



## King County

### **Dow Constantine**

King County Executive

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December 7, 2023

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if approved, adopt the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan (2024 Update) and related amendments to the Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Subarea Plan, land use and zoning, and development regulations in the King County Code.

The 2024 Update is a once-a-decade update to the Comprehensive Plan, which guides where people live, work, and play in unincorporated King County. As required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), the Comprehensive Plan guides County policy for the next 20 years for local services, land use, and development regulations in unincorporated King County and for regional services throughout the county, such as transit, sewers, parks, trails, and open space.

The proposed changes in the 2024 Update will enable King County to meet new and ongoing requirements of the GMA, satisfy the mandate for a ten-year update, and bring the Comprehensive Plan into compliance with the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050 and the County's 2021 Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). To ensure that King County will be a welcoming community where every person can thrive, the 2024 Update focuses on equity, housing, and climate change as established in the Scope of Work approved by the King County Council in June 2022, via Motion 16142.

A foundational element of the 2024 Update's equity focus includes a new report documenting the local history of racially exclusive and discriminatory land use and housing practices in King County. Required by the CPPs, the report analyzes how past land use regulations, development decisions, and neighborhood investments have impacted Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) households and proposes actions to repair these harms.

The 2024 Update responds to new GMA requirements to increase housing supply and address the affordable housing crisis by encouraging and streamlining the development of middle

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housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, and accessory dwelling units. In addition, the 2024 Update creates an Inclusionary Housing incentive program that would increase the supply of affordable housing by offering developers cost-saving measures if they voluntarily include affordable units in development projects.

On the climate front, the 2024 Update supports reductions in fossil fuel use in buildings, utilities, and transportation, and promotes the use of renewable resources. It streamlines permit requirements for fire wise clearing and promotes collaboration and planning with community partners to improve forest health and reduce the impacts of wildfires. The 2024 Update also supports the protection and longevity of mature and old growth forests, a strategy with multiple benefits designed for long term climate stability. Additionally, it requires climate solutions that distribute benefits equitably, with a focus on frontline communities most impacted by climate-related harm.

The 2024 Update also includes a package of supplemental changes related to adoption of the Snoqualmie Valley Community Service Area Subarea Plan that has been transmitted concurrently with this proposed Ordinance.

Lastly, a future component of the 2024 Update will include updates to the County's critical areas regulations that will be guided by Best Available Science to protect public health and safety and the environment. These proposed future updates are required by the GMA and are on a delayed transmittal timeline in order to complete engagement with key partners, including government-to-government consultation with Indian Tribes. The Council can expect to receive these amendments in March 2024.

My recommended 2024 Update represents the culmination of a two-year long planning process. Improved and more equitable public engagement strategies resulted in more than 1,500,000 points of engagement with the public and more than 10,000 comments received. Additionally, to center community input in development of the Plan, an Equity Work Group was convened. The Equity Work Group was an advisory body comprised of leaders representing communities that have been historically underrepresented in the County's comprehensive planning process. The group shared their lived experiences and collaborated with staff on the development of the 2024 Update, choosing to focus on housing policy, the equity impact review, and co-developing equitable engagement strategies.

A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been issued concurrent with this transmittal, and a Final EIS will be completed in advance of final action by the King County Council. An equity impact review of the proposals in the 2024 Update has also been included with the transmittal.

In response to a request from Council staff, this proposed Ordinance was updated during pre-transmittal review to align with new changes adopted in Ordinances 19687 and 19690.

I appreciate your careful consideration of the proposed Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations. Together, they will help to ensure that our region continues to manage growth effectively while ensuring the County's compliance with the GMA.


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If your staff have questions, please contact Lauren Smith, Deputy Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, at 206-263-9606.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Lauren Smith, Deputy Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget