

Mary Ann Simonds
17101 NE 40th Ave Vancouver, WA
360 907-4591

cc'd to
Orliako
Schroeder

Sept 10, 2015

Ref: Comments on Comp Plan updates and the Mill Creek Sub Area Plan



Dear Commissioners

Working on land use planning between here and Florida, I am always proud to use Clark County as an example of good planning and citizen participation. Tonight I would like to bring your attention to information that may influence the Board's decisions on updating the Comp Plan relating to two areas of concern: 1) Involves an area that was brought into the UGB only because the BGSD requested to build a school and 2) to consider the benefits of protecting, planning and zoning for a strong equestrian industry.

In 1994, the BGSD purchased a property adjacent to a rural residential community just North of WSU (West of NE 50th Ave, South NE 174th St.) At the time, there was no public input from the surrounding landowners as we watched over 28 acres of a highly diverse ecosystem being clearcut. Neither DNR nor the County was alerted at the time, so no reclamation or reforestation plan was filed – a case of one agency thinking the other one was in charge of the permit. Part of the site was also listed under the state as “priority habitat” and it is still in effect today.

The neighborhood formed a “neighborhood association (Pleasant Valley Rural Ranch Association) and questioned the BGSD why they would purchase the property in the first place as it did not seem like a suitable property for a school. The BGSD indicated they were “looking ahead” as it was difficult to find 40 acres near the UGB.

In 2005, the neighborhood in the area entered into an agreement with the County, the BGSD, WSU and the local landowners to develop a community plan for the area since the BGSD indicated they truly wanted to build a school (See Appendix A). In the spirit of collaboration, we all worked together to build trust and good planning tenants even though most residents felt no need to change any zoning.

The group conducted several surveys of the residents, met regularly and developed planning recommendations submitted to the Board of County Commissioners on June 7, 2007 (See Appendix B). The County incorporated the recommendations into what they refer to as the Mill Creek Sub Plan (See Appendix C- only the cover is attached due to the size of the document).

Although the majority of the residents did not want to come into the UGB, the Board of County Commissioners directed the group that the area must come into the UGB if a school was to be built. Currently zoning in the County did not reflect the Group's recommendation and it was understood we would continue to work with the County in future planning.

The Board also requested a letter from the BGSD indicating they did want to develop the property for a school to ensure they were not just requesting entrance into the UGB for “real estate development potential.” The County zoned the BGSD “Public Facility” on top of the zoning to protect it for a school.

Currently, the BGSD is wishing to sell the property, after determining it is “surplus lands.” This is very confusing and disheartening to us, as when asked by the County Commissioners at a

public hearing whether the BGSD was sure they wanted to build a school on the property, because the area was not going to have road access or sewer for perhaps 8-10 years, the BGSD response indicated they were looking ahead to 15-20 years and they had full intention to build a school **In the spirit of good planning and collaboration we would like to see the planning in this area re-visited.**

My recommendations and concerns were presented to the Board in June 6, 2007 and can read in Appendix D.

Key Point: The only reason our area, which is limited in development potential because of numerous environmental issues as well as transportation (we have two dead end roads) was brought into the UGB was because the BGSD wished to build a school. If they now do not wish to build a school, I request the Board investigate whether it is appropriate to be in the UGB as we are a low density rural area that has more horses now than we did 20 years ago

Recommendations

1 Either remove our area from the UGB and return our neighborhood to rural residential, or place an “equestrian district overlay” on us, which has been discussed and presented to the County with the equestrian task force and other community planning hearings “Factoid” – *horse properties in urban areas bring stable demographics and a large amount of tax dollars. Many areas such as Rancho Sante Fe or Wellington, Fl which have urban/rural horse farms have become some of the most desired and expensive places to live. Ten years ago 70 percent of horses owned lived in rural areas, today more horses owned live in urban areas.*

2 The County purchases the property and develops it as a County Park and natural area as it backs up to WSU and can protect the Mill Creek Watershed. Investigate then a Sustainable Master Planned Community on the area that may be suitable for residential development if infill is needed

3. Incorporate Equestrian planning and zoning into the Comp Plan – See Appendix D for resources from the Equine Lands Conservation Resource.

