

LAND USE



Photos/maps to be updated

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ A description of Covington's land use conditions, trends, and issues.
- ▶ A plan for future land use and areas where new development is being directed.
- ▶ Goals and policies that guide the character and intensity of land use.
- ▶ An action plan to implement this element.

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PURPOSE

The Land Use Element guides future land use on public and private property within Covington’s planning area, comprised of the city limits and its assigned Potential Annexation Area (PAA) within the King County Urban Growth Area (UGA). The element plans for the community’s rising needs for residential, employment, recreation, and other land uses. The element accommodates expected growth that is the basis for transportation, capital facilities, and utilities investments.

This element promotes compact and well-designed neighborhoods that are served by effective public facilities, protect environmental and cultural resources, and provide new opportunities for residents and businesses to locate in Covington to achieve the community’s vision. Covington’s proposed land use plan and policies also help the City grow in harmony with the goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) VISION 2050’s regional growth strategy, and King County’s Countywide Planning Policies.

LAND USE TRENDS AND ISSUES

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

History

Before European settlement, the Stkamish, Smulkamis, and Skopamish people inhabited the Covington area. Eventually, these tribes, together with other tribes along the White and Green Rivers, were resettled on the Muckleshoot Reservation, named for the prairie on which the reservation was established. (Kershner, 2013; Tribe, 2015)

Covington was originally known for lumber mills on Jenkins and Soos Creeks and a place where irrigated berry farms and dairies were successful. As with other places in King County following World War II, the community grew from a rural farming community into a suburb. (Kershner, 2013)

In 1992, Covington was designated as an Urban Activity Center by King County. Eventually, the community advocated for incorporation, and Covington became a full-fledged city in 1997.

Current Land Uses

Since incorporation, Covington and its land use patterns have been influenced by a mix of single-family residential neighborhoods and commercial areas with parks, critical areas, and schools nestled throughout the city. The city shares a boundary with Maple Valley to the east, Kent to the west, and unincorporated King County to the north and south. The current distribution of existing land uses is shown in Exhibit 2.

The city has two major corridors, SR 516 (272nd Street) and Highway 18, that provide direct access to Downtown and the Lakepointe Urban Village. Outside of these two land use areas, the city's land use densities range from low to high density and the land use pattern is a mix of pre- and post-incorporation subdivisions with lots ranging from 6,000 sq. ft. to 3,000 sq. ft.

The following land use areas are described in more detail in other sections of this element.

Lakepointe Urban Village

The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea is a 214-acre property in the city's northern part and consists of 4 distinct zoning districts: Regional Commercial Mixed Use (RCMU), Mixed Residential (MR), Residential 12 units per acre (R-12) and Residential 4 units per acre (R-4). Lakepointe will be a development with community gathering space, 1,320,000 sq. ft. of retail, 1,750+ residential units, many dining options, entertainment options, 90,000 sq. ft. of office space, and a 20-acre lake. The Lakepointe Urban Village was authorized through a Subarea Plan, Planned Action Ordinance, and Development Agreement.

Covington Downtown

Covington's downtown commercial center is located along SR 516 (SE 272nd St) with access from SR 18. The downtown has 4 distinct zoning districts: Mixed Commercial (MC), General Commercial (GC), Mixed Housing Office (MHO), and Town Center (TC)

The downtown area is dominated by auto-centric commercial development, including strip commercial centers and larger retail stores with parking lots. This development has established Covington as a retail destination with a strong tax base.

In pursuit of fostering a more inclusive and pedestrian-friendly environment, Covington has actively pursued mixed-use development, particularly evident in the downtown plans formulated since its incorporation. Over the past decade, the city has experienced rapid development, introducing multifamily housing units in the downtown area.

With a commitment to cultivating a community characterized by a diverse range of residential, retail, and civic uses and a focus on creating a livable, walkable public realm, Covington has built upon the groundwork laid from 2000 to 2009. The Covington Downtown Plan and a Zoning Study, endorsed by the City Council, envisioned the development of one or two pedestrian-oriented streets that

could evolve into the "Main Street" or heart of downtown. The plan centers around a public plaza with a distinctive architectural feature, poised to symbolize downtown Covington.

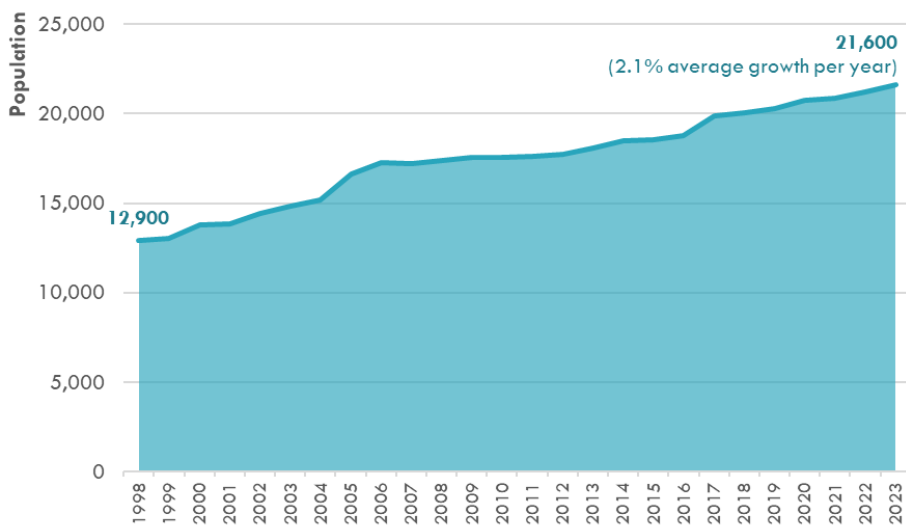
From 2009 to 2020, ongoing reviews of the goals outlined in the Covington Downtown Plan and Zoning Study have ensured its adaptability to changing circumstances. Amendments to downtown design guidelines have been made to align with the original vision. Although the form and design of downtown buildings may evolve slightly, the overarching goal of creating a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown remain true.

2024-2044 Growth Allocations and Population Trends

The growth targets for the comprehensive plan are established in the King County Countywide Planning Policies consistent with GMA requirements for regional growth management planning. Based on these growth targets, from 2019 - 2044 Covington is planning to accommodate 4,310 new housing units and 4,496 new jobs.

Covington has experienced steady growth since incorporation, as shown in Exhibit 1. The 2044 growth targets are consistent with this trend.

Exhibit 1. Covington Population Growth, 1998-2023



Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management annual population estimates, BERK, 2023

LAND USE ELEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Covington, a thriving community, boasts modern, well-kept single-family neighborhoods amidst parks, open spaces, and schools. Along suburban arterial corridors, commercial retail and medical services have flourished, providing a variety of services to Covington and the surrounding areas in southeast King County.

In the past decade, Covington has evolved into a vibrant urban hub, witnessing denser development, a significant surge in population, and job opportunities. Today, Covington stands at the cusp of further growth, with ambitious plans to increase housing units by 60% and jobs by 80% over the next 20 years.

