

Community Service Areas Program

Town hall questions and answers

May 30, 2018 – West Hill/Skyway

1. Why haven't efforts been made to support economic and housing development projects, like those in White Center?

King County's Department of Community and Human Services has long partnered with Skyway Solutions, among others, to support economic development and affordable housing in Skyway.

White Center was recently one of three communities to be awarded funding from Communities of Opportunity, a public-private initiative of the Seattle Foundation and King County. The good news for Skyway is that this year Communities of Opportunity is opening its Learning Community activities to Skyway Solutions and its community partners.

This means the Skyway community can partner with Learning Community activities to address a range of community needs, including support for quality affordable housing, the ability to thrive economically, building a healthy community, and creating a strong community voice and connections. See more at <https://kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/health-human-services-transformation/coo.aspx>.

2. What's the schedule for road repairs/maintenance in the Skyway area, including mowing in the road right-of-ways?

We've all seen how vegetation springs up every year when warm weather mixes with rain. With close to 1,500 miles of roads to maintain and limited resources, our focus is on managing cases that affect your safety, such as when plants block signs and signals, block the ability to see other traffic, block pedestrian walkways, or extend into other traveled ways. Resources for county bridges and roads are significantly constrained under our current funding systems, so overgrown vegetation that is unsightly but not dangerous must take a lower priority.

If you see specific roadways where vegetation is affecting critical safety, please call the 24/7 Roads Helpline (206-477-8100 or toll-free at 800-527-6237). For non-urgent issues, you may email maint.roads@kingcounty.gov. A service request will be created and the county will investigate the site. Once a critical safety issue is identified, the work can be placed on a priority list.

Contact us: 206-477-3859 or asklocalservices@kingcounty.gov

- 3. A) What does the county do with the funds from marijuana sales?
B) Why aren't ANY funds from the profit of cannabis sales put back into Skyway community-based programming that directly affects youths and families?**

The *profits* from cannabis sales in Washington go to retailers, but the voters who approved the recreational use of cannabis in 2012 directed that retailers pay a state excise tax. King County receives just about one percent of this tax, which amounted to \$2.9 million for the fiscal year just ended. These funds mostly support public safety and land use code enforcement in the unincorporated areas (including Skyway), and youth programs countywide.

The youth programs in the coming biennium will focus on developing youth leaders, providing factual information about the harms of underage marijuana use, and providing training for professionals working to curb underage marijuana use. These activities were chosen with input from community partners, and are required to be countywide.

- 4. Is it possible to expand the notification area for upcoming projects? I live 2 blocks from a 70-unit proposed building site, but none of my immediate neighbors were told about it.**

Yes, under certain conditions it is possible to expand the notification area. The King County Code specifies that the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review must mail notices of land use permit applications to property owners within a radius of 500 feet, or to a wider area when the project is highly controversial or when the 500-foot radius does not include enough of the project neighbors. (King County Code 20.20.060.H, which can be read online at [https://kingcounty.gov/council/legislation/kc_code/23 Title 20.aspx](https://kingcounty.gov/council/legislation/kc_code/23_Title_20.aspx))

In your case (the Plat of Earlington Village), the project application was filed on March 14 of this year. On April 25, the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review mailed out a notice of application to the 116 property owners who live within a 500-foot radius of the project. At the time, the department had no information to warrant an expansion of the mailing radius.

If you or any of your neighbors who live more than 500 feet away from the project have concerns about it, we encourage you to submit comments to the project manager at any time. The Department of Permitting and Environmental Review will accept and consider comments from the community. If a public hearing on the project is scheduled, the department will forward all comments it has received to the King County Hearing Examiner for consideration at the hearing.

To see the construction permit for a project, visit the King County Permitting Portal at <https://aca.accela.com/kingcounty/>. For the Earlington Village project, enter PLAT18-0004.

5. What is being done to support the homeless families and individuals living in the Skyway area?

The regional coordinator for the homelessness response in King County is All Home (<http://allhomekc.org>), which is working closely with Seattle, King County, and the United Way to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time, across King County and in White Center.

