



Legislation Text

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Clerk 09/16/2022

A MOTION requesting the executive complete a code study related to expanded multifamily housing types in low- and medium-density urban residential zones.

WHEREAS, single-family and low-density residential zoning exist in many communities across the United States, including in urban unincorporated King County, and

WHEREAS, this zoning practice restricts not only residential density, but minimum lot sizes and setbacks, maximum height, and other bulk and dimensional standards, resulting in exclusively single-family neighborhoods, and

WHEREAS, the historic practice of zoning for exclusively single-family and low-density residential housing has excluded low-income families and community of color, and

WHEREAS, the double-digit increase in housing prices in King County year-over-year and the loss of one hundred twelve thousand units of housing affordable to those making eighty percent area median income or less since 2012 has led to increasing unaffordability and ultimately displacement of low-income families and communities of color, and

WHEREAS, the regional affordable housing task force's five-year action plan, accepted through Motion 15372, includes a goal to promote greater housing growth and diversity to achieve a variety of housing types, and

WHEREAS, moderately scaled housing types, such as those that provide two to twelve units within a building or small homes centered around shared common spaces, can fit into a low-density community's character while increasing housing supply and providing market-rate housing that is more affordable when

compared to single-family housing, and

WHEREAS, King County has classified some of these moderately scaled housing types as apartments, townhouses or cottage housing, which are permitted or conditional uses in some residential zones in unincorporated King County, and

WHEREAS, the King County council passed Motion 16142, adopting the scope of work for the 2024 update of the King County Comprehensive Plan, which included reviewing topics related to comprehensive housing policy, improving affordable housing supply and expanding housing options;

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

A. The council requests that the executive complete a code study analyzing housing types within low- and medium-density urban residential zones in support and advancement of the 2024 update of the King County Comprehensive Plan ("the 2024 update"). The code study should include the following:

1. An evaluation of Comprehensive Plan policies that affect the ability to improve housing supply and expanded housing options;
2. A review of housing typologies that are compatible in R-1 through R-12 zones, including but not limited to: duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, multiplexes, townhouses, courtyard buildings, cottage houses and live-work buildings;
3. A review of development standards that affect the location, siting, and development of housing types identified in section A.1. of this motion in R-1 through R-12 zones;
4. Identification of regulatory barriers to developing the housing types identified in section A.1. of this motion, including any substantive, procedural or cost barriers; and
5. Propose strategies or recommendations to expand housing types, including code changes, that should be incorporated into the 2024 update.

B. The executive should consult and collaborate with the councilmember offices during the development of the code study before transmittal.

C.1. The executive should issue a draft of the code study as part of the public review draft of the 2024 update no later than June 1, 2023, and provide an electronic copy to the clerk of the council, all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the local services and land use committee, or its successor.

2. The executive should electronically file the final code study as part of the executive recommended 2024 update no later than December 31, 2023, with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff and the lead staff for the local services and land use committee, or its successor.