

2016 Update
Public Review Draft

King County Comprehensive Plan



King County

**Office of Performance
Strategy and Budget**

~~2012 (2013 Update)~~

~~Adopted December 3, 2012, Update adopted November 4, 2013
King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review
35030 SE Douglas St., Suite 210
Snoqualmie, WA 98065-9266~~

Legend for Revision Marks

XYZ	Text or policy unchanged
XYZ	Text or policy deleted
<u>XYZ</u>	Text or policy added
<u>XY</u> or XY	Text or policy moved (underlined in new location, strikethrough in old location)

Note: Policies that are moved *between* chapters are underlined. Policies moved *within* a chapter (such as in Chapters 1 and 4) are not underlined, but additions and deletions are shown with revision marks, as is the original policy number.



King County

Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

November 6, 2016

Dear King County Residents,

I am pleased to present the *Public Review Draft* of the *2016 King County Comprehensive Plan*. The 2016 update is a major (every four years) review of the Comprehensive Plan and the *Public Review Draft* represents an important step in the update process.

The draft amendments represent the culmination of a six-month long process that began with the adoption of Council Motion 14351, which established the scope of work. Now, the process includes outreach and dialogue with stakeholders. Please help us by reading the *2016 Public Review Draft* and sharing your thoughts.

The Plan can be accessed at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/compplan/>

If you wish to comment, note that the extended public comment period will run for two months, from **November 6, 2015 to January 6, 2016**. After that, my office will carefully consider the input received, make refinements, and then transmit the *Executive Recommended 2016 Plan* to the County Council on March 1, 2016.

The year 2016 marks the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Growth Management Act. This landmark legislation created a new planning approach in Washington State that sought to address the harmful impacts of uncoordinated and unplanned growth. The Growth Management Act requires jurisdictions to designate an urban growth area within which growth would be encouraged and outside of which growth could occur only if it was not urban in nature. It also requires the adoption of regulations to assure the conservation of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands of long-term significance as well as regulations to protect environmentally critical areas including wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, fish and wildlife habitat corridors, frequently flooded areas and geologically hazardous areas.

By almost any measure, King County has been successful in realizing each of these broad goals of the Growth Management Act. Since adoption of the first comprehensive plan in 1994, the vast majority of housing growth countywide – 96 percent – has occurred in urban areas. And, through incorporations and annexations, more than 60 percent of the unincorporated urban area that existed in 1994 is now within cities; this continues to fulfill the goal of transitioning counties to serve as providers of rural and regional services. In rural areas, the County has preserved working farms and forests through a balanced strategy that includes regulations,

incentives, and technical assistance, and this has led to a sustainable rate of development. However, continued success requires ongoing vigilance and attention to changing circumstances.

While the *2016 Public Review Draft* continues to respond to the broad goals of the Growth Management Act, it also responds to critical new challenges such as providing equitable access to opportunity, reducing carbon pollution and positioning the County to respond to a changing climate, addressing housing affordability, and strengthening mobility options.

If you have any questions about the proposed amendments in the Comprehensive Plan, please contact Ivan Miller, Comprehensive Plan Manager at (206) 263-8297 or ivan.miller@kingcounty.gov.

I urge your careful consideration of the draft plan. It is my intention that these changes will help ensure that our region continues to manage growth effectively while protecting thriving rural areas and resource lands, and remaining in compliance with the Growth Management Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dow Constantine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dow" being more prominent and the last name "Constantine" following in a similar style.

