2024 King County
Comprehensive Plan Update
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Prepared for

King County

Prepared by

Parametrix

November 2024

2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update
Final Environmental Impact Statement.
Prepared by Parametrix, Inc., Seattle, Washington.
November 2024.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Draft Environmental Impact Statement Responses to Public Comments
Appendix B Map Amendments and Area Zoning and Land Use Studies

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

2024 Update	2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update
ADU	Accessory Dwelling Unit
AIAN	American Indian and Alaska Native
AMI	Area Median Income
APD	Agricultural Production District
BAS	Best Available Science
BP	Before Present
CARA	Critical Aquifer Recharge Area
County	King County
CPP	Countywide Planning Policy
Current Plan	2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022
CWSP	Coordinated Water System Plans
DNRP	King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Ecology	Washington State Department of Ecology
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FPD	Forest Production District
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GMA	Washington State Growth Management Act
GMPC	Growth Management Planning Council
I-405	Interstate 405
I-5	Interstate 5
I-90	Interstate 90
K.C.C.	King County Code
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus Other Orientations and Identities
Metro	King County Metro Transit Department
MFTE	Multifamily Tax Exemption
MPP	Multicounty Planning Policy
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (CONTINUED)

NHOPI	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
PAA	Potential Annexation Area
PM	Particulate Matter
PSCAA	Puget Sound Clean Air Agency
PSRC	Puget Sound Regional Council
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
RNCC	Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center
SCAP	King County Strategic Climate Action Plan
SEPA	Washington State Environmental Policy Act
SMP	Shoreline Master Program
SOV	Single-Occupancy Vehicle
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USC	United States Code
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface

FINAL EIS SEPA FACT SHEET

Project Title

2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update.

Nature and Location of Proposed Action and Alternatives

The 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update (2024 Update) is a nonproject action related to unincorporated King County, Washington.

Location

King County, Washington.

Applicant

King County.

SEPA Lead Agency

King County.

Responsible SEPA Official

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Required Approvals

The King County Council will need to adopt the 2024 Update.

Authors and Principal Contributors

This Final EIS has been prepared under the direction of King County Executive and Council staff. Authors and contributors to the Final EIS include:

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Date of Draft EIS Issuance

December 7, 2023.

Date of Final EIS Issuance

November 6, 2024.

Timing of Final Agency Action

King County anticipates taking final agency action on the 2024 Update by December 2024.

Type and Timing of Subsequent Environmental Review

Subsequent project-level review will be completed, as needed, for project actions occurring under the 2024 Update.

Location of Background Information

Background information on the 2024 Update can be found here: [LINK]

Final EIS Availability

A copy of this Final EIS may be found here: [LINK]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

King County issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on December 7, 2023, evaluating the potential environmental impacts of the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update (2024 Update). This Final EIS has been prepared consistent with Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11.

FINAL EIS

Changes to the text, including deletions and new text added since issuance of the Draft EIS, are shown in underline and ~~strikeout~~.

All maps in the FEIS have been updated from the DEIS to show current data layers and background layers and to correct errors.

Proposed Action

The King County Comprehensive Plan is a key policy document that guides how growth and development will occur within unincorporated King County over the next 20 years. It guides King County (County) decisions and services, such as:

- Where homes, offices, or stores can be built.
- How roads, buildings, and trees contribute to the look and feel of neighborhoods.
- Where investments in transit and parks should be made.
- How to protect working farms and forests.
- How to ensure access to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment.

The County is updating its Comprehensive Plan to meet the most recent goals and requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). The 2024 ~~King County Comprehensive Plan~~ Update ~~(2024 Update)~~ provides an opportunity to make substantive policy changes that address the community's long-term needs and advance the County's policy goals. The GMA-required update must be completed by December 31, 2024.

The 2024 Update is rooted in the value of making King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive. In support of this value, the 2024 Update has three focus areas: equity, housing, and climate change and the environment.

Proposal Objectives

The 2024 Update includes an overarching goal of fostering a welcoming community where every person can thrive and is focused on equity, housing, and climate change and the environment in order to:

- Implement the current GMA, Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs), and Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs).
- Reflect, create alignment with, and advance current plans, regulations, and practices.
- Ensure consistency between the Plan and the King County Code.

Specific objectives include:

- Reducing housing and business displacement and advancing equity for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Integrating a pro-equity and anti-racist policy framework that improves outcomes for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who earn less than 80 percent of the AMI.
- Improving health equity outcomes in communities with the greatest and most acute needs.
- Aligning housing policies and regulations with the CPPs and Washington State Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220 (Chapter 254 Laws of 2021).
- Improving affordable housing supply, especially for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants and/or refugees, especially those that earn less than 80 percent of the AMI.
- Expanding housing options at all levels of affordability.
- Aligning with and advancing the King County 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan[1] to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support sustainable and resilient communities, and prepare for climate change.
- Integrating and implementing the County's Clean Water, Healthy Habitat goals.
- Increasing the amount of land that is preserved for conservation.
- Implementing CPPs.
- Addressing the outcomes of the County's Subarea Planning Program.
- Updating transportation policies.
- Improving regulations governing rural and natural resources.
- Implementing land use ~~designation~~ and zoning ~~classification~~ changes.