Thank you. I am happy to meet with County Commissioners and share more information about the economic advantages of equestrian planning and zoning or the documentation of the Mill Creek Planning efforts

Kind Regards,

Mary Ann Simonds

17101 NE 40th Ave
Vancouver, WA 98686
360 907-4591

**Letter of Intent
Mill Creek Area Community Plan**

Purpose To initiate a cooperative planning process for the rural portion of Section 13, T3N, R1E W M The planning area is generally bounded by NE 179th St on the North NE 50th Ave on the East, NE 29th Ave on the West, and the WSU Branch Campus on the South This area may be subject to modification as the process proceeds

Vision As partners who share a common interest, we wish to maintain community and ecological values while providing for well planned sustainable development in the future

Mission As partners and concerned committed volunteers we agree to work together in a collaborative planning process to produce recommendations to the County for this area's future which balance community, ecological and development values This pilot program will offer a model of integrated community-based planning for other communities to follow

Planning Tenets

The planning process will seek cooperative and creative planning approaches aimed at meeting the requirements and goals of the Growth Management Act and other legal requirements, while also fostering environmental concerns with safe and appropriate development and maintaining quality of life in the area and in the surrounding neighborhoods

This planning process assumes that changes to zoning for the study area would become effective with the adoption of the next Comprehensive Plan update if the urban growth boundary expands to include this area

It is assumed that participation in the planning process by as broad of a group of stakeholders as possible will be necessary for a successful outcome

By signing this Letter of Intent, the undersigned agree to participate in (or delegate staff to participate in) and support the planning process, including attending meetings reading materials and sharing ideas during the course of the project which could last up to 5 years No commitment of public funds is expressed or implied

Signed

Betty Sue Morris
Betty Sue Morris, Chair Date
Clark County Board of Commissioners

F H Striker 4-26-05
Frederick Striker Chair Date
Battle Ground School District

Goral J. Mammenga 5-10-05
Goral Mammenga, Vice-Pres Date
Pleasant Valley Rural Ranch Association

Mark Hinton 5/10/05
Mark Hinton Date
Hinton Development Co

David Gilroy 5-10-05
David Gilroy, Secretary Treasurer Date
Mill Creek Forest HOA

Blair Wolley 5-10-2005
Blair Wolley Date
Facilitator

Mary Ann C. Simons 5-10-05
Mary Ann Simonds Date
Resource Consultant/Volunteer Coordinator

Memo

To: Clark County Board of Commissioners
From: Mill Creek Area Community Planning Group
Date: June 6, 2007
Re: Summary Report and Recommendations

Background

Many states include a community development plan process (CDP) as part of their Comprehensive Plan process, which allows the public to assist in planning the communities in which they live prior to development. This can save time and money because it involves the community in working together to plan a livable future. Washington does not have this process written into its Growth Management Act. At the suggestion of a concerned citizen and resource consultant, the Board of County Commissioners decided to implement a CDP process as a trial in the Mill Creek area.

The process was triggered because several of the land owners in the defined area had applied to the County to be brought into the urban growth boundary, while other rural land owners were very much against being brought into the UGB. Participation from key large land owners, neighborhood and home owner's associations, and developers was necessary in order to facilitate the process. Commitment of people to attend regular meetings at least once a month was also required. This was not a public process, but rather was a citizen-generated process. Although meetings were open to any interested party to observe, participation was limited to the representatives who committed to the process.

A diverse group of stakeholders began meeting in September, 2004 to explore creative alternatives for future land use patterns and design standards for the Mill Creek area. In May, 2005 a letter of intent was signed which committed the parties to participate in a cooperative planning process for the Mill Creek planning area, which was generally defined as NE 179th St on the north, NE 50th Ave on the east, NE 29th Ave on the west and the WSU-Vancouver campus on the south. Stakeholders included Battle Ground School District, Pleasant Valley Rural Ranch Association, Hinton Development Co., Mill Creek Forest HOA and Clark County. A facilitator and a resource consultant also signed the letter of intent and agreed to participate (Attachment 1).

Mission

The stated mission of this stakeholder group was to work together to produce recommendations to the County for this area's future which would balance community, ecological and development values. This memorandum summarizes the group's process and progress toward fulfilling this mission.

Process & Planning Tenets

The first tenet adopted in the letter of intent was that the planning process would seek cooperative and creative approaches to meeting the GMA requirements while fostering environmental quality, appropriate development and quality of life. It was clearly understood

that the role of the group was advisory, with no authority to regulate or impose conditions on future development.

Among the creative approaches explored were

Master planned development – Most of the examples we examined of developments which were effective at preserving open space, protecting habitat and providing for a range of housing densities and community amenities were master planned communities. This type of master planning would be extremely difficult in the Mill Creek area given the number of parcels and owners. Hinton Development Co talked with a number of property owners, but was not able to assemble enough land to make a master plan feasible at this time. With several large contiguous parcels in the area, land assembly for a successful master planned development may still be possible.

Equestrian zoning– The group did not spend much time exploring how this approach has been used in other jurisdictions. Most of the examples we found were in rural or semi-rural areas, however there is an equestrian-oriented sub area plan for an urban portion of Bellevue called Bridlewood that could be used as a model were there is strong support for protecting and enhancing equestrian facilities and uses.

Overlays for additional environmental protection – There are significant areas of wetlands, floodway and priority habitat within the planning area. The critical area ordinances were being developed and reviewed throughout the tenure of this planning study, making it difficult to know exactly what level of protection (e.g. buffer widths) would be afforded these areas when the new code was adopted. It did not appear likely that the Board would want additional code requirements that were specific to this relatively small area.

Other Zoning concepts – There was a proposal from the Mill Creek Forest HOA representatives that zoning designations follow contours and natural features rather than parcel lines. There may be some added difficulty in mapping the exact zoning boundaries and knowing which zoning regulations apply. The allowed density on split zoned parcels would be proportional to the area of each zone, such that a parcel that was 50% R1-10 and 50% R1-20 would effectively be R1-15.

The second planning tenet assumed that broad participation would be needed for an effective outcome. To that end, the Planning Group and homeowners associations helped organize an open meeting in the neighborhood on August 22, 2005 that was attended by 48 neighbors. Information was provided about the planning process and other issues related to growth and development. Meetings of the Planning Group were open to the public and several property owners attended and participated. The project had its own webpage as a County Long Range Planning Project of Interest which included maps and meeting notes.

A main outreach effort was a survey developed in early 2006 by the group and mailed to all property owners in the area. The survey focused on identifying the core values of residents regarding the future of the area. Of the 65 surveys mailed, 35 were returned (54%). Of these 35, 14 expressed opposition to bringing the area into the urban growth boundary, 10 supported being added to the UGA without reservations and 11 identified reservations or conditional support for coming into the UGA. (It should be noted that some responses were from the Mill Creek forest subdivision, which is already inside the Vancouver UGA.)

The survey results (Attachment 2) showed strong support for three core values: maintaining and enhancing a sense of community, providing safe, convenient transportation routes, and preserving green space and protecting wildlife habitat. Among the factors that a significant number of respondents (17 or more) thought would contribute to a sense of community were

- Large areas set aside for wildlife and natural habitat

- Trails for walking, biking & horses within the neighborhood plus connections to WSU and other nearby destinations
- Neighborhood parks, open space & playgrounds
- Get-togethers between neighbors

There was strong support for creating a circulation plan for the neighborhood before growth occurs. This was seen as a priority because presently there is only one point of access into this neighborhood. Natural features (including steep slopes and creeks) combined with development patterns to the south and west make a future north-south street off of NE 179th St the only practical location for a second road access. This access road will have to take into account existing housing, the BPA Power Lines and vertical curves on NE 179th Street.

There was moderate support (15 to 17 votes) for sidewalks along all streets, an off-street trail system and lighting along both.

Methods for preserving green space and protecting wildlife habitat that had strong support included:

- Creating natural buffers along streams
- Designing with the land
- Taking advantage of and preserving natural features
- Using trees and landscaping for cover

Other values mentioned more than once were that property values not be decreased, that a small planning group not be allowed to mandate development design and that large lots be allowed, particularly adjacent to existing homes.

Areas of Consensus

While the group did not reach consensus on a zoning map, there were several areas of consensus:

1. This collaborative process was worthwhile. A diverse group came together to find common interests and some mutual understanding.
2. The group recommends that the core values identified in the survey be taken into account if this area is developed as part of the urban growth boundary and that the County continue looking for innovative planning tools to integrate the community values into the design process.
3. The group recommends low density residential zoning if this area is brought into the UGA with planned unit developments as an optional tool for clustering housing to protect sensitive and natural areas.

PC Work Session Community Planning Staff Report

Mill Creek Sub-Area Plan

**January 15, 2009
5:30 P.M.
Public Service Center
6th Floor Training Room #679**

Appendix D

From Mary Ann Simonds <enchantedkinship@yahoo.com>
Subject Mill Creek Sub Plan
Date June 6, 2007 5:33:31 PM PDT
To commplanning@clark.wa.gov
Cc Mary Ann Simonds <Enchantedkinship@yahoo.com>

Dear Commissioners

A tremendous amount of work was done to bring residents, developers, the County and the BGSD together in a community planning process over a 2 year period. We dissolved fears and disagreements and finally worked together on a vision with values and planning objectives. This process had good neighborhood involvement and as a group we moved from various alienated interests and points of view to a compromised position of collaboration. However, toward the end of last summer as we were defining specific design and zoning suggestions, the BGSD choose to become uncommitted and abstain from comment and participation.

