

Public Comments on Proposed Ordinance 2018-0153

2018 Comprehensive Plan

September 4 – October 29, 2018



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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October 29, 2018

Councilmembers
King County Council
500 Fourth Ave.
Seattle, WA 98104

Submitted via mail and electronic to erin.auzins@kingcounty.gov

RE: 2018 Amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan

Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing to provide comment from the City of Snoqualmie for today's public hearing and possible action by the Council on proposed 2018 amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan and follow up on issues related to the urban growth boundary amendment process.

First, the City is encouraged to see new language and a set timeline for a new subarea plan for the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Community Service Area. As the new subarea plan will be for a thirteen-year planning horizon before major update, the City is excited to participate in the public process with coordinated input leading to the County's 2020-21 adoption year.

Next, the proposed amendments include creation by ordinance of a Department of Local Services in 2019 to better serve the residents of unincorporated King County. This seems beneficial to our surrounding rural

areas and the City of Snoqualmie looks forward to partnering in discussions to potentially locate a new Department in the Snoqualmie Valley where it can directly best serve rural residents in a responsive and convenient fashion, similar to the existing King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER).

Lastly, our primary concern and comment is regarding proposed amendments that call for having an annual amendment cycle, a midpoint cycle, and an eight-year cycle (eight-year major update similar to GMA cities). The existing four-year update cycle reverts to an eight-year for all major/substantive changes. The new midpoint cycle update becomes an optional process that allows for consideration of a smaller range of substantive changes, but only if initiated by motion.

Because a smaller range of substantive changes results at midpoint updates, consideration of urban growth area (UGA) amendments, and other major amendments, effectively becomes an eight-year cycle, up from the current four. In the proposed language, the County Executive may still work with the GMPC and Council at new midpoint updates to determine whether amendments are appropriate or recommended.

However, this is a significant issue for cities in King County because opportunities to request needed amendments like general changes to the UGA become fewer, and more likely only, at eight-year increments. An automatic consideration as part of a regular four-year major update becomes a work plan issue for a new midpoint update. This is unacceptable because a prior mandatory review of a request as part of a four-year major update becomes possibly only a midpoint review to see if County staff has the bandwidth and resources to consider a UGA amendment in a work plan. To a degree, it is highly likely the decision to consider an amendment request would then be based on administrative factors and not true consideration of the issue.

We see that the annual cycle remains for technical changes and adoption of subarea plans to provide a measure of certainty and predictability necessary to allow for new land use decisions to work. Allowing UGA amendments to be considered outright at midpoint updates would retain similar flexibility

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necessary for needed amendments beyond the strict, confining four-to-one criteria in annual updates.

Please accept these comments for the public hearing at the Council on Monday, October 29, 2018 at 1:30 pm. Thank you for considering our comments regarding the proposed 2018 amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (425)888-5307.

Sincerely,



Matthew R. Larson
Mayor

CC: Councilmembers, City of Snoqualmie
Bob Larson, City Administrator
Bob Sterbank, City Attorney
Mark Hofman, Community Development Director