

Provided by the Governmental Affairs Department on behalf of the members of
the Seattle *KingCounty* REALTORS® and Northwest Multiple Listing Service

(Period covered: January 1, 2009 – May 26, 2009)

- **City of Seattle Energy Audits:** We killed an effort to mandate *Point-of-Sale* Energy Audits for residential and small multifamily buildings, together with requiring disclosure of the audit findings as a condition for sellers to record a deed. As proposed, the Energy Audits (performed by a certified auditor) would be in addition to the buyers' property inspection. Longer term, it appeared Seattle also wanted to impose a further mandate requiring all items identified in the Energy Audit be implemented before a family would be allowed to sell their home. Instead, we obtained a voluntary program (with deep subsidies for property owners) for Energy Audits that are not tied to *Point-of-Sale*. While future mandates at all levels of government remain an imminent danger, we believe the voluntary pilot program we are developing with the city will offer a viable alternative.
- **King County Growth Targets:** Following up on our earlier success late last year to have King County incorporate the State's revised growth forecasts into comprehensive plans now rather than waiting until 2012, we've met with GMPC staff to support their implementation efforts to ensure that cities plan now for housing to accommodate future job growth rather than exporting sprawl to other counties (part of *Jobs-Housing Balance* to minimize regional congestion consistent with PSRC plans). Moving forward, we will work with GMPC staff to encourage local jurisdictions acceptance of the increased housing allocation requirements.
- **King County Flood Response:** Immediately following the January 2009 floods in Western Washington, we linked members with county emergency management and post-flood resources such as the flood damage buy-back program. Our involvement helped speed resolution of flood damage problems to members and their clients.
- **King County SEPA Ordinance:** We helped kill an attempt by the King County Executive to pass legislation amending the SEPA process to include carbon emission. Our concern was that any early action taken by King County, in advance of the completion of the Governor's Climate Action Team, would be extreme and present a host of new compliance costs and regulatory obstacles to homebuyers.
- **City of Seattle Eminent Domain Abuse:** SKCR played an important role in killing a long-lingering proposal by the City of Seattle to invoke the Community Redevelopment Act, make a declaration and blight and condemn a number of properties in Southeast Seattle, adjacent to Sound Transit station areas. Through our work with the Attorney General's Eminent Domain Task Force, we are working to close loopholes that allow public entities to abuse their power of eminent domain at the expense of local community plans and individual property owners.
- **City of Seattle Private-Sector Collaboration:** We have made new inroads in working collaboratively with real estate and land use-focused interests in the Seattle business community. Due to the complexity of issues and political composition within the City of Seattle, increasingly, our legislative success relies on execution of comprehensive strategies in partnership with like-minded organizations.

- **City of Seattle Sign Code:** We have corrected a practice of overly aggressive sign code enforcement by the City of Seattle Parks Department in which off-premise open house A-boards placed on boulevards were being confiscated.
- **Renton Extension of Plats:** Obtained modifications to the City's ordinance to extend the life of plats by two years. The applicant must affirmatively request the extension from the city, and the request must be made prior to the sunset date on the existing permit.
- **Kent Extension of Plats:** Obtained modifications to the City's ordinance to extend the life of plats by two years. It includes a limited retroactive provision as well.
- **Auburn Door Tax:** Defeated efforts to impose a new door tax in Auburn on commercial properties. It would have adversely affected both commercial property owners, and commercial tenants. This was a joint effort with the Chamber of Commerce.
- **City of Redmond Sign Code:** SKCR defeated a proposal to require a permit and fee for temporary off-premise open house signs.
- **City of Bothell Sign Code:** SKCR defeated a proposal to limit the number of temporary off-premise open house signs.
- **City of Sammamish Sign Code:** The City of Sammamish will allow off-premise temporary “yard-arm” signs for homes and properties that are not located adjacent to public roads. These signs will be allowed on both public right-of-way and private property (with permission of the property owner). If there are more than three of these signs in the same location, the signs will need to be in a frame that holds multiple signs. This new regulation will be effective until December 2010 when it comes up for reconsideration by the City Council.
- **City of Kirkland Rezone of Park Place:** We worked successfully with the City of Kirkland to rezone the Park Place mixed-use development. The redevelopment of Park Place is expected to provide significant improvements to downtown Kirkland’s overall economic vitality. Additionally, an increase in retail services and jobs for nearby residential areas will occur.
- **City of Redmond Community Development Guide:** SKCR accepted the City of Redmond’s request to help update its Community Development Guide. The Guide determines land use and zoning throughout the City; this is the first major update in three decades.
- **City of Sammamish Town Center Plan:** The town center plan will significantly increase the number of allowed housing units in the City’s newly developing core – we expect a total of approximately 2,000 new housing units.