



PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR HYBRID MEETING

Monday, October 16, 2023, at 7:00 PM

Snoqualmie City Hall, 38624 SE River Street & Zoom

COMMISSIONERS

Chair: Luke Marusiak

Vice Chair: Andre Testman

Commissioners: Chris Alef, Ashleigh Kilcup, Michael Krohn, Darrell Lambert, and Steve Smith.

Join by Telephone at 7:00 PM: To listen to the meeting via telephone, please call **253.215.8782** and enter Webinar ID **864 8750 2701** and Password **1900040121** if prompted.

Press *9 to raise your hand to speak. Raising your hand signals the meeting moderator that you have a comment.

Press *6 to mute and unmute.

Join by Internet at 7:00 PM: To watch the meeting over the internet via your computer, follow these steps:

- 1) Click this [link](#)
- 2) If the Zoom app is not installed on your computer, you will be prompted to download it.
- 3) If prompted for Webinar ID, enter **864 8750 2701**; Enter Password **1900040121**
- 4) Please confirm that your audio works prior to participating.

This meeting will be conducted in person and remotely using teleconferencing technology provided by Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

AGENDA APPROVAL

PUBLIC COMMENTS

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

MINUTES

1. [Approval of the minutes dated October 2, 2023](#)

PERMIT REVIEW/DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The Planning Commission, sitting as the Design Review Board or the Historic Design Review Board, reviews the design of certain development proposals in Snoqualmie. The Planning Commission also reviews certain development permits per the Snoqualmie Municipal Code. Public comment may be limited for some or all of these items due to the nature of the permit approval process.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY ITEMS/REGULATIONS

The Planning Commission reviews proposed legislation within its scope of authority, including Comprehensive Plan amendments and development regulation amendments, and planning and development replated policy items referred by the City Council.

OTHER BUSINESS

2. Selection of New Chair
3. [Transportation Element Policy Review](#)

Items of Planning Commissioner Interest

[4.](#) Growth of the Snoqualmie Valley

Upcoming Schedule

[5.](#) Future Agenda List

[6.](#) Work Program

ADJOURNMENT



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES REGULAR HYBRID MEETING OCTOBER 2, 2023

This meeting was conducted in person and remotely using teleconferencing technology provided by Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL: Chair Marusiak called the meeting to order 7:05 PM

Commissioners:

Chair Luke Marusiak, Vice- Chair Testman, Michael Krohn, Chris Alef, Steve Smith, and Ashleigh Kilcup were present.

Councilmember Johnson was also in attendance.

Commissioner Darrell Lambert (unexcused) was absent.

City Staff:

Emily Arteche, Community Development Director; Ashley Wragge, Planning Technician; Jonathan Kesler, Senior Planner; Andrew Jongekryg, IT Support Systems.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Agenda approved unanimously.

MINUTES

September 18, 2023 were approved with an alteration from "YMCA public access" to "YMCA public access to pool"

COUNCIL LIASION UPDATE

Ribbon cutting for the Parkway happened, state legislator was present and was also shown the Community Center Expansion project. Council approved sidewalk repair. Council heard the ADU code changes and it will likely pass next council meeting as well as the MFTE designation.

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

No review.

LEGISLATIVE/POLICY ITEMS/ REGULATIONS

Comprehensive Plan- Housing Element Policy Review

Final revisions were presented based on feedback for the Housing Element. Topics covered were green energy, affordable housing, supporting workforce, and building impacts.

Comprehensive Plan- Transportation

The Transportation Element was introduced and the technical aspects of the element were explained to the commission. Presented were ways new goals and policies would be produced, map/ data updates, and a timeline for the element. Final presentation to the commission is slated for March 2024.

OTHER BUSINESS

Planning Commission Interest

Homecoming

Upcoming Schedule

Future Agenda List

Work Program

The next meeting will be on Monday October 16, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Marusiak, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Smith to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm.

Minutes by Ashley Wragge, Planning Technician

Recorded meeting audio is available on the City website after the meeting.

Minutes approved at the _____ Planning Commission Meeting.



Emily Arteche, Director
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MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Emily Arteche, Director
Karla Boughton, Perteet
Date: October 16, 2023
Subject: Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Element Policy Review

Background

The Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) requires King County and cities within King County to update their comprehensive plans on or before December 31, 2024. The transportation chapter (sometimes referred to as an “element”) is an essential piece of the Comprehensive Plan and must show how the City intends to provide a transportation system capable of providing for the updated growth targets over the planning horizon of 20 years. This chapter provides a summary of the existing transportation system and will address the long-term transportation needs and goals of the community. On October 2, 2023, staff/consultant presented a primer on transportation planning and the components of the Transportation chapter.

Analysis

On October 16, 2023, staff/consultant will present the first set of proposed updates to transportation policies to the planning commission on land use and transportation coordination, intergovernmental transportation planning, street system, bicycle and pedestrian system. The objective of the transportation policies review is to improve clarity in policy language, remove duplicative language, update terminology, and reflect recent changes to the Growth Management Act, and PSRC’s VISION 2050.

Draft Transportation Policies



Organized by following topics:

- Land Use and Transportation Coordination
- Intergovernmental Transportation Planning
- Street System
- Bicycle and Pedestrian System

October 16th

- Travel Demand Management and Environmental Stewardship
- Planning Design and Maintenance
- Goals

November 6th

Draft Transportation Policies:

Land Use and Transportation Coordination



- Plan and preserve transportation system routes and capacity to support planned growth based on projected travel demands.
- Ensure that street infrastructure projects are designed to harmonize with and enhance the distinctive character and visual identity of each city area.
- Ensure transportation improvements or strategies address development impacts in a manner concurrent with the city's adopted levels of service standards, as required by the GMA.
- Connect streets, sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities, and transit routes and facilities whenever feasible with existing rights of way to form an integrated, balanced and convenient multi-modal system.

Draft Transportation Policies: Land Use and Transportation Coordination



Color Code

VISION 2050

- Maintain a transportation capital improvement plan that balances and coordinates system improvements for all modes and supports economic development.
- Encourage multiple connections between new development and historic parts of the city when feasible.
- Monitor and prepare for changes in transportation technologies and mobility patterns.
- Increase the resilience of the City's transportation system and support strategies for security and emergency management responses.

Draft Transportation Policies: Intergovernmental Transportation Planning



Color Code

VISION 2050

- Coordinate with WSDOT on the transfer of the Snoqualmie Parkway to state operational and maintenance responsibility.
- Coordinate with local and regional entities when traffic generated outside Snoqualmie could impact City levels of service.
- Support and participate in cooperative regional transportation planning processes to ensure that City interests are reflected in regional transportation plans while supporting the Regional Growth Strategy.
- Support the safe movement of freight by establishing clear signage on routes that service trucks, hazardous material transport, and oversized loads.

Draft Transportation Policies: Street System



Color Code

VISION 2050

- For vehicular transportation planning and development review, use level of service (LOS) measures to evaluate system performance and needs, applying a peak-hour LOS D standard for arterial intersections and a LOS E at side-street stop locations.
- Plan street development and redevelopment to create complete streets, that accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and transit users within right of way aligning with street classification and projected travel volumes where feasible.
- Support access, connections and mobility for all and vulnerable populations through investment of equitable modes of transportation.

Draft Transportation Policies: Street System



Color Code

VISION 2050

- Recognize and accommodate the special transportation needs of the elderly, children, and persons with disabilities in all aspects of transportation planning, programming, and implementation.
- Ensure safety enhancements and maintenance of infrastructure in transportation improvement projects for all modes.

Draft Transportation Policies: Bicycle and Pedestrian System



- Encourage new development to provide pedestrian and bicycle pathways that safely connect residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools, transit routes, parks, regional trails and other destinations within the City.
- Consider opportunities for multi-use trails (separated from vehicle lanes) on principal and minor arterial corridors, and shared bicycle facilities on select collector arterials.
- Collaborate with the school district to identify pedestrian safety improvements on school walk routes.
- Ensure adequate bicycle parking in historic downtown, Snoqualmie Ridge neighborhood center, public parks, large offices and industrial developments to promote bicycle travel and multimode commuting.