We as a group agreed that the "default zoning" should be Low Residential with no smaller lots than 7500 sq ft. This was a compromise for the developer Hinton who wanted smaller lots as it was for many existing residents who do not want to be brought into the UGB. But we agreed to trust and work together.

We support being brought into the UGB under the assumption the County would have a "District Zoning" that would allow a flexible and variable Low Density Zoning meeting the needs of the community values. Such Counties as Benton already have this where rural issues come together with residential concerns. The horse community in this area also encouraged an Equestrian Zoning overlay as some other states and counties have done.

We are concerned that neither our summary letter or the meeting process notes ever reached the commissioners as we thought, and that only the testimony from the BGSD and the developers have been heard.

We worked very hard to come together as a community and work out differences with the hope that the County would adopt a model "district zoning" for this area which would allow such things as PUDs, trails, and large residential lots mixed with higher densities and open space. The existing community is mostly large lots of 2.5 acres to 5 acre parcels with a few large land owners mixed in the area. It is currently land locked by streams and backed up to existing high density developments.

The GMA has provisions for counties to develop their own district zonings as Benton and other counties have done, why then has Clark County not investigated and at list suggested the opportunity to do this sustainable type of planning? A huge amount of information and examples of planning sustainable green communities was given to the group and it was assumed this information was passed on to staff and the Commissioners during work sessions.

We are very concerned about the ethics of the BGSD which at the time of purchasing the property was told by the community that this would not be a good property for a school. The BGSD indicated

they needed a school site in this area. We continued to be "good neighbors" to the BGSD despite their lack of good property management and ignoring any DNR requirements after they requested the owner clear cut before closing escrow with no public input. The BGSD's request to be brought into the UGB is one of the main reasons we began our community planning effort.

When the BGSD requested only "they" come into the UGB because they needed school sites, we questioned them as a community, but chose to support them because a school will be needed in this area as the area develops and this area is ideal for planning around a walkable school. We as a community with the BGSD reps met on several occasions with various Commissioners including Judy Stanton, Craig Pridemore and Betty Sue Morris. Each time the BGSD representative stated they want a school and felt it would be easier to develop if they were in the UGB. During our community planning we asked them directly if they intended to have a school, as our planning efforts would be re-directed if we are looking at residential lots instead of a school site. Their position from a cooperative stakeholder to a non-committal and withdrawn, rather secretive attitude has the community concerned about their underlying motives.

Staff has indicated that if the area is built to the 7500 sq ft lot allowable with all that would be removed for roads, etc, the area's density would require a school on their current site. This is an ideal site to use as a buffer and protect the quality of the dead end neighborhoods by using a district zoning. In order to have continued trust in the BGSD, we suggest that their site be zoned for a school facility and the rest of the area have a default zoning of 7500 sq ft lots not 6000sq ft lots. We would hope that the district zoning possibilities could be investigated and that the County only adopt the area in the UGB and not zone any properties until there is a request for zoning. We have all lived with the Urban Reserve zoning for the last 12-15 years, so moving to a Low Residential zoning with no designation of lot size until a project is proposed does not seem out of line.

We have worked hard as a community to honor and maintain the private rights of each property owner as well as supporting and compromising on all of our desires to help build a strong sustainable community. I think we dissolve a lot of fear and learned how to work together. It disturbs many of us that perhaps our process and the desire of the community's vision and objectives were not clearly articulated to the commissioners.

Thank you for time

Regards,

Mary Ann Simonds
Mill Creek Community Sub Plan founder and organizer

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APPENDIX
E

[What's New \(https://elcr.org/what-new/\)](https://elcr.org/what-new/)

[Contact Us \(https://elcr.org/contact-us/\)](https://elcr.org/contact-us/)

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ISSUES

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[Best Management Practices \(https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/farms-and-ranch-land/\)](https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/farms-and-ranch-land/)

[Conservation Tools for Horse Lands \(https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/helpful-publications-and-links/\)](https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/helpful-publications-and-links/)

[Equine Access to Private Lands \(https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/trails-access-and-other-issues/\)](https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/trails-access-and-other-issues/)

[Equine Access to Public Lands \(https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/liability-issues/\)](https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/liability-issues/)

[Planning for Horses in Your Community \(https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/community-land-use-planning/\)](https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/community-land-use-planning/)

[Report an Issue \(https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/report-an-issue/\)](https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/report-an-issue/)



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Creating Horse Friendly Communities

Planning and zoning decisions can affect how land is taxed, what it may be used for, and which standards and regulations are applied to it. These regulations determine not only whether individuals may keep horses on their own property, but also whether horses have access to community parks and trails. ELCR offers users the tools they need to understand land use planning, zoning ordinances, and their implications for horses and horse-related activities. In this section you will find a primer on terms and processes, sample letters, and tools to support involvement in planning and zoning in your community. Our website also provides tools for community planners to help them understand how to include horses and horse-related activities in their planning efforts.

