

Potential Process for Reviewing Data Center Regulations

This topic of reviewing Data Center Regulations in Snoqualmie is being brought forward following discussion and interest expressed by the Mayor and Councilmember Johnson regarding how the City may wish to approach emerging land use issues of this type. This process facilitates a review proactively before a specific proposal creates time pressure or vesting considerations. The typical approach to a land use topic is a potential phased approach the City could follow to evaluate whether existing zoning and development regulations adequately address large-scale data center uses.

Phase 1 — Initial Council Consideration

The process begins with an initial Council discussion regarding:

- current zoning and where these uses may be allowed today;
- potential land use, infrastructure, and compatibility considerations;
- and whether the Council wishes to initiate a formal review of existing regulations.

At this stage, no policy decisions would be made regarding whether data centers should or should not be allowed. Instead, the purpose would simply be to determine whether the issue warrants further review through the City's normal legislative planning process.

Initial Council Decision Point

Following initial discussion, the Council could choose to:

- **Option A — Take No Further Action**
Determine that the current regulatory framework is sufficient.
- **Option B — Initiate a Formal Review Process**
Request that Administration, the City Attorney, and the Planning Commission begin review of potential code amendments and return with recommendations for Council consideration.
- **Option C — Initiate Review and Consider an Interim Moratorium**
Request the same review process while also directing evaluation of whether an interim moratorium should be considered during the review period.

Phase 2 — Staff, Legal, and Planning Commission Review

If requested by Council, Administration, the City Attorney, and the Planning Commission would begin the City's normal legislative review process.

This phase would generally include:

- review the current comprehensive plan;
- review of the existing zoning framework;
- evaluation of peer jurisdiction approaches;
- public meetings and public comment;
- review of legal and vesting considerations;
- and development of potential amendment options.

Potential topics for review could include:

- definitions;
- zoning district applicability;
- conditional use standards;
- operational standards;
- development standards;
- and related Comprehensive Plan consistency considerations.

This phase would also include any required SEPA review.

Phase 3 — Council Review and Final Action

Following Planning Commission review, the Council would:

- receive recommendations;
- conduct any required public hearing;
- consider ordinance language;
- and determine whether to adopt, modify, or reject proposed amendments.

Potential Role of an Interim Moratorium

If the Council wished to consider one, an interim moratorium could occur between Phase 1 and Phase 2, or at any point in the process.

The purpose of a moratorium would not be to predetermine the outcome of the review process, but rather to temporarily preserve the status quo while the City evaluates whether existing regulations adequately address the use.

The primary practical effect would be to temporarily pause vesting of certain applications while policy review is underway.

Any moratorium would require separate Council action under Washington law.

Comprehensive Plan and UGA Considerations

Separate from potential code amendments within city limits, the Council could also consider whether future Comprehensive Plan or Urban Growth Area (UGA) discussions are appropriate.

Because zoning authority in the UGA generally remains with King County until annexation occurs, the City's role in those areas is more focused on:

- long-range planning;
- future land use policy;
- intergovernmental coordination;
- and participation in county review processes.

These issues may proceed on a separate timeline from any city zoning code amendments.

Summary

This process would allow the City to:

- evaluate existing regulations proactively;
- provide opportunities for public discussion and Planning Commission review;
- consider potential code amendments; and
- determine whether existing regulations continue to reflect current community goals and expectations.

The process also preserves Council flexibility regarding whether additional interim tools, including a moratorium, are necessary during review.