Regional Officials Hit the Brakes on More Suburban Sprawl Near I-90

By Ryan Packer - October 3, 2023

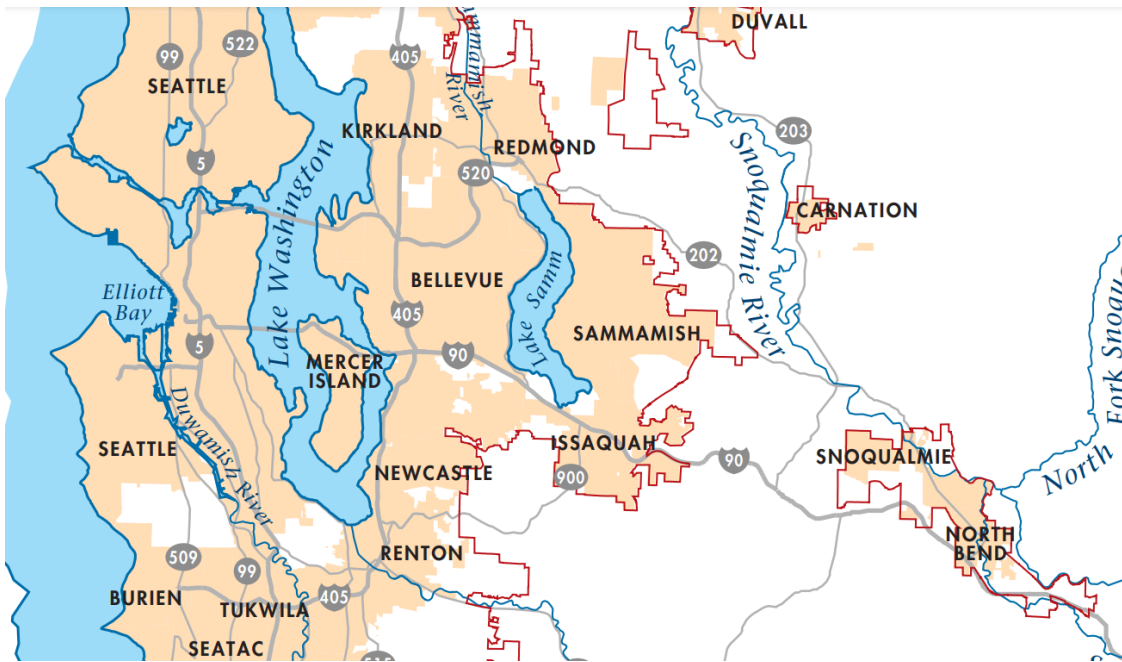


City officials in North Bend and Snoqualmie support expanding a program that offers development capacity in exchange for permanent open space. They were voted down last week by county leaders who say the idea could lead to more sprawl. (City of North Bend)

A meeting of an obscure regional planning body got tense last week as elected officials sparred over the issue of expanding King County's urban growth boundary to encourage housing development and preservation of existing open space along the exurban fringe. The area of focus are near the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie, an isolated patch of the county's Urban Growth Area (UGA) along Interstate 90, with city officials there wanting to keep the door open to some types of development, and leaders representing places like Seattle and Bellevue wary of too much sprawl in the I-90 corridor.

At the heart of the dispute is the wonky "four-to-one" program. An element of King County's comprehensive plan, the four-to-one program is one of only three ways that the UGA boundary is able to be modified, changing the line established in 1994 intended to constrain urban growth. Property owners interested in developing property that's immediately contiguous to the existing boundary, where compact development is able to be served with existing services, can apply to do so, if 80% of the property is dedicated to open space: four parts open space to every one that's developed.





Cities like Snoqualmie and North Bend, existing as islands outside of King County's larger contiguous urban growth area, blur the line between rural and urban areas. (King County)

The goal of the program is to provide incentives to create a “contiguous band” of open space along the growth boundary. A 2019 review of the four-to-one program found that proposals either completed or in the pipeline added up to 360 acres of new development, coming with around 1,100 new units of housing, and the preservation of around 1,400 acres of open space. Developments include 100-acre Glacier Ridge in Renton, the first four-to-one program approved immediately after the growth boundary was set in 1994, and smaller ones like five-acre Marshall near Sammamish.

On top of that, even larger developments, like Grand Ridge in Issaquah (490 acres), have been approved using four-to-one “principles,” through what’s called a Joint Planning Agreement (JPA), that expanded the 1994 UGA boundary while at the same time adding a considerable amount of open space. It’s those existing JPA additions to the 1994 growth boundary that are at the center of the dispute now. The question is whether the county should allow new four-to-one development projects on the borders of those JPAs. The upside could be more preservation of open space, but that would come at the cost of adding more residents in harder-to-serve areas of the county at a time when it’s trying to promote the opposite.





Areas in the Issaquah Highlands development were approved using four-to-one principles that created new urban developments on the border of the UGA while preserving additional open space. (Shaun Kuo)

While the county calls the four-to-one program “award-winning,” there’s not a consensus on whether approving these additions to the urban growth area has actually achieved the goal of constraining growth.

“Some of the biggest failures of growth management that we look at today, and we say, ‘that was not what we wanted, and that is impossible to serve’, those locations started life as four-to-one programs,” King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci said this spring. “This program can be problematic if we’re not careful.”

But cities like North Bend and Snoqualmie argue that the current UGA boundary, not the 1994 one, is what should be used to make planning decisions and that means allowing four-to-one development like in any other area.

“Providing a direct exchange of property into and out of the UGA appropriately allows for the right balance of urban and rural lands,” Snoqualmie Mayor Katherine Ross wrote to County Executive Dow Constantine earlier this year in a letter asking for the current boundary to be used. Ross suggested areas between the current UGA boundary and I-90 would be appropriate areas for “accessible workforce housing, medical, and/or behavioral health services.”



The question faced by elected officials in King County was whether to allow additional expansions of the urban growth area, into the pink areas shown, or just within the original 1994 boundaries, as shown by the dashed lines.

Changing the four-to-one program in this way across King County would add around 750 acres of developable land to the 5,500 acres that already qualify. That's around 6,000 units of housing potentially added to the county's urban fringes — slightly more than the official housing growth target for the city of SeaTac through 2044 and nearly five times the target of Mercer Island.

Why is this coming up now? In preparing for the major update to King County's comprehensive plan next year, county staff discovered that a previous update in 2012 had inadvertently removed the reference to the original 1994 boundary, prompting a need to clarify. In May, County Executive Dow Constantine proposed an amendment to the countywide planning policies that would have fully closed the loophole; at the time, it failed, after a faction on the council, largely made up of elected officials in east King County but also including County Councilmember Rod Dembowski and Seattle City Councilmember Dan Strauss, supported the idea of allowing four-to-one development adjacent to the JPA areas in North Bend and Snoqualmie.

County Executive Dow Constantine pushed back on that idea. "Changing the basis of the four-to-one program would take us back in time, and allow new four-to-ones right next to the ones we already allowed, allowing sprawl even further into the rural area," he said at that meeting.

King County Councilmember Sarah Perry, who represents the district that includes North Bend and Snoqualmie as well as much of rural King County, was at odds with Executive Constantine's approach, and deferred to the work that local officials in those cities have been doing to plan for growth. "I really want to honor the work that the cities have done in this. And I think it's very important to recognize that leadership,

recognize the changes, recognize how they're holding it and the work they've done throughout this process," she said.

After approving the amendment that would open the door to using the boundary with those JPAs added, the county opened public comment on the proposal. Sustainable land use, transportation, and environmental advocacy organizations were fairly unanimous that the idea should not move forward.

"Both environmental and economic rationale demand that the region focus growth in our existing cities and towns where infrastructure and support services already exist. Therefore, any four-to-one program expansion should be based on the UGA line adopted in 1994 and not on later additions to the UGA in any local jurisdiction," Sierra Club of Washington's Tim Gould wrote the council last month.

North Bend and Snoqualmie have limited transit networks and adding service would be expensive and difficult to do effectively given their low density and distance from job centers and activity nodes. In effect, such UGA expansions mean more car trips taxing I-90 and the highway network.

"Adding UGA expansions onto UGA expansions creates an urban pattern that is more expensive to serve with public facilities and services and will generate unnecessary adverse traffic impacts and additional greenhouse gas pollution," Hester Serebrin, policy director with Transportation Choices Coalition, wrote in a separate letter.

Even the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), which is in the process of [expanding State Route 18](#), and building a new diverging diamond interchange at the highway's outlet to Interstate 90, in large part to accommodate housing growth in the area, expressed concerns with further expansion of the urban growth boundary in this instance. Brian Nielsen, Northwest Region Administrator for WSDOT, said the policy chance could lead to "more unplanned and unanticipated challenges on the local, regional, and state transportation network" as a result of unanticipated future growth.

"[W]e maintain our concern that the recommended policies allowing exceptions for select jurisdictions are based on a request with urban development already in mind, not based on a countywide or regional need or policy rationale," Nielsen wrote.



The new diverging diamond interchange at I-90 and SR 18 is being built to accommodate future growth in the Snoqualmie Valley, but even WSDOT has reservations about expanding the urban growth boundary. (WSDOT)

In the end, the planning council voted 5 to 4 to stick with the original 1994 boundary. Executive Constantine joined with County Councilmembers Claudia Balducci, Joe McDermott, Jeanne Kohl-Welles, and Seattle City Councilmember Tammy Morales to squash the expansion of the four-to-one program to additional areas in North Bend and Snoqualmie. They were outnumbered by local elected officials like North Bend Mayor Rob McFarland, but their votes carried more weight.

Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell and Councilmember Dan Strauss, who both also serve on the council, were not present for the vote.

With King County finalizing [housing growth targets](#) and handing them over to cities to plan around, the vote illustrates some of the deep divisions that still exist across King County when it comes to figuring out how to accommodate growth. Given the intense opposition to changes in state law that would loosen restrictions on residential zoning, [encouraging infill housing](#) and supporting [transit-oriented development](#), some electeds in the region clearly see reconsidering the urban growth boundary an easier path forward.

