

**FALL CITY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION SUBAREA STEWARD COMMITTEE**

November 1, 2022

King County Dept of Local Services  
Permitting Division, Planning Dept  
201 S Jackson Street  
KSC-LS-0815  
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Fall City Subarea Plan Recommendations

Dear Subarea Planners: Jacqueline Reid and Jesse Reynolds:  
District 3 Councilmember, Sarah Perry  
King County Executive, Dow Constantine  
Dept of Local Services Director, John Taylor  
Permitting Division Director, Jim Chan

The community of greater Fall City has just completed an 18-month review of the Fall City Subarea Plan and has adopted recommendations for the upcoming new version, which apparently will be merged into the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County plan.

The subarea review committee is comprised of 10 area residents and businesspeople. We have met weekly to discuss the state of our community and how to wisely plan Fall City's future. We consulted our community through surveys, public meetings and at community gatherings, discussed emerging issues with county staff, and have created a set of recommendations that cumulatively represent hundreds of hours invested in our community's future.

Just a reminder:

Fall City is a small, unincorporated rural town in King County that in some ways would be recognizable to Jeremiah Borst, who first platted the town in 1877. He and his fellow settlers, if visiting us today, would see a familiar main street lined on one side with single-and two-story commercial buildings, some little changed in a century, mostly serving the local populace. On the north side of that road, the eternal Snoqualmie River meanders its way to Puget Sound, still undammed and largely unimpeded by man, still petulantly capable unleashing wintertime floods that spare Fall City but submerge much of the lower valley. Neighborhoods inside and adjacent to the Fall City community tend to feature large lots, modest-to-medium homes, with mature native trees and landscaping. Until recently, large undeveloped pastures and residential lots were a prominent part of the town's land-use mix. Much of the surrounding land is floodplain, forest land and steep mountain slopes, which makes flat and flood-free Fall City attractive to residential development.

Earlier versions of the Fall City Subarea Plan (the guide to the town's growth and ambience) acknowledged and vowed to protect Fall City's rural setting and ambience. The state's 1990 Growth Management Act exempted Fall City and its rural environs from urban-level residential and commercial densities.

Yet, that high-density growth is happening anyway. Undeveloped large lots are being ripped up and paved over, as developers erect urban-style multi-story compressed neighborhoods on tiny lots with minimal setbacks. The words of the state Growth Management Act, and the Fall City Subarea Plan are, to Fall City residents, in direct and unambiguous conflict with what King County is allowing on the ground.

This one truism – Fall City is losing its rural character – is the primary finding of our more than 18 months of work. And as you read your way through our recommendations, you’ll hopefully appreciate that the Fall City community sends you one overarching takeaway:

**The Fall City Community is united in favor of protecting the rural character and viability of our unique unincorporated town in an increasingly metropolitan county. We ask that King County support preservation of our rural character as endorsed in prior subarea plans and support our community’s set of recommendations.**

One additional point: We understand King County plans to end Fall City’s standalone Subarea Plan as a distinct entity and instead merge it into The Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan. Fall City is virtually a unique entity and deserves separate consideration. As a rural town center within a vast unincorporated area, we have special needs for services, infrastructure, and development regulations.

We suggest that Fall City to be the pilot for a new paradigm in King County’s land use for outside of the Urban Growth Boundary. Protect the heart of the valley where zoning approaches could be grounded in rural needs. Align planners and permitting to local areas for effective community implementation and familiarity of the constituents served.

Lastly, it is our request that we receive advance notice and an opportunity to review draft policy language so we may present it at our regular monthly community meetings to solicit meaningful community input. Appendix B is a Matrix of Recommendations for tracking the following as it proceeds through the planning process, Executive Recommendation and Council adoption.

## METHODOLOGY

In addition to weekly committee meetings, the FCCA conducted and funded various types of outreach and surveys over three years; culminating in development of the recommendations contained in this report.

