



## Rural Growth

### Objective:

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

### Strategy:

Manage growth to limit urban sprawl

### Why is this strategy important?

King County's Comprehensive Plan seeks to preserve the integrity of the Rural Area through appropriate maintenance of the Urban Growth Area (UGA), which is consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) and the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). By encouraging growth in a compact, centers-focused pattern that uses land and infrastructure efficiently, the Rural Area can continue to provide a viable and sustainable option for those seeking a lifestyle contrast to the Urban Growth Area. Further, by focusing development in the UGA, public facilities and services can be provided more cost-effectively than if needed to reach far-flung development in the Rural Area.

### How is our performance?

**Housing development:** Despite covering just one quarter of the land area of the county, the UGA has absorbed roughly 94 percent of the county's population growth since the year 2000. More specifically, from 2006 -- 2009, 23 percent of all new housing permitted in King County occurred within the urban centers.

**Urban Growth Area boundary:** From 2001 -- 2010, the Rural Area lost more than 1,300 net acres through changes to the UGA boundary. However, King County makes re-designation decisions in accordance with GMA and the CPPs and strives to provide community benefits including new open space designation that protect rural areas from development. For example, the Snoqualmie Preservation Initiative--which accounts for over 40 percent of the acres transferred between the Rural Area and the UGA between 2001 and 2010--preserved 9,000 acres from development. Similarly, a four-to-one exchange in the Issaquah Highlands moved 35 rural acres to the UGA in exchange for a dedication to King County of 144 acres on permanent open space.

### Moving forward

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides a legal framework for managing growth and making decisions about land use in unincorporated King County. Adoption of the 2012 King County Countywide Planning Policies and the 2012 King County Comprehensive Plan ensure achievement of the regional growth strategy by balancing economic growth and environmental sustainability, protecting rural areas and supporting public health in all communities

## Related Links

[Washington State Growth Management Act](#)

[Vision 2040 Plan for Puget Sound](#)

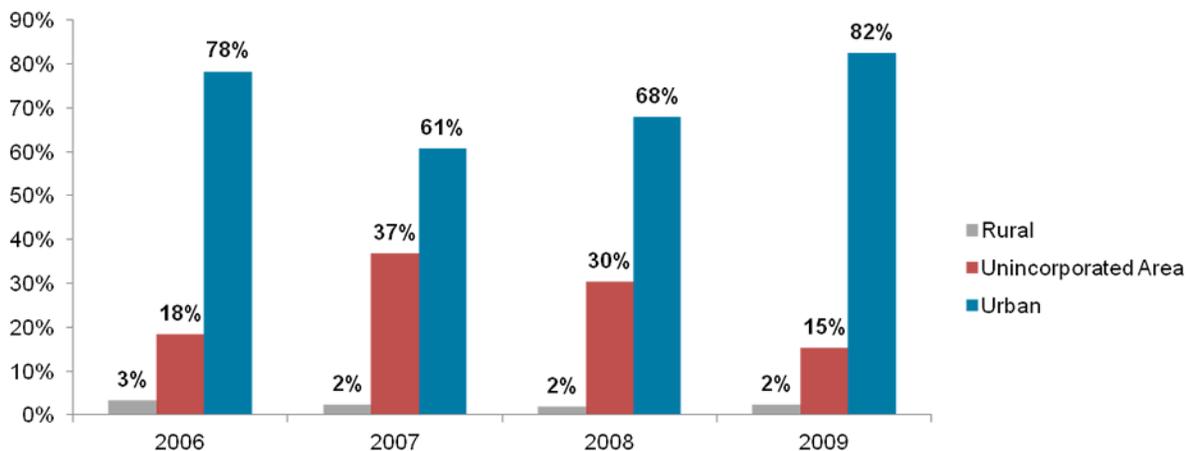
[King County Countywide Planning Policies and Plan](#)

## Moving forward

- Percent of annual countywide housing development located in the Rural Area: as reported in the King County Benchmark Program, [http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/PSB/BenchmarkProgram/LandUse/LU30\\_HousingDistribution.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/PSB/BenchmarkProgram/LandUse/LU30_HousingDistribution.aspx). Data provided by the Puget Sound Regional Council.
- Annual change to the Urban Growth Area boundary: taken from the King County Comprehensive Plan Performance Measurement Report, March 1, 2011
- Urban Centers are areas located incities which are meant to accommodate concentrations of housing and employment over the next 20 years. See King County Growth Report definitions for more information about King County growth terminology.,

## Charts and Maps

**Proportion of Annual Housing Development in King County by Geographic Area**



Data provided by Puget Sound Regional Council, as reported in the King County Benchmark Program.

