

ORDINANCE NO. 4686

AN ORDINANCE relating to planning; making legislative findings and a declaration of purpose; and amending Policy D-11 of the Comprehensive Plan, as adopted by Ordinance 263, Article 2, Section 1, and adding a new residential design policy to the Comprehensive Plan.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Findings and Declaration of Purpose.

(1) The Council finds that:

(a) The citizens of King County are experiencing an increase in housing costs and a shortage of affordable housing, especially for low income and moderate income families;

(b) Studies in King County and in other parts of the United States have shown that high densities of residential development, when properly designed and conveniently located with respect to employment, shopping and other urban services, are efficient in using and conserving energy, as well as less costly to buy and maintain than lower density housing;

(c) The Comprehensive Plan, and existing County land use regulations, through encouragement of planned unit developments, permit and encourage a mixture of single-family and multi-family housing types at urban densities while at the same time protecting environmental quality and making efficient use of land and energy resources;

(d) The planned unit development policies and regulations of the County, while allowing flexibility and opportunities for innovation, require long and complex project review, and therefore are not used for a significant portion of new housing units;

(e) Other jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region allow higher densities of single-family residential development than does King County without compromising environmental and neighborhood quality;

(f) Allowing higher densities, with proper safeguards, in single-family residential areas would allow more efficient use of land and other resources, and allow production of more affordable new housing in King County;

1 (g) Clustering of lots, zero-lot-line techniques and permitting
2 adjacent single-family dwellings to share common party walls, all have been
3 shown through well-documented studies to result in lower site development
4 costs and greater energy savings than conventional lot-by-lot single-family
5 detached residential development at equal densities.

6 (2) The Council declares that the purpose of this Ordinance is to
7 amend the Comprehensive Plan so that it clearly allows a zone classification
8 providing for higher density single-family residential development than is
9 now permitted in the RS-7200 zone without requiring a planned unit devel-
10 opment, with proper consideration of the public health, safety and welfare,
11 so as to conserve land, energy and other resources, encourage devel-
12 opment consistent with the Urban Centers Development Concept, allow more
13 cost-efficient and energy-efficient site designs without requiring a planned
14 unit development, and allow the production of more affordable housing.
15 Policy D-11, as amended in this Ordinance shall be used to reclassify
16 suitable properties as RS-9600, RS-7200 or RS-5000 through the community
17 planning process and the hearing examiner process set forth in Chapter
18 20.24. Factors such as existing development character, topography and
19 other site features, and potential impact on public services shall be used
20 to decide which classifications are best suited to particular sites. Policy
21 D-11-A shall apply primarily to subdivisions in areas of the County where
22 urban and suburban services such as public sewers and water supply are
23 available, rather than in outlying or rural areas.

24 SECTION 2. Residential Densities.

25 (1) Policy D-11 of the King County Comprehensive Plan, as adopted
26 by Ordinance 263, Article 2, Section 1 is hereby amended to read as
27 follows:

28 Single family residential areas (~~except as otherwise designated, -~~
29 ~~shall have a maximum allowed density of five housing units per gross~~
30 ~~acre~~) may have a density of three or more units per acre when
31 located in areas with all of the following characteristics:

32 (a) Public services, including sewers, water, public transit
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1 schools, fire and police protection and parks, are available and have
2 the capacity to support development at the proposed densities;

3 (b) Employment and shopping centers, recreation and other
4 community facilities are conveniently located to serve area residents
5 without requiring long and frequent energy-consuming automobile trips;

6 (c) Sensitive areas, such as unstable slopes, severe earthquake
7 hazards, coal mine hazard areas, wetlands or Floodplains, do not predomi-
8 nate. On sites which contain problem-free land as well as such sensitive
9 areas, residential development may be clustered on the problem-free
10 portions.

11 NEW SECTION. : SECTION 3. The following new policy, Number
12 D-11-A, is hereby added to the "Residential Development Policies" Chapter
13 of the Comprehensive Plan:

14 As an alternative to conventional subdivision practices, clustering of
15 lots, lot size averaging, flexible application of setback requirements, and
16 mixing attached and detached housing types, may be used to achieve site
17 development cost savings, energy savings, preservation of valuable natural
18 features, and significant open space as long as the development's overall
19 density does not exceed that called for in the area by the Comprehensive
20 Plan, community plan if any, and the Zoning Code. Use of such tech-
21 niques in single-family zones shall be allowed only in conjunction with a
22 subdivision or short subdivision. Residential developments in which such
23 techniques are proposed shall be restricted to areas which are served by
24 public sewers or have adequate soil conditions for on-site sewage disposal,
25 and are served by adequate public water systems, so as to make higher
26 density within clusters practical and safe. Design and layout of such
27 developments shall be reviewed for quality of open space preserved,
28 (e.g., suitability for recreation, valuable natural features, access to sub-
29 division residents, buffering functions), impact on neighboring properties,
30 aesthetic compatibility with established neighborhood character, adequate
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1 internal privacy, pedestrian and automobile circulation, parking, and pro-
2 per orientation to sun and wind.

3 SECTION 4. Application to areas with adopted community plans.

4 (1) It is the Council's intent that Policy D-11, as amended by this
5 Ordinance be used to evaluate proposals to classify properties as RS-9600
6 or a higher-density single-family classification. Policy D-11, as amended
7 by this Ordinance, and its implementing regulations were not anticipated in
8 community plans adopted prior to the effective date of this Ordinance;
9 therefore, review of individual requests to reclassify properties as RS-5000
10 in areas with such adopted community plans requires additional guidance as
11 follows. In areas with community plans adopted prior to the effective date
12 of this Ordinance, the RS-5000 zone classification should be applied only to
13 properties zoned RS-9600 or RS-7200, and shall only be applied when:

14 (a) all criteria in Policy D-11 are met;

15 (b) the public capital improvements, existing or authorized by
16 the community plan, which serve the properties involved are capable of
17 accommodating the increased density;

18 (c) if the RS-5000 zone conflicts with an adopted community
19 plan's density policy, a community plan revision eliminating the conflict
20 precedes or accompanies the reclassification, in accordance with Ordinance
21 4305.

22 (2) Proposals to use such techniques as clustering, lot averaging or
23 zero-lot-line arrangements of structures as allowed by Policy D-11-A, and
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its implementing regulations, within subdivisions located in areas with adopted community plans will be considered consistent with those plans as long as the average densities in said subdivisions do not exceed those called for by the applicable community plan.

INTRODUCED AND READ for the first time this 24th day of September, 1979.

PASSED this 7th day of January, 1980

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Bill Reames
Chairman ATTEST:

[Signature]
Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this 11th day of January, 1980.

[Signature]
King County Executive