

Issues & Impacts

Seattle King County REALTORS® is working to ensure that public policies support homeownership and your business's bottom line. Please contact Governmental & Public Affairs Director David Crowell, dcrowell@nwrealtor.com, with any local legislative issues that may need our attention. **The next issue will be released in December 2019.**

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King County Growth Rate Will Slow Next Year (2020), But Remain Positive

On July 19, King County's Office of Economic and Financial Analysis released its annual Economic and Revenue Forecast.

In a presentation to the King County Forecast Council, Dave Reich compared King County trends to what has been occurring nationally:

- In the 1st Quarter of 2019, the national economy grew by 3.1 percent, compared to 2.3 percent YTD in King County. This is the first time in history that the national economy has experienced growth every month for more than 10 years in a row. The most recent prior 10-year growth period was from 1991 to 2001, nearly 2 decades ago.
- King County's economy showed solid growth in 2018, but slowed in the second half of the year, and also remains slower thus far in 2019.
- In King County, the current construction boom continues, although there are some signs

of slower growth. The residential real estate market slowed considerably in 2018 according to the county, although job growth remains strong.

- Speaking of jobs, the US economy is continuing to produce jobs, which means lots of people are working. Unemployment has continued on a downward trend since January 2010. In fact, King County employment growth has been stronger than the nation as a whole, and more robust than many peer counties around the country including Dallas, San Diego, Los Angeles, Orange County, New York and Chicago.
- King County's population grew 1.6 percent, but growth rates have varied around the county:



Select King County cities	% Increase	Total population on April 1, 2019 as estimated by OFM
Auburn	1.5	71,740
Bellevue	2.0	145,300
Burien	0.3	52,000
Federal Way	0.4	97,840
Kent	0.7	129,800
Kirkland	1.9	88,940
Redmond	2.8	65,860
Renton	0.6	104,700
Seattle	2.3	747,300
Tukwila	5.7	20,930

- Single-family permitting and occupancy

approvals fell during the recession and have not recovered.

- King County’s Index of Leading Economic Indicators is mixed, but the King County forecast for 2019-2020 calls for continued growth:
 - o Total countywide assessed value is forecast to rise 13.46 percent (to \$606.6 billion) in 2019
 - o Total assessed value in unincorporated King County is forecast to rise 11.47 percent (to \$48.6 billion in 2019)
 - o Countywide, new construction is expected to grow by \$11.6 billion in 2019
 - o Taxable sales will continue to grow, but at a slower pace

More information, including the County’s Forecast Report, is available online at: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/independent/forecasting.aspx>.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Additional Housing Opportunities: Major Changes Adopted for Seattle Accessory Dwelling Units

After three years of legal challenge, the Seattle City Council has made major changes to regulations governing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs). The changes both ease restrictions on ADUs and promote development of ADUs by limiting the size of new single-family homes.

Seattle King County REALTORS® views ADUs as a valuable housing tool for cities throughout the region. ADUs enable greater utilization of existing houses and residential lots, without a significant change in community character. The added units offer important, affordable, housing opportunities for tenants as well as income for the owner --- easing the owner’s mortgage and improving a buyer’s ability to qualify. In addition, ADU’s offer important housing stability options for “empty nesters” and seniors on a fixed income. At the

same time, SKCR advocated for property rights with regards to floor-area-ratio (FAR) limits on new single-family homes. We believe property owners should retain the ability to size new construction according to their needs.

Summary of proposal:

- Allow two ADUs on one lot.
- Increase maximum household size to 12 unrelated people on lots with two ADUs.
- Allow DADUs on lots of at least 3,200 square feet & allow DADUs of up to 1,000 sq. ft.
- Increase DADU height limits by 1-2 feet, with flexibility for green building strategies.
- Increase rear lot coverage to provide flexibility for one-story DADUs, provided the increase rear lot coverage does not result in removal of trees over a certain size.
- Remove the off-street parking requirement.

- Remove the owner-occupancy requirement.
- Use floor-area ratio (FAR) to limit the size of new single-family homes and encourage ADUs. Sets a maximum square footage at 2500 square feet for lots up to 5000 square feet, and 1/2 the lot size above 5000 square feet.
- Exemption from the FAR limits include:
 - o Basement area;
 - o Any floor area contained in an accessory dwelling unit;
 - o Either up to 500 additional square feet of floor area in any accessory structure that is not a detached accessory dwelling unit, or up to 250 square feet of floor area in an attached garage.
- The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) is requested to develop an amnesty program for accessory dwelling units that were constructed without permits. The program shall permit owners of accessory dwelling units constructed without a permit to come forward during a certain time period and legalize their units without penalty.

Following the Council passage, Mayor Jenny Durkan signed an executive order to speed the permitting and construction of ADUs and to make them more affordable to build.

The Mayor has directed the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to streamline

the design and permitting process for detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs) by making preapproved plans available at low-or-no cost to homeowners.

Elements will include:

- Encouraging relatively simple, small, and low-cost DADU designs through an open call for submissions from the design and construction community.
- Supporting ongoing innovation in prefab, modular, and other new construction methods that may reduce construction costs.
- Issuing an ADU construction permit within 30 days for homeowners using a preapproved DADU plan.
- Establishing an “ADU navigator” on the permitting staff to help homeowners navigate the permitting process for ADUs.
- Developing a one-stop ADU website that provides a comprehensive inventory of ADU information, guidance, resources; summarizes ADU regulations and permitting steps.

The Seattle Office of Housing will pilot strategies for ADUs that support affordability for homeowners and tenants such as using the existing Home Repair Program for low-interest financing to help low-income homeowners create ADUs.

Burien Planning Commission Considers “Pilot Project” Affordable Housing Policies

Burien’s Planning Commission is moving forward to consider “Missing Middle” housing policy amendments to the City’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code, particular regulations relating to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s), allowing for housing variety in single-family residential zones and setting minimum density thresholds.

The proposed amendments are intended to provide incentives and flexibility for the development of

housing affordable to middle income households.

In addition, the Planning Commission has begun considering the possibility of policy revisions to encourage affordable housing “Demonstration Projects.”

The City’s Comprehensive Plan has provided for implementation of an “Affordable Housing Demonstration Project/Program” since 2003.



However, there have been no proposals from developers expressing a desire to pursue such a program, which has not helped to ameliorate the fact that since Burien's incorporation in 1993 a low percentage of new housing has been constructed relative to the total number of housing units in the city.

A Demonstration Project could test new or more flexible regulations and processes that are not currently allowed under existing land use regulations in efforts to encourage housing production, stimulate innovating housing design, encourage the development of catalyst housing projects, stimulate housing production, increase

the diversity of housing types and serve as a model for other neighborhoods.

As part of its review, the Burien Planning Commission will be reviewing the Kirkland City Council interim ordinance adopted in 2002 which allows up to five innovative housing projects to develop housing choices that were not available in single-family neighborhoods.

The city has identified cottage housing or other clustered small-lot planning concepts for evaluation against program goals to determine whether such housing types should be allowed generally.

Enumclaw: Single-Family Residential Design Standards



The city of Enumclaw Planning Commission has recommended the City Council amend the City's Single-Family Residential Design Standards to provide more flexibility in

connection with the construction of new homes.

The City's current standards are intended to ensure that new single-family development fits with the character of existing neighborhoods in terms of scale, density and design. Those standards include various provisions for garage door setbacks, window coverage, etc. In order to provide variety in home designs, the section also includes an optional review process for homes that meet the intent of the code but do not comply wholly with the standards.

According to the City's Community Development Director, Chris Pasinetti, the changes proposed by the Planning Commission would:

1. Allow flexibility within the regulations for driveways and front yard setbacks.

2. Clarify definitions and how the regulations are implemented, and
3. Provide greater flexibility within the regulations to allow for a more diverse housing stock.

For example:

- Many home designs have the garage extending in front of the main body of the house. The front yard setback is a minimum of 20 feet. The design requirements mandate that the garage be set back a minimum of 3 feet from the body of the house. The intent was to provide for a longer driveway (i.e., 23 feet). Changing the requirement would allow for homes to be designed with a garage in front of the main body of the house, but still provide for a 23-foot-long driveway.
- Including language regarding tandem garages, allowing windows on doors and garages to count toward window coverage, as well as allowing vinyl fencing.
- The design guidelines have a minimum 20 percent requirement for window coverage along facades that face the street, which is difficult to achieve due to state energy code

requirements. The draft requirements clarify how to implement the provision, as well as

reduce the coverage façade provisions from 20 percent down to a more achievable 14 percent.

REAL ESTATE SIGNAGE

Maple Valley Steps Up Sign Code Enforcement

The city of Maple Valley has announced that code enforcement officers have stepped-up enforcement of the sign code, especially for signs placed in the city right-of-way.

According to city officials, the emphasis on enforcing the sign code is occurring to address what the city says are citizens' growing concerns about temporary signs in the public right-of-way.

All prohibited signs will be removed. The owners of the signs will be contacted and provided the opportunity to pick up their signs at City Hall. If staff is unable to contact the owners of the signs, or the owners do not respond, the signs will be disposed.

Signs that are prohibited in the right-of-way include:

- Signs of any kind that are placed in the round-a-bouts or on medians
- Signs that block sight distance at intersections or otherwise pose a safety hazard
- Directional signs for developments that are located outside of the city limits, and
- All commercial signage (with the exception of real estate open house signs that support Federal Fair Housing provisions of the Civil Rights Act, and development directional signage)

Signs that are permitted in the right-of-way include:

- Political signs (must not exceed 8 sq. ft. in size)
- Garage sale and yard sale signs
- Real estate sale/open house signs that support Federal Fair Housing provisions of the Civil Rights Act (limited to 4 A-frame signs per property on the day of the event)
- All "non-commercial" signs (i.e. youth sporting events, church events, civic events, etc.)
- Development direction signs for development within the city limits (limit 3 signs per development, each 16 sq. ft. or smaller)



In June, City staff began working to notify local area businesses, real estate agents, community groups, and individuals running for elected office of the new enforcement measures. City representatives said the goal is to "preserve and enhance the safety and appearance of our community."

Codes related to signs on private property differ from those placed in the public right-of-way. The Maple Valley Municipal Code may be viewed online at www.maplevalleywa.gov. For answers to questions, or more information, contact the City's Community Development Department at 425-413-8800.

REGULATORY ISSUES

Seattle Green New Deal: New Taxes, Point of Sale Requirements?

Inspired by the Green New Deal introduced by progressives in Congress earlier this year, the Seattle City Council has passed a resolution

relating to a Green New Deal for Seattle.

The resolution signals the council's intention to



pursue a range of initiatives relating to carbon reduction, development of “green jobs,” and funding for new programs in disadvantaged communities. It includes an aggressive, 10-year goal to make Seattle free of climate pollutants, meaning those that cause shifts in climate patterns, including carbon dioxide, black carbon, methane, nitrogen oxides, and fluorinated gases.

Seattle King County REALTORS® will be watching for two major areas of concern as elements of the resolution transition to legislation. First, it is likely that the city will seek new tax revenue to fund program elements. This could come in the form of a voter-approved levy or a business tax, or income tax. Second, we expect carbon reduction strategies

will include the transition from natural gas and heating oil to electricity in residential settings. Already, the Mayor has proposed an additional tax on home heating oil. It will start with a prohibition on oil heat and natural gas in new construction but could easily expand to a prohibition on selling an existing home with oil heat and/or natural gas, enforced at the point of sale point-of-sale.

Retiring Councilmember Mike O’Brien is the chief proponent of the resolution. We anticipate he will establish an aggressive schedule for implementation in an effort to accomplish as much as possible before he leaves the council at the end of the year.

Seattle Revises Its Notice of Intent to Sell Ordinance

The Seattle City Council has revised legislation that requires sellers of multifamily properties with at least one affordable unit to provide notification to tenants and the city of their intent to sell. The revisions appear to give tenants and the city a right of first refusal, which is illegal under state law.

Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda, the chief proponent of the bill, said tenants will buy their buildings with adequate notice of sale. In addition, the Office of Housing (OH), the Seattle Housing Authority, and local nonprofits also would be prospective buyers. She believes these groups should be given time before the property goes on the market to determine whether they are interested and able to purchase.

Key elements of the legislation include:

- Expands the notice requirement to apply to owners of multifamily rental housing with two or more housing units, with at least one of the units renting at a rate affordable to a household at or below 80 percent of area median income.
- Increases the notice period from 60 days to 90

days prior to a building being formally listed for sale.

