



City of Seattle and King County Update

April 21, 2008

Prepared by the Public Affairs Staff of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce

City of Seattle

*** Full Council Vote on SEPA Thresholds, Today, 2:00pm: ACTION NEEDED!** On April 9, Sally Clark's Planning, Land Use, and Neighborhoods Committee passed Council Bill 116090 with two major changes: 1) it eliminated the public notice requirement, an action that the Chamber requested; and 2) it narrowed the residential areas where SEPA thresholds would be raised to only within urban centers. Although the revised bill does not raise thresholds as high as we would have liked, it is likely that no changes would have been made at all without our intervention.

Today, the full Council is considering voting on the bill; however, we were just notified that Councilmembers have been inundated over the weekend with phone calls and e-mails opposing its passage and asking for "more public discussion." If the bill does not pass today, it may be shelved indefinitely—stalling an important first step toward decreasing redundant regulations and increasing housing affordability.

Action: Please contact Vitoria Lin, 206-389-7268, for talking points if you wish to testify, e-mail, or call Councilmembers before today's Full Council meeting at 2pm.

*** Discussion on Citizen's Advisory Committee on Parks Levy, Today, 2:00pm:** The full Council will also discuss forming a Citizen's Advisory Committee to advise them on whether to renew the parks levy. The current levy, which costs the median homeowner \$104 a year (based on a \$420,000 home), will expire this year. Council President Richard Conlin and Councilmember Tom Rasmussen support renewing it, but Mayor Greg Nickels—as well as Councilmember Richard McIver—oppose because the economic outlook is uncertain. Instead, Mayor Nickels has proposed a six-year, \$75 million levy to improve Pike Place Market for the November 2008 ballot. That levy would cost the median homeowner \$37 a year from 2009 to 2014. The City Council would likely support the Pike Place Market levy; hence, there may be two new levies on this year's ballot. The deadline for getting a measure on the is August 12.

*** Industrial Lands Report on Wednesday, 4/23, 9:30am:** Last year, Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck pushed through a council bill that limited commercial and office use in industrial areas—alongside a resolution that we supported to require more in-depth analysis of those lands. As a first step toward implementing the goals of that resolution, the City Department of Planning and Development (DPD) will present its work plan for a land use and jobs analysis. That analysis would examine such salient issues as the definitions of manufacturing and research and development, adaptive re-use of designated industrial lands, and zone boundaries.

King County

*** County Council's Last Public Meeting on Comprehensive Plan, 4/22:** The County Council has held four of its five public meetings to solicit feedback and recommendations on its comp plan. The plan provides a blueprint for combining development decisions with environmental protection and long-term planning for infrastructure for the county. It undergoes review once every four years. The last public meetings will be tomorrow, April 22, at the Northwood Middle School Commons, 17007 SE 184th Street, Renton. Please see http://www.kingcounty.gov/council/comprehensive_plan.aspx for information about these events as well as details on the entire process.