What’s an ordinance?

A land use ordinance proposes a change in how land is used, planned or regulated. If adopted, it modifies one or more county planning documents, such as a community plan or the Community Development Code. It can result from an idea or ideas submitted by a CPO or an individual CPO member.

The County’s Land Use Ordinance Process has two stages.

The first stage is the annual development and adoption of the Long Range Planning Work Program which includes and prioritizes potential ordinances, among other tasks. The second stage is the Washington County Ordinance Season when staff prepares, publishes and submits ordinances for public review. (See diagram below.)

How does an idea become a land use regulation?

STAGE 1 = Work Program

1. Submission of Issue
   County staff or residents submit issues for consideration.

2. Draft Report
   Final draft report with compilation of public comments and staff recommendations considered by Board of Commissioners (Board).

3. Adoption of Work Program
   Board adopts Work Program, setting priorities for the year (Tier 1, Tier 2...). Tier 1 tasks are generally scheduled to be addressed in the current year.

4. Public Comments
   Long Range Planning Section compiles submissions and releases a draft Work Program Staff Report for a 30-day public review and comment period.

Some issues are addressed in an issue paper which helps inform the Board to determine if an ordinance is needed.

STAGE 2 = Ordinance Season

5. Ordinance Schedule
   Ordinance is filed and scheduled for public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board between March 1 and October 31. Public is provided documentation and notice of hearings.

6. Public Hearings
   Planning Commission and Board hold public hearings.

7. Decision
   Following public hearings, Board decides to adopt, reject or continue an ordinance. Board may elect to extend the review process. If adopted, an ordinance typically becomes effective 30 days after adoption.

Every year, new Washington County land use regulations are enacted. These regulations become laws that govern what, where, when and how land in the unincorporated areas of the county may be used and developed. This process is called the Land Use Ordinance Process.
Ordinance Season (cont.)

STAGE 1: Work Program Development

1. Community and staff members submit ordinance ideas to the County’s Department of Land Use & Transportation’s Long Range Planning Section.
2. In the fall and winter, staff reviews and researches the submissions, and then prioritizes them with other projects. This compilation becomes part of the draft Annual Work Program Staff Report.
3. During a 30-day public comment period in the spring, community members are encouraged to review and comment on the draft report and offer other potential Work Program ideas.
4. A final draft report and staff recommendations are presented to the Board of Commissioners (Board). The Board reviews, modifies and adopts the County’s Work Program setting priorities for the year.

STAGE 2: Ordinance Season

5. Unlike other counties in the state, Washington County has an official Land Use Ordinance Season which begins on March 1 and continues through October 31. During this time, documentation of each ordinance and notices of upcoming public hearings are provided to the public and CPOs. Each ordinance is put on the agenda at hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board.
6. The public is invited to provide testimony about the contents of each ordinance at the public hearings. Occasionally, contents of an ordinance are amended based upon direction from the Board. Amending the contents of an ordinance is called engrossing an ordinance. If the Board engrosses an ordinance, additional notice and public hearings will be scheduled to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the revised ordinance.
7. After reviewing public comment and testimony for each ordinance, the Board has the option to either adopt, reject or continue each ordinance. If adopted, an ordinance typically becomes effective 30 days after adoption. If an ordinance is not adopted or continued to the following Ordinance Season by October 31, it is deemed rejected.

Stay informed!

Use these references and tools to keep yourself informed about which new land use regulations are being proposed, when opportunities are available for you to participate in the process, and when decisions are being made.

Ordinances proposed this year:
http://bit.ly/1dbYHsu

Ordinances from 2000-2015:

More on the Work Program 2015-16:

If you have further questions, contact the County’s Long Range Planning Section at 503-846-3915 or email to: lutplan@co.washington.or.us

For more information, attend your CPO meetings.
During the Ordinance Season, County staff members occasionally present information about current ordinances at CPO meetings. This gives community members the opportunity to learn more about how proposed ordinances would affect their communities and engage in an open discussion about the issues.

Watch this video!

http://bit.ly/1If8zNh

What’s in an ordinance?

Go to County’s Ordinance Page:
Find the ordinance number and click on the link to the right.

Page 1-2 Public Hearing Notice
These pages list who and what land will be affected; ordinance summary; hearing time and date; staff contact; how to submit comments.

Pages 3+ Proposed Ordinance
These pages provide the legal language to adopt the proposed changes (Exhibit 1) if approved by the Board; identifies code/plan sections that would be affected.

Exhibit 1
Lists the current code/plan language with proposed changes to be considered at the hearings.

When available, you can also view the staff report that states the recommendations and supporting information.

Where do I submit…

Ideas?
Send to lutplan@co.washington.or.us, contact your CPO or attend a CCI Subcommittee meeting. (See page 2 for CCI meeting info.)

Testimony?
Submit oral or written testimony at the hearing. In advance of the hearing, mail, deliver or fax written testimony to: Washington County LUT, Long Range Planning Section, 155 N First Ave., Ste. 350, M514, Hillsboro, OR 97124-3072, fax 503-846-4412.

Questions?
Contact the staff planner listed on the ordinance notice or email lutplan@co.washington.or.us.