



Community Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: Community Development Committee
From: Jason Rogers, Senior Planner
Date: February 21, 2023
Subject: Urban Growth Area Planning and Annexation

INTRODUCTION

The Community Development Committee, as part of its 2023 Work Program, desires discussion of planning for future annexation and concepts for the so-called Urban Growth Area, e.g. the areas within the designated Urban Growth Area and part of the City's assigned Potential Annexation Area (PAA). This memo serves to provide background information and a short planning history of the City's PAAs and the UGA, as well as current efforts underway by the Administration regarding potential adjustments to the UGA.

BACKGROUND

Under the Growth Management Act (GMA) (Chapter 36.70A RCW), King County is required to designate an Urban Growth Area (UGA) "within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature" (RCW 36.70A.110(1)). To accomplish this, King County's 1994 GMA-compliant Comprehensive Plan designated a UGA for the entire county. King County and its constituent cities also adopted the King County Countywide Planning Policies (via interlocal agreement which also established the Growth Management Planning Council, GMPC) which included policies related to the designation and adjustment of the UGA and "assigned" different areas of the UGA that were not in city limits as PAAs for various cities. The UGA around Snoqualmie was further modified in 2001 and 2002 via a joint City-County planning process which, among other things, changed the UGA to include Snoqualmie Ridge II and remove areas between North Bend Way Snoqualmie Point Park (lands within the I-90 ROW and now within the Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area). The UGA around Snoqualmie and the City's assigned PAAs have remained unchanged since.

Since the 2001 adjustment to the UGA, Snoqualmie has annexed some land within its PAAs, including the City's North Wellfield, Whitaker Park, the Salish Expansion area, the Parcel K-North stormwater pond (north of SE Burke Street, at the north/west end of Douglas Ave SE), Snoqualmie Ridge II, the PSE substation site at the east end of Douglas, and the Snoqualmie Mill Site. The City's remaining unannexed PAAs include two areas north of the Snoqualmie Mill Site (one of which was included in the Snoqualmie Mill PCI Plan), an area north of the former Salish Expansion area, and the Snoqualmie Hills area.

In 2017 a private development group approached the City with a proposal to annex and develop approximately 260 acres of Snoqualmie Hills West. The proposal included 800-1,200 age-restricted (55+) residential housing

units along with a ~25 acre expansion of the Snoqualmie Ridge Business Park. After discussion, the City Council rejected the proposed annexation and project due to significant concerns about water supply, impacts to services including schools and parks, lack of affordable housing, lack of commercial development area, and traffic impacts.

Following the City Council's decision to not move forward with the 2017 annexation proposal, no serious proposals have come forth. City staff have had several informal conversations around various annexation concepts over the past 5 years, but none of these discussions have progressed to a formal feasibility stage. One reason that discussions did not advance was due to continued uncertainty around the same issues identified by the City Council for rejecting the 2017 proposal. The most serious inquiries concerned expansion of the Business Park. While the City may have sufficient water supply to accommodate a small (~50 acre) expansion of the Business Park, land assemblage issues and economic conditions have precluded further progress.

DISCUSSION

The current Comprehensive Plan designates the western portion of Snoqualmie Hills West for commercial development, likely as part of an expansion of the business park, and the eastern portion for "Innovative Mixed Use." The Comprehensive Plan identifies this as follows:

"These are developments that intend to holistically meet comprehensive plan goals such as developments that propose high-level green-building certification; show exceptional planned environmental outcomes; that provide much-needed park facilities beyond development requirements; that propose expanded educational opportunities for residents; or that propose senior, assisted living or planned retirement communities." (Comprehensive Plan, [Element 7 Land Use](#), section H.3. on page 20).

The Comprehensive Plan designations and descriptive text presently serves as the de-facto vision for Snoqualmie Hills West.

Snoqualmie Hills East largely consists of existing single family residential housing, much of which is on the valley floor in the floodplain. This area is considered to have limited development potential due to the floodplain and critical areas, and the Comprehensive Plan notes that this area is likely best suited to largely remain as this type of use in the future.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City Council could consider whether the current designations for Snoqualmie Hills West (business park expansion and Innovative Mixed Use) are appropriate considering current City Council priorities around affordable housing, growth targets, and economic development. In addition, the Administration has been working to provide updated information on what areas of the UGA may be buildable; a preliminary map is attached to this memo.

Finally, the Administration is also working on potential swaps of current unannexed UGA areas for non-UGA lands near the I-90/SR-18 interchange. The process under active discussion would allow trading of parts of the UGA that are not usable for urban uses for various reasons for areas near the interchange that would serve urban purposes. This process is currently in discussion with King County and the City's regional partners through the GMPC.

NEXT STEPS

Community Development Committee discussion of the UGA areas including potential changes to the vision for the UGA areas.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Buildable Lands Analysis of Snoqualmie Hills area

Attachment 2: 2017 Snoqualmie Hills West Annexation Site Plan