

KING COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA TITLE:	Urban Growth Area Policies and Four-to-One Program Amendments in the Proposed 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update
PRESENTED BY:	Ivan Miller, GMPC Lead Staff

Today's Meeting

The Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) will be briefed on changes proposed by King County to the Urban Growth Area (UGA) Policies and Four-to-One Program amendments that were recommended by the GMPC in Motion 23-4.¹

Discussion

Over the course of 2022 and 2023, the GMPC Work Program included a review of the UGA policies and the Four-to-One Program, which are found in the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs),² the King County Comprehensive Plan,³ and the King County Code.⁴ The outcome of that process was GMPC Motion 23-4, which included a suite of recommended amendments to ensure the three documents are consistent and reflect countywide growth management goals, consistent with King County Ordinance 19384⁵ which directed the review.

Other than minor technical restructuring for clarity, the outcomes in GMPC Motion 23-4 were included in the Executive Recommended 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update and updates to the CPPs⁶ that were transmitted to the King County Council in December 2023.

On June 5, 2024, the County Council's Local Services and Land Use Committee took action on the proposed Comprehensive Plan (including the King County Code changes) and CPPs. The Committee voted on proposed amendments to both pieces of legislation. The Committee then voted to move the legislation, as amended, with a "Do Pass" recommendation to the full County Council for possible adoption in December 2024.

The Committee-recommended version of the legislation makes several changes to the Four-to-One provisions in the Executive Recommended Plan and proposed CPPs (see Attachment A). In summary, the proposed amendments are generally consistent with the GMPC

¹ GMPC Motion 23-4 [\[LINK\]](#)

² 2021 King County Countywide Planning Policies, as amended [\[LINK\]](#)

³ 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, as amended [\[LINK\]](#)

⁴ King County Code Chapter 20.18 [\[LINK\]](#)

⁵ Ordinance 19384 [\[LINK\]](#)

⁶ See "Exec Recommended 2024 Plan" section of page [\[LINK\]](#)

recommendation, include changes to the structure / organization of the provisions, and they do contain several substantive changes. These changes were reviewed by the Interjurisdictional Team (IJT) which concurred with them.

CPP FW-1 discusses the role of GMPC in reviewing County Council changes to what GMPC recommended and it states:

FW-1 Maintain the currency of the Countywide Planning Policies through periodic review and amendment. Initiate and review all amendments at the Growth Management Planning Council through the process described below:

...

b) Growth Management Planning Council recommends amendments to the King County Council for consideration, possible revision, and approval; proposed revisions by the King County Council that are of a substantive nature may be sent to the Growth Management Planning Council for their consideration and revised recommendation based on the proposed revision;

As shown in Attachment A, while not formally referred back to the GMPC for further recommendation, because the Council Committee's proposed revisions are of a substantive nature, the Executive has included this item on the agenda for GMPC to consider and, should the GMPC choose, issue a revised recommendation.

Future Activity

Action on these changes, should the GMPC choose to act, is scheduled for the September GMPC meeting.

For More Information

If members and/or their staff are interested in additional detail, please contact Ivan Miller, GMPC lead staff, at ivan.miller@kingcounty.gov or 206-263-8297.

Attachments

A. Overview of County Council Committee Revisions to Urban Growth Area and Four to One Policy and Code Amendments in Executive Recommended Plan and proposed CPPs

Overview of County Council Committee Revisions to Urban Growth Area and Four to One Policy and Code Amendments in Executive Recommended Plan and proposed CPPs

[\[LINK\]](#)

Note: The following provides a detailed and sequential overview of the County Council Committee revisions. This overview has been prepared by Executive Branch staff and reviewed by Council Branch staff.

Summary: The County Council's Local Services and Land Use Committee's proposed amendments shift provisions from their currently adopted location, and the locations recommended in Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) Motion 23-4 ([LINK](#)), such that the broadest policies are in the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), more detail is in the Comprehensive Plan, and primarily only the regulations remain in the King County Code. In doing so, the amendments remove some of the underlying duplication amongst the provisions while seeking to maintain the intent in Motion 23-4 and the Executive Recommended Plan. Some substantive changes are also proposed in several of the provisions, as noted in the following.

