



Community Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: City Council
From: Emily Arteche, Community Development Director
Date: February 26, 2024
Subject: Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Element Policy Review

Introduction

The Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) requires King County and cities within King County to update their comprehensive plans on or before December 31, 2024. The transportation chapter (sometimes referred to as an “element”) is a core required element of the Growth Management Act and must be balanced by growth targets¹ established in the King County Countywide Planning Policies Table DP-1. The Element also must be compliant with all the legislative changes at the State, Regional and County level since the previous Comprehensive Plan completed over 8 years.

To facilitate the review and approval of the draft Element a roundtable discussion will be held on the recommended draft goals and policies, (see Attachment 1, PC Recommendation with Public Works Council Committee Recommended Edits, dated February 6, 2024). The roundtable will be followed by a City Council motion on the Element at an upcoming Council meeting.

Background

The Transportation Element draft goals and policies were discussed at a series of meetings with the public, Planning Commission, and the Parks and Public Works Council Committee on the following dates:

- On April 6, 2023, City Staff and consultants held a Comprehensive Plan Open House and received input from the public on the Element.
- On October 2, 2023, City Staff and consultants introduced the Transportation Element, (provisions of RCW 36.70A.070(6) including overviews of: level of service, (LOS); transportation facilities and services; traffic forecasting; local system needs to meet current and future demands; a multiyear financing plan; traffic demand management strategies; and a pedestrian and bicycle facilities for review and discussion.
- On October 16, 2023, City Staff and consultants presented draft policies on land use and transportation coordination, intergovernmental transportation planning, street system, bicycle and pedestrian system for review and discussion.

¹ Resolution No. 1680, Revised 2044 Growth Target, dated February 12, 2024

- On October 18, 2023, City Staff and consultants held a Comprehensive Plan Open House and received input from the public on the Element.
- On November 6, 2023, City Staff and consultants presented draft policies on Travel Demand and Environmental Stewardship, Planning, Design and Maintenance and draft goals.
- On November 11, 2023, the Planning Commission completed work on the draft Transportation Element with recommended draft goals and policies (see Attachment 2).
- On December 5, 2023, the Parks and Public Works Council Committee reviewed the recommended Element at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- On February 6, 2024, the Parks and Public Works Council Committee reviewed the recommended Element at a regularly scheduled meeting including amendments to the draft Transportation goals and policies based on comments received from Puget Sound Regional Council, PSRC.

The draft recommended goals and policies were solicited for early review at the state and regional level for GMA and Puget Sound Regional Council, (PSRC) Vision 2050 consistency. Review comments were received from the Puget Sound Regional Council, Liz Underwood-Bultmann Principal Planner, Growth Management Planning on December 21, 2023, (see Attachment 3). Recommended additional policies shown below were approved by the Parks and Public Works Council Committee on February 6, 2024.

- For vehicular and all transportation methods, including transit, bicycles, pedestrian planning and development review, use level of service (LOS) measures to evaluate system performance and needs that reflects the community's expectations for transportation performance.
- For multimodal levels of service apply consider frequency, presence and span of services to evaluate system performance and need including deficiencies.
- Identify projects, programs or strategies that will address existing and all future transportation deficiencies including transit, bicycles and pedestrian.

Analysis

Approximately 46 bills related to the Comprehensive Plan were passed during the time span, (see Attachment 5, GMA-amendments-1995-2023). In 2023, the Legislature passed HB 1181, which identified several new expectations for transportation elements including specific levels of service standards for multimodal and nonmotorized planning, as well as impacts and costs for state facilities. A part of the agency review process the draft Transportation Element was expanded to include new multimodal LOS policies for vehicular, as well as pedestrian and bicycle modes.

The Transportation Element will be supported by the following technical documentation (see Attachment 4, 2044 Snoqualmie Comprehensive Plan Outline):

- Land use assumptions used for estimating travel demand;
- Inventory of air, water and ground transportation facilities;
- Level of Service standards for all local and state transportation facilities;
- Forecasts of traffic based on land use and growth projections;
- Requirements of bringing transportation facilities that fall below LOS based upon forecast;
- Financing analysis – 20 year and 6 year;
- Demand Management Strategies;
- Pedestrian and Bicycle component.

The Transportation Evolution Spreadsheet, (see Attachment 7) demonstrates the evolution of goals and policies, i.e., when policies were combined, moved, updated to support new requirements, modified to address public comment, eliminated to reflect current conditions and/or adapted to fit the PSRC Vision 2050. This Element is rewritten and will fit into a reorganized Plan. The updated Element is intended to improve clarity, remove duplicative language, update terminology, reflect the values of the community and meet recent changes to the Growth Management Act and other laws.

The Transportation Element recommendation was developed with information from the Tribe and reflects numerous public comments received during the planning process. Tribal coordination began in the Fall of 2022 and included early review before the completion of the legislative process. Two public open house events, with dozens of attendees were held on April 6 and October 16, 2023. A “Take the Comp Plan Update Survey” provides an active -ongoing way for the public to share thoughts on our community. Combined public outreach efforts generated 107 public comments related to this Element since the launch of the Plan update in January 2023, (see Attachment 8: Transportation Element Public Comment Table). This Element is the most commented Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Many of the comments received emphasize transit, the Snoqualmie Parkway, Railroad Avenue and bike lanes:

Transit

- “direct bus service to Issaquah and Seattle and parks and ride areas”,
- “we have no transit”,
- “needs to be more options for public transportation to and from Snoqualmie”,
- “More public transit please!!”,
- “Bring back express busses...”,
- “I wish we had a park and ride...next to I-90”,
- “Fund and expand SVT”.

Parkway

- “stop treating Snoqualmie Parkway like a highway”,
- “logging trucks at 3 AM.. and “impose weight limit!”.

Railroad Avenue

- “We need more roundabouts in the downtown core”,
- “Traffic...dangerous to turn left on Railroad Avenue”,
- “roads...more crowded... especially on Railroad Avenue”.

Bike Lanes

- “improve bike lanes throughout the valley”,
- “...our area would be well suited with a bike path system”,
- “Better bike connections”.

Next Steps

Discuss the draft Transportation Element as recommended by the Parks and Public Works Council Committee.

Attachment 1: PC Recommendation with Parks and Public Works Council Committee Recommended Edits
Attachment 2: Signed PC Recommendation
Attachment 3: PSRC Comments on Snoqualmie Draft Transportation Element
Attachment 4: 2044 Snoqualmie Comprehensive Plan Outline
Attachment 5: GMA-amendments-1995-2023
Attachment 6: Transportation Element Evolution Spreadsheet
Attachment 7: Transportation Element Public Comment Table