Alternatives Considered for Analysis

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires that an ~~environmental impact statement (~~EIS~~)~~ analyze the probable adverse environmental impacts of a range of reasonable alternatives, including a "no action" alternative (~~Washington Administrative Code (~~WAC~~)~~ 197-11-402(1) and WAC 197-11-060(3)). For nonproject proposals, such as the 2024 Update, SEPA encourages agencies to describe the proposal in terms of alternative means of accomplishing a stated objective rather than a preferred solution (WAC 197-11-442(2)).

Accordingly, the alternatives evaluated in this ~~Draft~~ Final EIS are intended to illustrate alternate means of implementing the current GMA, MPPs, and CPPs; reflecting, creating alignment with, and advancing current plans, regulations, and practices; and updating the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022 (Current Plan), and the King County Code. When adopted, the 2024 Update may be one of the alternatives or blend components of multiple alternatives together.

[1] King County, 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan as adopted in Motion 15866, 2021. [LINK]

Potential Amendments to the Proposal

Additional detail or changes to the proposal are reflected in the Final EIS, consistent with WAC 197-11-405. The 2024 Update proposed by the King County Executive may be accessed on the King County website and includes changes that are the same as or similar to changes included in each of the action alternatives.[2] Since the transmittal of the Executive Recommended Plan, the Local Services and Land Use Committee has made a recommendation to the full Council. This recommended version made changes to the proposed amendments to existing code and policies in the Executive Recommended Plan. The Committee recommended version includes a striking amendment, as well as a series of adopted line amendments, to the Executive's Recommended Plan.[3] King County Councilmembers have since proposed other amendments to the Committee recommended version, and amendments will continue to be considered until a final proposal is adopted.

The range of potential impacts of the Committee recommended version and the known amendment concepts in the public hearing notice generally fall within the range of impacts associated with the alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS. Additional examples have been added to Table 2.3-1, Alternatives Example Table, to highlight changes being considered since publication of the Draft EIS, and additional discussion of those changes is included throughout this Final EIS. King County is also proposing several map amendments to land use designations and zoning classifications and has published several area zoning and land use studies, which are described and analyzed in a new Appendix B, Map Amendments and Area Zoning and Land Use Studies. ~~The King County Council may also propose variations from the Executive Recommended Plan and the proposals included in each of the action alternatives. The range of potential impacts from the action alternatives is anticipated to cover the potential impacts from the adopted 2024 Update.~~

Features Common to All Alternatives

Three alternatives are ~~proposed~~ being considered, as described below. All three of the alternatives, which include the No Action, Limited Change, and Extensive Change alternatives, would:

- Include goals and policies that address, to varying degrees, equity, housing, and climate change and the environment.
- Build on existing growth patterns.
- Allow growth that is below existing capacity within unincorporated King County. All alternatives assume the same estimated growth capacity within urban unincorporated areas, which was determined to be 7,386 housing units and 1,680 jobs, as identified in the 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report.[4]

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[2] King County, 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022. [LINK]

[3] *See* Proposed Ordinance 2024-0440 (Committee recommendation to Council), Committee amendments as of June 5, 2025 ("Do Pass" Recommendation), line amendments to the Striking Amendment to the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan, and Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440 (Striking Amendment), all at 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan "Council Amendments" website, [LINK]

[4] King County, 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report, 2021. [LINK]

While the capacity for growth is consistent among all three alternatives, the growth assumptions underlying the alternatives vary between the No Action and action alternatives.

- The No Action Alternative carries forward the growth targets from the 2012 CPPs. These growth targets are higher than the 2021 CPP targets. The No Action Alternative anticipates about 9,000 new housing units and 6,800 new jobs within urban unincorporated King County.
- The two action alternatives use the policy and regulatory framework from the 2021 CPPs and the associated growth targets. The action alternatives anticipate 5,412 new housing units and 3,340 new jobs within urban unincorporated King County.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would retain the Current Plan and associated land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards. Under this alternative, the County would not update the Current Plan or King County Code to align with the current GMA, MPPs, or CPPs that have not already been included in the Plan updates made since the last statutory update.

The Current Plan includes goals and policies aimed at addressing equity, housing, and climate change and the environment that would remain in effect. For example, the Current Plan policies support community development tools, such as food innovation districts and residential local improvement districts; commit to exploring increasing housing density and affordable housing near businesses and transit; and include Rural Area policies intended to avoid incompatible uses.

Action Alternative 1: Limited Change Alternative

The Limited Change Alternative consists of amendments to the Current Plan goals and policies as well as related land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards that would meet the proposal objective through a smaller-scale approach. The Limited Change Alternative would generally:

- Implement smaller, more incremental changes over time, using essentially the same level of resources as the Current Plan and within existing regulatory authority.
- Include voluntary programs, incentives, and policies that support the proposal objectives, as opposed to mandates or requirements.
- Not expand the applicability of existing requirements, programs, incentives, or policies to new or larger geographic areas beyond where a similar framework already applies.

For example, the Limited Change Alternative would seek to achieve the proposal objectives by adopting policies that further encourage or incentivize, but not mandate, inclusionary housing.

The Limited Change Alternative is generally anticipated to facilitate more minor changes with both potential positive and adverse impacts to the environment over time. It would also include minor technical amendments and incorporate statutorily required changes. Please see Chapter 2 in the ~~Draft~~ Final EIS for a table of examples of 2024 Update proposals under the Limited Change Alternative, including additional examples being considered since issuance of the Draft EIS or responding to public comments.

