



**Executive Girmay Zahilay**

Chinook Building, CNK-EX-0800  
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800  
Seattle, WA 98104-2391

June 12, 2026

The Honorable Sarah Perry  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Perry:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, amend King County Code 20.62 by updating landmark designation criteria and adding new criteria and related definitions. These changes will help to advance the recognition and protection of culturally significant properties and ensure that King County's historic preservation work is accessible, inclusive, and reflective of King County's diverse communities.

As the field of historic preservation continues to evolve, practitioners nationwide are reassessing traditional landmark designation criteria, which have often prioritized architectural integrity over social and cultural significance. Communities are increasingly seeking to recognize underrepresented histories, protect vernacular and recent past resources, and strengthen the ability to preserve culturally meaningful places.

With guidance from a 12-member Community Advisory Committee, including King County Landmarks Commissioners, and with support from 4Culture, County staff reviewed cultural significance criteria from other jurisdictions and developed proposed King County Code amendments. These amendments clarify language and establish new criteria for designating places of social and cultural importance. This proposed legislation centers equity and social justice in the work of the Landmarks Commission and expands access to grants and preservation incentives for community members seeking to designate culturally significant properties.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance, which will strengthen efforts to identify and protect places that tell the stories of all King County residents.

The Honorable Sarah Perry

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If your staff have questions, please contact Jennifer Meisner, Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at(206-477-0384.

Sincerely,



for

Girmay Zahilay

King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Deputy Executive, Office of the Executive

Jasmin Weaver, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Hyeok Kim, Chief Operating Officer, Office of the Executive

Sierra Howlett Browne, Policy Director, Office of the Executive

Garrett Holbrook, Council Relations Manager, Office of the Executive

Mo McBroom, Interim Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks