

CHAPTER 9

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. Overview

The foundation for a vibrant and sustainable economy consists of several elements. These include, but are not limited to a favorable business climate with consistent/predictable regulations, an educated and trained workforce, adequate public infrastructure, land supply, research and advancing technology, affordable housing, available capital, recreational and cultural opportunities, and a healthy natural environment.

The policies in this chapter are designed to continue King County's long-term commitment to a prosperous, diverse, and sustainable economy. They do so by promoting public programs and actions that support a successful economy, one in which the private, nonprofit, and public sectors can thrive and create jobs, is compatible with the environment, and contributes to a strong and stable tax base and a high quality of life for all residents.

The policies also recognize businesses and the workforce as customers of an economic development system; and they support actions and programs that promote the strength and health of both groups.

A. Consistency with Plans

This chapter is consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), passed in 1990 and 1991, which establishes the framework and direction for the development of comprehensive plans, including the economic development element as set forth in RCW 36.70A.070(7).

VISION 2040, adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council in April of 2008 states that “a robust economy is integral to our region’s environmental, social, and financial well-being. A sustainable economy is marked by a high quality of life for all people in the region, as well as vibrant communities.” The Vision 2040 plan was also reviewed and incorporated into the development of the policies in this chapter.

The King County Strategic Plan (KCSP), adopted in 2010, is the guiding document for decision-making by the county and reinforces the county’s commitment to economic development through the Economic Growth and Built Environment Goal (EGBE): “Encourage a growing and diverse King County economy

and vibrant, thriving and sustainable communities.” Both existing and new policies contained within this Plan support the objectives and strategies of that goal.

- The policies in *Section II, Business Development* support EGBE Objective 1: “Support a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy”.
- The *General Economic* policies in Section I (particularly ED-107, 108 and 109) support EGBE Objective 1, Strategy a., which calls for promoting economic development through partnerships.
- The policies in *Section III, Workforce Development* support EGBE Objective 1, Strategies b. and c. call for workforce development programs for adults and youth and contracting opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses, respectively.
- The policies in *Section IV, Infrastructure Development* support EGBE Objective 1, Strategy d, to maintain infrastructure to help facilitate the movement of freight and goods to promote trade.
- The policies in *Section V, The Rural Economy* support EGBE Objective 4 and its strategies to preserve and support economic development that maintains the character of rural communities.

Additionally, as environmental protection, safeguarding and enhancing natural resources, including sustaining agricultural and forestry uses, and ensuring a high quality of life for residents are part of the county’s economic development efforts, objectives and strategies within the KCSP Environmental Sustainability Goal are also implemented through the policies and discussed within this chapter.

The Regional Food Policy Council was established in September of 2010 and has adopted a vision, mission and goal statements to guide its work. Their economic development, agriculture, and policy goals are all forwarded within the policies of this chapter as the county explores opportunities for regionally-scaled natural resource infrastructure, attempts to maximize opportunities and reduce barriers to farming and development of value added products, and promotes efforts to strengthen local and regional food systems and access networks.

B. The State of the Economy

King County’s economy is the largest, most diverse, and most significant economy in Washington State. In 2010, King County’s economic base included:

- 1,134,000 nonagricultural jobs. This represents 65.7% of the Central Puget Sound Region’s (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties) 1,727,000 nonagricultural jobs and 40.7% of the state’s 2,784,000 nonagricultural jobs;
- A \$67.8 billion payroll. This represents 72% of the region’s \$94 billion payroll and 49.8% of the state’s \$136.3 billion payroll;

- 74,700 business firms, excluding sole proprietorships. This represents 63% of the region's 118,000 firms and 35.8% of the state's 208,400 firms; and
- A 2010 Census population of 1,931,200. This represents 52.3% of the region's 3,691,000 population and 28.7% of the state's 6,724,500 population.

