The King County Strategic Plan

Working Together for One King County

Justice & Safety

Goal: Support safe communities and accessible justice systems for all

Objective 1. Keep people safe in their homes and communities

Strategies:

a. Maintain a proactive law enforcement presence in unincorporated communities and cities with whom we contract
b. Maintain safe and secure county-owned infrastructure, including roads, bridges, buses, transit facilities, parks and buildings such as courts
c. Provide programs and support for individuals exposed to violence
d. Provide rapid emergency response
e. Collaborate with local jurisdictions to define and provide regional law, safety and justice services
f. Enforce building and land-use codes in unincorporated areas

Objective 2. Ensure fair and accessible justice systems

Strategies:

a. Eliminate barriers to court access
b. Prosecute accused individuals fairly and efficiently
c. Manage and resolve court cases in a timely manner
d. Ensure the availability of public defenders to those who need them
e. Provide therapeutic courts, such as mental health and drug courts

Objective 3. Ensure offending individuals are appropriately detained or sanctioned

Strategies:

a. Maintain adequate levels of secure detention for violent and repeat offenders
b. Operate secure and humane detention facilities that comply with legal and regulatory requirements
c. Provide a continuum of jail diversion programs, such as education and treatment
d. Provide alternatives to secure detention to appropriate offenders

Objective 4. Decrease damage or harm in the event of a regional crisis

Strategies:

a. Undertake regional emergency planning and preparedness activities, including education and coordination
b. Coordinate and provide direct response to crises such as communicable disease outbreaks, floods, earthquakes, severe weather events, and homeland security threats

Health & Human Potential

Goal: Promote opportunities for all communities and individuals to realize their full potential

Objective 1. Increase the number of healthy years that residents live

Strategies:

a. Initiate, implement and coordinate programs that prevent the leading causes of poor health and premature death, including injuries and violence
b. Ensure access to affordable, appropriate and quality physical and behavioral health services
c. Provide education that promotes individual health
d. Implement policies and interventions to reduce health disparities

Objective 2. Protect the health of communities

Strategies:

a. Ensure the safety of food, air and water
b. Make healthy choices easy choices through policy, system and environment changes
c. Monitor and improve environmental quality and reduce exposure to hazardous materials

Objective 3. Support the optimal growth and development of children and youth

Strategies:

a. Support prevention and early intervention programs for children and youth most at-risk
b. Build partnerships with local and regional education systems to enhance their programs
c. Provide or contract for behavioral health and human services designed to meet the unique developmental needs of children and youth

Objective 4. Ensure a network of integrated and effective health and human services is available to people in need

Strategies:

a. Facilitate access to programs that reduce or prevent involvement in the criminal justice, crisis mental health and emergency medical systems, and promote stability for individuals currently involved in those systems
b. Support partnerships to deliver integrated and effective services to people in need
c. Join with local and regional partners to prevent and reduce homelessness for families and individuals
d. Join with local and regional partners to help stabilize and improve people's lives by assisting all residents of King County, including unincorporated area residents

Economic Growth and Built Environment

Goal: Encourage a growing and diverse King County economy and vibrant, thriving and sustainable communities

Objective 1. Support a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy

Strategies:

a. Promote regional economic development through partnerships with regional organizations, other jurisdictions, and the private sector
b. Support workforce development programs for adults and youth
c. Create contracting opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses
d. Maintain infrastructure that facilitates the efficient movement of freight and goods to promote trade across the region
e. Promote a quality of life that attracts a talented workforce and businesses to the region

Objective 2. Meet the growing need for transportation services and facilities throughout the county

Strategies:

a. Focus transportation resources to support density and growth
b. Coordinate and develop services for an integrated and seamless regional transportation system
c. Meet the transportation needs of low-income and other under-served populations
d. Enhance bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as alternative transportation options

Objective 3. Shape a built environment that allows communities to flourish

Strategies:

a. Partner within the public and private sectors to ensure the availability of a wide range of affordable housing and supportive services
b. Acquire and maintain regional parks, trails, and open space
c. Support community infrastructure and collaborative land-use planning that is responsive to the needs of residents,businesses, services, schools and cities with potential annexation areas

Objective 4. Preserve the unique character of our rural communities in collaboration with rural residents

Strategies:

a. Manage growth to limit urban sprawl
b. Encourage stewardship of rural landscapes including agricultural and forest land
c. Promote policies and programs that sustain rural lifestyles
d. Support rural economic development that maintains the character of the rural area

Environmental Sustainability

Goal: Safeguard and enhance King County's natural resources and environment

Objective 1. Protect and restore water quality, biodiversity, open space, and ecosystems

Strategies:

a. Focus development within the Urban Growth Area
b. Use a combination of incentives, technical assistance and use regulations to promote desirable environmental practices by individuals and businesses
c. Support acquisition and stewardship of open space and natural areas
d. Protect water quality through reducing pollution at its source, wastewater treatment, low impact development practices, and stormwater management
e. Collaborate to restore Puget Sound and protect vulnerable, threatened, and endangered species
f. Use water quality and quantity monitoring data to inform and prioritize investments in clean ups and stormwater retrofits
g. Consider multiple benefits when developing flood hazard reduction, open space, recreation, and habitat projects

Objective 2. Encourage sustainable agricultural and forestry

Strategies:

a. Utilize landowner incentives to keep land in agricultural and forestry use
b. Provide incentives, technical assistance, and streamlined permitting to support sustainable farm and forestry practices

Objective 3. Reduce climate pollution and prepare for the effects of climate change on the environment, human health and the economy

