ECONOMY

Overarching Goal: People throughout King County have opportunities to prosper and enjoy a high quality of life through economic growth and job creation.

The Countywide Planning Policies in the Economy Chapter support the economic growth and sustainability of King County’s economy. A strong and healthy economy results in business development, job creation, and investment in our communities. The Economy Chapter reflects and supports the Regional Economic Strategy and VISION 2040’s economic policies, which emphasize the economic value of business, people, and place.

The Regional Economic Strategy is the region’s comprehensive economic development strategy and serves as the VISION 2040 economic functional plan. VISION 2040 integrates the Regional Economic Strategy with growth management, transportation, and environmental objectives to:

- support critical economic foundations, such as education, infrastructure, technology, and quality of life; and
- promote the region’s specific industry clusters: aerospace, clean technology, information technology, life sciences, logistics and international trade, military, and tourism.

Each local community will have an individual focus on economic development, while the region’s prosperity will benefit from coordination between local plans and the regional vision that take into account the county’s and the region’s overall plan for growth.

EC-1 Coordinate local and countywide economic policies and strategies with VISION 2040 and the Regional Economic Strategy.

EC-2 Support economic growth that accommodates employment growth targets (see table DP-1) through local land use plans, infrastructure development, and implementation of economic development strategies.

EC-3 Identify and support industry clusters and subclusters within King County that are components of the Regional Economic Strategy or that may otherwise emerge as having significance to King County’s economy.

EC-4 Evaluate the performance of economic development policies and strategies in business development and job creation. Identify and track key economic metrics to help jurisdictions and the county as a whole evaluate the effectiveness of local and regional economic strategies.

Business Development
Business creation, retention, expansion, and recruitment are the foundations of a strong economy. The success of the economy in the county depends on opportunities for business growth. Our communities play a significant role through local government actions, such as by making regulations more predictable, by engaging in public-private partnerships, and by nurturing a business-supportive culture.

These policies also seek to integrate the concept of healthy communities as part of the county’s economic objectives, by calling for support of the regional food economy, including production, processing, wholesaling and distribution of the region’s agricultural food and food products.

**EC-5** Help businesses thrive through:
- Transparency, efficiency, and predictability of local regulations and policies;
- Communication and partnerships between businesses, government, schools, and research institutions; and
- Government contracts with local businesses.

**EC-6** Foster the retention and development of those businesses and industries that export their goods and services outside the region.

**EC-7** Promote an economic climate that is supportive of business formation, expansion, and retention and emphasizes the importance of small businesses in creating jobs.

**EC-8** Foster a broad range of public-private partnerships to implement economic development policies, programs and projects.

**EC-9** Identify and support the retention of key regional and local assets to the economy, such as major educational facilities, research institutions, health care facilities, manufacturing facilities, and port facilities.

**EC-10** Support the regional food economy including the production, processing, wholesaling, and distribution of the region’s agricultural food and food products to all King County communities. Emphasize increasing access to those communities with limited presence of healthy food options.

**People**

People, through their training, knowledge, skills, and cultural background, add value to the region’s economy. Additionally, creating an economy that provides opportunities for all helps alleviate problems of poverty and income disparity.

**EC-11** Work with schools and other institutions to increase graduation rates and sustain a highly-educated and skilled local workforce. This includes aligning job training and education
offerings that are consistent with the skill needs of the region’s industry clusters. Identify partnership and funding opportunities where appropriate.

**EC-12** Celebrate the cultural diversity of local communities as a means to enhance the county’s global relationships.

**EC-13** Address the historic disparity in income and employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged populations, including minorities and women, by committing resources to human services; community development; housing; economic development; and public infrastructure.

**Places**

Economic activity in the county predominantly occurs within the Urban Growth Area, including Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers. Continuing to guide local investments to these centers will help provide the support needed to sustain the economy and provide greater predictability to businesses about where capital improvements will be located. In addition to making productive use of urban land, economic activity adds to the culture and vitality of our local communities. Businesses create active, attractive places to live and visit, and make significant contributions to the arts. The Rural Area and Resource Lands are important for their contribution to the regional food network, mining, timber and craft industries, while Rural Cities are important for providing services to and being the economic centers for the surrounding Rural Area.

**EC-14** Foster economic and employment growth in designated Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers through local investments, planning, and financial policies.

**EC-15** Make local investments to maintain and expand infrastructure and services that support local and regional economic development strategies. Focus investment where it encourages growth in designated centers and helps achieve employment targets.

**EC-16** Add to the vibrancy and sustainability of our communities and the health and well-being of all people through safe and convenient access to local services, neighborhood-oriented retail, purveyors of healthy food (e.g. grocery stores and farmers markets), and transportation choices.

**EC-17** Promote the natural environment as a key economic asset. Work cooperatively with local businesses to protect and restore the natural environment in a manner that is efficient and predictable and minimizes impacts on businesses.

**EC-18** Maintain an adequate supply of land within the Urban Growth Area to support economic development. Inventory, plan for, and monitor the land supply and development capacity for,
manufacturing/industrial, commercial and other employment uses that can accommodate the amount and types of economic activity anticipated during the planning period.

**EC-19** Support Manufacturing/Industrial Centers by adopting industrial siting policies that limit the loss of industrial lands, maintain the region’s economic diversity, and support family-wage jobs. Prohibit or strictly limit non-supporting or incompatible activities that can interfere with the retention or operation of industrial businesses, especially in Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.

**EC-20** Facilitate redevelopment of contaminated sites through local, county and state financing and other strategies that assist with funding environmental remediation.

**EC-21** Encourage economic activity within Rural Cities that does not create adverse impacts to the surrounding Rural Area and Resource Lands and will not create the need to provide urban services and facilities to those areas.