with passive open spaces like septic field and stormwater treatment areas. The community believes that the definition of open space eligible for inclusion in density standards should be refined in order to ensure the more usable open spaces in future developments.

The community participants said they enjoy the large yard, wide alley, and wide safe street where children can play, and neighbors can connect closely. These features in the historic and post-war neighborhoods contribute to the rural lifestyle and remedy for park spaces.

Tree Retention

The community participants desire the preservation of mature trees in the new developments and want regulations for tree retention more comprehensively. They would like to see sustainable development and tree preservation, potentially incentive through the County's tree ordinance and tree code.

Neighborhood Connectivity

The community participants like the trails and small pedestrian connections, including informal pedestrian paths that connect the cul-de-sac and they are well-used by the community. A pedestrian path extending from a cul-de-sac is identified in the site 2 analysis.

The community participants are concerned about pedestrian safety as in the denser area, vehicles will park in the walking area. They would like to see dedicated safe walking routes with curbs and signs especially near school.

J. Recommendations

The project recommendations are informed by the review of development regulations, the analysis of rural character specific to Fall City, the site and context analysis of sites in Fall City, and input from the Fall City community. The goal of the recommendations is to better align new development with the established rural character in Fall City while protecting property rights and allowing reasonable development that contributes positively to the community.

Establish criteria for allowing land used for common open space and amenities to count towards project density. Currently land used for common open space and infrastructure may count towards the project density at the discretion of the developer. This results in smaller parcel sizes that contribute to the lack of compatibility of new development in Fall City with the existing development pattern and rural character. Potential criteria may include:

- **Creation of Public Open Space.** For open space to count towards project density it would be required to be publicly accessible and not limited to a homeowners association.
- **Preservation of Significant Trees or Natural Areas.** Density credit could be provided for the preservation of significant trees, forested or natural areas that provide a public benefit.
- **Visual or Physical Amenity.** For infrastructure such as stormwater facilities they would need to be designed a visual or physical amenity to count towards a project density. Septic drainfields would therefore not count towards project density.
- **Trails.** Open space that provides a publicly accessible trail could be counted towards project density.

For lot sizes below ¼ acre, require a master planning process that combines the subdivision and site planning process. This process would only apply to projects that are requesting to reduce lots sizes below ¼ acre in exchange for providing common open space and amenities that meet the recommended criteria described above. The review process should include submittal of plat maps, site plans, elevations, massing models, and architectural renderings. Standards for architectural variety in materials, massing, landscape, and site planning could be required since this is a process that developers would opt into. The alternate review process will provide more flexibility but also higher standards for design and integration with the rural character of Fall City.

Modify dimensional standards to reduce building mass and create more space between buildings.

- Reduce the maximum impervious surface limit to 40% and exempt longer driveways to encourage detached rear garages.

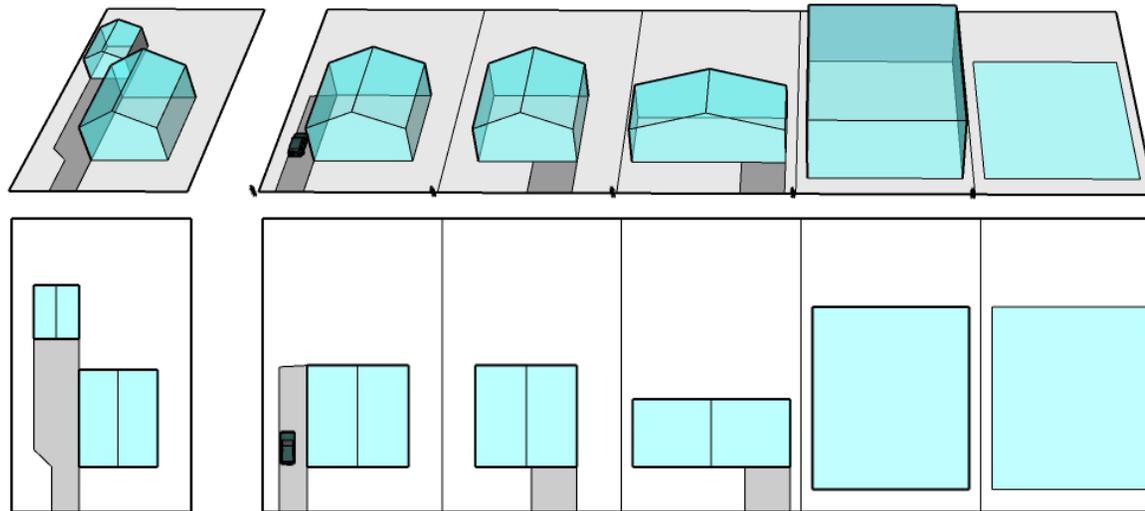
- Increase the front yard setback to a minimum of 20’.
- Increase side yard setbacks to a minimum of 15’ and require one side yard setback of at least 20’ to allow access to the rear yard.
- Increase the minimum lot width to 60’ but allow flexibility for irregularly shaped lots.

Establish a Floor to Area (FAR) limit to right size buildings to parcel sizes. FAR limits help to reduce building mass and right size building sizes to parcel sizes. Given the typical lot size of a quarter acre the FAR limit could be 0.4 and would allow 4,000 sq feet of building area which should include garages that are integrated into the principal building. Incentives should be provided for other design approaches to reduce building mass of the principal structure such as rear detached garages, garages accessed from the side where garage doors are not visible from the street, and the use of alley accessed detached garages. Detached accessory dwelling units could also be exempt to provide more variety and affordable and multi-generational housing opportunities.

Require or incentivize keeping stormwater on-site for sites with larger parcels. Requiring a minimum lot size of a ¼ acre will expand opportunities to retain stormwater site on individual parcels. New requirements could be put in place to require or incentivize (such as through RainWise) stormwater to be kept and treated on-site unless there are topographical or other site challenges that make this infeasible. The focus should be on non-pollution generating surfaces such as roofs as driveways may have to be addressed in a different manner.

Consider adopting stronger tree preservation standards. Community engagement efforts indicated a desire for stronger tree preservation standards. Standards may include new classifications of trees based on size and species with different standards for preservation along with mitigation requirements for replanting. Flexibility in site design can also help to preserve trees in new developments.

Figure 36. Site Dimension Scenarios



# Scenario	6	5	4	3	2	1
Description	Increased Side Yard, Drive in Side Yard, Detached Garage	Increased Side Yard Setback, Driveway in Side Yard	Increased Side Yard Setback, Driveway in Front	Existing Regulations	Current Zoning Envelope	55% Impervious Surface Limit
Lot Size	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400	10,400
Lot Width	80'	80'	80'	80'	80'	80'
Lot Depth	130'	130'	130'	130'	130'	130'
FAR	0.29	0.39	0.39	0.4	n/a	n/a
Lot Coverage	32.00%	27.30%	23.30%	24.00%	55%	55%
Street Setback	20'	20'	20'	20'	10'	10'
Minimum Interior Setback	5'	5'	5'	5'	5'	n/a
Building Footprint	1505	2025	2025	2100	n/a	n/a
Principal Building Sq Ft	3010	4050	4050	4200	n/a	n/a
Total Building Sq Ft	3490	4050	4050	4200	n/a	n/a
Accessory Building Footprint	480	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Driveway Footprint	1822	815	400	400	400	n/a

Figure 37. Site Dimension Scenarios #6 Neighborhood Rendering