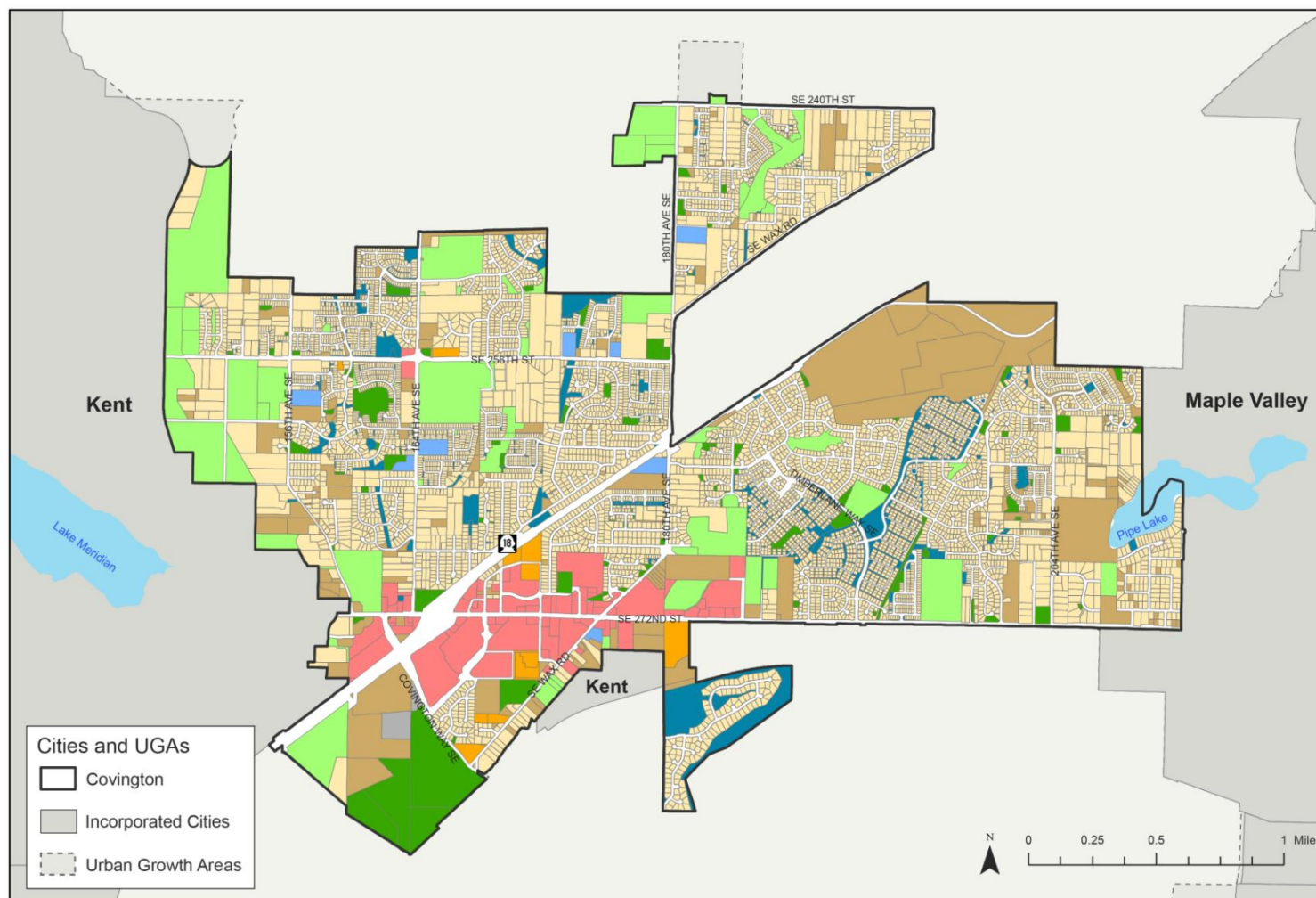
To enhance the quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods and preserve environmentally sensitive areas, Covington strategically focuses its growth in two urban centers: Downtown and Lakepointe.

- Downtown is envisioned as a dynamic space, fostering compact mid-rise, mixed-use residential, and commercial developments with gathering spaces, gridded streets, and a focused Town Center.
- Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea plans to provide regional and local commercial opportunities, mixed-use retail, and various housing options, including multifamily, townhomes, and single-family homes.

To support the housing deficiencies statewide and within Covington, infill and redevelopment are anticipated in various parts of the city, including accessory dwelling units and other moderate-density housing types. Some areas of the city still have some larger tract areas that could be developed for more single-family housing.

The type and intensity of land use within Covington are guided by the goals and policies in this Comprehensive Plan and the City's development regulations. Aligning with state law and the regional growth framework established by the Puget Sound Regional Council and King County, Covington is poised to continue its positive trajectory of growth and development.

Exhibit 2. Existing Land Use Map



Date: May 7, 2024
Source: City of Covington;
King County GIS Center

Population Trends

Covington's population has grown steadily since incorporation, from a population of 12,900 in 1998 to a population of 21,600¹ in 2023.

Covington's growth rate has generally been slightly higher or about the same as King County overall. The City experienced a compound annual population growth rate of 2.5% between 2000 and 2010, slowing to 0.5% between 2010 and 2015. Covington's growth rate was higher than King County's compound annual growth rate of 1.4% between 2000 and 2010 and similar to the County's rate of 0.6% between 2010 and 2015.² From 2015 to 2023, Covington's compound annual growth rate was 1.9%, and King County's was 1.7%.³

Employment Trends

Covington has also realized strong employment growth. In 2000, the city had 2,632 jobs based on Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Total Covered Employment data. In 2021 total jobs had increased to 5,457, with the most growth in local-oriented service sectors such as retail and personal services.

Home occupations are not tracked in the PSRC data. In 2022, Covington issued or renewed 270 business licenses for home occupations. Adding this number to the PSRC 2021 total employment number gives an estimated 5,727 jobs for Covington.

Jobs-to-Housing Ratio Trends

In 2021, Covington had an estimated 7,141 households based on Washington State Office of Financial Management population data

¹ Washington State Office of Financial Management's annual April 1 population estimate

² Covington 2015 Comprehensive Plan

³ BERK 2023; Washington State Office of Financial Management 2015, 2023

and American Community Survey 5-Year household size data⁴. Covington had a jobs-to-housing ratio of 0.80 in 2021.

Covington's growth targets for 2044 represent increases equal to about 60% of Covington's current housing units and almost 80% of Covington's current jobs. Assuming these growth targets are achieved, Covington's new jobs-to-housing ratio in 2044 would be about 0.89. This greater balance in jobs and housing is consistent with the City's plans for growth and development.

Land Capacity

Covington's current zoning provides adequate land capacity to accommodate its jobs and housing growth targets. The housing growth target is further broken down into subtargets for all income levels and for emergency and supportive housing. See the Housing Element and Housing Element Technical Appendix for details.

Housing Capacity

Covington's housing capacity was documented in the 2021 King County Urban Growth Capacity Report. However, this report did not detail the housing capacity to serve people at different income levels or with specialized housing needs. For this reason, the City updated its housing capacity in 2023. The updated analysis is provided in the Housing Element Technical Appendix. Covington has an estimated total capacity for 5,801 new housing units, including units already permitted or planned. The City also has the capacity to meet its housing growth targets for all income levels and for emergency and supportive housing.