Action Alternative 2: Extensive Change Alternative

The Extensive Change Alternative consists of amendments to the Current Plan goals and policies as well as related land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards that would meet the proposal objective through broader, more major changes. The Extensive Change Alternative would generally:

- Implement more substantial changes than the Limited Change Alternative and could require additional resources and regulatory authority.
- Include mandatory programs and requirements that advance the proposal objectives rather than only voluntary programs, incentives, or policies.
- In some instances, expand the applicability of existing requirements, programs, incentives, and policies to new or larger geographic areas beyond where a similar framework already applies.

For example, the Extensive Change Alternative would seek to achieve the proposal objectives by expanding mandatory inclusionary housing to all unincorporated areas.

The Extensive Change Alternative is generally anticipated to have more substantial changes with both positive and adverse impacts to the environment compared to the Limited Change Alternative. It would also include minor and technical amendments and incorporate statutorily required changes. Please see Chapter 2 in the ~~Draft~~ Final EIS for a table of examples of 2024 Update proposals under the Extensive Change Alternative, including additional examples being considered since issuance of the Draft EIS or responding to public comments.

Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section summarizes the impacts of the proposed action alternatives. In general, the action alternatives being considered for the 2024 Update would result in overall positive impacts to both the natural and built environment. However, in some instances there would be trade-offs where an action may have benefits within one area of the environment and detriments to another. The ~~Draft~~ Final EIS considers whether the proposal will have significant adverse environmental impacts rather than considering whether those are outweighed by any beneficial aspects. The 2024 Update is not anticipated to result in any probable significant adverse impacts, so no mitigation measures are proposed for either action alternative. However, avoidance and minimization measures are nonetheless identified throughout this ~~Draft~~ Final EIS where potential impacts could be further reduced. Development under all alternatives would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to the environment.

Please see Chapters 3 and 4 in the ~~Draft~~ Final EIS for a more detailed discussion of the affected environment, anticipated impacts, and potential avoidance and minimization measures for each element of the environment.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, development would continue under the goals and policies of the Current Plan and existing land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards. Some progress would continue to be made in meeting the County's objectives to address equity, housing, and climate change and the environment, though perhaps not as far as under the Limited or Extensive Change alternatives. Following are ***examples*** of potential impacts from the No Action Alternative, whether positive or negative.

Natural Environment

King County would not be expected to meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals under the No Action Alternative without additional incentives to curb the use of fossil fuels and transition to alternative forms of energy. Development would follow existing density patterns, resulting in a greater increase in impervious surfaces, reduction of tree cover in urban unincorporated areas, and possible pressure to develop unprotected farmland and forestland as compared to the action alternatives.

Built Environment

Under the No Action Alternative, the Current Plan would be inconsistent with recent amendments to the GMA, the MPPs, and King County CPPs. This would affect the County's ability to accommodate and manage urban growth in alignment with regional planning efforts. While the County would continue existing and planned efforts to address housing affordability under the No Action Alternative, it may not be able to keep pace with the high demand. Similarly, while the County has plans to address equitable access to parks and open space resources, inequities could continue to exist for urban unincorporated residents. Also, current maintenance backlogs for the transportation network would continue to affect access to and availability of public transit options for vulnerable communities.

Limited Change Alternative

The Limited Change Alternative includes voluntary programs, incentives, and policies to implement smaller, more incremental changes related to land use, zoning classifications, and development standards. The County would be expected to make progress in meeting its objectives to address equity, housing, and climate change and the environment under this alternative to a greater degree than under the No Action Alternative, though not as far as under the Extensive Change Alternative. Following are ***examples*** of potential impacts from the Limited Change Alternative, whether positive or negative.

Natural Environment

The Limited Change Alternative would incentivize several actions that, collectively, would help the County reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and protect water resources, farmland, critical areas, and natural habitat from development to a greater degree than under the No Action Alternative. However, the Limited Change Alternative could result in the conversion of Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands through policies that provide expanded allowances for the development of renewable energy, resorts, or industrial uses. The Limited Change Alternative would also incentivize active production of farmland in agricultural zones, which could result in greater localized water quality impacts within areas zoned for agriculture as compared to the No Action Alternative.

Built Environment

Changes to density allowances and incentives for inclusionary housing under the Limited Change Alternative would increase the variety of housing options and lead to development patterns within and closer to existing urban areas to a greater degree than the No Action Alternative. This would support housing for a broader range of income levels and more efficient expansion of utility and public services than compared to the No Action Alternative. Allowances for temporary and emergency housing would support short-term housing needs, though may impact social service providers. The Limited Change Alternative could result in potentially greater preservation of open space than the No Action Alternative, through changes to the County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Four-to-One programs. At the same time, those changes could alter the geographic pattern of land designated for conservation,

including greater urban development within unincorporated rural areas. Tourism, resort, and economic development-oriented buildings would be allowed to a greater degree in the Rural Area, on Natural Resource Lands, and within agricultural zones than under the No Action Alternative, which could result in development inconsistent with the existing character of those areas.