A. Countywide Planning Policy Amendments

[redline version:⁷ [LINK](#) | clean version:⁸ [LINK](#)]

- The one notable substantive change in the CPPs is an increase in the on-site natural area requirement. It increases it from at least 'half of the site in open space' to 'at least three-quarters of the area required to be dedicated natural area is on-site.'

Non-substantive changes to the CPPs include:

- Revises DP-17 (which defines the three allowed types of Urban Growth Area (UGA) amendments – capacity issues, park transfers, and Four-to-One (4:1) projects) to move the details about the 4:1 program into a separate policy.
- Adds a new map that shows the original UGA boundary adopted in the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan; also shows other layers such as the Joint Planning Areas.
- Revises DP-18 (now DP-18A) to only address UGA amendments based on capacity issues.
- Adds new policy DP-18B which only addresses UGA amendments based on 4:1 projects. Includes a suite of provisions that heretofore were only detailed in the King County Comprehensive Plan and King County Code. While relocated, these provisions are consistent with the intent of Motion 23-4 and address topics such as the following:
 - Prohibiting urban serving facilities in Rural Areas/Natural Resource Lands, requiring 4:1s to follow topographical features, prohibiting 4:1s on Natural Resource Lands, requiring the new urban lands to be free of environmental constraints, requiring 4:1s to be adjacent to the original UGA in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, prohibiting 4:1s in areas previously expanded through 4:1 projects, requiring cities to add new urban lands to their Potential Annexation Areas, prohibiting development until annexation for certain 4:1s. The

⁷ Highlights Committee changes to the Executive Recommended Plan and proposed CPPs

⁸ Shows changes compared to current adopted policies and codes

requirement that only residential uses are allowed within the urban area of a 4:1 is added to the CPPs.

- Moving these provisions to the CPPs is consistent with the treatment of the 4:1 program as a countywide program and means that any future changes would require GMPC review.

B. Comprehensive Plan Amendments

[redline: [LINK](#) | clean: [LINK](#)]

Non-substantive changes to the KCCP include:

- Revises RP-108 to clarify that GMPC actions are recommendations; this is consistent with the language in the CPPs.
- Moves the 4:1 policies from the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Communities Chapter to the Regional Growth Management Planning Chapter.
- Throughout, changes the term “open space” to “natural areas”.
- Revises the program purpose in the text statement by removing language that stated that the natural area would run “north and south” along the “main” UGA; this change more accurately reflects how the program has operated.
- Revises acreage totals in the text by removing acreages that were in the Joint Planning Area projects.
- Restructures and reorders language in several policies so that each policy has fewer focus areas.
- Removes some of the provisions that are now proposed to be in the CPPs.

C. King County Code Amendments

[redline: [LINK](#) | clean: [LINK](#)]

- Substantive changes include:
 - Requires the Executive branch to transmit the triparty agreement to the County Council concurrent with transmitting the 4:1 proposal and specifies some of the conditions that must be included in the triparty agreement (such as density, timing, sequencing, and other mandatory topics).
 - Replaces the requirement for Type 1 landscaping with a requirement for a 50-foot landscaped buffer that has a mix of trees, shrubs, and groundcover that are native to the area, and would create a visual barrier. This is similar in purpose as the GMPC motion, and the revised language retains the ability for the County to change the buffer to restore the natural area or habitat, or better protect natural resources and functions and land use compatibility in the area, where appropriate.
 - Removes the requirement that the natural area be half the width of the property. The existing provisions – that the depth of the natural area be 200 feet, that it generally parallel the UGA, and that it be configured to connect with adjacent open space – remain in place.

- Creates a placeholder for the affordable housing requirements recommended in the GMPC motion. The new amendments remove the total number of units that trigger the requirement for affordable housing, the percentage of total dwelling units that shall be affordable, and the area median income for which the units must be affordable. The provisions in the motion were written to align with the affordability requirements in the County's Inclusionary Housing program. The Council is in the process of restructuring the Inclusionary Housing program, including its affordability requirements, as part of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. The 4:1 affordability standards are expected to be aligned with the Inclusionary Housing as part of final adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in December.

Non-substantive changes to the K.C.C. include:

- Removes some of the provisions that are now proposed to be in the CPPs.
- Makes a technical correction to remove language related to allowing Transfer of Development Rights to be used to satisfy the natural area requirement.