

**KING COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL**

**AGENDA TITLE:** Public School Siting Policy – (1) 2018 School Siting Report, and (2) Proposed Motion 18-1

**PRESENTED BY:** Interjurisdictional Staff Team (IJT)

**Topics for Discussion:**

School siting has been a signature issue for the GMPC since 2012 when policies were added to the Countywide Planning Policies directing local jurisdictions – the county and the cities – to work collaboratively with the school districts to site schools within the Urban Growth Area. The GMPC will be considering two agenda items today: (1) the bi-annual report of meetings between school districts and local jurisdictions in accordance with CPP PF-19A, and (2) Motion 18-1, which outlines actions jurisdictions can take to facilitate the development and renovation of public schools within the UGA.

**Background**

Policies regarding school siting included in the 2012 Countywide Planning Policies direct schools to the UGA and set up an accountability system that requires school districts and local jurisdictions to meet and report on their findings. In adopting these policies, the GMPC recognized that siting schools in the UGA was a shared responsibility between the school district and the local jurisdiction.

**PF-18** Locate schools, institutions, and other community facilities and services that primarily serve urban populations within the Urban Growth Area, where they are accessible to the communities they serve, except as provided in Appendix 5 (March 31, 2012 School Siting Task Force Report). Locate these facilities in places that are well served by transit and pedestrian and bicycle networks.

**PF-19** Locate new schools and institutions primarily serving rural residents in neighboring cities and rural towns, except as provided in Appendix 5 (March 31, 2012 School Siting Task Force Report) and locate new community facilities and services that primarily serve rural residents in neighboring cities and rural towns, with the limited exceptions when their use is dependent upon a rural location and their size and scale supports rural character.

Public school facilities to meet the needs of growing communities are an essential part of the public infrastructure. Coordination between each jurisdiction's land use plan and regulations and their respective school district[s] facility needs are essential for public school capacity needs to be met. The following policy applies countywide and requires engagement between each school district and each city that is served by the school district. The policy also applies to King County as a jurisdiction for areas of unincorporated King County that are within a school district's service boundary. The policy initiates a periodic procedure to identify if there are individual school district siting issues and if so, a process for the school district and jurisdiction to cooperatively prepare strategies for resolving the issue.

**PF-19A** Plan, through a cooperative process between jurisdictions and school districts, that public school facilities are available, to meet the needs of existing and projected residential development consistent with adopted comprehensive plan policies and growth forecasts. Cooperatively work with each school district located within the jurisdiction's boundaries to evaluate the school district's ability to site school facilities necessary to meet the school district's identified student capacity needs. Use school district capacity and enrollment data and the growth forecasts and development data of each jurisdiction located within the school district's service boundaries. By January 2016 and every two years thereafter, determine if there is development capacity and the supporting infrastructure to site the needed school facilities. If not, cooperatively prepare a strategy to address the capacity shortfall. Potential strategies may include:

- Shared public facilities such as play fields, parking areas and access drives
- School acquisition or lease of appropriate public lands
- Regulatory changes such as allowing schools to locate in additional zones or revised development standards
- School design standards that reduce land requirements (such as multi-story structures or reduced footprint) while still meeting programmatic needs

In 2017, and every two years thereafter, King County shall report to the GMPC on whether the goals of this policy are being met. The GMPC shall identify corrective actions as necessary to implement this policy.

## **2018 School Siting Report**

The purpose of this bi-annual report is to bring to the GMPC the results of the school/city/county coordination meetings called for in CPP-PF-19A. Specifically, policy PF-19A calls for the agencies to work together to assess school capacity needs, identify future school sites within the UGA and, as necessary, prepare joint strategies for resolving school siting needs consistent with adopted comprehensive plan policies.

The recent growth within King County has made it challenging for school districts to accommodate their students in facilities located within the UGA. While this situation is most apparent in the school districts that include both urban and rural students, the need for increased school capacity is also felt in many districts that are wholly within the

UGA. There are 21 school districts with all or part of their districts within King County. Of these, eleven districts held meetings with their cities and the county.

This is the second round of meetings held in accordance with PF-19A. The first set of meetings occurred in 2016. As with the first set of meetings, this second set did not result in the need for districts and jurisdictions to develop a joint strategy for addressing school capacity shortfalls.

### **Motion 18-1: School Siting**

This is the second reading of Motion 18-1, following a first reading and discussion at the GMPC meeting on February 28, 2018. Motion 18-1 is the result of presentations by school districts to the GMPC at their November 29, 2017 meeting. The rapid rise in enrollment combined with the recent passage of school district bond issues has magnified the current need for more capacity. The school districts are focused on siting schools in the UGA, as required by the CPPs. The GMPC heard several success stories and also the challenges faced by the districts as they search for suitable sites within the UGA and then comply with the regulatory structure. Districts that have both urban and rural students as well as those districts that serve only urban students have similar challenges when building new schools or expanding existing schools within the UGA.

CPP Policy PF-18, as identified above, calls for schools to be located within the UGA, for the most part. To address this policy as well as continue with the work identified in Policy PF -19A, Motion 18-1 outlines best management practices. This motion was developed with the intent to address some of the common issues raised at several of the recent PF-19A meetings and in an effort to proactively facilitate adequate school capacity as the region continues to grow.

The GMPC-directed motion outlines actions jurisdictions can take to further facilitate the development and renovation of public schools within the UGA. Following discussion by the GMPC members at the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, one revision was suggested: adding in a provision for the consideration of allowing playfields in the Rural Area adjacent to schools in the UGA with direct access from the UGA. The GMPC directed staff to revise the motion and bring it back for consideration at this meeting. Motion 18-1, as presented to the GMPC today, includes the additional language as directed by the GMPC, and is ready for consideration.

### **Next Steps:**

- GMPC consideration of Motion 18-1 and, if approved, the ratification process.
- Continue dialogues with school districts as they seek to site and develop new public schools in the UGA.