Strategies:

a. Promote collaborative efforts among local and regional governments to assess and reduce community green house gas emissions
b. Monitor county greenhouse gas emissions and use the information to guide future actions and investments to advance progress against emission reduction goals
c. Advocate for and participate in the development of federal, state, and regional climate response strategies and resources that advance emission reduction goals
d. Identify and adapt to the impacts of climate change on natural systems, human health, public safety, county operations, infrastructure, and the economy
e. Advance policies and programs that simultaneously reduce climate pollution and improve human health

Objective 4. Minimize King County's operational environmental footprint

Strategies:

a. Incorporate sustainable development practices into the design, construction and operation of county facilities and county funded projects
b. Measure energy usage in county facilities and use this information to guide conservation investments.
c. Invest in alternative fuel transit and fleet vehicles to reduce emissions, fuel use, and fuel costs
d. Create resources from wastewater and solid waste disposal
e. Encourage King County employees to reduce their environmental impact

Service Excellence

Goal: Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs

Objective 1. Improve our customers' satisfaction with King County

Strategies:

a. Make customer service a primary focus for all county employees
b. Gather customer feedback regarding service delivery and report results as part of the county's performance management system
c. Improve local service delivery

Objective 2. Build a culture of performance and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of county programs,services, and systems

Strategies:

a. Implement a unified management system for county operations including budgeting, performance management, service delivery, and strategic planning
b. Adopt new technologies and processes that allow county agencies to work more effectively and efficiently
c. Establish accountability at every level of service delivery
d. Provide cost-effective, accountable, and responsive internal services

Objective 3. Foster an ethic of working together for One King County

Strategies:

a. Engage in partnerships to solve problems, expand services, and inform decision-making
b. Define King County's role in regional issues as a leader, equal partner, participant, or facilitator
c. Actively participate in and strengthen regional organizations and policy bodies
d. Strengthen King County's collaborative role with cities and communities
e. Improve collaboration internally, including among the county's elected leadership, across departments, and with employees

Objective 4. Increase access to King County services, personnel, and information

Strategies:

a. Provide information and services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate
b. Create single points-of-contact for residents, clients, and other partners
c. Create a Web site that is easy to navigate and provides needed services
d. Consider fairness and opportunity for all in policy, budget and service decisions

Financial Stewardship

Goal: Exercise sound financial management and build King County's long-term fiscal strength

Objective 1. Keep the county's cost of doing business down, including keeping growth in costs below the rate of inflation

Strategies:

a. Partner with the county's workforce to improve productivity and identify ways to contain the growth of future costs
b. Work with cities to identify opportunities to provide services more efficiently, such as contracting
c. Transition the governance and fiscal responsibility for local services in urban unincorporated areas to cities
d. Pursue technologies that improve service while reducing the cost of delivery

Objective 2. Plan for the long-term sustainability of county services

Strategies:

a. Manage the county's assets and capital investments in a way that maximizes their productivity and value
b. Develop and implement a long-term financial plan that reflects service levels desired by the public
c. Establish policies regarding the use and long-term health of financial reserves, including the county's rainy day fund
d. Advocate for a more diversified revenue base and implement financial policies that address variability in revenue growth
e. Partner with cities to leverage state and federal resources
f. Assess county taxes through fair and equitable application of tax law
g. Encourage entrepreneurship, grant-seeking, and leveraging private sector talent and resources

Objective 3. Provide the public with choices about which services King County delivers within existing resources and for which services they would like to provide additional funding

Strategies:

a. Clearly define the services King County will provide, to whom, and at what level, focusing on quality, timeliness, and cost
b. Use public input, including voter approved levies when appropriate, to make decisions about which products, services, and projects are provided

Public Engagement

Goal: Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities

Objective 1. Expand opportunities to seek input, listen, and respond to residents

Strategies:

a. Develop communication channels that will allow all residents ongoing opportunities to be heard and receive a timely and appropriate response
b. Increase and improve the use of new technology and social media tools for citizen involvement
c. Ensure that communication, outreach and engagement efforts reach all residents, particularly communities that have been historically under-represented

Objective 2. Empower people to play an active role in shaping their future

Strategies:

a. Provide accurate, secure and accessible elections
b. Promote meaningful community participation in decisions that affect their community

Objective 3. Improve public awareness of what King County does

Strategies:

a. Develop guidelines and standards for public engagement and education for use by all county agencies
b. Create a countywide plan to coordinate communication across different lines of business
c. Use public outreach to better communicate who we are and what we do

Quality Workforce

Goal: Develop and empower King County government's most valuable asset, our employees

Objective 1. Attract and recruit a talented county workforce

Strategies:

a. Promote King County as an employer of choice
b. Promote the value of customer service excellence in hiring and recruiting activities
c. Promote equity, social justice and transparency in hiring and recruiting activities
d. Reduce the time to fill positions

Objective 2. Develop and retain quality employees

Strategies:

a. Provide for career growth opportunities
b. Promote the development of employees to ensure continuity of government services
c. Build leadership and professional skills within our workforce
d. Promote wellness and work/life balance initiatives, policies, and programs that contribute to an increase in healthy hours worked
e. Implement training and development programs to help achieve county goals

Objective 3. Utilize employees in an efficient, effective, and productive manner

Strategies:

a. Seek employee collaboration on cost reduction, service improvement, and problem solving
b. Enable employee health and safety
c. Recognize employees for high-performance, good customer service, innovation, and strategic thinking
d. Promote the use of technology to maximize productivity and efficiency
e. Communicate decisions, important issues, goals, and expectations
f. Ensure effective partnerships with our workforce, including timely resolution of bargaining and related issues
g. Develop ongoing communication channels to solicit employee input and participation