



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

You may have read recently that our county Comprehensive Plan update was vetoed by the County Executive. Though I voted in favor at final passage, I opposed the amendments that the Executive has called out in committee and at the full Council. I'm relieved that the Council will now have a second opportunity to make a few modifications for the betterment of the plan.

The Pierce County comp plan is basically a guideline for our growing communities. It looks ahead at the next 20 years and makes recommendations that will affect how the County develops over time. The state Growth Management Act requires counties to update comp plans every 10 years. The plan is over 1,000 pages and covers virtually every aspect of County government such as land use, transportation, parks, and more. Importantly, our ability to receive grant funding requires that we have a compliant plan adopted and we are now past the deadline set in state law.

MY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PLAN

Though the plan had already been worked by our local land use advisory committees, Planning Commission and staff, as Vice Chair of the Community Development Committee I had the chance to support changes responsive to concerns and suggestions made by citizens. I also sponsored amendments on rural transit services and supporting our Transfer of Development Rights program. The latter will enable us to save thousands of acres of farmland from development.

PROBLEMATIC AMENDMENTS

However, despite these good provisions of the plan, there were a couple more amendments added at final passage to which I am adamantly opposed. These are the same two that the county executive cited when she vetoed the plan.

The first, known as the "Merriman amendment," would reclassify 5.2 acres of rural separator land to an urban designation. By common sense and the plain language of the Growth Management Act, the County's Urban Growth Boundary is already too large. Adding to it, even in a small way, only makes the problem worse. As a result, this issue has already been before the hearings board once before and lost in a precedent setting case which explicitly stated that the size of the amendment is not a justification for violating GMA. Since nothing has changed since then, forcing taxpayers to again devote financial resources to this matter makes zero sense.

The second, known as the "Frederickson amendment," would allow big box retail in Fredrickson. The resulting influx of shoppers could clog this vital freight corridor with unnecessary traffic. If the Fredrickson Industrial Area is Pierce County's heart, this corridor is its aorta... and taxpayers have already invested well over \$100 million in

infrastructure in its support.

Additionally, Frederickson is already designated as a Manufacturing and Industrial Center under the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040 plan. Changes may cause PSRC to reconsider Frederickson's MIC designation, deterring manufacturing investors and employers and potentially threatening future grants to complete the corridor.

Because this amendment was added to the final plan, I fear we've put the county's economic future at risk.

ANOTHER BITE AT THE APPLE

Thanks to the Executive's veto, the Council now has another chance to tighten up the comp plan...and hopefully common sense will win over partisan politics. While I'm frustrated by the circuitous route this issue has taken, it is the result of a great deal of community input and citizen involvement as well as hard work by many County employees from several different departments. I'm proud to be here at the end of this road, and I look forward to helping ensure the successful future of our county.

As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me directly. Your involvement in this process is what makes it great.

Sincerely,



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