

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

MOTION NO. 22-259

MAKING A DESIGNATION OF ULTIMATE CAPACITY FOR
ARTERIAL UNITS #204, #207/336 AND #337/420 ON 35TH AVENUE SE
FROM SR 524 TO SEATTLE HILL ROAD

WHEREAS, SCC 30.66B.110(1) provides that the county council may, by motion, following a public hearing, make a determination of ultimate capacity for any arterial unit; and

WHEREAS, SCC 30.66B.110(1)(b) SCC provides that the designation of ultimate capacity for an arterial unit by the county council will be initiated by an engineer's report and written recommendation from the director of public works evaluating whether or not a given arterial unit is a candidate for ultimate capacity based on the criteria in code and rules; and

WHEREAS, the director of public works has provided the county council with an engineer's report that summarizes the analysis by public works which finds that arterial units #204, #207/336 and #337/420 on 35th Avenue SE from SR 524 to Seattle Hill Road (hereinafter "these arterial units") do meet the criteria for ultimate capacity; and

WHEREAS, in the last 10 years through 35th Avenue SE Phase 1 and Phase 2 of construction, the county has invested nearly \$33M in state and federal grants, developer mitigation fees, and local tax dollars to widen these arterial units to three lanes and construct them to full urban standards including curbs, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes; and

WHEREAS, the 2015-2035 Transportation Element (TE) of the county's GMA comprehensive plan does not identify any further widening of these arterial units, and thus indicates that these arterial units have been already improved consistent with the county's long-range transportation plan; and

WHEREAS, to widen the road from three to five lanes to add even more capacity would mean undoing decades of work to build out the corridor, cost more than \$100 million dollars, require the demolition of dozens of homes, and encroach on several critical areas; and

WHEREAS, because it would be excessively expensive and disruptive to existing homeowners to widen the 35th Avenue SE corridor to five lanes to meet projected traffic demands, the county has identified additional system improvements in the TE that would improve mobility in the 35th Avenue SE vicinity; and

WHEREAS, the additional system improvements that would improve mobility include completion of the parallel 43rd Avenue SE corridor which is programmed for design, right of way acquisition and construction in the county's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) pending the identification of construction funding; and

WHEREAS, additional system capacity on 180th Street SE provided by the completed Phase 1 construction, the Phase 2 widening in the design phase and the 228th Street SE widening in the design phase will further improve mobility in the vicinity; and

WHEREAS, possible future projects shown in the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan Arterial Circulation Map include 51st Avenue SE, which would create another parallel corridor, and an extension of 43rd Avenue SE south of SR 524 which would both improve travel alternatives to 35th Avenue SE; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of the Phase 2 improvements on 35th Avenue SE, public works will implement signal optimization, coordination, and timing improvements to increase capacity through operational efficiency; and

WHEREAS, public works will collaborate with WSDOT and cities to identify increases in capacity through coordination of county signals with those signals owned and operated by other jurisdictions that influence traffic along the corridor; and

WHEREAS, road widening through 35th Avenue SE construction and development approvals has addressed access management according to the county's road standards by providing a continuous two-way left-turn lane along the corridor for access to and from the private and public roads; and

WHEREAS, the county will continue to implement county access standards as the remaining development occurs on land not fully developed and combine individual driveways as opportunities arise; and

WHEREAS, the county's Road Safety Plan identifies the 35th Avenue SE corridor as being on the High Injury Network (HIN) list which is a list of the 7% of corridors in urban areas that experience 57% of all serious injury or fatal collisions on the county's urban road network; and

WHEREAS, the county's Road Safety Plan was completed prior to completion of Phase 2 of the 35th Avenue SE widening project; and

WHEREAS, access management, signalization and non-motorized improvements that have been implemented with Phase 1 and Phase 2 construction will reduce the number and severity of collisions, but it will take at least three years after construction for data to reveal new trends; and

WHEREAS, public works will continue to monitor and implement countermeasures through implementation of the Road Safety Plan, in particular to reduce serious injury and fatal collisions on the corridor; and

WHEREAS, although the 35th Avenue SE corridor is not currently included in Community Transit's service area, the county is committed to collaboration with Community Transit to explore innovative non-transit options (vanpool, micro-transit, etc.) to serve the needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, the county will support Community Transit adding the 35th Avenue SE corridor into their service area so that regular and maybe even high-capacity transit service could be added; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the 35th Avenue SE corridor has been designated as a Transit Emphasis Corridor by Community Transit in their Long-Range Plan and by Snohomish County in the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the designation of ultimate capacity on 35th Avenue SE will help the county meet critical Growth Management Act (GMA) goals contained in RCW 36.70A.020; and

WHEREAS, the designation of 35th Avenue SE as being at ultimate capacity will support the county in meeting the requirements of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) contained in Vision 2050, the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) recently adopted plan for regional growth; and

WHEREAS, the RGS categorizes the area of Snohomish County adjacent to 35th Avenue SE as a High-Capacity Transit (HCT) Community and a designation of ultimate capacity on 35th Avenue SE will help the county meet the RGS goals of locating 50 percent of new growth within HCT Communities and reducing sprawl; and

WHEREAS, the arterial units on 35th Avenue SE are projected to fail the adopted level of service E standard when traffic volumes exceed pre-COVID-19 levels; and

WHEREAS, without a designation of the arterial units on 35th Avenue SE as ultimate capacity, concurrency restrictions will prevent some land development within the HCT Communities and elsewhere in the urban growth area from providing the variety of housing types and densities necessary to support high-capacity transit and non-motorized transportation; and

WHEREAS, the determination of ultimate capacity for this arterial will streamline concurrency determinations for developments adding new trips to these arterial units; and

WHEREAS, with an ultimate capacity designation all developments impacting 35th Avenue SE would still be subject to concurrency and would still be required to meet locally established service levels consistent with Goal 12 of the GMA; and

WHEREAS, the county will work with all new development that adds trips to this arterial to provide transportation demand management (TDM) measures through site design, programmatic measures, and/or TDM payments for the purpose of improving efficiency, preserving roadway capacity, providing transportation alternatives, and improving operations; and

WHEREAS, the public works director recommends that the county council make a designation of ultimate capacity for these arterial units; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing to allow testimony on whether or not the county council should make a designation of ultimate capacity for these arterial units was held on July 13, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the county council hereby determines that excessive expenditure of public funds would be required to provide additional capacity on these arterial units through any further widening and such excessive expenditure is not warranted;

NOW, THEREFORE, ON MOTION, the Snohomish County Council hereby makes a designation of ultimate capacity for arterial units #204, #207/336, and #337/420 on 35th Avenue SE from SR 524 to Seattle Hill Road.

PASSED this 13th day of July, 2022.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington



Acting Council Chair

ATTEST:



Asst. Clerk of the Council