



DATE: March 9, 2015

TO: Mayor Balducci and Councilmembers

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SUBJECT: Ratification of proposed amendments to the King County Countywide Planning Policies

The purpose of this Management Brief is to summarize two amendments to the King County Countywide Planning Policies that were recommended for ratification by the Growth Management Planning Council. City Council traditionally considers these amendments and votes on whether or not to ratify within the required 90 day period which ends April 3, 2015.

The Growth Management Planning Council unanimously approved motions 14-4 and 14-5 (Attachment 1) at their July 23, 2014 meeting:

- Approving the King County 2014 Buildable Lands Report
- Establishing a countywide target for greenhouse gas reduction and articulating periodic assessment and reporting by King County.

Staff recommends that the City Council ratify both of the proposed Countywide Planning Policy amendments. If Council concurs, staff will prepare a Resolution for action on the Consent Calendar for the March 16, 2015 City Council meeting.

The Growth Management Planning Council is responsible for reviewing and recommending policy and map amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies. The Growth Management Planning Council is composed of elected officials from the King County, Seattle, and Bellevue Councils and the Sound Cities Association. Councilmember Robertson is Bellevue's representative.

The King County Council approved and ratified the amendments on behalf of unincorporated King County on December 16, 2014. For the amendments to be adopted they must be ratified by at least 30% of city and county governments representing 70% of the population of King County within 90 days of approval by the King County Council.

For additional background on each of the proposed amendments, Attachment 1 includes a copy of the King County Council ordinances, Growth Management Planning Council motions and staff reports. The King County Buildable Lands Report is about 150 pages and is available in the City Council Electronic Document Library. Following is a brief summary of the proposed amendments.

Motion 14-4 Buildable Lands Report: State law (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.215) requires six western Washington counties, including King County, and the cities within them to periodically measure their land supply and capacity. Previous buildable lands reports were prepared in 2002 and 2007. King County worked with cities to prepare the 2014 report. Bellevue was involved in the process, providing and verifying data and reviewing findings and conclusions. The 2014 report covers the period from 2006 to 2011. The report finds that new growth has been focused within county-designated Urban Centers such as Downtown Bellevue. This pattern is also consistent with the regional growth strategy in *VISION 2040* which designates Bellevue as a Metropolitan Center. The report concludes that if this growth pattern continues there is sufficient land capacity to accommodate countywide growth targets beyond 2031.

Because Bellevue has more than enough land supply and capacity to accommodate the City's current growth targets, there are no policy implications for the City. Overall, growth is occurring as envisioned by Bellevue's *Comprehensive Plan*, as well as the City's updated draft *Comprehensive Plan*. Since 2007, new residential capacity was added in Bel-Red with mixed use, transit-oriented development nodes around the future light rail stations. Downtown continues to receive the lion's share of multi-family growth (88% of new multi-family units during 2006-2011). Together, Downtown and Bel-Red provide a substantial amount of Bellevue's land supply and capacity.

Motion 14-5 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target: When the Countywide Planning Policies were updated in 2012, policy EN-17 called for the establishment of a countywide greenhouse gas reduction target that "meets or exceeds the statewide reduction requirement that is stated as the 2050 goal of a 50 percent reduction below 1990 levels." There was discussion by the Growth Management Planning Council at the time about what the target should be as well as the respective roles of the county and cities in achieving a reduction target. Councilmember Robertson supported the policy provided the target applied countywide and did not set individual targets or requirements for cities – that was the direction ultimately approved by the Growth Management Planning Council and included in the updated Countywide Planning Policies. At the time of the update, the Growth Management Planning Council directed staff to develop a specific, science-based countywide target and assessment tools that could be used to measure progress toward achieving the target.

The proposed amendment to policy EN-17 is in response to the Growth Management Planning Council direction from the 2012 Countywide Planning Policies update. Staff from King County and several cities, including Bellevue, developed a target based on scientific research and the most recent greenhouse gas emission data. The proposed targets are reductions from the 2007 levels of at least 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. These targets are considered ambitious for 2020 but achievable based on an analysis done for King County and a set of strategies developed for the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration. It is important to note that the statewide levels referenced in the current policy EN-17 are requirements for the state to achieve. The targets in the proposed amendments to policy EN-17 are not requirements, but achievable goals at the countywide level.

Many cities, including Bellevue, have set their own targets. Bellevue signed on to the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement in 2007 (Resolution No. 7517) that set a target of 7% below 1990

levels by 2012, and the target has not been updated. Bellevue has been working through our Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions of City-related functions and operations – emissions were reduced by over 20% between 2007 and 2013 – demonstrating that ambitious targets can be achieved on some scales. The assessment and reporting requirements in proposed policy EN-18A will provide King County and cities with a standardized means of assessing progress toward achieving the targets. Bellevue regularly monitors and reports both municipal operations and community emissions through an online database available to the public. Although the state uses 1990 as the base year, the countywide baseline relies on more recent 2007 data for ease of comparison to gauge progress.

Ratification of policies EN-17 and EN-18A would be in keeping with the City's previous actions and leadership in environmental stewardship. For nearly a decade, Bellevue has taken an active role in promoting clean energy, clean transportation, waste reduction, and the preservation of urban ecosystems. In July 2014, Bellevue joined the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration to work regionally on climate change and a sustainable future. Ratification of these proposed Countywide Planning Policy amendments would address one of the shared goals in the *King County-Cities Climate Collaboration Joint Commitments*, "Adopt science-based countywide [greenhouse gas] reduction targets that help ensure the region is doing its part to confront climate change."

#### NEXT STEPS

Under the provisions of the Countywide Planning Policies, cities in King County have 90 days to take formal action to either ratify or disapprove the amendment. **No action is deemed to be the same as ratification.** The 90-day deadline for action on these amendments is April 3, 2015. Cities are not allowed to modify the proposals as part of the ratification process.

If Council has no objections, staff will prepare a Resolution for ratification of the proposed amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies for Council action on the March 16, 2015, Consent Calendar.

#### ATTACHMENTS

1. January 2, 2015, correspondence from King County regarding ratification, including King County Council and Growth Management Planning Council motions and staff reports.

#### AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

1. King County Buildable Lands Report, July 2014.