Introduction

[\(http://elcr.org/changing-economic-landscapes-impact-access-to-horses-future-of-horse-industry/\)](http://elcr.org/changing-economic-landscapes-impact-access-to-horses-future-of-horse-industry/) Seven Steps to Influencing Horse-Friendly Planning for Horsemen [\(http://elcr.org/seven-steps-to-influencing-horse-friendly-planning-for-horsemen/\)](http://elcr.org/seven-steps-to-influencing-horse-friendly-planning-for-horsemen/)

[Seven Steps to Planning for an Equestrian-Friendly Community for Community Leaders and Planners \(http://elcr.org/sevenstepstoplanning/\)](http://elcr.org/sevenstepstoplanning/)

[\(http://elcr.org/planningandzoningguide/\)](http://elcr.org/planningandzoningguide/) Planning and Zoning Guide For Horse Friendly Communities [\(http://elcr.org/planningandzoningguide/\)](http://elcr.org/planningandzoningguide/)

[\(https://elcr.org/dontwaituntilitstoolate/\)](https://elcr.org/dontwaituntilitstoolate/) The Basics of Planning and Zoning for Horse-

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
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
ELCR works through our Conservation Members and Partners to raise awareness of issues driving loss of horse lands and to support local action to keep land open to horses. Please join us today.


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
 <http://www.elcr.org/three-words-every-equestrian-should-know/> A Jewel of the Pacific Northwest. Planning and Cooperation Benefit Both Government and Equestrians (<http://elcr.org/ajewelofthepnw/>)


 <http://www.elcr.org/three-words-every-equestrian-should-know/> Three Words Every Equestrian Should Know (<http://elcr.org/three-words-every-equestrian-should-know/>)


 <https://elcr.org/dontwaituntilstoolate/> Don't Wait Until It's Too Late - Land Use Planning for Horsemen (<https://elcr.org/dontwaituntilstoolate/>)

 <https://elcr.org/i-sincalifornia/> Community Planning for Horses in the West (<http://elcr.org/i-sincalifornia/>)

 <https://elcr.org/the-scoop-on-poop/> The Scoop on Poop (<https://elcr.org/the-scoop-on-poop/>)


 <http://elcr.org/changing-economic-landscapes-impact-access-to-horses-future-of-horse-industry/> Local Planning and Zoning Practices Related to Equine Facilities (<https://elcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Local-Planning-and-Zoning-Practices-Related-to-Equine-Facilities.pdf>)

 http://www.equestrianprofessional.com/public/Live-Webinar-What-Horse-Professionals-Need-to-Know-About-Land-Use.cfm?awt_l=NwZYl&awt_m=3Vl3n3vNofa093f Maryland Horse Council Save The Horse Farms Campaign (<http://mdhorsecouncil.org/STHFGuide.pdf>)

 <http://elcr.org/changing-economic-landscapes-impact-access-to-horses-future-of-horse-industry/> Costs of Community Services (<http://elcr.org/changing-economic-landscapes-impact-access-to-horses-future-of-horse-industry/>)

 <http://elcr.org/open-and-green/> Open and Green (<http://elcr.org/open-and-green/>)

 <http://elcr.org/how-many-horses-can-i-keep/> How Many Horses Can I Keep? (<http://elcr.org/how-many-horses-can-i-keep/>)

 <http://elcr.org/driving-to-save-horse-country/> Driving to Save Horse Country (<http://elcr.org/driving-to-save-horse-country/>)

Smart Growth Ideas

 <https://elcr.org/blendinglandconservation/> Blending Land Conservation with New Community Development (<https://elcr.org/blendinglandconservation/>)


 <https://elcr.org/usingsmartgrowth/> Using Smart Growth to Create Equestrian-Friendly Communities (<https://elcr.org/usingsmartgrowth/>)

 <http://elcr.org/rural-sprawl/> Rural Sprawl. Beyond the Edge (<http://elcr.org/rural-sprawl/>)


Agriculture Planning and Zoning

 <http://elcr.org/agriculture-districts/> Agriculture Districts (<http://elcr.org/agriculture-districts/>)


 <http://elcr.org/agricultural-horse-friendly-zoning/> Agricultural Horse-Friendly Zoning (<http://elcr.org/agricultural-horse-friendly-zoning/>)


 [Protecting Horse Farms \(protecting-horse-farms-by-organizing-and-communicating-effectively/\)](https://elcr.org/conservation-resources/community-land-use-planning/protecting-horse-farms-by-organizing-and-communicating-effectively/)


Webinars

 [What Horse Professionals Need to Know about Land Use \(http://www.equestrianprofessional.com/public/Live-Webinar-What-Horse-Professionals-Need-to-Know-About-Land-Use.cfm?awt_l=NwZYl&awt_m=3Vl3n3vNofa093f\)](http://www.equestrianprofessional.com/public/Live-Webinar-What-Horse-Professionals-Need-to-Know-About-Land-Use.cfm?awt_l=NwZYl&awt_m=3Vl3n3vNofa093f)


Videos

 [Stop the Sprawl: Basics of Land Use Planning Part 1 \(http://elcr.org/stop-the-sprawl-basics-of-land-use-planning-for-horse-men-and-women-runtime-3416/\)](http://elcr.org/stop-the-sprawl-basics-of-land-use-planning-for-horse-men-and-women-runtime-3416/)

 [The Invisible Horse: Basics of Land Use Planning Part 2 \(https://elcr.org/theinvisiblehorsepart2/\)](https://elcr.org/theinvisiblehorsepart2/)

 [Equestrian Planning Education Workshop: Tools and Strategies for Incorporating Horses into Community Planning \(https://elcr.org/wellingtonworkshop/\)](https://elcr.org/wellingtonworkshop/)

 [Chatahoochee Hills Transfer of Development Rights Program \(http://elcr.org/chattahoochee-hills-transfer-of-development-rights-program/\)](http://elcr.org/chattahoochee-hills-transfer-of-development-rights-program/)

 [Blending Land Conservation with Community Development \(http://elcr.org/blendinglandconservation/\)](http://elcr.org/blendinglandconservation/)

About ELCR

The loss of open land is a great and urgent threat to the future of equestrian activities in the United States. The Equine Land Conservation Resource, or ELCR, was founded to address this threat and to preserve land for equestrian use. [Read More»](http://elcr.org/about-elcr/) (<http://elcr.org/about-elcr/>)

What's New

- [Horse Trail Access: Protect It or Lose It \(https://elcr.org/horse-trail-access-protect-it-or-lose-it/\)](https://elcr.org/horse-trail-access-protect-it-or-lose-it/) June 16, 2015
- [The Basics of Planning and Zoning for Horse-Friendly Communities \(https://elcr.org/planning-and-zoning-webinar/\)](https://elcr.org/planning-and-zoning-webinar/) April 7, 2015
- [Landowner Relations – A Complex Issue Affecting Short and Long-Term Hunt Viability \(https://elcr.org/landowner-relations-a-complex-issue-affecting-short-and-long-term-hunt-viability/\)](https://elcr.org/landowner-relations-a-complex-issue-affecting-short-and-long-term-hunt-viability/) March 12, 2015

Upcoming Events

There are no upcoming events at this time.

Contact Us

<http://elcr.org> (<mailto:info@elcr.org>)

Equine Land Conservation Resource
4037 Iron Works Parkway
Suite 120
Lexington, KY 40511

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F | (859) 455-8381

info@elcr.org
<mailto:info@elcr.org>

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Appendix E

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A Jewel of the Pacific Northwest: Planning and Cooperation Benefit Both Government and Equestrians

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March 10, 2015, by ELCR

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By Jennifer M. Keeler for the Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR)

With the towering ridges of the Cascades mountain range, the refreshing salty air of Pacific seaways, and lush greenery of the temperate rainforest climate the Pacific Northwest region has long been renowned for its natural beauty. Both locals and visitors alike appreciate taking in the splendor the region by horseback.



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The residents of Seattle and King County, in the state of Washington, are well known for their appreciation of the great outdoors. It is therefore not surprising that The King County Regional Trail System (KCRTS) is one of the nation's most extensive multi-use off-road systems with hundreds of miles of trails linking urban, suburban, and rural areas.

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Thanks to long-term vision, effective planning, and cooperation between government agencies and the local horse community, equestrians today and in the future will also be able to enjoy all that this spectacular region has to offer. The KCRTS can serve as a model for equine friendly trails in and around urban areas in other parts of the country. This impressive network of shared-use paths has proven popular for a multitude of outdoor activities including bicycling, hiking, walking, skating, dog walking, and horseback riding.

King County Trails Coordinator, Robert Foxworthy, explained that the regional trail system provides another key advantage for local equestrians: convenient access to an even larger network of backcountry trails and land. The approximate 185 miles included in the backcountry trail system link more than 25 parks, working forests, and natural areas throughout King County, offering year-round access.