- Establishes a tiered system of notification periods, with larger properties requiring longer periods of time and a series of checkpoints that allow an owner to sell more quickly if no potential buyers emerge.
 - o 2-4-unit buildings: 15-day notice
 - o 5+ unit buildings: 90-day notice
- Requires an owner to submit a signed declaration, under penalty of perjury, affirming that the owner has complied with the required notices. This declaration is submitted to OH at the same time the required written notice of intent to sell is submitted.
- Requires an owner to prominently post a notice in the building that will be sold that states the owner’s intent to sell the building so that tenants are informed of this impending action.

Seattle King County REALTORS® worked closely with the Commercial Brokers Association and the Rental Housing Association to offer the city pathways to achieve the stated goals of the legislation in manner consistent with the market.

We encouraged the public housing agencies to improve their acquisitions program by retaining a commercial broker to serve as a buyer's representative. For tenant purchase, we strongly

encouraged city outreach to tenant to provide education about existing first-time buyer programs.

Read our [coalition letter](#) to the city.

Auburn Revising Multi-Family Property Inspections

The Auburn City Council is reviewing options for revising the City's regulatory framework for multi-family rental properties, especially with regard to property inspections.

The Council began working on the issue in April after being advised there are approximately 470 licensed multi-family properties (duplexes or larger) in the city, and a state law allows for mandatory multi-family inspection programs. City staff advised the Council that nearby cities have implemented such programs.

Council members expressed particular interest in code enforcement data and prior experience with respect to complaints about multi-family living conditions, as well as tools that code enforcement officers believe would improve the City's ability to address multi-family living conditions.

Then, in early August, Development Director Jeff Tate provided a briefing and administrative recommendations to the City Council regarding conceptual changes, as well as how the inspection program for multi-family rental properties will interact with current requirements, and the additional police-power tools that would be available to city Code Enforcement Officers who are charged with enforcing the Auburn City Code and the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC).

The City's current "S.A.F.E.R. Program" not only requires the owners and/or managers of rental properties to attend a mandatory 8-hour training session, but also contains the City's regulatory ground rules and expectations for the management

of rental properties.

According to city staff, over the past three years Auburn has achieved approximately 98 percent voluntary compliance with this training program, and only 2 percent were mandated to attend the program through Code Enforcement action. City code enforcement officers say that as a result of working collaboratively with property owners and managers, the Code Compliance Division has "built a solid rapport with rental property owners and managers."



Currently, multi-family property owners and managers can participate in a voluntary inspection program through the city. The inspection is conducted by the Code Compliance Division and focuses on the exterior of the property only. City code enforcement officers say they have conducted 25 voluntary inspections. Of the 25 inspected properties, all had one or more "violations."

Even though correction of the violations on these properties took time and money, according to the city they were all resolved without formal code enforcement action. The Code Compliance division also requires mandatory inspections of properties that are referred by the Auburn Police Department. Such inspections also focus only on the exterior of the property.

In recommending changes to the City's framework for regulating multi-family tenancies, city staff considered IPMC enhancements regarding Security (requiring lockable doors/windows), Kitchens (size, lighting and separation of cook/sleep areas) and



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Rodent Control (extermination from the structure/ exterior).

In addition, city staff also considered Healthy Housing Standards, also involving Security (requiring locks to be re-keyed with every change of tenancy), Kitchens (requiring an oven with a range/vent) and Pest Management (including Professional Integrated Pest Management [IPM] protocols).

City staff also evaluated both mandatory inspections, and compliance-based inspections.

The recommendation provided to the City Council would amend title 5 and/or Title 15 of the Auburn City Code to provide for adoption of the National Healthy Housing Standards and also require mandatory inspections of properties with three or more confirmed code compliance violations in a 12-month period.

OTHER CITY ACTIONS

Maple Valley City Council Wants a “True Downtown”

The city of Maple Valley wants a “True Downtown.”

That appears to be the definitive outcome of a series of Downtown Visioning Meetings between the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Economic Development Commission and business owners.

As a result, at a study session in July the City Council identified the area that it says will be the focus for creating a new downtown for the City. It is bounded by the North end of the Legacy site, the west side of the Cedar River Trail, down to SE 260th, and back up to the north end of the Legacy site.

The next major action on the initiative to create a new downtown will come this fall when the Planning Commission will begin discussing actual code provisions for the new downtown area, including details as specific as design requirements for park benches and street lighting.