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

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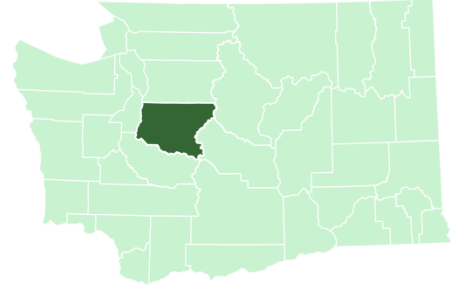
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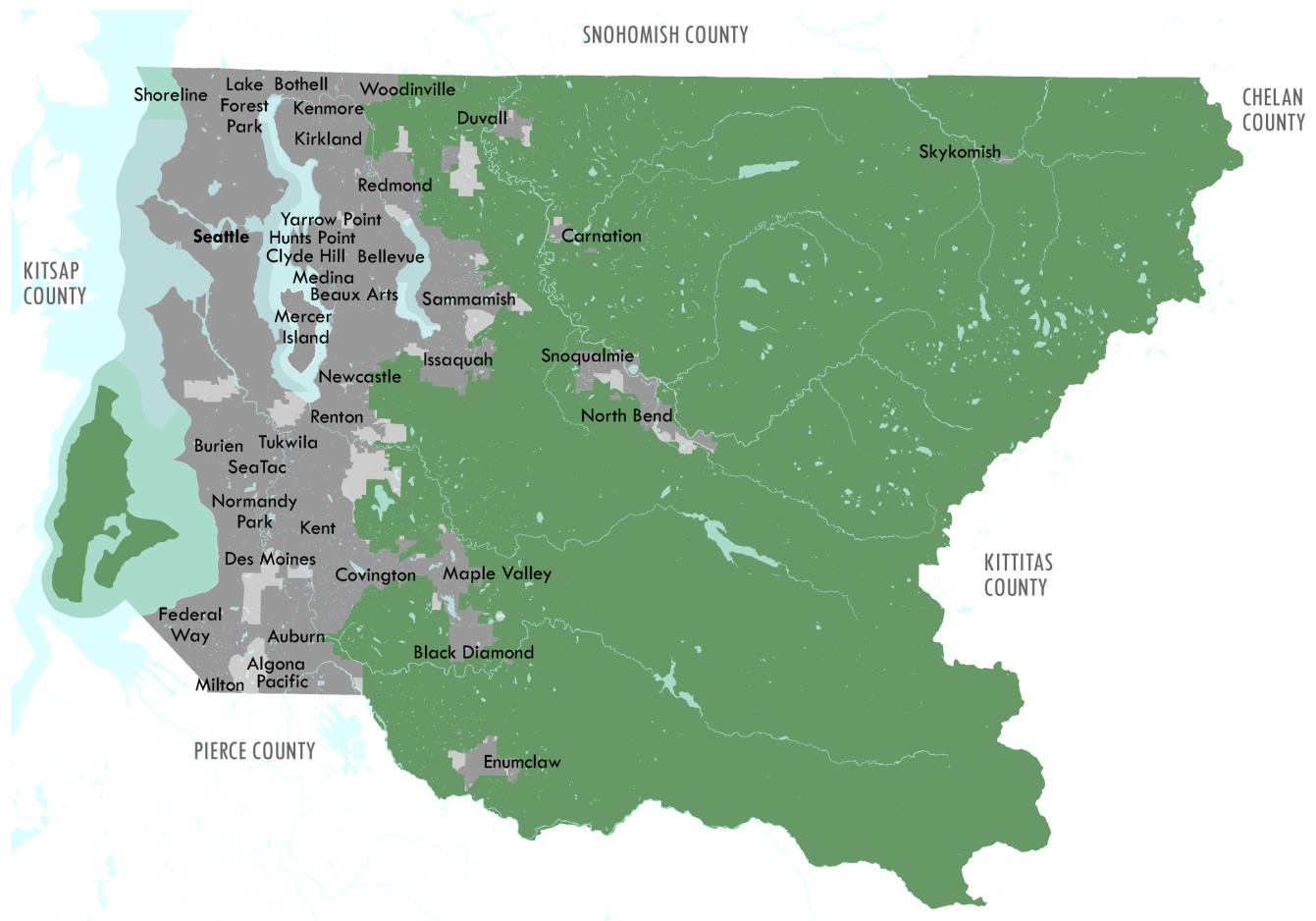


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, King County was the **most populous county in Washington State** and the **13th most populous county in the nation**. Between 2014 and 2031, King County is targeted to **grow by 286,500 residents and 396,000 jobs**.



