

Frequently Asked Questions: General

Why is the City proposing to rezone my property?

Citywide rezones were identified as part of the Envision SeaTac 2044 Comprehensive Plan Update project by City Council in January 2024. Zoning changes are needed to implement the Envision project's updated City vision and growth strategies, which were developed with the Planning Commission and input from the community over the last year and a half. The State of Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) also requires that zoning is consistent with Comprehensive Plans.

What happens to my property if City Council adopts the proposed rezone?

City Council is anticipated to take action on the Envision SeaTac 2044 project's proposed changes to policies, development regulations, and zoning in December. If your property is rezoned, the City will not take any additional actions in regards, to your property. You will still be able to choose what to do with your property, however, it will be important to understand what the new zoning of your property allows. If you have a single-family house, please see the information below. Please contact City staff to learn more about the new zone proposed for your property.

What happens to existing single-family houses with this rezone?

The City understands the importance of continuing existing uses for single-household dwelling units (single-family houses) in the areas affected by these rezones. With updates to the SeaTac Municipal Code, occurring concurrently with the rezones, existing detached dwelling units are permitted to continue their use, and are allowed to complete repairs, and certain additions or expansions.

The future code section to allow this is SMC 15.120.070(E), and is included below for reference:

“E. Any detached dwelling unit made nonconforming due to a change in zoning classification, shall be considered legally nonconforming, and shall be permitted to continue as a nonconforming use, as follows:

- 1. Alterations and additions may be approved provided the proposed changes meet all applicable dimensional requirements, do not increase the nonconformance of any dimensional standards, and do not create an additional dwelling or accessory dwelling unit.*
- 2. A detached dwelling unit that experiences substantial destruction in excess of the allowance in SMC 15.120.080 shall have the rights to the nonconformance continued provided all the following apply:*

- a. *The loss of the structure is the result of a fire, earthquake, or other casualty not intentionally caused by the owner or tenant of the property; and*
- b. *The replacement is within the original configuration of the structure immediately prior to the substantial destruction; and*
- c. *A complete building permit application to replace or reconstruct the structure is filed with the city within three years of such fire, natural disaster, or casualty event.”*

How Will Property Values be Affected by New Growth and Development?

According to the City of Shoreline, which recently undertook a rezoning process, analysis from more than twenty (20) reputable studies found that property values in new developments near neighborhood centers and high capacity transit generally rise in value, from 0% to 32%, the closer they are to transit stations or centers. This is the case for all land use types—commercial, mixed use, employment, residential, etc.

- Positive value effects occur as a result of rezoning as well as being in proximity to high capacity transit and/or neighborhood centers.
- Negative effects on property value would not be anticipated as a result of new growth and development near transit stations and/or neighborhood centers.
- For property owners, the most typical effect is a 5% to 10% increase in value within ½ mile of the transit stations or a new neighborhood center/special district. However, exact potential increases in values are difficult to predict.
- It is important to remember that property values are affected by a wide range of factors, including other adjacent land uses, the size and condition of the property and structures, zoning, overall economic conditions, etc.
- Increased values related to development would likely be less for single family properties that would need to be aggregated with other properties to create a sufficiently-sized parcel for redevelopment compared to larger sized parcels that are more readily sized and configured for redevelopment.

How Will Increases in Property Values Affect Property Taxes?

Assessors typically revalue properties once a year in King County and a physical inspection is required at least once every six years.

Property taxes can be increased based on increased changes in property value, but in Washington State there are property tax levy limitations that restrict the amount property taxes can be increased. For example, Washington State’s constitution limits the regular (non-voted) combined property tax rate that applies to an individual’s property to one percent of market value (\$10 per \$1,000). Voter approved special levies, such as special levies for schools or parks, are in addition to this amount.

Senior citizens, veterans with 100 percent service-connected disability, and people with disabilities on limited incomes are eligible for exemption from paying some property taxes depending on their income levels. This program freezes the value of residential property as of January 1 of the initial year of application, exempts all excess levies, and may exempt a portion of regular levies thereby reducing the amount or property taxes due (as authorized by the County Assessor).

More information is available at:

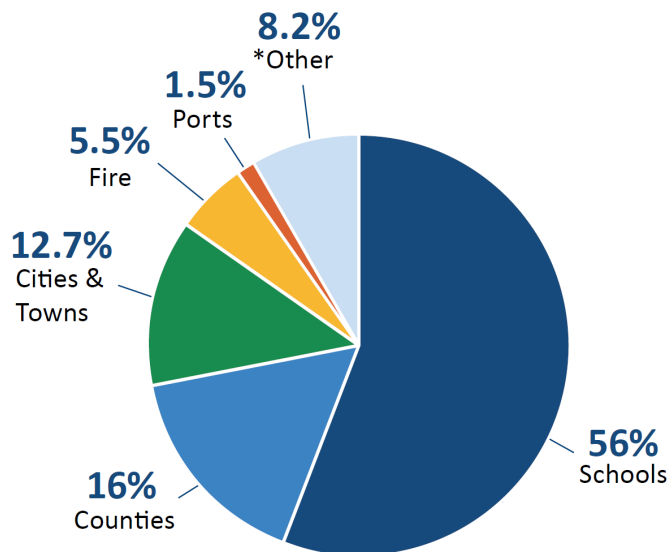
<https://dor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/HomeOwn.pdf> and

<https://dor.wa.gov/taxes-rates/property-tax/property-tax-exemptions-and-deferrals>

- Churches, government entities, and many nonprofit agencies are exempt from property tax if they use property for tax-exempt purposes, as determined by the Department of Revenue.
- Tax rate adjustments will affect annual property taxes. In a strong market, property values go up everywhere, tax rate adjustments downward can minimize the tax impact. In a flat market with little adjustment, increases in value related to proximity to high capacity transit and transit-oriented development may lead to additional property taxes.
- Exact potential increases in property taxes are difficult to predict due to legal limitations for various property owners and many other factors.

What Do Property Taxes Pay For?

How property taxes are spent varies by location, but according to State Department of Revenue data from 2015 indicates that approximately 56 percent were used to finance schools, 16 percent went to general county government and roads, 12.7 percent went to cities, city related services, and local capital improvements, 5.5 percent went to fire districts, 1.5% went to ports, and 8.2% went to other facilities and taxing districts, such as regional libraries, emergency medical, parks and recreation, etc.



** Other includes regional libraries, parks and recreation, emergency medical, and hospital districts. (Distribution of 2015 tax year)*