The last decade has been characterized by two major recessions and two periods of recovery and growth. Nonagricultural employment peaked in 2000 at 1,187,000 jobs, but as the dot-com recession took hold, declined 7% to 1,109,000 jobs in 2003. Employment began to rise again in 2004, and by the job peak in 2008, employment had exceeded 2000 levels, growing to a total of 1,216,000 jobs. During the Great Recession, employment decreased by 7% again to 1,134,000 jobs in 2010, 4% *below* levels of a decade before. From recessions to recoveries, nonagricultural employment has shifted among industry sectors, from Goods-Producing to Service-Providing. Both manufacturing and construction, the primary Goods-Producing sectors, were hit hard by the Recession. The proportion of employment in the Goods-Producing sectors steadily dropped from 2000, falling from 17.2% to 13% of total employment, with a corresponding increase in the Service-Providing sector. At 985,000 jobs in 2010, the Services sectors have essentially the same total employment numbers as in 2000, although individual sectors have shifted.

King County employment in 2010 was comprised of the following sectors:

- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities was the largest sector, with 207,000 employees or 18.3% of total employment. This sector includes Retail Trade (106,300), Wholesale Trade (58,700), Transportation (40,100), and Utilities (2,300).
- Professional and Business Services (legal services, architecture, computer designing) was the second largest sector, with 178,000 employees (15.7% of total employment), followed by Government (federal, state, and local), with 167,000 (14.7%).
- Three sectors had employment in the 100,000 range: Educational and Health Services (mostly in health) had 139,000 (12.2%), Manufacturing had 98,100 (8.6%), and Leisure and Hospitality had 108,400 (9.6%). At less than 100,000, manufacturing was the lowest in decades, but prospects are favorable for aerospace and other manufacturing.
- Three other sectors had employment in the 50-70,000 range: Financial Activities had 65,600 (5.8%), Information (Software Publishing and Telecommunication) had 79,300 (7%), and Construction had decreased to 50,300 (4.4%).
- Other Services (repair and maintenance, personal services and religious, professional and civic organizations) was the smallest sector at 41,200 employees, 3.6% of the total.

The rural portion of the county's economic base plays a significant role in helping the county maintain a diversity of economic sectors, thus contributing to the county's overall economic health. Evaluation and

discussion of the rural economy includes the Rural Area, Resource Lands, and the Rural Cities of Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall, Enumclaw, North Bend, Snoqualmie, and Skykomish.

Information on the rural economy is as follows:

- In 2010, about 8.5% (163,500) of the county's total population of 1,931,200 lived in the Rural Area, Resource Lands, and Rural Cities.
- However, only 3% (34,400) of the total 1.1 million jobs in the county are located within the Rural Area, Resource Lands, and Rural Cities (2008 data).
- About two-thirds of the rural jobs (62%) are located in the rural unincorporated area, with the remaining one-third (38%) located in the Rural Cities.
- The Service Sector, which caters to both rural households and businesses, comprises 34% of rural employment.
- The more traditional Construction and Resources sector, including agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining, accounts for 20% of rural jobs.
- Farming in King County is changing in response to increased demand by urban residents to purchase locally grown foods. Farms are becoming smaller with increased crop diversity. In 2007 there were 1,790 farms in the county, with an average farm size of 28 acres. Farm acreage increased 18% from less than 42,000 acres in 2002 to 49,000 acres in 2007. Farm product sales totaled over \$127 million in 2007.
- Sales at county farmers' markets in 2006 generated over \$25 million in direct sales to Washington farmers.
- The timber industry is also experiencing profound changes as larger companies have left the county and, in many cases, sold off timber lands for large acreage residential development. Between 2000 and 2002, the county saw a 35% decline in timber harvest to 91,000 board feet processed.
- The equestrian industry plays a role in the rural economy. In 2005, there were about 3,200 persons directly employed in the equestrian industry and 945 persons employed in jobs related to the industry countywide. Additionally, equestrian industry sales totaled \$227 million based on 2005 numbers, which included direct, indirect, and induced sales.

C. General Economic Development Policies

King County partners with businesses, economic development organizations, and other jurisdictions in efforts to grow our economy to ensure the elements for a prosperous and successful economy are provided. The county also provides infrastructure, business, and workforce development products and services as part of its regional responsibilities; and it makes many other contributions to sustain the quality of life that makes the region a desirable place to live and work.