The City announced that Community Development Manager Matt Torpey, Associate Planner Amy

Taylor, and City Attorney Jeff Taraday will develop preliminary ideas for the Planning Commission to begin considering this fall. Those ideas are expected to be informed by looking at examples from other cities, including streetscape designs, and building adjacent to roadways that also have room for amenities such as sidewalk dining in front of restaurants.

Interim zoning provisions regarding mixed-use development (which include a moratorium on the city accepting applications to construct new housing in mixed-use zones) will remain in place until November 13, 2019. Because state law limits moratoriums to six months unless a city holds a public hearing and votes to extend the moratorium (for up to an additional six months) the city plans to hold a hearing and vote on an extension before the current moratorium expires on November 13. Even so, the city indicated its interim moratorium on housing in mixed-use zones will not apply to the area that the City Council has designated as the location for the new downtown.

Auburn City Council Votes to Hire Racial Equity Consultant

Initially, the Auburn City Council voted 3 to 3 on whether or not to hire a racial equity consultant as

requested by Mayor Nancy Backus. As a result, the motion failed. Councilmember Larry Brown was absent from the meeting where the vote was taken.

But in mid-July, with only Councilmember Bill Pelosa voting no - because he said the Council had not had enough time to study a revised proposal - the City Council voted 6 to 1 to contract with a consulting group to provide city leaders and staff with racial equity training, and to help develop city policies on the subject.

Earlier, Councilmember Largo Wales had objected because of what she characterized as an overly narrow focus on racial inequities to the exclusion of other commonly experienced unlawful discrimination. In addition, she expressed concerns

about budget constraints in the face of other pressing needs, including street maintenance.

Under the revised proposal for the city to contract with the Racing to Equity Consulting Group, the original proposal was reduced from a \$400,000 expenditure over three years, to a two-year plan that will cost \$141,150. Additionally, training for City Council members will be delayed until 2020 so that three new councilmembers who will be elected in November will be able to participate. The revised proposal also defers community engagement during the initial two-year period and delays the “train-the-trainer” program until after the contract with Racing to Equity is concluded.



TAXATION

Kent Mayor Backs Away from Proposing Another Property Tax Increase... For Now



Mayor
Ralph

Kent Mayor Dana Ralph has pulled back, temporarily, a suggestion that the City Council send a ballot measure to voters asking for another property tax increase to pay for additional police officers.

The issue will likely be reconsidered after the election (when City Council members are not running for re-election). According to news reports, the city’s Chief Administrative Officer, Derek Matheson, wrote in an e-mail in mid-July that, “The mayor remains 100% committed to recommending a police ballot measure in the future and we’ll continue to work in that direction.”

In a special election in April 2018, 57 percent of voters rejected a measure to increase the city’s utility tax from 6 percent to 8 percent to pay for more police. At the time, city officials indicated the city faced a “fiscal cliff” and there was no other way to pay for more officers.

Since then, the city’s financial situation has changed dramatically.



In the wake of a 38.8 percent permanent increase in city property taxes already approved by the Council without a vote of the people, plus two increases in the B&O tax (with a 3rd city of Kent B&O tax increase already approved but not yet implemented), the City continues to receive funding from the legislature to off-set lost sales tax revenue, and higher than budgeted revenues because of strong economic growth, the initial suggestion from the Mayor to increase property taxes in an election year was met with enormous skepticism.

Three factors are thought to have contributed to the negative reaction:

1. The city of Kent is awash in cash. Lots of cash! In the wake of robust economic growth, the



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City’s General Fund Tax Revenue Collections were \$7.9 million over budget, at \$110 million last year. Sales tax revenues collected by the City came in \$3.5 million over budget. Other tax revenues collections (including B&O tax and permit fees) were \$3.1 million over budget. In addition, Kent has a General Fund Reserve Balance of \$21.6 million or 19.8 percent of the general fund budget (even though the City Council’s own Reserve Policy only requires 18 percent, and despite the fact the Government Finance Officers Association says 4 to 8 percent reserves are Good; 8 to 15 percent reserves are Strong; and more than 15 percent in reserves is Very Strong).

- 2. Tax fatigue: Taxpayers are contending with significant state property tax increases to fund K-12 Education following the legislature’s decision to increase state property taxes in response to the McCleary lawsuit, more than \$50 billion in new taxes approved for Sound Transit Phase 3, significant increases on B&O taxes passed last session by the legislature, new property tax increases just approved by Kent voters for the Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority, and new long-term care taxes on employees - all of which are in addition to recent tax increases passed by the Kent City Council, and efforts that are underway in Kent, Renton and Auburn to rezone the valley floor to increase city B&O tax revenues.
- 3. The city’s #1 priority (police/public safety) would be funded with new taxes, while the city’s extra cash is used for other things: The money

from another increase in property taxes would be used to add more police officers. Kent’s police department is understaffed, property crimes have been de-policed (officers are not dispatched to property crimes) and high-speed pursuits in the city of Kent have increased dramatically – up approximately 37 percent - in the last year.

Public safety – and especially police - is the number one priority of local government. Critics argue it should be paid-for with the first dollars collected by City Hall, instead of funding other less important priorities with available funds and then imposing new taxes to pay for police.

That happened with Medic-One several years ago when King County began funding ambulance services through ballot measures while spending available revenues on other things. Now, Kent’s Mayor has expressed a desire to do the same thing for adding officers to Kent’s Police Department.

Not using available funding for police - and instead spending available tax dollars on other things - also raised concerns because City Hall doesn’t have to pay for a fire department. Instead of the city of Kent having its own fire department, the Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority provides all the fire protection services in the city of Kent and collects separate property taxes and fire fees that are not part of the budget at City Hall. So, the city has fewer “public safety” expenses it must pay for out of its budget: police, but not the fire department, and not Medic-One ambulance service.

King County: Road and Bridge Funding Running Out in 2025

The Local Services, Regional Roads and Bridge Committee of the King County Council has been advised that funding for new road and bridge projects in unincorporated King County is expected to run-out by 2025 because revenues haven’t

kept pace with service demands.



John Taylor, the County’s Director of Local Services, and Rick Brater,

the County's Director of Road Services, said approximately 80 percent of the county's road budget comes from property tax garnered from the roads levy. However, as cities continue annexing unincorporated areas the amount of money the County receives for roads is reduced. In addition, the state law that limits property tax increases to 1 percent annually has helped to create a hole of \$250 million annually in the County's road and bridges budget.

While the county expects it will have some funding for road maintenance, Taylor and Brater warned that beginning in 2025 the County will not be able to take-on any new construction projects for roads or bridges.

A 2017 report indicates the County has 182 bridges, and half of those are 65-years old, despite the fact that the typical useful lifespan of such bridges is approximately 50 years.

In unincorporated areas of King County, roads and bridges accommodate about 1 million vehicle trips daily, but the maintenance of those bridges and roads is mostly paid for by just the 250,000 residents living in unincorporated portions of the County. In addition, the County receives little business-related revenue, unlike the cities that collect enormous amounts of sales tax revenue.

Taylor and Brater laid-out several options to provide more funding for roads and bridges in the rural areas including:

- Creating a Transportation Benefit District in the unincorporated portion of the county. The County has the authority to ask voters to create a district, but a previous taxing district was repealed in 2014. A new one was expected to only generate between \$5 million to \$10 million annually, which would only provide 2 percent to 4 percent of the \$250 million shortfall.
- The County can also lobby for increases in

state and federal funding and try to leverage that funding in areas that are serviced by state highways. Taylor and Brater pointed to Fall City as an example of a rural area where this might be possible because Fall City has two state highways that run through it.

- Larger funding options are likely to require voter approval, but even those opportunities have limitations. For example, county road taxes that require voter approval are capped by state law at \$2.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Since 2008 - as the economy recovered from the recession - high appreciation in property values have been of limited value in generating more local tax revenue because cities cannot raise property taxes more than 1 percent annually without voter approval, and such approval is difficult to obtain because voters are experiencing significant tax fatigue.

If the County Council were to pursue a one-time levy lift, it would generate approximately \$144 million over five years, which would cost a typical property owner \$270 annually. Another option would be to pass an increase, and then tie subsequent increases to the rate of inflation, which might generate an additional \$16 million over the same five-year period.

According to Sound Publishing, King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert said the County should ask the state Legislature to pass laws allowing King County to form a countywide transportation benefit district.

According to County officials, if the County is unable to bridge its \$250 million annual roads funding gap, it will have to start considering closing rural bridges and letting roads return to gravel.

In the 2017 annual bridges report released in August 2018, the county stated it owns or maintains 182 bridges ranging in age from 10 to 100 years. The median age of the bridges is 65, while the typical



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useful lifespan of a bridge is around 50 years. The County says that by 2040, it is expected that up to 72 miles of county roads may go to gravel, and

multiple bridges could be closed.

PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS

Elections in 2019

Laws govern the way in which you conduct your business and affect your bottom line. Laws are made by elected officials. This year elections will be conducted for city council positions, county council positions and the Port of Seattle. The general election is on November 5.

We need elected officials who share our REALTOR® values, and who appreciate the hard work you do as a real estate professional. So, members of the Association will review voting records of elected officials. And it's why your REALTOR® colleagues will interview candidates running for office.

REALTORS® don't just sell homes. We sell neighborhoods and Quality of Life.

REALTORS® know that Quality of Life begins with a good job in a company that has a great future. Homes are where those jobs go at night. That's why it's so important to have elected officials who understand the key contribution that jobs and housing make to healthy, vibrant communities.

This year Seattle King County REALTORS® will act to protect and enhance your business by supporting candidates for local office (city councils, county council) who share our REALTOR® values. We will mail you the REALTOR® Voting Guide for the November 5 general election.

Seattle Primary Election Results

The August primary election has narrowed a field of 55 candidates for Seattle City Council down to 14.

The following candidates will advance to the general election.

Bold identify SKCR-endorsed candidates

- District 1: **Phil Tavel** vs. Lisa Herbold
- District 2: **Mark Solomon** vs. Tammy Morales
- District 3: **Egan Orion** vs. Kshama Sawant
- District 4: **Alex Pedersen** vs. Shaun Scott
- District 5: **Deborah Juarez** vs. Ann Davison Sattler
- District 6: **Heidi Wills** vs. Dan Strauss
- District 7: **Jim Pugel** vs. Andrew Lewis

While this is a tremendous opportunity for change, it will be important for REALTORS® and their customers to engage in the election to ensure a pool of candidates that supports a healthy real estate market, high quality of life and neighborhood safety. REALTORS® can play an important role in helping bring moderation to the council through engagement in the election. Please review your REALTOR® Voter Guide for endorsed candidates and make sure you, your family, and friends vote in the November 5 general election.

Black Diamond City Council to Increase in Size to 7 Members



Currently, there are 5 members on the Black Diamond City Council. By the end of September there will be 7.

On August 1, the Black Diamond City Council voted unanimously to increase in size from 5 to 7 members. Councilmember Janie Edelman, who is not seeking reelection this fall, pointed to the thousands of new houses being built in the 10 Trails master-planned development as one of the reasons to expand the size of the city council now.

Any city with at least 2,500 residents is allowed by state law to have seven councilmembers. However, cities with 5,000 or more residents are required to do so. Last year, using the 2010 census as a baseline, the state's Office of Financial Management estimated the population inside the city of Black Diamond was 4,500 residents.

Initially, the two additional city council members will be appointed to their positions by the current councilmembers - as required by state law - rather than being elected by popular vote. Then, if they choose to do so, the two new councilmembers will have to stand for re-election in 2021 in order to remain on the Council. In 2021, one of the new council positions will be up for election to a two-year term, and the other will be up for election to a four-year term, in order to maintain staggered

terms that are intended to avoid disproportionately large turnover on the city council in a given year.

By law, the mayor does not have a vote in the initial selection of the new councilmembers.

Even though she does not have a vote in the appointment of new councilmembers, Mayor Carol Benson noted one other consideration regarding the timing for making appointments to expand the City Council: "We're going to be heavily into the budget process later in the year," Benson said. "If you have somebody that you want to select, you want to give them the longest time possible to learn the budget process." The City Council is scheduled to begin reviewing next year's city budget at its meeting on September 26.

The newest member of the council, Chris Wisnoski, who is running for re-election in November, was similarly appointed to the Council last year after Councilmember Pat Pepper was tossed from office by voters when she lost a Recall Election by the largest margin in the modern history of King County. The King County Superior Court determined Pepper and two other councilmembers had violated the state's open government laws. The two other councilmembers, Erica Morgan and Brian Weber, whose terms on the council expired at the beginning of last year chose not to run for re-election.



Issues & Impacts

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