



Legislation Text

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Clerk 6/21/2007

A MOTION directing the King County executive to review options for the preservation of affordable housing opportunities within manufactured home park communities.

WHEREAS, the lack of affordable housing is very often a key factor in communities with persistent poverty, and

WHEREAS, manufactured home park communities are usually overlooked as the single largest source of unsubsidized affordable housing in the country and are not appreciated as a community asset until they start disappearing, and

WHEREAS, nationwide, about fifty-five thousand manufactured home park communities are home to roughly ten million residents or three million five hundred thousand families, of which seventy-five percent are considered low-income, and

WHEREAS, in many markets, homes in manufactured home park communities tend to remain affordable, compared to homes on fee-simple land, and

WHEREAS, new manufactured homes generally sell for about a quarter of the price of new single-family units, with median sales prices for new manufactured homes at fifty-one thousand dollars compared to two hundred twenty thousand dollars for new single-family units, according to the 2005 United States Census, and

WHEREAS, preserved resident-owned communities can remain accessible to low-income families as homes in these communities gain acceptance as a homeownership asset from low-income mortgage programs

like the American Downpayment Dream Initiative and the dozens of other demand-side programs, and

WHEREAS, although manufactured home park closures and resident displacement is not a new threat to their residents and families, an ever-growing number of manufactured home park communities are coming under threat of closure as cities, suburbs and outlying areas expand and the underlying property becomes increasingly valuable for development, and

WHEREAS, manufactured home park community residents are vulnerable to displacement because, although they own their homes, they do not own the land upon which their homes rest, and

WHEREAS, this expanding pace and scale of closures has sent thousands of mostly low- and moderate-income manufactured home owners scrambling to relocate, and

WHEREAS, although they are commonly referred to as "mobile" homes, this is misleading because most manufactured homes are not easily moved. In fact, most manufactured homes are not moved again once they leave the dealer's lot, due to the high expense of moving and the potential for significant structural damage during a move, especially for older manufactured homes, and

WHEREAS, even though most residents of manufactured home parks are long-term members of their local communities, when a park owner decides to sell, the residents usually find themselves faced with eviction and few alternative rental space which would allow them to maintain ties with their local communities, and

WHEREAS, several factors are driving the closures, such as landowners having the opportunity to make large profits because of rising land values and the cost of maintaining often-deteriorating infrastructure within manufactured home parks, and

WHEREAS, in light of these factors, the county must examine the urgent issue of preserving manufactured home park communities in the face of skyrocketing land values and development pressures, and

WHEREAS, King County government actively supports low income housing and has officially endorsed the Committee to End Homelessness in King County's ten-year community plan to end homelessness, entitled "A Roof Over Every Bed in King County," and

WHEREAS, the county should work with residents, land owners, local officials and often banking institutions to preserve and expand affordable housing for low income individuals and families and develop and negotiate solutions that will allow manufactured home park residents to gain the stability they and their families need, by:

1. Identifying successful examples of nonprofit practitioners around the country who are preserving and creating economically secure manufactured housing for low- and moderate-income families;

2. Reviewing the feasibility of using surplus public lands;

3. Examining the reestablishment and implementation of the Residential Mobile Home Park (RMHP) zone, which existed in prior versions of the King County Zoning Code and has been recently enacted in Snohomish county;

4. Seeking out and evaluating ideas and policies that can enhance affordable communities where manufactured-home buyers have control of the land and evaluating the need to enact state laws giving residents the opportunity to buy their communities; and

5. Expanding access to conventional mortgages and to other financial resources essential to stemming the tide of manufactured home park closures, preserving communities and building healthy neighborhoods with engaged citizen leaders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The King County executive is requested to conduct a study of options for King County government to assist manufactured home park residents faced with threats of displacement from their homes. Ten copies of the report shall be submitted to the clerk of the council, who shall distribute one copy to each councilmember, no later than September 30, 2007. The report should include, but not be limited to, the following options:

A. Reestablishing the "Residential Mobile Home Park" zone designation for existing mobile home parks and for any future mobile home park development;

B. Imposing a temporary moratorium on conversions of mobile home parks until research on outcomes

of those conversions can be completed;

C. Establishing adequate mitigation fees to be paid by land owners or developers seeking to convert a manufactured home park to another use, to be used for direct compensation to manufactured home owners, financing to develop replacement mobile home parks, or the equivalent;

D. Using surplus King County government property to build replacement mobile home parks, possibly using developer mitigation fees for this purpose;

E. Partnering with nonprofit developers, housing authorities or community land trusts to use public/private funds to purchase at-risk mobile home parks before they can be sold for redevelopment;

F. Offering incentives to mobile home park owners to encourage selling to current homeowners at fair market value of property; and

G. Enacting local or support statewide "right of first refusal" laws requiring park

owners to give residents notice before selling and the right to buy the park if they can match the terms of the proposed sale.