



## What is AIMS High?

AIMs High: Annual Indicators and Measures is a performance measurement and evaluation website and a key piece of King County's management model. AIMS High supports the management model by evaluating progress on the [King County Strategic Plan](#) (KCSP).

## What is King County's management model?

The management model is an ongoing, cyclical process that uses performance evaluation to inform management decisions.

King County is implementing a new management model because:

- Community needs and expectations are rapidly changing and becoming more complex
- King County's fiscal resources are constrained
- King County needs to use tax dollars as efficiently as possible
- King County needs to demonstrate how we use tax dollars to respond to community needs

When fully implemented, King County's management model will be an ongoing, systematic approach to improving results and outcomes through continuous organizational learning and evidence-based decision making. It will also improve transparency and public accountability for performance.

## How does AIMS High support King County's management model?

AIMs High supports the management model by evaluating progress on the King County Strategic Plan (KCSP) as explained in Figure 1. It is intended to support decisions about how we spend tax dollars both within county government and in the community.

AIMs High evaluates KCSP Objectives and Strategies which are organized around eight Goal Areas: four Goals for what King County delivers ("What Goals") and four Goals for how King County delivers them ("How Goals"). In the KCSP, 29 Objectives define measurable results King County hopes to produce. AIMS High measures Objectives with Objective Indicators. The KCSP also includes 118 Strategies to achieve its Objectives. AIMS High evaluates Strategies with Strategy Measures.

## Examples of AIMS High Indicators and Measures

What Goal Objective Indicators reflect the state of the environment or community. While King County government has some influence over these conditions, they are also influenced by external factors and often other actors that must also be at work to move those indicators in a positive direction. What Goal Strategy Measures reflect how well county government is implementing its strategies. Although other factors still affect our ability to achieve our strategy-level targets, county government has much more control over these results. Strategy Measures support accountability because King County is directly responsible for strategy level performance. Perhaps more importantly, Strategy

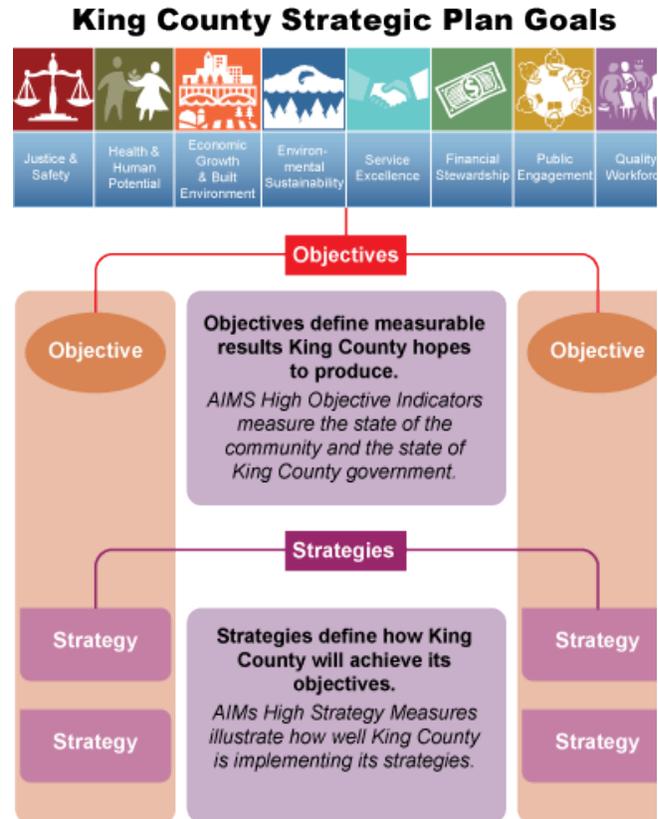


Figure 1: How AIMS High Works

Measures will also assess the effectiveness of the Strategies to achieve the plan's Goals and Objectives. Figure 2 shows an example of measurement of a What Goal Objective and Strategy.

The How Goal Objective Indicators reflect the state of King County government. Although external factors can have an effect on outcomes, Objective Indicators for How Goals are largely subject to the county's influence making King County more directly accountable for them than for What Goals. For the How Goals, the primary focus of measurement will be at the objective level. Because of the fixed duration of most How Goal Strategies, their measures are less meaningful when compared over time. Figure 3 shows an example of measurement of a How Goal Objective.

### How will AIMs High be used within King County government?

AIMs High will be the basis for evaluating progress on the KCSP by the County Council, County Executive, agencies, and departments. AIMs High will also be a primary data source for additional planning work. By the end of 2013, each Goal in the KCSP will be the subject of more detailed planning to provide direction to agencies about how to further implement the KCSP.

In addition, King County is developing Goal Teams to further the work of the KCSP. These teams will share responsibility, across King County branches and agencies, to achieve the Strategies and Objectives of the KCSP. Each Goal Team coordinates planning and monitors progress to inform resource decisions and set immediate priorities within the goal area.

### How can AIMs High be used by King County residents?

AIMs High can help you understand social, economic, and environmental conditions throughout the county and what King County government is doing to improve those conditions. AIMs High has been recognized as an outstanding example of public performance reporting by the [Association of Government Accountants](#).