General King County economic development policies include:

- ED-101** **King County has a long-term commitment to sustainable economic development throughout the county.**

- ED-102** **The focus for significant economic growth will remain within the Urban Growth Area, while within the Rural Area, the focus will be on sustaining and enhancing prosperous and successful rural businesses as well as encouraging new businesses that support and are compatible with the rural economic clusters.**

- ED-103** **King County policies, programs, and strategies shall recognize the importance of, and place special emphasis on, retaining and expanding homegrown firms in basic industries that bring income into the county and increase the standard of living of our residents.**

- ED-104** **King County policies, programs, and strategies shall recognize the importance of a diversified economic base to provide a continuum of job opportunities to meet the skill levels of all workers.**

- ED-105** **King County recognizes the environment as a key economic value that must be protected.**

- ED-106** **King County shall protect cultural resources and promote expanded cultural opportunities for its residents and visitors in order to enhance the region's quality of life and economic vitality.**

King County's role in economic development is implemented at several levels. At all levels, King County seeks to coordinate, partner, and engage with private and public organizations to pursue mutually beneficial outcomes.

- ED-107** At the multicounty level, King County should partner with other counties, regional entities and the state, as appropriate, to devise and implement economic development policies, programs and strategies to provide for sustainable and equitable growth throughout the Puget Sound region.
- ED-108** At the countywide level, King County should partner with other jurisdictions, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, the Port of Seattle, and others, as appropriate, to develop and implement policies, programs, and strategies that set the general framework for economic development within the county.
- ED-109** Within the unincorporated areas, King County should partner and engage with local businesses, the Agriculture and Rural Forest Commissions, community service areas, adjacent cities, other organizations and residents, as appropriate, to develop and implement policies, programs, and strategies that promote compatible local economic development.

II. Business Development

King County has long supported a growing and diversified economy, one that provides business development opportunities throughout the county. Since 2004, King County has participated in developing and implementing “A Regional Economic Strategy for the Central Puget Sound Region,” which is discussed in more detail below. The County is also working with several other regional business development efforts and partners to create opportunities for new business development, help retain and expand existing companies, and recruit new firms into the county.

Homegrown businesses are those that started in the region. Local and national research over the last 25 years has concluded that homegrown, small to medium-size businesses create the majority of new jobs in a local economy. King County's policies, plans, and programs should support a positive and healthy business climate that enables all local firms to stay globally competitive, quality-oriented, technologically advanced, and able to pay good wages.

Industries and firms that export their products and services outside King County bring income into the county and are considered basic, in economic terms. Jobs in basic industry generally pay better than non-basic jobs and support the non-basic or secondary part of the county's economy.

About 37% of the jobs in King County are basic and support the 63% non-basic jobs, such as retail and personal services. Roughly one of every four jobs in the Puget Sound region is dependent on international trade.

The county's leading export sectors are:

- Information Services, with 16.4% of all export jobs. Software Publishing is the principal factor in this sector, accounting for over 50% of the sector's basic jobs and 9.3% of total basic employment.
- Manufacturing, with 14% of all basic employment, led by aerospace, with 9% of total basic jobs.

Business Services, such as banking, insurance, accounting, legal, architectural, engineering, research and development, and computer services, with 13.8% of export jobs

On September 27, 2005, the Central Puget Sound Economic Development District (serving King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties) adopted a “Regional Economic Strategy for the Central Puget Sound Region”. The Regional Economic Strategy was developed by the Prosperity Partnership—a coalition of over 200 government, business, labor, nonprofit and community leaders from the four counties—to ensure long-term regional prosperity.

The Regional Economic Strategy identifies five industrial clusters that, based on regional economic analysis, offer the best opportunities for business growth and job creation in the Central Puget Sound region for the next several years. Clusters are geographically concentrated groups of competing and complementary firms that sell to similar domestic and international markets. Clusters drive regional economies because they export goods and services outside the region, which results in greater income, wealth, and prosperity than would otherwise occur. An industry cluster differs from the classic definition of an industry sector because it represents the entire horizontal and vertical value-added linkages from suppliers to end producers, including support services, specialized infrastructure, regional universities' research and development, and other resources. Clusters are supported by the foundation elements listed in Section 1. The clusters are Aerospace, Clean Technology, Information Technology, Life Sciences, Logistics and International Trade, Military, and Tourism. The Regional Economic Strategy identifies specific strategies and actions to help support the growth of each cluster.