Job Capacity

The City's jobs capacity was documented in the 2021 King County Urban Growth Capacity Report. At that time, the City had capacity

⁴ BERK, 2023.

to accommodate 8,421 jobs in its commercial, mixed-use, and industrial zoning designations. This included an estimated 2,933 jobs that would be provided at buildings already permitted or planned, including in the Lakepointe master planned development.

KEY TERMS

- ▶ **Growth Target:** A growth target is the City's assigned share of housing or employment growth for the period 2019-2044 consistent with the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The City must demonstrate its Comprehensive Plan at least accommodates its growth targets.
- ▶ **Capacity:** Capacity illustrates whether the City has sufficient developable land free of constraints and zoned at urban densities to accommodate assigned growth targets. The City's capacity is measured ahead of every periodic Comprehensive Plan update in the King County Urban Growth Capacity Report.
- ▶ **Missing Middle Housing:** This type of housing is moderate density. It is in the "middle" of the density spectrum between single family homes and large apartment buildings. It can include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, courtyard apartments, cottage housing, and stacked flats. These types of housing can fill gaps in community housing needs for less expensive or smaller homes.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Promoting Covington as a hub for medical services and family wage jobs.

Since the 2015 Comprehensive Plan periodic update, Covington has continued growing as a hub for medical services in southeast King County. For example, a hospital was built, adding to the existing urgent care facility in the city.

Continuing to attract professional services, medical services, and other jobs that have the potential to support living wages is important to the City's overall economic development goals and

would promote sustainable living by helping reduce single occupancy vehicle driving.

Encourage the preservation of existing housing stock while encouraging new housing opportunities and vibrant mixed-use development.

There is limited vacant, unconstrained land left to develop in the city. Future growth will require more infill and redevelopment than in the past. Covington also needs more housing types, as described in the Housing Element.

Covington's existing single-family neighborhoods are important parts of the community. Over time, they will require investments in public infrastructure and services to maintain a high quality of life. They may also evolve to include some missing middle housing types to help accommodate population growth over the long term and meet community housing needs.

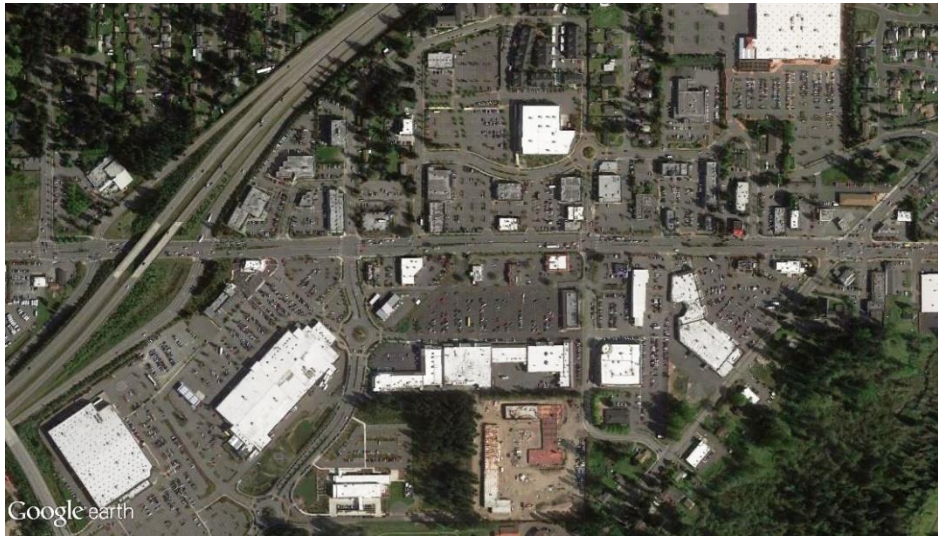
The City is actively planning to focus the majority of future growth in well-designed, higher-density, mixed-use centers in Downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village. By focusing most growth in these two areas, the City can preserve existing residential neighborhoods while meeting the community's changing needs for housing variety and offering more pedestrian amenities, public gathering spaces, and gridded streets.

New development, whether it is located in Downtown, the Lakepointe Urban Village, or within the community's established neighborhoods, must be compatible with its surroundings and enhance Covington's community identity.

Downtown and Town Center Vision

Covington's Downtown area is presently in a low-rise development pattern, with commercial shopping centers predominating. See Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3. Downtown Aerial



Source: Google Earth, 2015

The 2009 Downtown Plan and Zoning Study defined the course and vision for the downtown. The plan addresses core economic development and land use goals that continue to inform policies and codes applicable to the downtown:

- Identify a new town center site
- Make strategic town center investments
- Improve vehicular linkages
- Develop a parking study
- Provide greater pedestrian connections
- Establish new street and building design standards
- Consider and support Covington as a regional transportation focal point

The proposed land use pattern is based on a dense, pedestrian-friendly core surrounded by several districts:

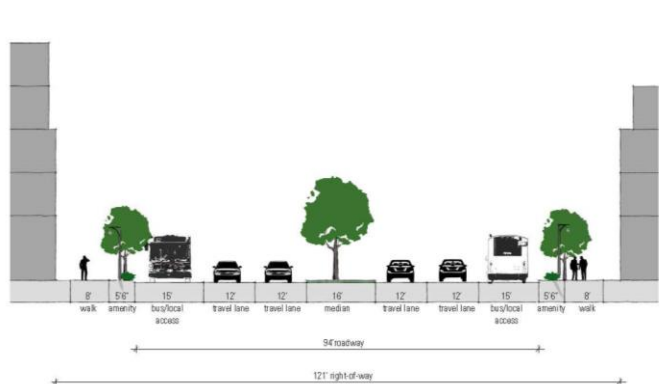
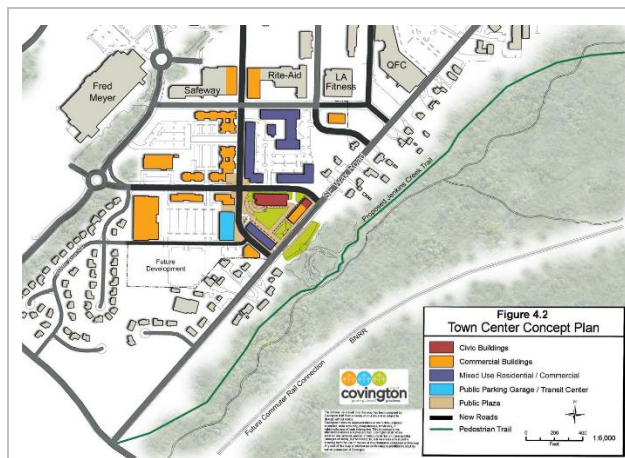
The downtown area should consist of a central Town Center District developed around a central civic plaza and open space, a new City Hall and/or other community facilities, and a public parking facility/transit center. Surrounding this Town Center core should be other Mixed Commercial and/or General Commercial districts

permitting a wide variety of retail, residential, office, service, and public uses. Surrounding the retail, residential, office, service, and public uses should be a less intensive Mixed Housing and Office district with a variety of housing and office uses at various levels of density and height as provided in the four inter-related but discreet land use districts Town Center (TC), Mixed Commercial (MC), Mixed Housing and Office (MHO) and General Commercial (GC).