Any resident of King County, including in Skyway, can access any homeless services in any part of the region. King County contracts with local nonprofits to do outreach throughout South King County, including Skyway. More information on Regional Access Points (entry points into homeless services) is available online at <https://kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/health-human-services-transformation/coo.aspx>, or by phone at 206-328-5796.

6. Construction (on the Rainier View Cottages development on 60th Avenue S) has badly damaged the existing street. Will the contractor be required to rebuild the roadway?

Yes. The construction permit for the Rainier View Townhomes requires full frontage improvements along 60th Avenue S to the curb, gutter, and sidewalk next to the project; road widening; full-width asphalt overlay on the road; and a crushed rock shoulder on the opposite side of the road. These improvements are typically made toward the end of the project construction.

The final construction will not be approved until all frontage and on-site requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

To see the construction permit for this project, visit the King County Permitting Portal at <https://aca.accela.com/kingcounty/> and enter DWEL17-0088.

7. In April this year the state Liquor and Cannabis Board started another round of retail marijuana licensing. And King County has approved the proposal for Skyway. Help!

The Department of Permitting and Environmental Review has not yet approved any permits or a business license for the proposed retailer on Renton Avenue S. The Liquor and Cannabis Board is currently reviewing the application to determine if it meets state law. If the state grants a license, the business will still need to demonstrate compliance with all King County code requirements, including the following.

- No new marijuana retailer can open a business within 1,000 feet of an existing marijuana retailer.
- Marijuana retailers may only operate on properties that are zoned for “Community Business” or “Regional Business.”

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- 8. A) What you have done with the reduction of Mt. Anderson is great! Thank you. What is the plan and timeline for removing the equipment and junk on the property?
B) Is the county aware of the Mt. Anderson site being used as a staging/storage area for heavy equipment and large vehicles? That use doesn't seem to be legal.**

The two-and-a-half-acre, 100,000-cubic-yard pile of crushed concrete in Skyway—locally known as "Mt. Anderson"—was an eyesore and health hazard that took more than 30 years of protracted code enforcement and court action to remove. As noted by the questioner, the bulk of the concrete rubble was removed last summer.

The storage of heavy equipment and junk on the site is the subject of a separate code enforcement action we have pursued since 2003. As was the case with the rubble pile, resolution of this case has been delayed since the owner went bankrupt and the property went into receivership in 2006.

We received a new complaint in June that the property was being used for staging equipment. Inspection confirmed that the site is still being used to store equipment and junk, but it is not being used to stage construction equipment, so that new case has been closed. Regarding equipment storage, we have a status conference with King County Superior Court Judge Cheryl Carey in early September to get an update on the court-appointed receiver's plans to clean up and sell the property.

What's really needed are more-efficient, common-sense rules to strengthen the county's code enforcement of eyesores and health hazards such as this.

9. What's the status of the form-based code demonstration area on the west side of the hill?

The pilot project proposed eight years ago was not enacted.

A form-based code is a land development regulation that seeks to address in plain terms the relationship between building facades and the public realm—in other words, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another—instead of the conventional zoning focus on things like floor area ratio, dwellings per acre, setbacks, and parking ratios.

In an effort to explore any benefit from form-based codes, the King County Executive proposed a Form-Based Code Pilot Project in his 2010 update to the King County Comprehensive Plan. The pilot was for three unincorporated areas: Cottage Lake/Bear Creek, East Renton Plateau, and the State Route 900 and South 129th Street area (Martin Luther King Jr. Way west of Renton).

The King County Council elected not to move forward with the pilot and removed it from the comprehensive plan update due to its complexity and challenges.

10. I believe there are five marijuana shops in the Skyway West Hill area. Is there a maximum number that can be approved?

Yes, five marijuana retailers currently operate in Skyway-West Hill. Based on overlapping state and local regulations, it appears that the most shops that can be located there is six.

- Washington State requires that no marijuana retailer can locate closer than 1,000 feet from a school, public park, playground, daycare, or transit center.
- King County requires that no new marijuana retailer can locate any closer than 1,000 feet from any other existing marijuana retailer.
- Marijuana retailers are only allowed on properties that are zoned for “Community Business” or “Regional Business.”

It appears that only one property remains in Skyway/West Hill that could potentially meet all three sets of regulations, and the Liquor and Cannabis Board is currently reviewing a license application for this site.