Extensive Change Alternative

The Extensive Change Alternative includes mandatory programs and requirements to implement more substantial changes related to land use, zoning classifications, and development standards compared to the Limited Change Alternative. The County would be expected to make progress in meeting its objectives to address equity, housing, and climate change and the environment under this alternative to a greater degree than under both the No Action Alternative and Limited Change Alternative. Following are ***examples*** of potential impacts from the Extensive Change Alternative, whether positive or negative.

Natural Environment

In comparison to the Limited Change Alternative, the Extensive Change Alternative would help the County to a greater degree in meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and protecting water resources, farmland, critical areas, and natural habitat from development. However, the Extensive Change Alternative could result in a greater conversion of Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands through policies that provide expanded allowances for the development of renewable energy, resorts, or industrial uses than the other alternatives. The Extensive Change Alternative would require, rather than incentivize, active production of farmland in agricultural zones, which could result in greater localized water quality impacts within areas zoned for agriculture as compared to the Limited Change Alternative.

Built Environment

The Extensive Change Alternative includes greater allowances for density and requirements for inclusionary housing than the Limited Change Alternative. It could increase the variety of housing options and lead to development patterns within and closer to existing urban areas and those served by public transit. This would support housing for a broader range of income levels and lead to a more efficient expansion of utility and public services than compared to the Limited Change Alternative. Substantial increases in allowances for temporary and emergency housing would support short-term housing needs, though could necessitate an increase in social service provider staff and resources.

The Extensive Change Alternative would conserve more land as rural through the TDR Program and make more substantive updates to the Four-to-One Program requirements, including changes that are more likely to increase participation. As with the Limited Change Alternative however, the Extensive Change Alternative could alter the geographic pattern of land designated for conservation, including greater urban development within unincorporated rural areas. Tourism, resort, and economic development-oriented buildings would be allowed to a greater degree in the Rural Area, on Natural Resource Lands, and within agricultural zones, which could result in development inconsistent with the existing character of those areas.

Significant Areas of Controversy and Uncertainty and Issues to Be Resolved

The environmental review has identified and addressed the significant policy areas being addressed in the 2024 Plan update. Numerous factors create uncertainty for the implementation of the plan, such as the real estate market and private market financing, state planning and public financing, and others.

Because the 2024 Update process is happening concurrently with the production of this ~~Draft~~ Final EIS, there is uncertainty around which proposals will ultimately be adopted by the 2024 Update. ~~During this process, t~~The King County Executive proposed an Executive Recommended Plan to the King County Council on December 7, 2023. ~~Over the next year~~ Since then, the King County Council ~~will review and amend~~ has reviewed and proposed amendments to the proposals ahead of adoption in late 2024. ~~Due to the uncertainty around adopted proposals, this Draft EIS evaluates alternatives which attempt to cover a range of proposals and their potential environmental impacts.~~ As discussed in the section above, Alternatives Considered for Analysis, the 2024 Update may be one of the EIS alternatives or a blend of proposals from multiple alternatives, consistent with SEPA.

~~There is also uncertainty around the identification of a preferred alternative.~~ SEPA does not require a preferred alternative to be identified for non-project proposals, though the lead agency may select one or more. ~~If t~~The County ~~chooses~~ chose not to select a preferred alternative, ~~it will be~~ so no preferred alternative is identified in ~~the~~ this Final EIS.

1. INTRODUCTION

The King County Comprehensive Plan is a key policy document that guides how growth and development will occur within unincorporated King County over the next 20 years. It guides County decisions and services, such as:

- Where homes, offices, or stores can be built.
- How roads, buildings, and trees contribute to the look and feel of neighborhoods.
- Where investments in transit and parks should be made.
- How to protect working farms and forests.
- How to ensure access to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment.

FINAL EIS

Changes to the text, including deletions and new text added since issuance of the Draft EIS, are shown in underline and ~~strikeout~~.

All maps in the FEIS have been updated from the DEIS to show current data layers and background layers and to correct errors.

The 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update (2024 Update) is an opportunity to make substantive policy changes that address the community's long-term needs and advance the County's policy goals. This update also meets requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) to complete a comprehensive review and update to the Comprehensive Plan to ensure compliance with GMA goals and requirements. The GMA-required update must be completed by December 31, 2024.

The 2024 Update is rooted in the value of making King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive. In support of this value, the 2024 Update has three focus areas: equity, housing, and climate change and the environment.

1.1 Background

King County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1964 (Ordinance 263) and its first major update to the Comprehensive Plan in 1985 (Ordinance 7178). The 1985 Plan established an urban growth boundary to encourage growth in areas with existing infrastructure and ensure affordable housing and diversity in communities while protecting critical habitat, open spaces, and Natural Resource Lands. Pursuant to the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA; Chapter 197-11 Washington Administrative Code (WAC)), King County prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the 1985 Plan.

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature enacted the GMA to promote coordinated and planned growth, conservation and wise use of lands, environmental protection, sustainable economic development, public health and safety, and a high quality of life.[5] The GMA lists several goals to guide cities[6] and counties in their planning efforts that address urban growth, affordable housing, multimodal transportation systems,

[5] Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.010.

[6] For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan EIS process, the term “cities” includes incorporated towns. It does not include unincorporated Rural Towns.

protection of natural resources and the environment, public facilities and services, open space and recreation, and the involvement of the public in the planning process, among others.[7]

In anticipation of passage of the GMA, King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties built upon their existing coordination efforts to form the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), a Regional Transportation Planning Organization under Chapter 47.80 RCW. Shortly after the GMA was enacted, PSRC adopted Vision 2020, a regional planning document to address where and how Central Puget Sound would grow and meet transportation, economic, and housing needs for people living and working in the region. Vision 2020 strategies and Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs) were consistent with the intent of the GMA to anticipate and manage growth over a 20-year planning horizon. PSRC continues to develop policies and coordinate decisions about regional growth, transportation, and economic development planning; it adopted VISION 2040 in 2008 and adopted VISION 2050, the current regional plan, in 2020.[8] PSRC is composed of nearly 100 members, including the four counties as well as the cities, towns, ports, state and local transportation agencies, and Tribal governments within the Central Puget Sound region.

In 1992, King County and the cities within its boundaries established interlocal agreements to form the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC). The GMPC developed the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) to meet the GMA's requirements for coordinated planning among all the jurisdictions within King County. The initial CPPs, adopted through Ordinance 10450 and updated through Ordinance 11446, served as the framework for all comprehensive plans. The CPPs also recommended, and then the Comprehensive Plan adopted, an Urban Growth Area (UGA) for King County, where the most growth and development was projected to occur, with goals to reduce urban sprawl, protect the Rural Area, and to efficiently provide roads, parks, and services. The CPPs were substantively updated in 2012 to reflect the updated MPPs in VISION 2040. The most recent substantive update to the CPPs occurred in 2021 with Ordinance 19384 to reflect the updated MPPs in VISION 2050, and they were amended again with Ordinance 19553.

In November 1994, the County issued a Supplemental EIS for the 1994 Comprehensive Plan Update, which built on the environmental documentation completed for the 1985 Comprehensive Plan. The 1994 Comprehensive Plan, adopted through Ordinance 11575, was the first plan adopted to meet GMA requirements. In 1995, the County updated the development regulations necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan through Ordinance 11653.

Between 1995 and 1997, the County conducted annual reviews of the Comprehensive Plan and, starting in 1998, limited annual reviews to technical changes only. This process allowed for substantial policy changes and issues to be addressed only during major update cycles, the first of which occurred in 2000. Another Supplemental EIS to the 1985 EIS was completed in November of 2000 to evaluate the environmental impacts of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan.

The County conducted subsequent quadrennial reviews and significant revisions to the Comprehensive Plan in 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020. These updates relied on existing environmental documents, including the 1985 EIS, the 1995 Supplemental EIS, and the 2000 Supplemental EIS. Specific impacts from these updates were described in addenda to those existing environmental documents. The County

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[7] RCW 36.70A.020.

[8] PSRC, VISION 2040, April 2008. [LINK]; PSRC, VISION 2050: A Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region, October 2020. [LINK]

has also adopted existing environmental documents from other agencies, including the EISs from PSRC related to VISION 2040 and VISION 2050.

The current 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 6, 2022 and referred to here as "the Current Plan," has a planning horizon of 2006 through 2031 and includes the following components:

- Executive Summary.
- Chapter 1 – Regional Growth Management Planning.
- Chapter 2 – Urban Communities.
- Chapter 3 – Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands.
- Chapter 4 – Housing and Human Services.
- Chapter 5 – Environment.
- Chapter 6 – Shorelines.
- Chapter 7 – Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources.
- Chapter 8 – Transportation.
- Chapter 9 – Services, Facilities and Utilities.
- Chapter 10 – Economic Development.
- Chapter 11 – Community Service Area Subarea Planning.
- Chapter 12 – Implementation, Amendments and Evaluation.
- Glossary.
- Various technical appendices and adopted subarea plans.

King County is required to complete its next periodic comprehensive plan review, evaluation, and update by December 31, 2024, and every 10 years thereafter. The County must consider population allocations, UGA densities, locations of growth in the cities and County, protection of critical areas, and other key factors in its review for the 2024 Update.[9]

1.2 Study Area

The "study area" for this ~~Draft~~ Final EIS consists of unincorporated King County, which is the area governed by the King County Comprehensive Plan, and includes the Urban Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands. Amendments to the Current Plan may impact elements of the environment beyond the political boundaries of the plan's jurisdiction, so any discussion of areas or impacts outside of unincorporated King County are included only to the extent that those areas or impacts are related to the proposed updates or provide context for issues that cross jurisdictional borders.

[9] RCW 36.70A.130.

1.3 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Washington State Growth Management Act

Comprehensive plans and development regulations (codes) within King County must be consistent with the provisions of the GMA.

Key provisions of the GMA include the following:

- Planning Goals.
- MPPs.
- CPPs.
- Local Comprehensive Plans.
- Urban Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands.
- Review and Evaluation Program (sometimes referred to as the Buildable Lands Program).
- Development Regulations.