Downtown Town Center Vision

As part of the 2009 Zoning Study, it became clear that Covington needed a center within the downtown that would be dynamic, include retail, office, residential, and communal gathering spaces, and provide for development-friendly zoning and transportation requirements as well as improved surrounding areas. See Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4. Town Center Vision



Sources: City of Covington Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards, 2014;
Pannattoni 2015

Downtown Form Based Code

Initial development following the Downtown planning effort resulted in lessons learned. In response, Covington adopted a form-based code for the Downtown in 2021. The form-based code promotes housing variety and affordability with modernized design standards and amenities for residents. With this code, Covington hopes to strengthen the Downtown and create a “main street” feel for the community. As infill development occurs, the new regulations are expected to develop a vibrant human-scaled environment with walkable streets and trails, high-quality mixed-use development, job opportunities, housing options, and attractive public spaces, including green spaces.

Lakepointe Urban Village

The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea (formerly known as the Hawk Property Subarea Ord. 01-14) lies in the northern gateway area of the city and encompasses approximately 214 acres southeast of SR 18. It was formerly the site of the Lakeside gravel mine, an asphalt batch plant, vacant land, and a highway interchange. Approximately 76 acres of the subarea was annexed to the city limits on January 12, 2016 (Ord. 01-16). The master plan development is implemented through a development agreement and Planned Action Ordinance (PAO). The agreement is valid for 15 years from the adoption date of April 2017. As of 2024, initial development of the subarea is underway.

The community vision for the subarea is a mixed-use urban village secondary to the Town Center:

The vision for the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea is the creation of an Urban Village at Covington’s northern gateway that provides a mix of commercial development focused on regional uses and a variety of housing types. This village would provide regional shopping and employment opportunities for residents of both Covington and neighboring communities, as well as new housing opportunities for the Covington community. In addition to commercial and residential development, the village would

offer public recreational amenities, such as parks, natural open space, a pond, and bicycle and pedestrian trails that link to the regional trail system. The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea, while providing both economic and lifestyle benefits would be a secondary center within Covington, providing an experience that is distinct from Covington's town center, not competing with it. (Ord. 01-14)

The City considered a range of concepts for the subarea, allowing 1,000-to 1,750 dwellings and 680,000 to 1,320,000 square feet of commercial development (Ord. 04-2021 and Ord. 01-2022). In a development agreement, the City Council approved a master development plan similar to the Maximum Concept Plan. See Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 6.

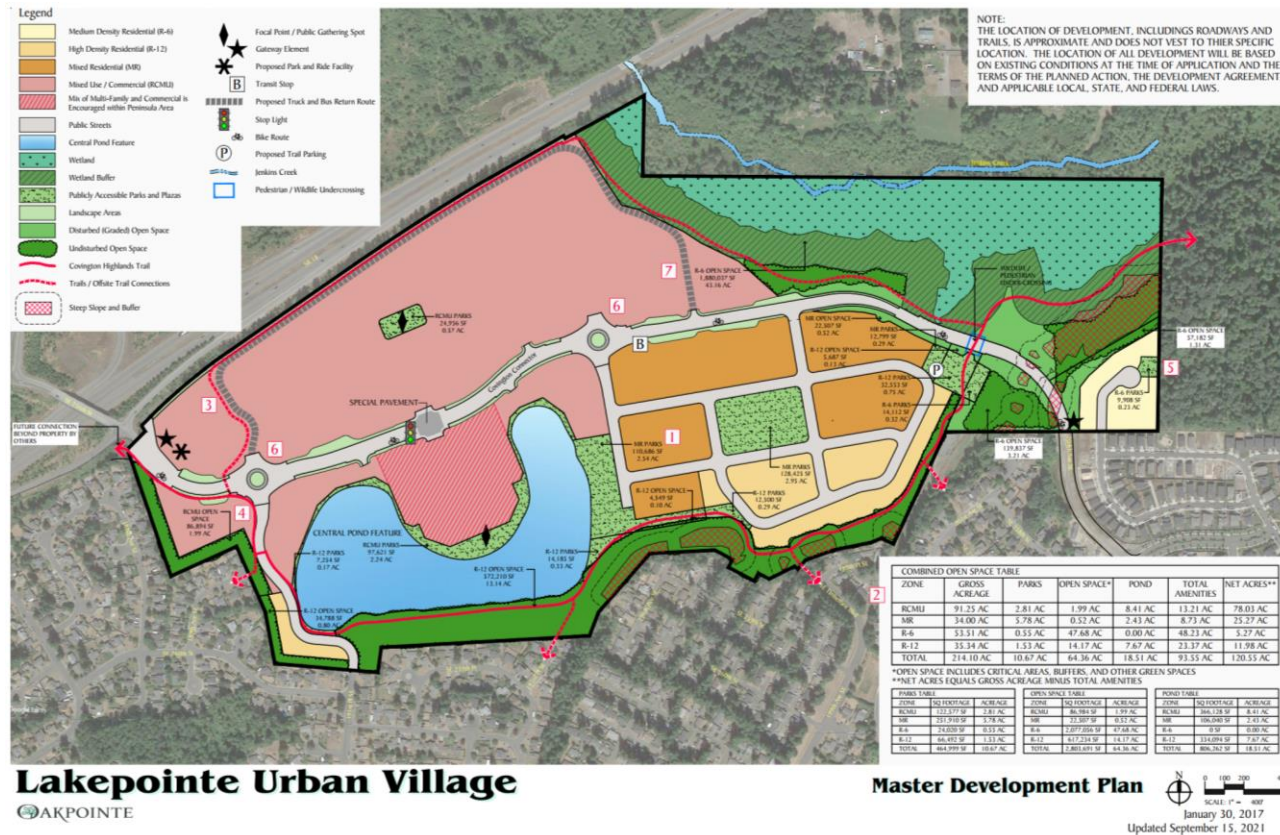
Exhibit 5. Lakepointe Urban Village Minimum and Maximum Concept Plans*



Source: City of Covington, 2014 (Hawk Property Subarea Plan Ord. 01-14, Hawk Property Planned Action Ord. 04-14)

Note: *Formerly Hawk Property Subarea

Exhibit 6. Lakepointe Master Development Plan (September 15, 2021)



Source: City of Covington, 2021

Maintaining Covington's natural environment.

Covington recognizes the value and need to preserve and protect the natural environment to balance growth, economic needs, and quality of life. Development can be designed to preserve environmental functions and values.

Potentially constrained lands typically include critical areas containing frequently flooded areas, wetlands, streams and associated buffers, wildlife habitat, critical aquifer recharge areas, landslide, seismic, and erosion hazard areas. Other constrained areas include power line easements and gas line easements.

Some potentially constrained lands are managed for health and safety (e.g., geologic and flood hazards), and the amount of development within or abutting the area may be restricted. Some areas are protected for their water quality and habitat functions and

values (wetlands, streams and lakes, critical aquifer recharge areas, wildlife habitat, and floodplains) and may be protected from development by buffers and setbacks. Permanent structures are limited in utility corridors.

Low-impact development methods that mimic natural stormwater systems are now required by the City's stormwater manual, where feasible, as amended. These standards not only have value in managing water quality and quantity but also can be designed to contribute to open space systems and soften streetscapes.

More detailed discussions and policies related to the city's natural environment can be found in the Natural Environment and Shoreline Master Program Elements.

Planning for Climate Resiliency and Equity.

Climate resilience and equity were raised as key issues during the 2024 update of the Comprehensive Plan. These issues are related.