ED-201 **King County shall partner with federal, state, and local governments, economic development organizations, and the private sector to foster an innovative and entrepreneurial environment and support programs and strategies that promote sustainable business development and job creation. Programs that provide technical and financial assistance to businesses include, but are not limited to:**

- a. Financial, marketing, expansion, and general operations assistance for small businesses to help them become competitive in the private sector;**
- b. Technological, efficiency, and managerial assessments to help manufacturers reduce costs and use smaller footprints for existing or expanded production; and**
- c. Assessment and/or remediation of contaminated property (Brownfields) in order to continue or expand operations to help individual small businesses or jurisdictions impacted by Brownfields.**

ED-202 **King County shall emphasize continued support for the aerospace and information technology industrial clusters as well as industrial clusters offering the best opportunities for business development, job creation, and economic growth including those identified in the Prosperity Partnership's Regional Economic Strategy for urban areas and the King County Rural Economic Strategies for rural areas (including resource lands).**

ED-203 **King County shall support and participate in programs and strategies that help create, retain, expand, and attract businesses that export their products and**

services. Exports bring income into the county that increases the standard of living of residents.

- ED-204** King County shall encourage redevelopment of and reinvestment in industrial and manufacturing properties by collaborating with other jurisdictions and the private sector to remove, revise, or streamline regulatory or other redevelopment barriers without compromising environmental standards or quality. This includes assessment and/or remediation of contaminated properties.
- ED-205** King County shall support programs and strategies to promote and market Foreign Direct Investment opportunities in the county.
- ED-206** King County shall promote and help position small and mid-size businesses to gain greater participation in the supply chains of large companies and the military located in the region.
- ED-207** King County shall provide opportunities for small businesses to compete for and obtain contracts on county-funded construction, consulting, and goods and services projects. King County shall also collaborate with other jurisdictions to promote public-contracting opportunities for small businesses and to develop and maintain common standards, a common application, and a common directory for small contractors and suppliers seeking contracts on publicly-funded projects.
- ED-208** King County shall assist businesses, property owners, and other jurisdictions in preserving and enhancing historic properties, including historic business districts, through incentives and economic development measures. County programs and incentives for land and resource preservation and economic development shall support and be coordinated with preservation of historic properties.
- ED-209** King County shall foster the development and use of public/private partnerships to implement economic development projects and programs. At a minimum, these projects must demonstrate that they:
- a. Cannot be accomplished solely by either sector;
 - b. Have an experienced and proven private partner(s);
 - c. Do not unduly enrich the private partner(s);

- d. Provide tangible and measurable public benefits in terms of tax and other revenue, construction and permanent jobs, livable((-)wages with benefits and a wage-progression strategy, and public amenities; and
- e. Will use the King County Jobs Initiative, or other entities with similar programs, as their first source of referral for training and employing low-income, low-skill residents in entry-level and semi-skilled jobs.

ED-210 King County should support programs and strategies to expand international trade, including those that:

- a. Promote, market, and position the county for increased export, import, and foreign investment opportunities; and
- b. Provide technical assistance, training, and opportunities for local firms wishing to export.

ED-211 King County should support programs and strategies to preserve and plan for an adequate supply of industrial and commercial land, including but not limited to:

- a. Complying with the State of Washington Buildable Lands Program – RCW 36.70A.215 – and, in cooperation with the cities, inventory and monitor the use of industrial, commercial, and residential lands every five years;
- b. Partnering with other jurisdictions and the private sector, to advocate for development and maintenance of a regional Geographic Information System to track the supply of land;
- c. Actively applying for federal, state, and other resources to help defray the costs of assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of private and/or public Brownfields;
- d. Selling county-owned surplus industrial and commercial lands for development by the private sector;
- e. Promoting the redevelopment and infill of industrial and commercial areas and explore the feasibility of using incentives to achieve this goal; and
- f. Preventing the encroachment of non-industrial uses on industrially-zoned land and the rezoning of industrial land to other uses.

III. Workforce Development

King County provides programs and participates in partnerships to address the ongoing workforce challenges of the Puget Sound region and within the county. The current economic climate has created an even greater need to ensure access by all residents to information about local workforce development programs, to work with employers in skills training and worker retention, and to recognize the importance of worker training and retraining to provide the skilled workers needed by industry today. While traditionally, many low-income people have difficulties gaining access to quality education, training, and support services needed to prepare them for the world of work, many displaced workers also need access to retraining opportunities to obtain employment. Meeting these challenges successfully will require the county to continue and strengthen strategies and working relationships between business, government, labor, advocacy organizations, education and training institutions, and human service providers.