GMA Planning

As described in Section 1.1, Background, the GMA sets forth planning goals to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations by counties and cities.[10] With the GMA goals as a guide, jurisdictions subject to the GMA, including King County, must prepare comprehensive plans that include maps and text describing the objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the comprehensive plan.[11]

All elements of the comprehensive plan must be consistent with the future land use map. Required elements of the comprehensive plan include land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, and, for counties only, the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.[12] Economic development and parks and recreation are required when funding is provided, but jurisdictions often prepare the elements to meet state and local goals and grant opportunities; King County's Comprehensive Plan includes an Economic Development element and a Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Resources element. In the 2023 session, the legislature amended the GMA to require planning for Climate Change and Resiliency in comprehensive plans; those updates are not required until the 2029 and 2034 comprehensive plan updates.[13] Local governments may include other elements if they wish, including subarea plans.[14] All development regulations, such as zoning classifications or critical areas ordinances, must be consistent with a county or city's comprehensive plan.[15]

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[10] RCW 36.70A.020.

[11] RCW 36.70A.070.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1181. [LINK]

[14] RCW 36.70A.080.

[15] RCW 36.70A.040.

Puget Sound Regional Council – VISION 2050 – Multicounty Planning Policies

The GMA also requires the adoption of MPPs for larger counties with a contiguous urban area, such as those in the Central Puget Sound region.[16]

In King, Kitsap, Snohomish, and Pierce counties, MPPs serve as the regional framework for growth management. They guide land use, economic development, public services, environmental planning, and transportation projects within Central Puget Sound. MPPs serve three key roles:

- Implementing the Regional Growth Strategy.
- Creating a common planning framework for local plans and CPPs.
- Providing the policy structure for other regional plans.

VISION 2050 establishes the region's MPPs. It is the current regional plan for managing growth over the coming decades in King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. It was prepared by PSRC in coordination with its member jurisdictions and approved by the PSRC General Assembly in October 2020.

VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy calls for new housing, jobs, and development in regional growth centers and near High-Capacity Transit. Regional growth centers are located within Metropolitan Cities and Core Cities and are characterized by compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of uses and are envisioned as a major focal point of higher-density population and employment, with efficient multimodal transportation infrastructure and services. The Regional Growth Strategy also aims to keep the Rural Area, farmlands, and forests healthy and thriving.

VISION 2050 incorporates a focus on locating growth in more compact, walkable, and transit-served locations. VISION 2050 includes a goal for 65 percent of the region's population growth, anticipated to reach 5.8 million people by 2050, and 75 percent of the region's employment growth, forecasted to be 3.4 million jobs by 2050, to be in regional growth centers and within walking distance of High-Capacity Transit. VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy calls for High-Capacity Transit Communities—cities and urban unincorporated areas with existing or planned high-capacity transit investments—to accommodate 24 percent of the region's population growth (approximately 1.4 million people) and 13 percent of its employment growth by the year 2050. This regional-scale goal provides a benchmark to inform local planning and continue to focus new growth as transit investments come into service.

Within King County, most population and job growth (approximately 95 percent) will go to incorporated Metropolitan Cities and Core Cities, followed by High-Capacity Transit Communities, some of which are located in urban unincorporated King County.

Countywide Planning Policies

The 2021 CPPs, adopted through Ordinance 19384 and amended by Ordinance 19553, provide guidance to incorporate changes to the regional policy framework in advance of the 2024 Update and reflect new priorities addressing equity and social justice within communities in King County. The CPPs create a shared and consistent framework for growth management planning between the County and the 39 cities within King County, in accordance with RCW 36.70A.210. The CPPs implement the MPPs and

[16] RCW 36.70A.210(7) and WAC 365-196-305(8).

provide more specific details to guide County and local comprehensive planning by including the following:

- Policies to implement the UGA.
- Policies for the promotion of contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services.
- Policies for siting public capital facilities of countywide or statewide nature.
- Policies for countywide transportation facilities and strategies.
- Policies that consider the need for affordable housing for all economic segments of the population and parameters for its distribution.
- Policies for joint County and city planning within the UGA.
- Policies for joint countywide economic development and employment.
- Fiscal impact analysis.
- Policies that address the protection of Tribal cultural resources, developed in collaboration with Indian Tribes.

As required by the GMA, the CPPs adopt the 2019 through 2044 housing and job growth targets for each jurisdiction within the County, as well as urban unincorporated areas of the county.

As shown in Table 1.1-1, Urban Unincorporated King County 2019–2044 Growth Targets (Non-High-Capacity Transit Communities), unincorporated areas in the County that are not High-Capacity Transit Communities have a growth target of 1,292 housing units and 700 jobs by 2044. As shown in Table 1.1-2, Urban Unincorporated King County 2019–2044 Growth Targets (Associated with High-Capacity Transit), Communities the urban unincorporated areas identified as Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) and classified in VISION 2050 as High-Capacity Transit Communities have a growth target of 4,120 new housing units and 2,640 new jobs.