Climate

The City conducted a Climate Vulnerability Assessment in 2023. Based on this assessment, the types of climate impacts Covington is likely to experience in the coming decades include increasing days with extremely high temperatures, increasing the risk of fire related to the wildland urban fire interface, increasing exposure to wildfire smoke, increasing wet season rain and storms, and decreasing snowpack to feed summer stream flows. Related risks to land use and development in Covington could include:

- Changes in availability of housing stock or business services due to hazard events.
- Need for new or upgraded flood-control and erosion-control structures.
- Increased stormwater management and infrastructure maintenance costs.
- Adverse water quality impacts due to uncontrolled stormwater runoff or septic system damage during extreme precipitation events.

- Reduced water availability in summer.

The climate vulnerability assessment identified areas of the city with the highest risk for climate impacts. The highest risk areas are generally located around major roads, areas with low tree cover, and along streams. The assessment also identified areas of Covington with both high risk for climate impacts and high vulnerability of community members to climate impacts due to health and socioeconomic factors. These areas include central and Downtown Covington.

The City can mitigate the risk of climate impacts through its plans, regulations, investments, and partnerships. Land use patterns and urban design that support climate resiliency include compact development, a balanced mix of jobs and housing uses, a network of parks and green spaces and urban tree canopy, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity, energy-efficient design, Low Impact Development (LID) design, and drought-tolerant plantings. Covington is working to achieve all these things. The City could also review and update its flood hazard regulations and shoreline master program regulations and prioritize climate resiliency in its budgeting processes for infrastructure investments. See the Natural Environmental Element and the Capital Facilities Element for related information.

Equity

The City developed an equity approach for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update. This approach is outlined in the Foundation Element. It includes a definition of equity that calls for the City to prioritize investments that reduce disparities and address historical and systemic inequalities. For instance, this definition would support investing in climate resilience in central and Downtown Covington. As discussed above, these areas have both a high risk of climate impacts and a high demographic vulnerability to climate impacts.

The equity approach also includes desired equity outcomes for each plan element. The desired outcomes for the Land Use Element are listed below:

- When development and redevelopment occurs in Covington, it makes the community a better place for all.
- New development meets needs for housing and employment and fills gaps in the City's network of trails, sidewalks, and transit stops.

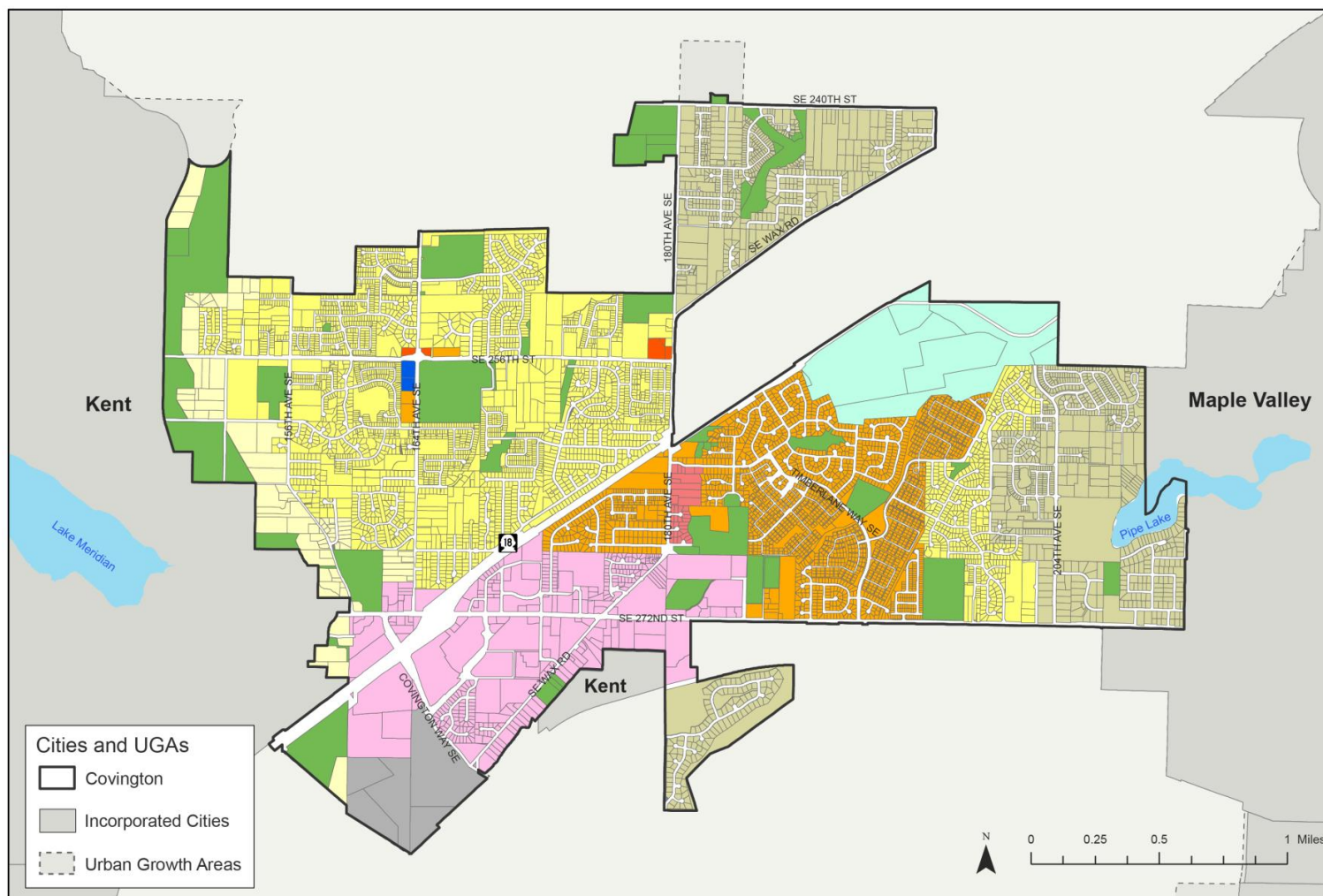
This element's land use designations, goals, and policies support these outcomes. The City plans to monitor progress toward the desired equity outcomes and act as needed to achieve them.

OUR LAND USE PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND DESIGNATIONS

Covington's future land use plan is oriented around two mixed-use centers: Downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village. Around these two centers are residential neighborhoods at low, medium, and high densities, interspersed by a green network of parks, trails, open spaces, and schools. There is also an industrial area south of Downtown and two small-scale commercial areas in the northern part of the City. The City's Future Land Use Map is shown in Exhibit 7. There have been no major changes to this map since the last periodic update in 2015. The future land use designations shown on the map are defined in Exhibit 8, and the acreage in each designation is provided in Exhibit 9. These future land use designations allow for growth to occur in a sustainable development pattern, maintaining Covington's quality of life and enhancing Covington's identity. The future land use designations are implemented by detailed zoning designations outlined in the City's code. See Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 7. Future Land Use Map



Land Use Classifications

- Low Density Residential 4du/ac
- Medium Density Residential 6du/ac
- High Density Residential 8du/ac
- MultiFamily Residential 18du/ac
- Urban Separator 1du/ac
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Downtown
- Industrial
- Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea
- Public Parks, Recreational Facilities & Schools

Date: May 29, 2024
Source: City of Covington;
King County GIS Center

Exhibit 8. Future Land Use Map Description

Urban Separator

The Urban Separator category fosters identifiable boundaries between Covington and Kent, helping each develop as a distinct community with individual identities and a sense of place. Much of Covington's Urban Separator includes Soos Creek Park along the western portion of the UGA. Low-density residential development of up to two dwelling units per acre is also appropriate for Urban Separator lands.

