



## Legislation Text

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Clerk 12/15/2008

A MOTION relating to a housing stimulus plan for King County to preserve and enhance the supply of housing in King County.

WHEREAS, the economic downturn in King County is triggering substantial revenue shortfalls for county and city governments, resulting in significant job losses and in some cases diminishing their ability to provide critical facilities and services to county citizens, and

WHEREAS, King County's job loss is due to a nationwide economic downturn/recession that has now revealed its full impact in Washington state, thus calling for extraordinary effort in the task of attracting new business to King County, and

WHEREAS, according to 2008 market research by the National Association of Home Builders, an average of 3.05 jobs and \$89,216 in taxes are produced from building an average new single family home and the development of a typical one-hundred-unit multifamily apartment complex generates one hundred sixteen jobs, \$8,670,900 in income from all affected industries and \$3,349,400 in tax revenue, and

WHEREAS, a recent Oregon study found that for every job created on site by creating or renovating affordable housing an additional 1.5 jobs are created off site. For every dollar invested in affordable housing, an additional ten to fifteen dollars of economic benefit was generated for the surrounding community, and

WHEREAS, the federal government has announced its intentions to develop a major economic stimulus package focused on funding public-works infrastructure projects to increase the demand for labor, and

WHEREAS, the state of Washington and other jurisdictions are currently preparing or adopting legislative plans to stimulate certain economic sectors, in part by increasing the efficiency of permit processes

and expediting public works projects that are already planned and funded, and

WHEREAS, the King County council and King County executive desire to implement a housing stimulus plan in partnership with interested cities and the state, and

WHEREAS, the 2008 King County Comprehensive Plan Appendix B, Housing, Section VII, B. Supplemental Actions, states, "King County will supplement existing policies to more effectively address several issue areas. Among these refined strategies and policies, King County will:

- **ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT INNOVATIVE DESIGN STANDARDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** Existing policies are modified to reduce parking and open space requirements for affordable housing projects. New policies also promote universal design concepts and support the development of walkable and sustainable projects.
- **INCREASE THE QUANTITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN KING COUNTY.** Existing policies are strengthened to support Land Trusts, mobile home parks as a source of affordable housing and the use of surplus sites for affordable housing in a manner consistent with the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness and King County Consortium Consolidated Plan.
- **CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO DIVERSIFY NEW HOUSING STOCK.** Existing policies are strengthened to promote the development of affordable housing through density bonuses and other incentives. New policies support the increase in development capacity in locations near core transit routes to promote walking and transit use; support employer assisted housing to provide affordable housing to workers living close to their employers; and promote the development in Accessory Dwelling Units in urban residential zones.
- **SUPPLEMENT EFFORTS TO CREATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.** Through modification of policy U-402, King County supports higher income thresholds for incentives to promote affordable rental and ownership housing development and

preservation.

- **REDUCE BARRIERS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.** New and existing policies seek to minimize, or eliminate where possible, barriers to development; provide expedited building permit and plan reviews; and exempt payment of impact fees to promote development of affordable rental or ownership housing," and

WHEREAS, the general principles central to this housing stimulus plan are as follows:

1. King County is committed to balancing a variety of goals, including growth of strong educational institutions, maintenance of high environmental standards, promotion of sustained and vibrant economic growth, generation of revenues to fund capital facility needs and creation of new housing affordable to residents of King County;

2. King County is committed to complying with the Growth Management Act, through its Countywide Planning Policies for King County, to ensure that the county's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations balance these needs;

3. King County has and will continue to streamline the permitting and review process for land use applications, to comply with RCW 36.70B.010, which is intended to reduce "the cost and time needed to obtain local and state land use permits," and to eliminate, where possible, the "potential for conflict, overlap and duplication between various permit and review processes"; and

4. Early start of capital facilities projects that are already planned and funded will provide immediate stimulus to the local economy, and promote jobs through potential growth of existing local businesses and new businesses relocating into the county, and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the King County council and executive to develop and implement a housing economic stimulus package that will provide critical infrastructure, jobs-based training and educational opportunities and an improved regulatory environment rooted in certainty, predictability and consistency, and

WHEREAS, the King County council and executive intend to stimulate development that will invest in our region's infrastructure in a manner that will reflect sustainable building, livable communities and long-lasting construction that will support our future environment, and

WHEREAS, preparation and implementation of this housing economic stimulus plan will send a strong and clear message to future producers of jobs that the county is competitive with other local, statewide, national and world markets, and

WHEREAS, the King County council and executive intend to take immediate steps in order to restore our community's confidence in our local economy and government, and in the short term to counter current trends that are damaging the local economy, and

WHEREAS, the executive has directed executive department to develop a "Housing Stimulus Plan" that will encourage new housing and retain the vitality of the existing housing stock, while simultaneously providing efficient, comprehensive and consistent services to its residents;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The executive shall implement the "Housing Stimulus Plan" as identified by executive departments and outlined in this motion to encourage new housing and retain the vitality of the existing housing stock, while simultaneously providing efficient, comprehensive and consistent services to its residents.

B. In order to support and enhance the economic vitality of the housing market, the Housing Stimulus Plan shall consider the following elements:

1. Review and consider expanding current extensions for approved preliminary plats and short plats;
2. Review and consider expanding current extensions for approved building permits;
3. Permit processing improvements, including but not limited to;
  - a. project management refinements;
  - b. implement preferred applicant program for land use inspections, and consider other preferred

application processes similar to city of Seattle;

- c. review impact of inspection costs on subsidized housing that is already subject to inspection and program requirements; and
- d. explore alternatives and process improvements to performance and maintenance bonds;
- 4. Implement the recommendations from the permit technical advisory committee;
- 5. Consider increased density bonuses for sustainable development projects;
- 6. Consider greater development flexibility including, but not limit to; reduced parking requirements, flexible road standards, reduced building setbacks, increased heights and floor area ratios and flexible standards for low impact development, and consider options related to moving the point of collection of all county administered impact fees to a date closer to the end of the development and building process;
- 7. Consider expanding the use of more-efficient in lieu fee mitigation programs; including implementing the county's updated mitigation reserves program to provide greater applicant flexibility and improved environmental outcomes;
- 8. Identify county properties appropriate for housing development;
  - a. use of surplus properties;
  - b. consider co-location of services and housing development for mixed-use opportunities;
  - c. request for qualifications and proposals for affordable and workforce housing; and
  - d. leasing county land for affordable and workforce housing use;
- 9. Continue to only require the replacement or repair of cracked sidewalks when critical to address structural or safety defects; and
- 10. Work with federal and state government and other partners;
  - a. advocate for a federal stimulus package which includes resources for local public works infrastructure projects that may allow for reductions in or reimbursements of transportation and school impact fee programs to local jurisdictions;
  - b. partner with the King County Housing Authority on a homebuyer education program aimed at

current renters;

c. coordinate with water and sewer utilities regarding the timing of sewer charges to coincide with occupancy permit issuance; and

d. work with school districts to consider collection of impact fees at a date closer to the end of the development and building process.