

Planning

in King County



What does the Plan Do?

Prompted by residents' concerns about sprawl, King County adopted its first comprehensive land use plan in 1964 and, in 1985, established an urban growth area to focus growth and investments. The 1985 plan also established policies to preserve the rural area, conserve the natural environment and designate resource lands for long-term agriculture and forest production.

Counties play multiple roles – they are a local government in unincorporated urban, rural and natural resource areas as well as a regional service provider for the entire county geography. In this context, the Comprehensive Plan guides local land use decisions such as subdivision, permitting and zoning, or land use designation. It also guides the provision of regional services such as transit, parks, solid waste and the establishment of the urban growth area boundary.

These strategies continue to guide the comprehensive plan, which now responds to requirements in the Growth Management Act (1990). The Plan has been updated multiple times since then to address issues such as climate change, social equity and public health, as well as new expectations in countywide and multicounty policies.

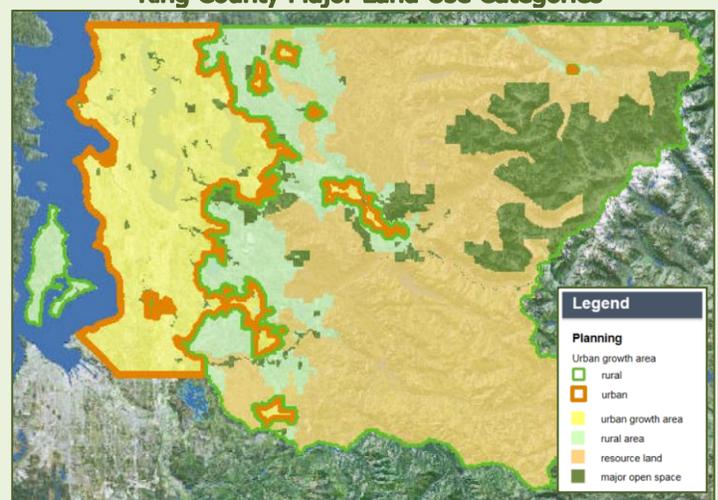
For regional services, the Plan seeks efficiencies by concentrating investments and services to support the land use vision and focus growth in and near cities where local services are located or can be made available.

Major Themes in 2012 Plan

The currently adopted Plan focuses on creating a sustainable King County, and contains text, maps and policies that are organized around the following major themes:

- Creating Sustainable Neighborhoods
- Preserving Open Space
- Directing Development Towards Existing Communities in the Urban Growth Area
- Providing a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Addressing Health Disparities
- Addressing Equity, Social and Environmental Justice
- Achieving Environmental Sustainability
- Managing Performance

King County Major Land Use Categories



These themes seek to ensure that King County will manage growth in ways that improve the quality of life and the natural environment for **future generations**. These themes align with the county's Strategic Plan, the Growth Management Act, and Countywide and Multicounty Policies.

State Requirements

for Comprehensive Plans

Washington's Growth Management Act requires most counties and cities in the state to prepare comprehensive plans to manage future growth. The Act requires each plan to include chapters on land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities and utilities that show where future population growth will occur and the types of infrastructure the city will need to provide to serve that growth.

Summary of GMA Planning Goals:

- Reducing low-density sprawling development
- Encouraging development in urban areas where facilities and services already exist or can be efficiently provided
- Maintaining transportation, housing and open space opportunities
- Protecting property rights
- Protecting the natural environment

Plans often contain optional chapters related to the environment, the economy and parks and recreation.

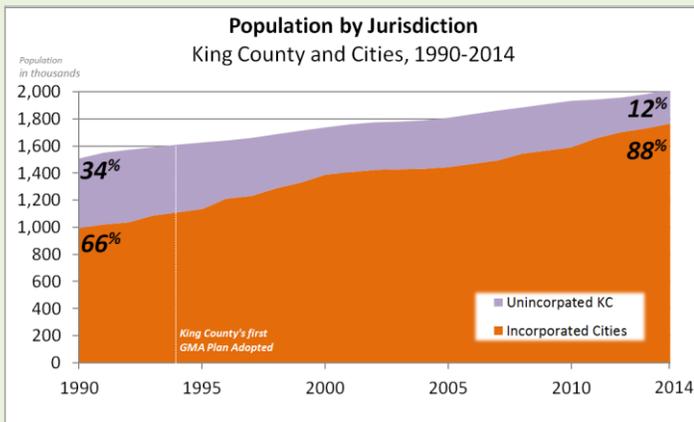
Accommodating Growth in King County

The County has seen large population increases over the past decades; this is expected to continue in the coming years.

❖ **Where We've Been** – Consistent with the Growth Management Act's directive to focus growth and transition unincorporated urban areas through annexation and incorporations, county residents now predominantly reside in cities – a significant change from the past.

❖ **Where We're Going** – Shown below are the *Adopted 2011-31 Growth Targets*, consistent with the countywide- and multicounty-planning policies. These targets are the land use assumption that guide each chapter in the comprehensive plan.

Looking forward, the cities will continue to play an even larger role as they are targeted to accommodate 95% of new housing and 98% of new jobs.



Location	New Housing	New Jobs
12 Cities with Urban Centers	181,635	368,690
20 Other Cities in UGA	31,887	45,873
7 Rural Cities	7,085	5,095
Unincorporated UGA	12,470	8,410
KC Total	233,077	428,068

2016 Plan Update



Comprehensive plans are long-range land use and service delivery guides; however, they work best when periodically revisited and updated to address new challenges and changing circumstances. Under state law, major periodic updates are required every 8 years; King County met this requirement with the adoption of the 2012 plan.

To keep the plan more current and relevant, the King County code requires a review every four years and this process is currently underway. The diagram below provides an overview of the update timeline.



During this process, public comment will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Visit the King County Comprehensive Plan webpage for a more detailed calendar.

Get Involved. Visit <http://www.kingcounty.gov> and search on "Comprehensive Plan."