The King County Comprehensive Plan is fundamental for directing and managing this anticipated growth. It contains policies guiding development and land use in unincorporated areas of the County, as well as service provision throughout the County and the region. Since the 1994 update, the Comprehensive Plan has worked in accordance with the Washington State Growth Management Act to protect resources and enhance quality of life. The Plan does this by emphasizing the protection of critical areas and natural resource lands, protecting rural lands and character, and designating an urban growth area where density and services should be concentrated. In addition, the Plan guides the County's work with its Cities through the countywide and multicounty planning policies in central Puget Sound.

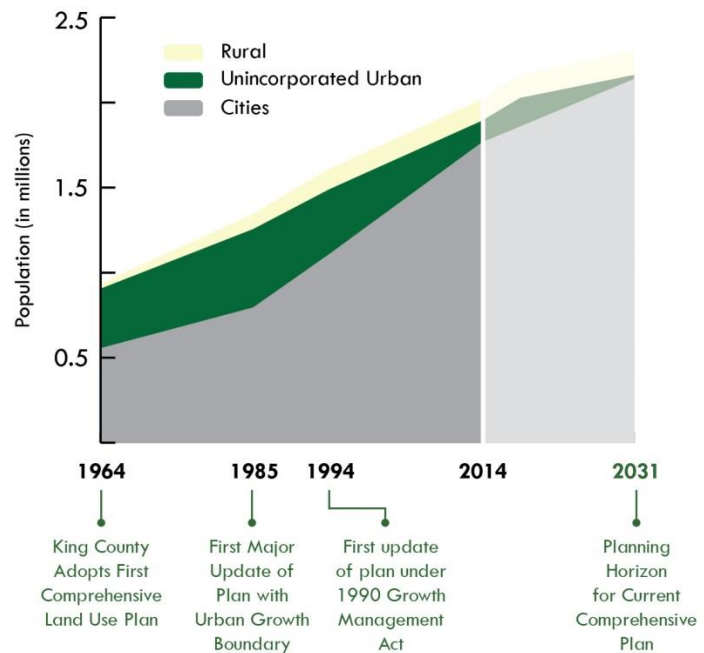


About King County

Demographics

According to most recent available data (2014), King County has an estimated population of **2.02 million people**. Approximately **94%** of King County's residents live in urban areas and **6%** in unincorporated rural areas and resource lands.

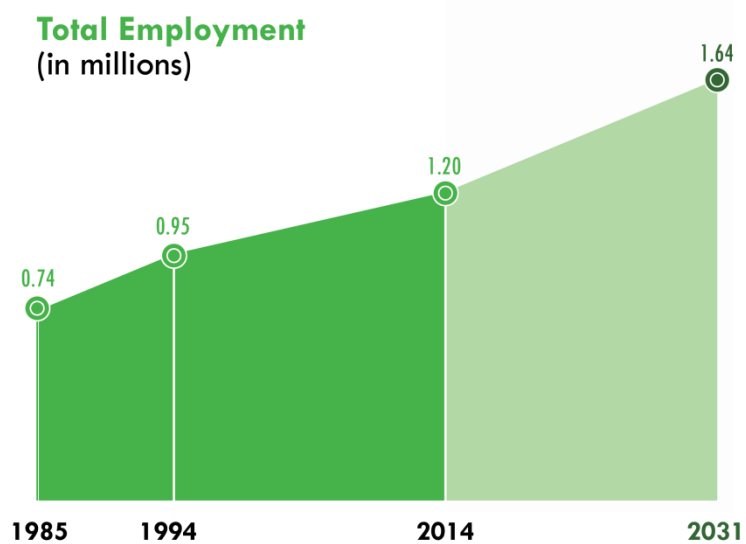
Over the past 20 years, King County has experienced a substantial 25% growth in its population. By 2031, King County is **expected to grow to a population of 2.3 million, adding just under 300,000 residents** to its overall population. Based on the guiding principles of the comprehensive plan, **95% of this growth is targeted to be absorbed by cities and 5% in unincorporated King County**.



Economy

The substantial population growth that King County has experienced in recent years can largely be attributed to the area's thriving economy, which has fostered a massive influx of individuals adding to the County's overall workforce. King County comprises the majority of the Seattle-Bellevue-Tacoma metropolitan statistical area and consists of **approximately 70,000 businesses providing nearly 1.2 million jobs**.

The vast majority of King County's workforce is employed in the service sector, such as in the trade-transportation-utilities, professional-businesses services, and education-health services industries. Overall, King County **accounts for 50.3% of Washington's total payroll**.

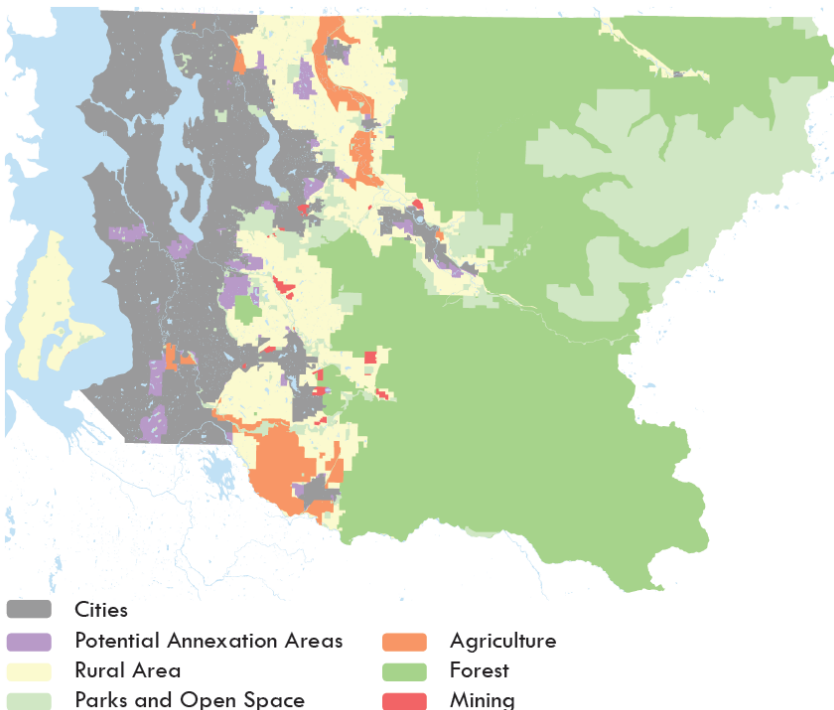


Geography



King County is characterized by beautiful scenery and geographic diversity, stretching from the Puget Sound in the west to the Cascade Crest in the east. There are 39 cities in the county, ranging in size from the 205-person city of Skykomish to the bustling metropolis of Seattle, with a population greater than 660,000. In addition, King County has a variety of working farm- and forestlands, as well as a vast open space network. Numerous water bodies, including rivers, lakes, and streams, provide a key resources and create valuable land assets and unique ecosystems along coastlines and river corridors.

Land Use



King County's total land area is 2,130 square miles, accounting for 3% of all land in Washington State. Through careful zoning and development regulations, King County manages its land use in a manner that ensures a high quality of life for its residents. Growth management in King County is largely implemented by directing development toward the urban growth area, while protecting existing rural areas, open spaces, and natural resource land assets. The map offers a general snapshot of land use across the county, and shows urban land uses located towards the western Puget Sound area and more rural and resource lands located in the central and eastern parts of the county.

