



Principles for Incentive Zoning

Adopted March 16, 2007

Each jurisdiction in King County should adopt the following set of Incentive Zoning principles that will be consistently and concurrently applied to all residential and mixed use upzoning/ rezoning. These principles are designed to allow for flexibility based on the significance of the zoning change and the size of the project.

1. CONSISTENT APPROACH

A standardized approach should be used within each jurisdiction, for fairness and consistency. This does not mean that every upzone will have the same requirement, but that a consistent method for determining the amount of requirement will be applied to each upzone that meets threshold.

2. MANDATORY PARTICIPATION

Developments within Incentive Zoning areas that are 10 units or larger should be required to participate. All significant developments should contribute to affordable housing within coverage areas.

3. FAIR EXCHANGE

The Incentive Zoning public benefit created by development should be reasonable and proportional to value of the private benefit (upzone/rezone).

4. HOUSING FOCUS

The Incentive Zoning public benefit should be in the form of affordable housing. Other public benefits can be paid for from other sources.

5. PERFORMANCE FOCUSED

Developers should be required to build units on site or within 500 feet. Incentive Zoning should be performance-focused to achieve the goal of keeping housing close to jobs, and bringing affordable units on line as quickly as possible. A developer may petition for greater flexibility if he/she offers greater public benefit for housing.

6. PERMANENT AFFORDABILITY

The affordability required by the Incentive Zoning program should be permanent. The public is giving a permanent benefit to the owners of upzoned property and should get a permanent benefit in return.

7. RANGE AND PROPORTION OF AFFORDABILITY

There should be a sliding scale on the number or percentage of affordable units required, depending on the level of income addressed, with fewer units required at lower end of the income scale and a greater number of affordable, below-market units at the higher end of the scale. As per state law, the affordable unit mix should proportionately reflect the sizes and number of bedrooms in the rest of the development.

8. PROGRAM REVIEW

The Incentive Zoning program should be reviewed and evaluated by the jurisdiction every 5-7 years.