Jobs that pay wages sufficient to support families are vital to the quality of life. However, training, education, skill levels, and abilities vary from person to person. As such, it is important for King County to support job opportunities for all residents with entry-level jobs being essential to helping low-income, low-skilled individuals enter the workforce, reduce their dependence on public resources, and move out of poverty.

A family wage, or sometimes referred to as livable wage, is a wage that allows a family to meet its basic needs without resorting to public assistance and provides it some ability to deal with emergencies and plan ahead. This definition is taken from the “2010 Northwest Job Gap Study” produced by the Alliance for a Just Society (formerly Northwest Federation of Community Organizations). According to this study, the 2010 family (livable) wage for a single adult with two children in King County was \$32.01 per hour or \$66,589 per year. For each job opening at this level, there are at least seventeen job-seekers.

For context, the 2010 King County average annual wage, excluding software workers, was \$56,326 or \$27.08 per hour. Adding the average annual wage for software workers – \$121,000 – increases the 2010 King County average annual wage to \$60,750 or \$29.21 per hour.

As defined for this comprehensive plan, an acceptable entry-level wage pays a minimum of \$9.00 per hour (to be reviewed annually and adjusted as appropriate), provides benefits, and offers workers wage progression opportunities. Although an entry-level wage is a wage that provides workers greater economic incentive than does being on welfare, it is not a family wage. Depending upon household size and income, persons making entry-level wages in King County most likely require public subsidies in the

form of childcare, housing, food stamps, and/or Medicaid. As skill levels and wages increase, workers become less dependent upon public subsidies as they approach a family wage level defined above.

- ED-301** **King County should support workforce development programs that are integrated with the county’s overall economic strategies, including but not limited to:**
- a. Apprenticeship opportunities on county public works projects to ensure a continual pipeline of skilled, local construction trades workers and to encourage family-wage job opportunities.**
 - b. Development and growth of clean technology “green” jobs linked to the preservation and sustainability of the natural environment, including jobs in pollution prevention, Brownfields cleanup, energy efficiency, renewable energy industries, and other technologies that address climate change.**
 - c. Training in skills (job clusters) that apply to and are in demand across multiple industry clusters.**
- ED-302** **King County supports the King County Workforce Development Council, established by the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, composed of high-level representatives from business, local government, labor, education and training institutions, advocacy organizations, and human service providers. The purpose of the council is to coordinate and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs to meet the needs of workers and employers.**
- ED-303** **King County policies programs, strategies, and partnerships shall recognize the importance of worker training and retraining, especially for low-income and low-skilled residents, to provide the skilled workers needed by industry. King County shall support and partner with other jurisdictions, educational institutions and industry to promote programs such as:**
- a. Programs that retrain dislocated workers for jobs in growing industries;**
 - b. Training for jobs in growing industries that require post-technical or post-secondary training and credentials and provide a career pathway to self-sufficiency;**
 - c. Programs that facilitate employer involvement in hiring workers with limited experience and skills and provide successful strategies for skills training, job placement, and worker retention;**

- d. Programs that reduce recidivism by helping residents exiting the criminal justice system gain access to training and employment services;**
- e. School-to-work programs and effective alternatives for out-of-school youth to provide a clear pathway to self-sufficiency through career options and applied learning opportunities;**
- f. Summer youth employment programs for at-risk youth;**
- g. Access to alternative modes of transportation by providing transportation information, financial assistance, and services to jobseekers and workers; and**
- h. Access to childcare by increasing the availability and affordability of quality childcare for low-income families.**

IV. Infrastructure Development

Adequate and well-maintained public infrastructure is the lifeblood of a strong economy. Basic public services that maintain a high quality of life in an area support employment growth, increased productivity, and influence business location decisions.