Single-family Urban Residential:

Low

Minimum density:
4 dwelling units/acre

Medium

Minimum density:
6 dwelling units/acre

High

Minimum density:
8 dwelling units/acre

Covington's existing neighborhoods are primarily characterized by single family urban residential development often platted at four to eight units per acre. Accordingly, the Future Land Use map divides the Single Family Urban Residential category into "Low," "Medium," and "High" sub-categories, assigning minimum densities at four, six, and eight units per acre, respectively. Undeveloped or underdeveloped areas within this designation will develop in a manner that maintains compatibility with existing neighborhoods and open space corridors, consistent with City code. This is expected to include missing middle housing uses such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and townhomes.

Multifamily (Residential 18 du/acre)

The 35-acre Multifamily area located north of the Downtown land use designation allows higher density urban residential development typified by structures designed to accommodate several unrelated households, including duplexes, apartments, townhomes, and condominiums.

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial category includes small-scale commercial uses that provide convenience goods and services to serve the everyday needs of the surrounding neighborhoods while protecting neighborhood character. Neighborhood Commercial development can help reduce automobile trip lengths and frequency by providing dispersed commercial uses closer to community members' homes. Second-floor residential uses are encouraged in Neighborhood Commercial buildings, and it's critical that regulations ensure that the design and scale of Neighborhood Commercial development maintain compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

Community Commercial

The Community Commercial category is intended to provide for a broader range of commercial activities and services than those envisioned for Neighborhood Commercial areas. Community Commercial development should be designed and scaled to serve a range of day-to-day needs for residents of nearby neighborhoods, but not intentionally addressing needs of those living outside those areas. Uses should be sized and permitted accordingly to maintain compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhoods, and the design and scale of Community Commercial development should be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.

Downtown

The Downtown category is intended to provide the majority of the retail commercial and office opportunities within the city and various civic, social, residential, and recreational uses. The Downtown designation is intended to accommodate economic growth in a compact form with a mix of uses that lessens automobile trip lengths and promotes travel modes other than single-occupancy vehicles. Residential uses integrated with commercial uses in mixed-use buildings are encouraged.

The Downtown area is envisioned to grow as the “heart” of Covington, characterized by:

- Places for community events
- Vibrant, active streetscapes with sidewalk vendors and street trees
- Higher-intensity development (over time) with reuse of parking lots for new buildings
- High-quality development
- A scale and form that’s walkable and comfortable for pedestrians
- Connections to nearby parks and natural spaces
- Distinctive landmarks to ensure people can easily find their way

The Downtown category includes four interrelated districts as follows:

- **Town Center:** Encompassing 81 acres is an area envisioned as the heart and core of downtown, characterized by an intensive mix of uses, a vibrant and active streetscape, the most pedestrian-scaled land use and circulation system downtown, and includes an important public gathering space.
- **Mixed Commercial:** These “gateways” to downtown Covington on the west and east encompass 231 acres. They accommodate a diverse mix of uses, emphasizing retail and employment, with increased walkability and access for all modes of travel. Large-format retail, auto-oriented uses, and public uses may be part of the mix, provided they’re compatible with the area’s pedestrian-oriented scale and character.
- **Mixed Housing & Office:** Totalling 67 acres, this category includes infill housing and office development designed to be compatible with surrounding residential uses. Cottage housing types or single family detached housing may also be part of this category.
- **General Commercial:** This 95-acre area is envisioned to include the broadest range of uses of any in the downtown, including commercial, light manufacturing, office, transportation and utility uses, and residential uses buffered from more intensive uses to ensure compatibility.

Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea

The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea (formerly the Hawk Property) category is intended to provide commercial and residential opportunities in an “urban village” setting (formerly referred to as Hawk Property Subarea) with associated recreational and open space amenities. The adopted Hawk Property Subarea Plan (Ord. 01-14, as amended) clearly envisions mixed-use development in this area. Future development of the Lakepointe Urban Village is intended to provide regional and local commercial opportunities and housing options not currently widely available in Covington, including multifamily, townhome, and small-lot residential development.

Industrial

This category is intended to provide for industrial enterprises and activities involving manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, processing, bulk handling and storage, research facilities, warehousing, and heavy trucking. The purpose of this designation is also to protect the industrial land base for industrial, economic

development and employment opportunities. It is applied largely to the Bonneville Power Administration Substation.

Public Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Schools

This category is only placed on properties currently developed with a public park, recreational facilities, or land owned by the Kent or Tahoma School District.

Future Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Schools may occur throughout the city, consistent with comprehensive plan goals and policies and development regulation provisions, which reduce impacts on surrounding land uses. Although mapped as a specific land-use designation, lands within this designation may occur in any zone, as this land-use designation does not affect underlying zoning.

Exhibit 9. Future Land Use Designation Acreage

PLACEHOLDER

Exhibit 10. Future Land Use Designation & Corresponding Zoning Districts

Land Use Designation	Zoning District
Urban Separator	US (R-1) Urban Separator
Single Family Urban Residential	
▪ Low Density Residential	R-4 Urban Residential
▪ Medium Density Residential	R-6 Urban Residential
▪ High Density Residential	R-8 Urban Residential
Multifamily	R-18 Residential
Neighborhood Commercial	NC Neighborhood Commercial
Community Commercial	CC Community Commercial
Downtown	TC Town Center MC Mixed Commercial MHO Mixed Housing/Office GC General Commercial
Regional Commercial Mixed Use	RCMU Regional Commercial Mixed Use
Mixed Residential Use	MR Mixed Residential
Industrial	I Industrial
Public Parks, Recreation, and Schools	All Underlying Zones

CONSISTENCY WITH STATE GOALS AND REGIONAL PLANS

CITY VISION CONNECTION

The land use element most directly supports Covington's vision for an unmatched quality of life and the framework goals around fostering well-designed and diverse neighborhoods, promoting economic development, establishing a vibrant downtown, encouraging active and healthy living by design, promoting sustainable development patterns, and integrating nature into neighborhoods.

The City plans in conformance with the GMA, the PSRC VISION 2050, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.

State GMA goals are implemented in this Land Use Element and other Comprehensive Plan elements by promoting a compact urban development pattern served by adequate transportation, parks, and other capital facilities and services. Covington's Comprehensive Plan also encourages various housing choices and economic development opportunities, promoting the protection of environmental, natural, and cultural resources. Each property in Covington is allowed a reasonable use consistent with the land use plan and development regulations. The City's land use permit procedures allow permits to be addressed in a fair and predictable manner. (RCW 36.70A.020)

VISION 2050 contains multicounty planning policies and a regional growth strategy applicable to King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. The King County Countywide Planning Policies provide additional guidance for the county subregion, including the 2044 growth targets for each jurisdiction.

The PSRC conducts consistency reviews of comprehensive plans and certifies transportation elements for consistency with VISION 2050. VISION 2050 requires a statement of consistency with the GMA, VISION 2050's multicounty planning policies, and the King County Countywide Planning Policies.

Covington's State of Consistency with VISION 2050 and Coordinated Regional Planning Efforts.

Covington plans to commit to a sustainable and vibrant future through the implementation of a downtown center with mixed-use commercial and residential mid-rise development patterns, gathering spaces, and connected multi-modal streets. A mixed use urban village is planned in Covington's northern gateway in the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea where a variety of housing types and densities are planned together with large format and community-based retail around natural and recreation amenities. Compact growth in the Downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village allows the City to reduce vehicle miles traveled, retrofit stormwater systems in a low-impact manner to improve water quality, avoid impacts to ecological functions and values, and reduce air quality emissions over standard development patterns. The City will leverage special district and private investment in these places and make wise, efficient public investments in infrastructure and services within already developed or altered environments.

This compact mixed-use strategy also allows the City to protect and improve existing residential neighborhoods where a variety of homeownership opportunities are available on a range of lot sizes, served by a network of parks, open space and schools.

As a community with a mission of unity, Covington plans together with neighboring jurisdictions and special districts serving the City on infrastructure, transportation, human services, hazard reduction, and shoreline and critical area protection.

Covington's plan promotes a quality development pattern able to accommodate the community's fair share of housing and employment growth targets in conformance with the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The City will

work with PSRC, King County, and its peer cities to grow responsibly consistent with the regional growth strategy.

To address 1) Covington's unique market circumstances as a commercial and services hub in southeast King County, 2) its attraction of compact, mixed use development at an unprecedented pace, 3) its reliance on urban sewer and water services with special districts, and 4) its commitment to ongoing transportation coordination with state, regional, and local governments, the City will work in partnership with King County and PSRC to monitor growth and to provide opportunities to meet growth targets consistent with regional policies, in order to manage anticipated and unavoidable growth in a compatible and environmentally sensitive manner.

GOALS AND POLICIES

LAND USE GOALS

- Goal LU-I.** Covington contains a diverse mix of uses and densities that are sustainable and support the community's desire to provide a high-quality environment for all current and future community members, businesses, employees, and visitors.
- Goal LU-II.** Covington's zoning, design guidelines, and other strategies promote development that provides a variety of land use types, densities, and building forms while discouraging sprawl, protecting critical areas, and minimizing exposure to climate impacts and other natural hazards to support a healthy economy and promote living wage job growth.
- Goal LU-III.** Covington's vibrant mixed-use and commercial areas are places current and future community members and businesses want to live, work, play, shop, learn, and locate their businesses. These

centers incorporate various housing types, commercial spaces, public spaces, parks and recreational facilities that accommodate Covington's diverse community of families and individuals, income groups, and types of businesses.

- Goal LU-IV.** Covington's downtown is the economic and entertainment heart of the community, flourishing from the investment in infrastructure, mixed-use development, and high quality urban design.
- Goal LU-V.** The Lakepointe Urban Village is thriving and accessible by multi-modal transportation at the northern gateway to the city, providing regional shopping and employment, new housing opportunities for the community, and a mix of recreational amenities.
- Goal LU-VI.** Covington's land use pattern and urban form help to improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities. Covington is a walkable community with access to healthy local foods, active living facilities, and well-designed and accessible multi-modal connections between and within neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Goal LU-VII.** Covington community members and business owners are informed and involved in the ongoing land use decision-making process and have opportunities to participate in the implementation, review, and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, zoning code, and development permits. The City strives to equitably engage all community members and ensure that land use decisions do not unfairly impact historically marginalized communities.

LAND USE POLICIES

Citywide Sustainable Growth Management Strategy

- Policy LU-1. Plan and manage community growth and redevelopment to ensure an orderly pattern of land use that is interconnected and accessible to the community while maintaining and improving the city's existing character.
- Policy LU-2. Maintain sufficient land designated to accommodate appropriate commercial, office, healthcare, and educational uses proximate to adequate transportation and utility infrastructure.
- Policy LU-3. Work with King County and other urban cities to adjust and align individual city and King County growth, targets, and the PSRC Regional Growth Strategy, as needed. Factors to consider include:
 - a. Existing land capacity, demand, and market conditions including Covington's niche in southeast King County.
 - b. Available and planned infrastructure.
 - c. The community's compact growth pattern and standards for environmental protection.
 - d. State population projections and local trends.
- Policy LU-4. Maintain land use designations that ensure an adequate supply of housing units and employment space to meet required growth targets and market demand.
- Policy LU-5. Encourage maximum permitted density of land development while requiring high-quality design, avoiding natural and manmade hazards, and protecting critical areas and environmental quality to avoid unnecessary public and private costs.
- Policy LU-6. Encourage new development to be sited and designed to:

- a. Limit impact on the natural environment.
- b. Be compact and contiguous to existing development.
- c. Protect critical areas and mitigate risk of climate impacts.
- d. Protect cultural resources, including consideration of potential impacts to tribal cultural resources.
- e. Promote water quality, incorporation of renewable energy, green infrastructure, urban forests, green roofs, and natural drainage systems.
- f. Incorporate energy and water conservation practices, and reduce heat absorption.
- g. Encourage walking, bicycling and transit use.

Policy LU-7. Direct growth, including redevelopment and infill, to locations that take advantage of existing service capacity and infrastructure.

- a. Coordinate with all public service providers to ensure services can support Covington's planned growth and shifts in demand while maintaining acceptable levels of service.
- b. Implement City transportation level of service standards, concurrency, and impact fee requirements to support future land development. Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation and adjacent jurisdictions to manage transportation demand and facilitate improvements.

Policy LU-8. Ensure new development complements existing neighborhoods, encouraging attractive site and building design that is compatible in scale and in composition with existing or planned development.

Policy LU-9. Support development patterns that promote the community's health by:

- a. Providing opportunities for safe and convenient physical activity and social connectivity.
- b. Promoting safe routes to and from public schools.

- Policy LU-10. Promote residential and other forms of mixed-use development in commercial areas to allow people to live, work, play, shop, and learn while reducing vehicular traffic and providing for shared parking in a pedestrian-friendly setting, including eventual transition to structured parking at high demand locations, and maintain development capacity for active ground-level commercial use.
- Policy LU-11. Require the incorporation of features in new development projects that support transportation choices.
- Policy LU-12. Promote the use of landscaping that can thrive in urban settings, conserve water, tolerate heat, retain desirable trees, grow the urban tree canopy, and is comprised of native plant materials.
- Policy LU-13. Promote local agriculture in farmers markets and urban agriculture as a way to access healthy, sustainable, and affordable local foods.
- Policy LU-14. Encourage the development and strategic placement of public art features throughout the city.
- Policy LU-15. Encourage public open spaces or community plazas where appropriate in commercial areas, for the congregation of people.
- Policy LU-16. Allow, through appropriate zoning and siting, a variety of public and quasi-public uses serving the community, including parks, schools, libraries, churches, community centers, fire and police stations, and other municipal facilities in a well-designed manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses.
- Policy LU-17. Manage and design public utility land uses and structures in a manner that is compatible with nearby

uses, using techniques such as buffers, increased setbacks, easements, landscaping, and other innovative forms of screening.