Guiding Principles & Objectives

Moving Towards a Sustainable King County

King County's Comprehensive Plan has long been based on a vision of the county as a livable area with healthy, thriving, and dense urban communities; ample open space and farmlands preserved for long-term use; a vibrant economy inclusive of numerous sectors; and a multimodal transportation system providing a variety of options. In addition, the Plan reflects the 14 goals of the Growth Management Act and the goals of the King County Strategic Plan. In 2015, King County adopted an update to its Strategic Plan, which aims to promote: **justice and safety, health and human potential, economic growth and the built environment, environmental sustainability, service excellence, financial stewardship, public engagement, and a quality workforce.** The following principles, first adopted in the 2012 Plan, reflect these long-term goals and priorities.

1. Create Sustainable Neighborhoods



Ensure neighborhoods are developed in ways that supports and provides a high quality of life for present and future residents.

5. Achieve Environmental Sustainability



Collaborate with other local governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change impacts.

2. Preserve & Maintain Open Space



Conserve open space, working farms and forests, and healthy ecosystems with natural functions and human activities in mind.

6. Address Health Disparities



Create opportunities for healthy living for all residents, by promoting healthy food access, physical activity, and other health services.

3. Direct Development Towards Existing Communities



Reduce sprawl and concentrate growth in cities and centers where infrastructure and services exist or are planned to exist.

7. Address Equity, Social, and Environmental Justice



Ensure that negative impacts and positive benefits of development are shared equitably among all segments of the population.

4. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices



Increase multimodal accessibility and mobility for all residents, while reducing reliance on harmful single-occupant vehicles.

8. Manage Performance



Use metrics that are aligned with strategic and statutory goals to assess, report on, and improve the county's performance.

New in the 2016 Plan

Major Four-Year Update

The 2016 update is a major four-year review of the Comprehensive Plan and, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Growth Management Act. This landmark legislation requires jurisdictions to designate an urban growth area within which growth would be encouraged, and adopt regulations to conserve resource land and environmentally sensitive areas. By almost any measure, King County has been successful in realizing the broad goals of the Growth Management Act. However, success has not been easy and, looking forward, the Comprehensive Plan needs to respond to new challenges such as equitable access to opportunity, reducing carbon pollution and responding to climate impacts, addressing housing affordability and strengthening mobility. To address these, **the following changes are proposed.**

Land Use Policy Amendments

- **Annexation policies revised to be more city-focused.** Creates incentives for annexation by promoting joint planning, using city regulations or negotiating on transferable development rights in Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) where there is an Interlocal Agreement, and revisiting PAA map with cities. Amendments in *Chapter 2*.
- **Rural Area policies strengthened to avoid incompatible uses.** Avoiding placement of urban serving facilities in the rural area (similar to intent of School Siting), and removal of the mining site conversion demonstration program. Amendments in *Chapters 2, 9 and 12*.
- **Transfer of Development Rights policies enhanced for PAAs.** TDRs can be negotiated in PAAs with annexing cities, and directing amenity funding into PAAs receiving significant TDRs.

Equity and Health Policy Amendments

- **Establishes a new chapter on Housing and Human Services.** The new *Chapter 4* consolidates and updates existing policies, and reflects new initiatives. It calls for new community development tools such as food districts and residential local improvement districts, and commits to explore increasing housing density and affordable housing near businesses and transit.
- **Increases emphasis on Equity and Social Justice.** This includes maps, illustrations, and more emphasis in policies *throughout the plan*.
- **Reflects current Public Health-related programs** – topics include tobacco-free parks, smoke-free housing, healthy food retail, urban agriculture, the **Local Food Initiative** and farm-supportive programs. Amendments in *Chapters 2 and 3*.