Table 1.1-1. Urban Unincorporated King County 2019–2044 Growth Targets, Non-High-Capacity Transit Communities

2019–2044 Growth Targets	Housing Units	Jobs
Auburn PAA	12	0
Bellevue PAA	17	0
Black Diamond PAA	328	0
Issaquah PAA	35	0
Kent PAA	3	300
Newcastle PAA	1	0
Pacific PAA	134	0
Redmond PAA	120	0
Sammamish PAA	194	0
Unaffiliated Urban Unincorporated	448	400
Urban Unincorporated Subtotal	1,292	700

Source: 2021 King County Countywide Planning Policies (King County 2022)

Table 1.1-2. Urban Unincorporated King County 2019–2044 Growth Targets, Associated with High-Capacity Transit Communities

2019–2044 Growth Targets	Housing Units	Jobs
Federal Way PAA	1,020	720
North Highline PAA	1,420	1,220
Renton PAA- East Renton	170	0
Renton PAA- Fairwood	840	100
Renton PAA- Skyway/West Hill	670	600
High-Capacity Transit Unincorporated Subtotal	4,120	2,640

Source: 2021 King County Countywide Planning Policies (King County 2022)

Local Comprehensive Plans

Local comprehensive plans direct how a local community will grow and change by articulating a series of goals, objectives, policies, actions, and standards that are intended to guide day-to-day decisions by elected officials and local government staff.

Land Use Categories: Urban Area, Natural Resource Land, and Rural Area

Under the GMA, there are three general categories of land: an Urban Area, Natural Resource Lands, and a Rural Area. Each county that is planning under the GMA must "designate an urban growth area or areas within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature."[17] A county's UGA must allow a range of urban densities and areas sufficient to accommodate a broad range of needs and uses, such as medical, governmental, institutional, commercial, service, retail, and other nonresidential uses, and can include greenbelt and open space areas. The area of the UGA must be sufficient to meet 20-year growth projections. The GMA directs most population and employment growth to be focused in urban areas to avoid sprawl, provide efficient and effective services and infrastructure, and protect environmentally critical areas.

Natural Resource Lands are those lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for agriculture, forestry, or mineral resource extraction. Jurisdictions must adopt regulations protecting these resource uses from conversion to other non-resource uses.[18]

The Rural Area includes "development outside the urban growth area and outside agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands" and can consist of a variety of uses and residential densities at levels that are consistent with the preservation of rural character.[19] Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential densities and may use techniques such as "clustering, density transfer, design guidelines, conservation easements, and other innovative techniques that will accommodate appropriate rural economic advancement, densities and uses that are not characterized by urban growth and that are consistent with rural character."[20] The rural element (in King County, the Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands chapter) of the comprehensive plan must include measures to contain development and protect against sprawl, assure visual compatibility with the surrounding rural setting, protect critical areas, and protect against conflicts with agricultural, forest, and mineral resource uses.

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[17] RCW 36.70A.110.

[18] RCW 36.70A.060.

[19] RCW 36.70A.030(24).

[20] RCW 36.70A.070(5)(b).

Review and Evaluation Program

The Review and Evaluation Program requires King County to determine the amount of land suitable for urban development and evaluate the capacity for growth, based upon measurement of recent actual development activity.[21] This is commonly referred to as a "buildable lands report," or, in King County, the "Urban Growth Capacity Report."

The 2021 King County Urban Growth Capacity Report was adopted via Ordinance 19369 on December 14, 2021, and ratified on April 6, 2022.[22] Between 2006 and 2018, the County had a net gain of about 131,000 new housing units, with 4 percent of new housing construction occurring in urban unincorporated areas and 3 percent in rural unincorporated areas. Findings from the Urban Growth Capacity Report indicate that the growth capacity within urban unincorporated areas is about 7,400 housing units and 1,700 jobs, compared to about 406,000 housing units and 613,000 jobs in the urban area countywide (including both incorporated and unincorporated areas). The growth capacity in urban unincorporated areas included the capacity in unincorporated PAAs, including the Federal Way, North Highline, and Renton PAAs, which are now designated as High-Capacity Transit Communities in VISION 2050. The Urban Growth Capacity Report evaluated the performance of the existing growth targets to the year 2035, as required by GMA, and provided baseline information for the development of the 2044 growth targets, which were adopted in the 2021 CPPs and will be incorporated into the 2024 Update.

Development Regulations

The GMA requires that all development regulations be consistent with comprehensive plans. Development regulations include provisions such as building and construction standards, clearing and grading, land segregation, and zoning.

1.4 SEPA and Public Involvement

1.4.1 SEPA Scoping Process

King County determined that the 2024 Update has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on the environment, and therefore an EIS is required by RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). Subsequently, the County issued a Determination of Significance on August 10, 2022, to solicit comments on the scope of the EIS.[23] Agencies, Tribes, and members of the public were invited to provide comments between August 10 and August 31, 2022, on the alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts, and mitigation measures for the 2024 Update. The County received 10 comments, six from members of the public and four from organizations. These comments were summarized and included in their entirety in the King County Comprehensive Plan Scoping Summary Report.[24]

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[21] RCW 36.70A.215.