Councilmember Perry described the final vote as an urban versus rural divide, calling out what she described as a “divisiveness highlighted simply by the differences in the specific communities represented” on the planning council.

“What you’re seeing playing out is a discussion that is largely between members who represent the space outside the contiguous UGA... versus those whose jurisdictions are contained within the contiguous UGA,” Parry said.

County Councilmember Claudia Balducci painted a more existential threat that could have come from moving forward with the change that had been considered. “I tried to get to the point where I felt confident that this would not start a cascade of actions up

and down the urban growth boundary, fundamentally breaking it over time,” she said in support of Executive Constantine’s amendment.

For now, the line is holding.

Support Us

Article Author

Ryan Packer

[Website](#)

Ryan Packer lives in the Summit Slope neighborhood of Capitol Hill and has been writing for the *The Urbanist* since 2015. They report on multimodal transportation issues, #VisionZero, preservation, and local politics. They believe in using Seattle's history to help attain the vibrant, diverse city that we all wish to inhabit. Ryan's writing has appeared in *Capitol Hill Seattle Blog*, *Bike Portland*, and *Seattle Bike Blog*, where they also did a four-month stint as temporary editor.

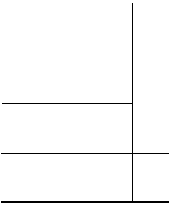


Draft Planning Commission Schedule

Task Name	2022				
	3-Oct	17-Oct	7-Nov	21-Nov	5-Dec
Comprehensive Plan Review				Introduction	
Housing			HNA presentation FCS Group		HAP element review
Design Review/Historic Design Review	HDRB: Wild Hare Sign DRB: Salish Front Entrance Expansion	DRB: Gere Auto			
Training	Short Course Training: Certification	Short Course	Short Course	PSRC training (recording from 11/14)	
Other		PSRC Economic Development Training 1 of 4 (recording)			
Street Use/ROW Use Code Amendment					
Code Amendments	Introduction: Appeal process/code amendment	HDRB Amendment		HDRB Amendment	HDRB Amendment
Site Plan Code Amendment			SPR Amendment	SPR Amendment	SPR Amendment
Key					
Public Hearing					
Discussion					
Action					

[illegible]

5-Sep	18-Sep	2-Oct	23-Oct	6-Nov	20-Nov	4-Dec	18-Dec		



Project Name

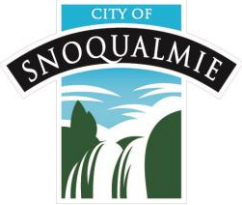
Historic Design Review
Design Review
Discussion Item: Planning Commissioner interest

Notes:

As Needed
As Needed
As Needed

FUTURE AGENDA LIST

Agenda Items	2023										
	17-Jul	7-Aug	21-Aug	5-Sep	18-Sep	2-Oct	16-Oct	6-Nov	20-Nov	4-Dec	18-Dec
Comprehensive Plan Review											
Housing			Introduction Housing	Housing Goals and Policies	Housing Goals and Policies	Final Draft Recommendation for Housing					
Land Use	Land Use Goals and Policies	Land Use Goals and Policies	Land Use Goals and Policies								
Environment								Intro to Capital Facilities and Utilites			
Transportation						Intro to Transportation Element	Transportation Goal & Policies	Transportation Goal & Policies			
Community Character											
Parks and Open Space											
Economic Development		Economic Development Goals and Polices	Economic Development Goals and Polices			ED Comm recommendation of approval of Econ Dev Elem					
Design Review / Historic Design Review											
Training											
Other											
Staff/Chair comment items											
Code Amendments	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)	ADUs (Public Hearing)	ADUs (cont Public Hearing)					Mixed-Use Final Plan Amendment			
Key											
Public Hearing/Action											
Discussion											
Training											



Planning Commission Work Program

Items are not listed in any order. Subject to change.

2023 WORK PROGRAM ITEMS		
TOPIC	DATE	STAFF
Comprehensive Plan Update	Throughout 2023	
Multi-Family Tax Exemption program	By Nov. 2023	
Snoqualmie Ridge Mixed Use Final Plan Amend – Center Blvd Retail Uses	Beginning Fall 2023	

2024 WORK PROGRAM ITEMS		
TOPIC	DATE	STAFF
Comprehensive Plan Update	Throughout 2024	
Historic Preservation Code Revisions	Early 2024	
Snoqualmie Mill Design Standards	TBD	
Wireless Code update	TBD	
Sign Code update	TBD	
Temporary & Emergency Housing	Early 2024	
CAO	TBD	