Environmental Policy Amendments

- **Increased focus on Climate Change** in *multiple chapters*. Integration of relevant policies from the Strategic Climate Action Plan and the County-Cities Climate Collaboration.
- **Stormwater Management Program and Permit policies updated.** Reflects the new stormwater permit, low impact development, collaboration, sub-basin planning, infrastructure maintenance and retrofits, infrastructure mapping, integration of the Green Building Code, and evaluating stormwater credit trading. Amendments in *Chapters 5 and 9*.
- **Various environmental topics updated** – topics include noxious weeds, beaver exclusion and removal, enhanced landslide hazard identification and mapping, and supporting a market-based price on carbon pollution. Amendments in *Chapters 5, 7 and 9*.

Subarea Planning Program

- **Initiation of a new Community Service Area Subarea Planning Program.** Starting in 2016, this process will use the Community Service Areas as the planning geography. Amendments in *Chapter 11*.
- **Starts process to adopt the Skyway–West Hill Action Plan.** This is an addendum to existing 1994 community plan, and is a "pilot" for the new CSA Subarea Planning.

General Amendments

- Changes to make the plan more **user-friendly** such as this Executive Summary, a more navigable Table of Contents, and a new Workplan section in *Chapter 12* that identifies major work items that start after adoption in 2016.
- Other updates *throughout the plan* including revised data, refined definitions in the Glossary, minor formatting enhancements, and updated references to County partnerships and functional plans.

These amendments, along with others included in the following chapters, are intended to help the Comprehensive Plan remain responsive to the County's growth management challenges of today... and tomorrow.

Plan Elements

Chapters of the Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 1

Regional Growth Management Planning

King County's growth management policies and regulations are consistent and work in coordination with the Growth Management Act, multicounty and countywide Planning Policies, and other technical plans.

Chapter 2

Urban Communities

With the majority of King County residents living and working in the urban area, this chapter includes policies that guide urban development with the goal of creating healthy, sustainable communities.

Chapter 3

Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands

King County's rural area and natural resource lands are crucial for sustaining life into the future. This chapter's focus on protecting these assets from development and promoting sustainable economic development.

Chapter 4

Housing and Human Services

The availability of adequate and affordable housing has become one of the most pressing issues facing King County today. This chapter contains policies regarding the provision of housing and services for all residents.

Chapter 5

Environment

King County's natural environment comprises various unique and valuable assets. This chapter contains King County's approach to environmental protection, conservation and restoration, as well as, sustainability.

Chapter 6

Shorelines

Shorelines require particular focus and management given both their immense value and fragility. This chapter contains King County's Shoreline Master Program, which aims to protect and conserve this unique natural resource.

Chapter 7

Parks, Open Space & Cultural Resources

This chapter addresses King County's approach to conserving and maintaining its expansive open space system, which includes numerous local and regional parks, and trails, and its cultural resources and historic properties.

Chapter 8

Transportation

Recognizing that availability of safe, accessible, and efficient transportation options has significant implications for the quality of life of all county residents, This chapter addresses how King County will distribute investments equitably.

Chapter 9

Services, Facilities & Utilities

The provision of services, facilities and utilities should be concentrated in areas of density and at levels that can support existing and future demand. This chapter addresses how such crucial infrastructure should be developed.

Chapter 10

Economic Development

In its commitment to foster a prosperous, diverse and sustainable economy, the County recognizes that it must support actions and programs promote the success of both businesses and the workforce.

Chapter 11

Community Service Area Planning

This chapter includes policies that recognize the unique characteristics of particular communities and provides significant historical context.

Chapter 12

Implementation & Amendments

This chapter describes how the policies should be implemented and monitored, the procedure for amending the plan, and the role of zoning in the planning process.

Appendices

Integral to the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan are the detailed inventories, forecasts, financial plans, and urban growth area analysis required by the Growth Management Act. A set of technical appendices are adopted as part of the plan to meet Growth Management Act requirements.

Regulations

The King County Comprehensive Plan is implemented through adopted regulations, including the King County zoning Code and other code titles. All development must meet the requirements of the code.