- ED-401** **King County recognizes that adequate infrastructure is essential to support existing economic activity and to attract new industry and development. The county therefore supports and partners on programs and strategies to maintain existing infrastructure and construct new facilities (transportation, utilities, schools, information, communications, including an adequate supply of housing) necessary to accommodate current and future economic demand.**
- ED-402** **King County will support programs and partnerships to facilitate the efficient movement of freight to promote global competitiveness for business and industry.**
- ED-403** **King County shall partner, where feasible, with jurisdictions and other stakeholders to develop subarea economic development strategies to promote development and redevelopment in areas that can accommodate growth.**
- ED-404** **Through local subarea planning and partnerships with other agencies and organizations, King County should use zoning, incentives, or other measures to ensure that an appropriate proportion of the land adjacent or near to major public infrastructure facilities is used to capitalize on the economic benefit of that infrastructure. The surrounding land uses should be compatible with the economic development uses or a buffer provided as necessary.**

V. Sustainable Development in the Private Sector

It is the goal of King County to work toward a model sustainable community where both the public and private sectors seek to balance urban growth with natural resource protection while addressing climate change. Sustainable development seeks to achieve this goal by addressing the impacts of the built environment in which we live and work. Sustainable development is implemented through planning, design and construction methods, including green building and low impact development (LID) that promote environmental quality, economic vitality and healthy communities.

King County seeks to foster innovative design and development techniques in the private sector that reduce the negative impacts of site development and building construction while maintaining affordability and economic development.

ED-501 King County should encourage, support and promote the application of sustainable development practices in all private sector development within the county. This may be accomplished through working with residential and commercial developers to reduce impervious surface areas, protect ground and surface water within a watershed, assure that habitat protection needs are incorporated into development proposals to the extent possible, incorporate greater use of green building materials, eliminate, to the extent possible, the use of materials that pose health hazards, and utilize systems that conserve or reuse resources, including those that use energy more efficiently. When King County provides technical assistance and incentives for the use of sustainable development practices, it shall be at no cost to any private sector development. King County shall collaborate with the private sector on potential future regulatory tools.

ED-502 In the Rural Area, King County shall provide assistance through development of customized stewardship plans for individual properties, to help property owners understand their properties' characteristics and the potential impacts of their actions, and to make sustainable land use choices that protect natural resources.

ED-503 King County shall identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote sustainable development.

ED-504

King County should participate in the development of national standards for measuring sustainability at the community scale and the breadth and effectiveness of county policies and practices that improve community-scale sustainability.

VI. The Rural Economy

King County values its entire rural area, including the Natural Resources Lands and recognizes the traditional economic activities that support rural communities and a rural lifestyle. A healthy and sustainable rural economy is necessary to ensure rural residents can continue to both live and work throughout the entire rural area. The farm, livestock, and forestry operations, the many entrepreneurial home-based businesses, the Rural Towns, Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers, and the rural cities all provide rural residents with goods, services, and employment.

Within unincorporated rural King County, economic activities include farming, livestock raising, equestrian uses, forestry, resource value-added businesses, and home-based businesses. The Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers are designed to provide a limited array of goods and services to local rural residents on a small scale. The Rural Towns provide a wider range of goods, services, and jobs for rural residents, including retail, restaurants, and services. The designated Resource Lands support the long-term commercial aspects of agriculture and forestry and potential resource valued-added products.

The county also recognizes that the land areas, economies, and natural beauty of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands classifications benefit all county residents. The agriculture sector provides a safe and reliable local food source—keeping costs low and quality high—to restaurants and households, the majority of which are in urban areas, and regionally to farmers' markets and specialty stores. Rural King County provides many diverse recreation and tourism opportunities, including scenic vistas; trails for hiking, bicycling, off-road, and equestrian use; harvest festivals; open space and wildlife habitat; and working farms and forest lands, all within a short distance from the urban centers.

A vibrant and sustainable rural economy depends on several factors, including, but not limited to, preserving and enhancing the businesses within traditional rural economic clusters, ensuring that new commercial enterprises are of a size and scale that is consistent with and retains the rural character of the surrounding area, and changes in regulations to reflect and respond to the differing needs and emerging trends of rural economic activity while protecting the natural environment.

In 2004, the King County Comprehensive Plan was amended to include a policy that directed the county to develop and implement a rural economic development strategy. To comply with this policy, the county developed the Rural Economic Strategies Report in 2005 and began implementing the identified strategies and actions in 2006.

The mission of the Rural Economic Strategies is to advance the long-term economic viability of the Rural Area, with an emphasis on farming, forestry, and other rural businesses consistent with the unique character of rural King County. The mission is accomplished by initiating and implementing specific strategies and actions to support and enhance rural economic viability. Rural businesses generally fall into six rural economic clusters and each cluster is supported by specific strategies and actions to strengthen and/or enhance it. The clusters are: Agriculture, Forestry, Equestrian, Home-Based Businesses (i.e., those home occupations that are allowed on lands designated Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Area), Recreation and Tourism, Commercial/Industrial Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers, Rural Towns, and Rural Cities. Consistent with CP-942, found in Chapter 10, Community Plans, no expansion of industrial land use or zoning is allowed within the Rural Town of Fall City.

The specific strategies and actions are intended to be flexible in order to respond to evolving rural business needs and changes within any of the economic clusters. Each year the county evaluates the actions accomplished in the previous year, introduces new actions to be initiated, and discusses proposed actions for the following year. This ensures the process stays flexible and is current with evolving trends in the rural economy. It is anticipated that this procedure will become part of the Annual Work Plans developed for each of the Community Service Areas.

The rural economic policies are designed to establish and maintain a long-term commitment to a sustainable and vibrant rural economy. They support implementation of the Rural Economic Strategies; continued evaluation of county codes to support the evolving agriculture, forestry, and other rural economic clusters; and support for programs and strategies that foster a diversified rural economy, compatible with existing rural character, while maintaining the natural environment.

ED-601 King County is committed to a sustainable and vibrant rural economy that allows rural residents to live and work throughout the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. County policy, regulations, programs should be reviewed and developed in partnership with rural businesses, the Agriculture and Rural Forest Commissions, the community service areas, the unincorporated area councils, and others to support the preservation and enhancement of traditional rural economic activities and lifestyles, while supporting evolving compatible commercial uses and job opportunities.

ED-602 King County shall use the Rural Economic Strategies to guide future rural economic development and will modify and add strategies as needed to reflect the evolving nature of the rural economy, while protecting the traditional rural economic clusters.

- a. **King County recognizes the value of the agriculture and forestry clusters for both their economic contribution and for their natural, educational, and recreational benefits to the county as a whole. The county will work with the Agriculture Commission, Rural Forest Commission, and other related organizations on strategies and programs to strengthen and enhance the economic viability of these clusters and the evolving value-added industry that helps sustain the county's legacy of raising crops and livestock and managing and harvesting forestlands.**
- b. **King County recognizes the value of home-based business, recreation and tourism, and commercial/industrial clusters for their ability to provide job opportunities in the rural area and help sustain the rural economic base. The county will continue to work with chambers of commerce and other organizations that support these rural businesses to help ensure the continued viability and economic health of new and existing businesses in these clusters.**
- c. **King County recognizes the importance of the equestrian cluster for its diversity of business and recreation related operations which combine to provide jobs and income opportunities within the rural economy. The county will continue to work with equestrian related organizations on business and recreation aspects of the equestrian cluster and with organizations that represent the various trail user groups to help ensure the continued viability and economic health of equestrian and related recreation businesses.**
- d. **King County is committed to ensuring that all economic development, including the provision of infrastructure, within the rural area, which includes resource lands, shall be compatible with the surrounding rural character, be of an appropriate size and scale, and protect the natural environment.**
- e. **King County will continue to support and partner on programs and incentives to ensure the economic vitality of rural historic resources to help maintain the character of the rural area, which includes resource lands.**
- f. **King County will explore opportunities to support agricultural tourism and value-added program(s) related to the production of food, flowers, and wine in the county. These partnership venues should be**

educational and include information on the diversity of products available in the county and the importance of buying local.

- g. King County should continue to review existing and proposed regulations to ensure they are relevant and effective in accommodating the differing needs and emerging trends of the compatible businesses that comprise the rural economy.**

ED-603 King County should partner with other Puget Sound counties and businesses to analyze the need and possible sites for regional agricultural (including beef and poultry) and forest product processing facilities that may require regional demand to make them economically feasible. The county should also explore options and incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to invest in mobile forest and food production processing facilities that can serve the region.

The ability to bring rural agricultural, forestry, and value-added products into the urban area and the ability of urban residents to utilize the rural areas for education, open space, scenic vistas, and a diversity of out-door recreation options encourages the urban/rural interdependence and linkage, thus enhancing the county's economic base.

ED-604 King County will continue to partner with organizations that support programs and strategies that strengthen the interdependence and linkage between the rural and urban economies, such as the Regional Food Policy Council and Puget Sound Fresh.