Planning is Key for multi user groups. King County has acquired forest conservation easements on over 200,000 acres of private and publicly owned forest lands along the trails over the last decade. Although not required to do so, many private landowners of the County's conservation easement properties have chosen to provide public access to hundreds of additional miles of trails for non-motorized recreational use.

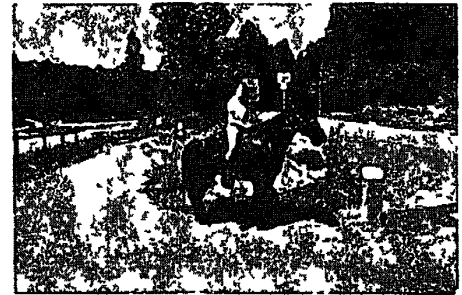
Effective planning for inclusion of equestrians in the King County trail systems has been key to the continued availability of these lands for horseback riding. Because of the popularity of horses in the region, "it made sense to include equestrians in the mix of potential users when the regional trails were first planned, particularly on regional trails in more rural areas," said Foxworthy. "While some trails with heavy congestion in urban areas may not allow equestrians for safety reasons, in other instances trail planning has gone the extra mile to include horses."

The King County Comprehensive Plan and Open Space Plans highlights the County's recognition of the importance of maintaining equestrian trails and includes specific direction to implement that goal. Those policies call for the provision of equestrian facilities, adoption of land use regulations that support trail preservation and management of p

rograms that provide incentives for land owners to provide trail opportunities (such as the Public Benefit Rating System). Many of the trails that are protected through these provisions eventually become part of the King County Park System.

A Spirit of Cooperation

King County also illustrates how cooperation between government agencies, various municipalities, and equestrian groups benefits all parties. "The regional trails are an ever-growing network of paths owned, developed, and managed by multiple agencies," said Foxworthy. "King County owns and maintains the largest part of the network but the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Seattle, and other cities also have their own regional trails that add to the overall network. For more rural areas, King County Parks also created a Backcountry Trails Crew that focuses solely on maintaining and constructing the backcountry trails.



As advocated by the Equine Land Conservation Resource, in order to ensure continued access to land for equine use, horsemen and women must make their needs known in local land use issues. In King County, a strong rapport between government and area equestrian groups such as the King County Executive Horse Council (KCEHC) demonstrates how this relationship works well. Dedicated KCEHC officers and volunteers contribute in a variety of ways to the continued success of equestrian use of the trail system, including advocacy for the horse industry, equestrian way of life, and protection of land for equine use. The KCEHC keeps track of City, County and State legislation that will affect trails and the equestrian lifestyle, receives notices of pending development, and determines whether or not these developments will impact trails.

The spirit of cooperation goes beyond sharing the trails as Foxworthy reported that his staff are working with a local horse group interested in building an equestrian facility that could include such features as an outdoor arena with an obstacle course, cross-country jumping, access/amenities for disabled/therapeutic riding, a parking facility as well as a network of trails connecting to adjacent public land. Joint efforts such as this and others across the country illustrate even further how public private partnerships between equestrian groups and local government can expand opportunities for all equestrians while protecting public land for equine related activities.

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Community Planning for Horses in the West

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November 7, 2013, by ELCR

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From Spanish Land Grant Ranchos to Equestrian Communities



<https://elcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/85.jpg> by Mary Ann Simonds, MA

As recently as 50 years ago, it was not unusual to drive from Southern California to Southern Oregon and see riders moving cattle or sheep across the golden hills. While the East Coast followed an "English" system for land use planning with "townships", California's land use stemmed from Spanish land grants which gave title to individuals to own and operate "ranchos" for the primary purpose raising cattle and sheep. The boundaries of these "ranchos" became the basis for California's land survey system, and can still be seen in modern maps.

West coasters developed the once large cattle ranches and Spanish land grants into communities that maintained a California "ranch style". A blend of Western and English riding disciplines came together offering both types of training at their community barns as well as trail riding and horse shows.

The Southern California Lifestyle in the 70s conjured up images of riding, sailing, beach going, and enjoying outdoor activities. With the influx of affluent people desiring to buy "ranch homes" throughout communities including San Diego, Los Angeles and Orange County, these areas experienced tremendous growth in the 70s and 80s consuming what was left of the large Spanish ranchos. This trend resulted in the creation of small lot equestrian estates. Despite strong urban pressure, many of these horse communities have survived today thanks to the surge of equestrian planned communities in the 1970s, as well as restrictive land features such as landslides or faults which have prevented re-zoning and "in-fill".

Many of the Southern California horse communities have gained national attention for their affluent homes and lovely horse shows. Some of these include Rolling Hills, Rancho Santa Fe, San Juan Capistrano and Coto de Caza. However, one community has clearly defined itself as an affordable "Horse Town" USA, that being Norco, CA.