Summer 2020 – We launched a community wide survey for road safety and pedestrian concerns, with an amazing response of 628 respondents.

Summer 2021 – In a needs-list outreach campaign, we erected posters, A-Frames, and window signs along downtown and in high-traffic areas. The Needs List output was provided by King County to our community for a deep dive into the priorities, needs and concerns of the community.

Spring/Summer 2022 – Outreach activities included several public engagements, meetings, and the formal kick-off of the Subarea Planning process, including:

- Regular monthly community meetings streamed live on Facebook and via Zoom, which includes a live chat, comment features, and reaches an average of 600 residents each month. Archived copies are available at [www.fallcity.org](http://www.fallcity.org) and Fall City, WA Facebook page.
- Community Event booths at Fall City Day and National Night Out with visual displays, handouts, comment box and volunteers engaged with residents to address needs, answer questions, and identify priorities in the Subarea Plan.

- Committee members also participated in several public meetings with King County officials including NEKC Town Hall Meetings, Councilmember Public Meeting, Subarea Kick Off meeting, Comprehensive Plan Kick Off meeting, Subarea Public Meeting and Fall City Subarea Task Force Meeting.
- We surveyed every address in 98024, focusing on the top fifteen priorities identified in the previous outreach activities and committee deliberations to measure the community's sentiment. We had a 22% response rate. See Appendix A for a summary report of the survey results. An overwhelming majority of respondents provided feedback on each survey question and provided comments on each question. The insights provided by the feedback comments are valuable in understanding the residents' sentiments toward the subarea plan.
- Ongoing social media campaigns were synchronized with the above activities and were featured on Facebook's Fall City, WA public page, the Fall City Community Facebook Group Page (closed to residents only), NextDoor Discussion boards and the FCCA email distribution list.
- A two-month guest speaker series with our committee focused on areas addressing permitting/zoning/land use; Roads and Transportation; Green Building; Agriculture; Emergency Management; Forestry; Tribal; and Economic Development to better understand the challenges impacting Fall City.

### **Snoqualmie Valley/ NEKC Subarea Plan Policy Recommendations**

#### ***Future Land Use/Zoning***

The following recommendations are intended to protect and safeguard our rural character:

- Maintain low rural densities of one to four dwelling units per acre in the rural town boundary (CP-533)
- Amend CP-535 with defined rural design standards and do not allow zoning that would allow more intense development beyond that adopted in the 1999 Fall City Subarea Plan. The rural character of Fall City should be preserved.
- Amend R-4 zoning for Fall City rural town boundary to have a minimum lot size of 10,890 square feet.
  - 81.70% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Require subdivisions within the Fall City rural town boundary to build connecting public paths and trails to surrounding neighborhoods. Children and families need safe passageway between neighborhoods.
  - 81.86% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Require new homes and buildings within the Fall City rural town boundary to comply with a county-managed set of design standards that protect rural character.
  - 70.06% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Require developers to pay mitigation fees to improve the rural town of Fall City. Example: inclusive playgrounds, community center, downtown beautification, road improvements, trails, etc.
  - 90.78% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Amend R-4 zoning within the Fall City rural town boundary to have larger setbacks.
  - 67.75% (33.33+34.42%) of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey
    - 33.33% of Fall City respondents are in favor of larger setbacks (30 feet front, 20 feet back, 10 feet sides) or

- 34.42% of Fall City respondents are in favor of even larger setbacks (40 feet front, 30 feet back, 15 feet sides)
    - Although it was not included in the survey, a helpful tool that was provided in comments was a building/land ratio as another zoning option to preserve rural character.
  - Unlike many urban areas, rural residents do not park in the road and use larger driveways with ample space for boats, recreational trailers as well as storage for large riding lawnmowers. Consider this characteristic

### ***Economic Development***

The Fall City committee in partnership with King County, created the Fall City Business District Overlay (SDO-260) in the 2012 Subarea Plan update. It enables and encourages a viable, sustainable business economy while maintaining harmony with the surrounding rural residential and natural resources areas. In general, the SDO continues to provide adequate land use and zoning for the town's 20-year vision. The following recommendations are small adjustments identified by our committee:

- Amend A. i. (A). Multifamily residential units shall only be allowed on the upper ~~floors~~ floor of buildings
- Maintain CP-534 language in the next subarea plan. Any update to the language shall be available for advance review of the Subarea Stewards Committee and the Fall City community.
- If, upon a thorough review it is determined that the existing Automotive Repair & Service businesses would not be able to operate upon substantial damage or extended closure, then add Automotive Repair & Service as an allowable use under general services. As a rural town, residents typically shop and work outside of the community. Without this critical service, a viable town would be revoked.

### ***Natural Resources, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources***

- Expand and Enforce CP-538 to state "King County shall" and include all ROWs public access easements and public lands to allow for public use as appropriate.
- Open the river levees in Fall City for public walking trails or paths.
  - 79.46% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- We ask King County to agree that in the event of divested county properties, Fall City area special purpose districts shall have first right of refusal and if a local municipality chooses not to purchase in fee, then a local advisory group and local bid process shall be formed to determine best use for the community and ensure that it provides maximum local benefit to the adjacent community. The community would benefit from siting of a community center, farmers market and gathering spaces.

### ***Transportation***

- Enforce and amend CP-537 to include safe walking routes, paths, and trail access within Fall City to surrounding areas, regional trails, and adjacent Fall City neighborhoods outside of the rural town boundary. Continue to make transportation and egress a priority for the Fall City area.
  - For community resilience, it is suggested that we strive for two means of egress/ingress when new developments have ten or more homes.

- Designate, upgrade, and improve safe walking routes, as defined by the community, in the rural town boundary of Fall City.
  - 76% Supported improved pedestrian routes
    - 17.05% Supported more sidewalks
    - 58.95% Supported Better safe walking routes for a total of 76.00% community support per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Create more trail and/or path access in Fall City and/to the surrounding area.
  - 72.93% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
  - Most respondents on this topic reside in adjacent Fall City neighborhoods.
- Work with WSDOT to improve and expand bike lanes on SR 202 and SR 203 from Fall City.
  - 63.94% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Additionally, road improvements should be at least 11-12 feet in width per lane to provide greater distance away from children and provide ample shoulder for supplemental parking during school and community events.

## **King County Comprehensive Plan Policy Recommendations**

### ***Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands***

- Include “Parks” in #d in R-507 as allowable public facilities.
- In the event of divested county properties, community agencies shall have first right of refusal and if a local municipality chooses not to purchase in fee, then a local advisory group and local bid process shall be formed to determine best use for the community and ensure that it provides maximum local benefit.

### ***Economic Development***

- Amend ED-605 to not only invest in public lands but be a steward of public lands by way of enforcing the commitment to partner with local organizations for communities’ use and maintenance of these open spaces.

## **King County Code Revision Requests**

### ***Future Land Use/Zoning***

- Develop accompanying code language to protect rural residential character in the rural town boundary of Fall City. Requests include minimum lot size, larger setbacks, land/building ratio, varying dwelling types, aesthetic variety, and tree placement of 1:1 ratio or greater.
- Developing accompanying code language to allow for public access pedestrian connection between neighborhoods
- When zone change occurs within 98024 or surrounding unincorporated Snoqualmie Valley, the Dept of Local Services shall initiate a local review committee to ensure continuity of the rural community’s vision and needs.

***Economic Development***

- If upon code review shows that the existing Automotive Repair & Service businesses that exist Fall City would not be able to rebuild if substantially damaged; amend SDO-260 to allow for Automotive Repair & Services in the Fall City Business District general services.