Policy LU-18. Site essential public facilities countywide in coordination with King County, the State and/or other cities and tribes considering environmental and social equity, fair-share burden, and environmental, technical and service area factors to reduce incompatibility with adjacent uses.

Policy LU-19. Coordinate planning efforts with State agencies, King County, and neighboring cities to address shared areas of interest and concern such as transportation systems and concurrency, regional trails, health and human services, shorelines of the state, surface and groundwater systems, watersheds, and other topics.

Policy LU-20. Promote city land use patterns that:

- a. Prioritize equitable access to opportunities for historically underserved communities and vulnerable populations.
- b. Align development regulations to mitigate impacts from environmental health and natural disaster hazards.
- c. Engage the transit provider (King County Metro) to expand Covington's transportation choices, allowing the city to put higher-density developments along transit corridors.
- d. Ensure safe, accessible routes to parks, trails, schools, and commercial areas.

Policy LU-21. Consider the impact of land use decisions on displacement risk for community members and business owners, and explore options and potential partnerships to mitigate for displacement risk.

Urban Growth and Annexations

- Policy LU-22. Continue to support the expansion of the City's Urban Growth Area in the northern gateway to include land east of 180th Ave SE between SE Wax Road and SR 18 to correct illogical boundary lines. Pursue changes to the Urban Growth Area based on criteria in the Countywide Planning Policies and in coordination with King County.
- Policy LU-23. Annex potential annexation areas assigned to the City within the King County urban growth area into Covington's city limits only after carefully studying the fiscal impacts and planning for the future development of the area.
- Policy LU-24. Monitor the City's growth in relation to the Countywide Planning Policy growth targets and the countywide growth assumed in VISION 2050.
- Policy LU-25. Consider Countywide Planning Policies, the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy, and Covington's Comprehensive Plan Vision and Framework Policies when evaluating new land use designation requests during the 2024-2044 planning period.

Public Services and Responsiveness

- Policy LU-26. Ensure timely, thorough, consistent, fair, and predictable project review by allocating adequate resources to the permit review process, and minimizing review time.
- Policy LU-27. Promote public involvement in the planning process.
- Policy LU-28. Establish and maintain positive and proactive inter-jurisdictional relationships with outside service providers, such as water, sewer, gas, electric, fire, schools, phone, cellular, and cable entities, throughout the permitting process.

Downtown

- Policy LU-29. Encourage a variety of development in the downtown with an emphasis on multi-story mixed-use, while allowing existing, major retail components to remain until market conditions support redevelopment; allow limited, regulated, and high-quality designed large format retail while minimizing impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Policy LU-30. Encourage the integration of new office, service, health care, educational, and residential uses into the downtown area to support high quality business/retail activities and to increase the vitality of the downtown.
- Policy LU-31. In the Downtown Mixed-Housing and Office designation, encourage infill development and redevelopment that provides a variety of housing types and professional office uses that may include innovative ideas and designs.
- Policy LU-32. Promote a mix of uses, building forms, and public realm improvements within the Town Center, consistent with the current version of the Town Center Design Standards and Guidelines.
- Policy LU-33. In the Mixed Commercial area of the downtown, encourage diverse employment opportunities and increased walkability and connectivity to portions of the downtown outside of the Town Center, while encouraging a mix of commercial and multi-story residential uses, with mixed-use buildings, public uses and spaces, compatible food-related uses, still allowing for large format and auto-oriented retail, provided they are designed consistent with the current version of the Town Center Design Standards and Guidelines.
- Policy LU-34. In the General Commercial designation, encourage a complete variety and mix of commercial and office uses, appropriate low-impact manufacturing and

storage, transportation-related and utility facilities and limited residential use that can be buffered to ensure compatibility.

- Policy LU-35. Encourage a development pattern that places buildings near the street and makes surface parking a non-dominant use.
- Policy LU-36. Provide for a sense of gateway and entry to the downtown area through the development of key distinctive focal points, such as special signs, and architectural, water and/or landscaping features.
- Policy LU-37. Encourage interconnected walkway systems to accommodate areas for landscaping and wide sidewalks that provide the opportunity for appropriate outdoor commercial and civic activities, including seating for food and beverage establishments.

Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea

- Policy LU-38. Encourage a variety of commercial, residential, and recreational development types in the Lakepointe Urban Village.
- Policy LU-39. Encourage a variety of housing types at various densities in the Lakepointe Urban Village.
- Policy LU-40. Ensure that the public realm in the Lakepointe Urban Village provides places for a variety of ages, interests, and experiences and is easily accessible.
- Policy LU-41. Implement design standards that facilitate development in the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea as the northern entrance to Covington.
- Policy LU-42. Ensure that the pond in the Lakepointe Urban Village serves as a major public amenity with extensive public access and a surrounding area with a mix of residential and commercial uses that offer a place for the community to gather, stroll, dine, shop, and live.

Policy LU-43. Encourage the preservation of a green space buffer, which may include public trails, along the southern border of the Lakepointe Urban Village adjacent to existing residential development.

Policy LU-44. Encourage development of larger public park and greenspace amenities in the Lakepointe Urban Village that are accessible to all community members and visitors, as opposed to small, fragmented, private park facilities.

ACTION PLAN

The Land Use Element is implemented by related elements, plans, regulations, and programs, including:

- Covington’s Zoning Code, which provides permitted uses, density and dimensional standards, and design guidelines for new development.
- Covington’s Comprehensive Plan Housing Element, which provides strategies for integrating a diversity of housing types and more affordable housing.
- Covington’s Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element, which provides policies and strategies for growing businesses in the community.
- Covington’s Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, which guides parks, trails, and recreation acquisition and improvements.
- Covington’s Transportation Plan, which provides motorized and non-motorized plans and promotes coordination of transit with regional providers to serve local residents, workers, and visitors.
- Covington’s Natural Environment Element and Shoreline Element, which protect sensitive areas and provide open space that frames and links neighborhoods.

This Land Use Element also includes policies promoting new initiatives. See Exhibit 11.

Exhibit 11. Land Use Action Plan

Implementing Action	Responsibility
Prioritize strategic investments in parks, trails, sidewalks, streetscape, gathering spaces, streets, and other infrastructure to facilitate the downtown vision.	Community Development, Parks, and Public Works Departments
Coordinate the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, Transportation Plan, and Stormwater Plan to provide for a system of green infrastructure, gathering spaces, and non-motorized connections between neighborhoods and schools, parks, and shopping areas	Community Development, Parks, and Public Works Departments
Update the downtown development code to support climate resiliency and the types of development that meet the City's housing needs.	Community Development Department
Consider updating the City's flood hazard and shoreline regulations in response to changing conditions in climate vulnerability.	Community Development Department
Track progress towards the City's desired equity outcomes for land use, and course correct as needed.	Community Development Department
Work with landowners to be prepared to market our General Commercial/ Industrial lands to potential buyers. (Council Strategic Priority 2023-2027)	Community Development Department & Executive Department
Evaluate new business and tenant improvement permitting processes to identify obstacles. (Council Strategic Priority 2023-2027)	Community Development Department
Establish criteria to determine diversity for local businesses: 1) Establish criteria for different types of businesses 2) Conduct a gap analysis to determine business diversity in revenue options (Council Strategic Priority 2023-2027)	Community Development Department