Located in Riverside County, Norco covers only 14 square miles but has over 100 miles of trails. Everyone from the mayor to the residents maintain a strong vision to keep their horse history and plan for horses in their future.

Although having primarily a western town flavor, Norco offers a good equestrian planning model for urban development. With a strong and clear vision to continue to provide "animal-keeping and equestrian lifestyle in a city", Norco will no doubt define itself as a unique

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Community Planning for Horses in the West ELCR
equi-tourism town as they
continue to develop and
support equine events
and facilities

Norco planner Steve King
commented "Everything
we do in Norco from
downtown planning to
residential planning is
based around keeping
horses." While
surrounding areas have
small lots and big houses,
Norco has 20,000 sqft lot
minimums with
supportive building codes
and ordinances all
designed for safe and
sustainable horse keeping Their strong vision to create a horse friendly town has earned
them the name "Horse Town USA" And with only about 21,000 people and 17,000 horses,
they deserve the name



(<https://elcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Trail-1-credit-Mary-Ann-Simonds.jpg>)

Photo Courtesy of Mary Ann Simonds

High Taxes and Land Values Force Migration North

Surrounded by higher density developments, other communities such as Thousand Oaks, Diamond Bar, Yorba Linda, Orange Hills, and Bridle Path have all fought to keep their equestrian roots Horse trails blend with sidewalks and shopping centers in some cases, but urban horse communities continue to survive Planners have found the horse folks "hard to get rid of", as one planner in Orange County commented When fires broke out in the Orange Hills, an unexpected but valuable benefit was realized when the equestrian trails provided much needed access to fire trucks and acted as a firebreak

As land prices, people, and property taxes increased, a natural migration to the north took place for many horse folks seeking a greater abundance of less expensive land and greener pastures for horses. Those existing Southern California horse communities protected by limiting land features such as earthquake faults or landslides remained and thrived And horse folks being one of the most stable demographics, don't move often, so housing prices have continued to soar for the limited Southern California horse properties

Along with vineyards, horse farms began dotting the hillsides north of the Los Angeles area including Ventura and Santa Barbara County And many of the most prestigious equestrian estates in this area can be found in the lovely Santa Ynez Valley What was left of the Southern California Coastal range and old Spanish Ranchos have been filled with mixed agricultural and equestrian facilities

Today, a new wave of equestrian estates are being developed along the central coast of California with equestrian master planned communities in the planning stages near Paso Robles, CA. Both Western and English equestrian lifestyles mix around the shared vision of keeping horses in pastures and having riding trails through the "golden hills"

Inland, east of the central Valley at the base of the Sierra foothills, equestrian planned communities continue to thrive as well as attracting retirees with horses wanting open

Community Planning for Horses in the West ELCR spaces, trails and mixed recreational opportunities While golf courses and equestrian activities jointly have been a common theme, some communities have combined boating, which draws a new blend of outdoor sport enthusiasts

Acting as a major north-south artery for California, the I-5 corridor serves equestrian communities to the east concentrating in the foothills around Sacramento and to the

West all through the Bay Area extending north of San Francisco into the Napa Valley and south through Santa Cruz Many land use planners in Northern California are well aware of the need to plan for and manage equestrian communities in their long range planning models While landslides and earthquake faults have limited higher density urbanization of some horse communities in Southern California, water supply and watershed protection are key factors in Northern California as well as earthquake faults The Bay Area, with high density housing in many areas, has retained private equestrian communities for their land use values

Offering land protection for wildlife, recreation, watershed, and visual quality, Northern California equestrian communities such as Walnut Creek, Danville and Woodside have fought to protect equestrian rights and worked with local governments to show the value of maintaining large lots and open spaces Instead of moving, residents have worked to increase trails by working in collaboration with local, regional and state agencies to create inter-connective trail systems where possible, as well as maintained open spaces and parks Trees and trails provide wildlife corridors in much needed congested areas. Thus, the horse communities provide a buffer between higher density neighborhoods and open space

Citizen groups have formed to protect trails and open spaces and worked collaboratively with both private land owners and governments throughout Northern California. Groups such as the Bay Area Barns and Trails provide small grants to groups for land conservation

Traveling north of the San Francisco Bay Area, many horse owners are leaving California and migrating to the northwest areas of Oregon and Washington, again seeking larger and greener pastures at affordable prices And with all the northwest rain, they will certainly be greener, but will they be "horse friendly"? We will see

<https://elcr.org/i-5in-california>



<https://elcr.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Trails-3-credit-Mary-Ann-Simonds.jpg>

Photo courtesy Mary Ann Simonds