***Natural Resources, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources***

- Develop accompanying code language that requires designation during development of Fall City's surrounding areas to provide more public trail and/or path access between neighborhoods and regional trail systems.
- Develop accompanying code language that requires designation during development of public access tracts of river levees for public walking trails/paths.
- During open space and as conservation futures acquisition occurs, within 98024 or surrounding unincorporated Snoqualmie Valley, the Dept of Local Services shall initiate a local review committee to ensure continuity of the rural community's vision and needs.

***Transportation***

- Develop accompanying code language that requires designation and upgrades of safe walking routes as defined by the community with development in the rural town boundary of Fall City.

**Funding/ Services/ Infrastructure Needs List Requests**

***Natural Resources, Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources***

- While the community has some community meeting spaces, they are limited, with many requiring a fee for usage. The Fall City community recommends addressing the needs for a community center and capital funding for this project.
- Build a community center for Fall City that will accommodate community meeting space, daytime adult classes/programming, before and after school activities, heating & cooling shelter and more based on community input.
  - 46.38% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Create more trail and/or path access in Fall City and/to the surrounding area.
  - 72.93% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Make the river levees in Fall City open for public walking trails or paths with acquisition or easements.
  - 79.46% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.

***Housing & Human Services***

- Improve local access to mental and behavioral health services in the Fall City area. Fall City respondents would require further engagement from King County to define what constitutes mental and behavioral health services to include impact assessments and outreach.
  - 60.83% are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.

### ***Transportation***

- Designate, upgrade, and improve safe walking routes in the rural town boundary of Fall City.
  - 76.00% community support per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
    - 58.95% Supported Better safe walking routes
    - 17.05% Supported more sidewalks
- Create more trail and/or path access in Fall City and/to the surrounding area.
  - 72.93% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
  - Most respondents on this topic reside in surrounding Fall City neighborhoods and have a strong desire to stay connected to the services of the rural town via non-motorized trails and paths.
- Work with WSDOT Improve and expand bike lanes on SR 202 and SR 203 from Fall City. This would require further engagement with the community to include potential impact to land use, taxes, etc.
  - 63.94% of Fall City respondents are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Provide safer means of road crossings between within the business district along SR292 such as flags, lights, and improved signage.
- Feasibility of pedestrian/equestrian bridge(s) to improve connectivity to the business district to recreation; to increase economic development and improve safety.
- Provide additional pedestrian safety signage along safe walking routes and crosswalks in the residential areas.
- Partner with WSDOT to review, fund and manage the SR 202 Corridor Improvement Project.

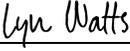
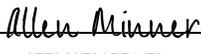
### ***Climate Change***

- Emerging hazard mitigation plans identify gaps in Fall City’s resilience. It is imperative that we act now, engage with the Office of Emergency Management and local planning partners to site a location for a heating/cooling shelter with resources during isolating natural hazards. Such space could be multi-purpose and serve the community invariably.

### ***Services & Utilities***

- Build a public restroom in Fall City. Further outreach will be required to address community concerns and potential impact.
  - 44.83% are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Create a King County Sheriff office or substation in Fall City.
  - 69.95% are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Fund more King County law enforcement presence in Fall City.
  - 72.95% are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.
- Improve local access to mental and behavioral health services in the Fall City area.
  - 60.83% are in favor per the August 2022 FCCA subarea survey.

Sincerely,

 DocuSigned by: 836D78C14FF74BF...	Angela Donaldson, Committee Chair
 DocuSigned by: D29478C144A4...	Jason Refsland
 DocuSigned by: E931242B28E40E...	Lyn Watts
 DocuSigned by: D29478C1447F...	Charlie Kellogg
 DocuSigned by: D29478C14430AD4...	Sue Holbink
 DocuSigned by: 40568894E5...	Pete Nelson
 DocuSigned by: 5D44F80074B9...	Terri Divers
 DocuSigned by: 885C1E341CC4EE...	Bill Ziehl
 DocuSigned by: 7E5CC0589A418...	Carrie Lee Gagnon
 DocuSigned by: C7F8C9E9AD71479...	Allen Minner