### How does AIMs High relate to other King County public reporting?

King County generates and reports on a lot of community-level and performance data. Some of the other major data resources that the county develops or participates in include:

- [Communities Count](#)
- [Community Health Indicators](#)
- [King County Benchmarks](#)
- [King County Open Data](#)

In addition, many agencies and departments do additional public performance reporting, such as Metro Transit's [monthly performance measures](#) and the Department of Natural Resources and Parks' [KingStat](#), and the Department of Community and Human Services' [Performance Measures](#).

AIMs High integrates data from many of these other data sources to provide a comprehensive picture of community conditions and government performance.



Figure 2: Example of Economic Growth & Built Environment Measurement

## Public Involvement with AIMs High

In 2008, the county adopted the [Performance and Accountability Act](#) (844KB PDF), a new ordinance which formalized several existing performance management practices and added new requirements for strategic planning. The King County Strategic Plan was created in 2009 through a public engagement process that included:

- A countywide survey of residents that asked about their satisfaction with King County services, their priorities for service, and how they think decisions should be made;
- Public workshops in four locations across the county at which residents shared their vision for the county and their priorities for service;
- On-going meetings with the county's elected officials during which they developed and endorsed a new mission, vision and set of guiding principles for the county;
- A survey of all King County employees that asked them about how King County services could be improved and about their job satisfaction;
- A meeting with leadership from many of the county's thirty-nine cities to get feedback on how the county can better partner with and serve cities;
- Workshops with communities that are frequently under-represented in more traditional outreach efforts; and,
- Other input opportunities including an online survey, space to comment online and questions included in the July round of the Countywide Community Forums program.

## King County Strategic Plan Goals

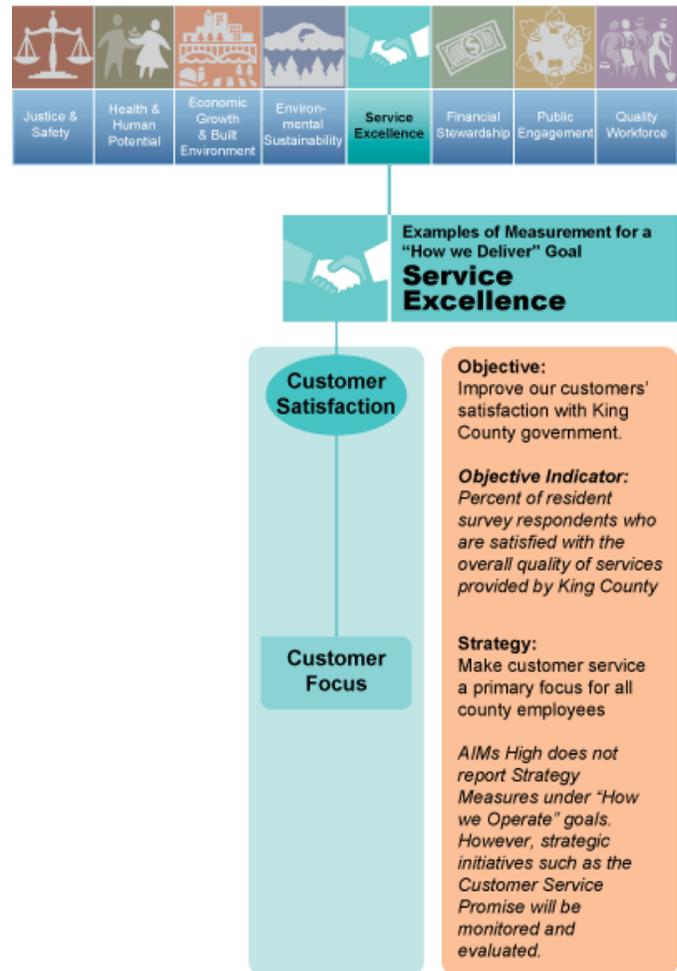


Figure 3: Example of Service Excellence Measurement

Two of the source documents from which many of the indicators are taken, Communities Count and King County Benchmarks, were developed via a public process or with stakeholder input. Communities Count conducted an extensive public process where residents expressed their opinions on what they value and what they are concerned about. Over 1,500 King County residents participated through a random digit dial telephone survey, a series of focus groups, and seven public forums held across the county.

The King County Benchmarks were originally developed via an appointed stakeholder committee that included a diverse membership of elected officials, labor, social service organizations, business, and community non-profit organizations. This committee selected indicators to support the Growth Management Planning Council's assessment of countywide planning policies developed under the state's Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Planning Council is a formal body, consisting of elected officials from King County, Seattle, Bellevue, other cities and towns in King County, special purpose districts, and the Port of Seattle.

## Ongoing Efforts to Improve King County Performance Measurement

AIMs High has been recognized as an outstanding example of public performance reporting by the Association of Government Accountants for 5 years. With adoption of the King County Strategic Plan in 2010, the site was revised to measure countywide performance using the KCSP framework. These measures were chosen through a process that sought input from county staff and management and will be adjusted and improved upon in the future. The report's technical notes explain the measurement methodology of new measures. King County continues to develop its measurement framework and data collection processes in order to report the most meaningful, consistent and reliable information possible.

## **Feedback**

We welcome any feedback on the current site, such as:

- Suggestions for more valuable or relevant indicators and measures
- Ideas to improve site navigation
- Additional desired content
- Text or graphs that need clarification

Please contact [Michael Jacobson](#), Deputy Director for Performance and Strategy, with questions about AIMs High or King County's performance management system.