[22] King County, King County Urban Growth Capacity Report, June 2021. [LINK]

[23] King County, State Environmental Policy Act Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of Environmental Impact Statement, August 2022. [LINK]

[24] King County, King County Comprehensive Plan Scoping Summary Report, October 2022. [LINK]

1.4.2 Purpose of the EIS

The analysis in this ~~Draft~~ Final EIS will be used to review the environmental impacts of the 2024 Update. The adoption of comprehensive plans or other long-range planning activities is classified as a nonproject action under SEPA.[25] A nonproject action is defined as an action that involves decisions on policies, plans, or programs. An EIS for a nonproject proposal does not require site-specific analyses; instead, it should discuss potential impacts appropriate to the scope and planning level of the nonproject proposal.[26] Specifically related to an EIS for a comprehensive plan, SEPA provides that the discussion of alternatives "shall be limited to a general discussion of the impacts of alternate proposals for policies contained in such plans, for land use or shoreline designations, and for implementation measures. The lead agency is not required under SEPA to examine all conceivable policies, designations, or implementation measures but should cover a range of such topics."[27]

This ~~Draft~~ Final EIS is meant to help the public and decision-makers identify and evaluate the potential environmental effects of alternative policies, development patterns, service standards, and implementation approaches related to future growth. Additional environmental review will occur as subsequent project or nonproject actions are proposed in the county in the future; future environmental review could occur in the form of new EISs, Supplemental EISs, adoption of existing environmental documents, SEPA addenda, or determinations of nonsignificance.[28]

1.4.3 Public Involvement

To support early and continuous engagement throughout the 2024 Update, County staff developed a multiphase public participation plan with a focus on (1) centering the voices of those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, and other intersectional populations, including those who earn less than 80 percent of the area median income; people with disabilities; seniors; LGBTQIA+ people; and/or those who identify as women; and (2) partnering with King County equity cabinets and community-based organizations. This public participation plan strove to meet the "County engages in dialogue" level of community engagement as outlined in the King County Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice Community Engagement Guide,[29] with a two-way channel of communication, multiple interactions, the advancement of solutions to complex problems, and creation of an advisory board and community partnerships.

During the scoping phase of the 2024 Update in early 2022, the County shared information about comprehensive planning and the 2024 Update and requested public input. Based on community feedback, the scope was further informed by review of recent community input from the Skyway-West Hill and North Highline subarea planning processes, as well as the community recommendations from the King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission, Mobility Equity Cabinet, Open Space Equity Cabinet, and Climate Equity Community Task Force.

Throughout the development of the Executive Public Review Draft from mid-2022 through mid-2023, the County engaged the community through a number of methods, including the creation of an Equity Work Group. The Equity Work Group, consisting of 15 community members from historically

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[25] WAC 197-11-704.

[26] WAC 197-11-442.

[27] WAC 197-11-442(4).

[28] WAC 197-11-443.

[29] King County, Community Engagement Guide, 2011. [LINK]

underrepresented groups, worked closely with Executive staff to incorporate equity considerations into the 2024 Update. Their work included educational engagement to expand their personal knowledge base, discussion and development of key proposals, and participation in the equity impact review process. Additionally, the Equity Work Group was instrumental for shaping the community engagement methods for the 2024 Update, as well as identifying the groups that should be included in the engagement process.

The Executive also provided opportunities for the general public to stay informed and provide input via website, social media, newsletters, emails, surveys, town hall meetings, ethnic media, and partnerships with local businesses and community-based organizations at key milestones.

- After the scope was approved by the Council, the Executive implemented a large-scale awareness campaign for the general public in September and October 2022. This effort was centered around an opportunity for the general public to provide input on the three main theme areas for the 2024 Update (equity, housing, and climate change and the environment) and included use of a partnership with a community-based organization that specializes in "last-mile" outreach to populations historically underrepresented in comprehensive planning.[30]
- During February 2023, County staff shared draft conceptual proposals with the public and offered a variety of ways to engage with the County about the concepts, such as an incentivized feedback survey and virtual town halls. One of the unique aspects of this effort was a partnership with a local bakery to provide incentives for those who participated in the survey and a place-based outreach effort conducted in partnership with the members of the Equity Work Group to meet people where they are.
- The third phase of engagement began after the Public Review Draft of the 2024 Update was released on June 1, 2023, for a 45-day public review and comment period. Engagement during this time included an open house at the Southgate Roller Rink in White Center; three virtual town halls; tabling at community-led events; working with ethnic media outlets and social media micro-influencers who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; and partnering with community centers in neighborhoods that have been historically underrepresented in the planning process.
- All efforts included the use of language access strategies, including but not limited to materials translated into six or more languages, interpretation services, and use of illustration and graphic design for key materials.

Following completion of the public comment period on the Public Review Draft, an Executive Recommended Plan informed by this public input was submitted to the Council in December 2023.

The Council review, refinement, and adoption process throughout 2024 ~~will~~ included additional public outreach and opportunities for public input as part of the decision-making process. This ~~will~~ included~~, at a minimum,~~ the ability to submit written feedback throughout the process, opportunities for verbal public comment at Committee meetings during the day and at five evening meetings held around the County, ad-hoc meetings between interested parties and individual Councilmembers, a formal public hearing before the full Council, a 30-day notice of the public hearing date and a formal comment period,

[30] Historically underrepresented groups or populations are communities of people whose experiences, opinions, and life outcomes have intentionally or indirectly not been sought out or reflected in planning processes. Historically underrepresented groups often include Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities; immigrants; refugees; people living with low incomes; people speaking a language(s) other than English; women and gender non-conforming individuals; and LGBTQIA+ people.

emailed notices of key milestones and opportunities for input, and a mailed notice to properties near proposed land use designation and/or zoning classification changes.

1.4.4 SEPA Public Comment Period

Following issuance of the Draft EIS, King County provided a public comment period from December 7, 2023, through January 31, 2024. The comments received and the County's responses are included in Appendix A. The County reviewed all comments that were received and prepared this Final EIS consistent with WAC 197-11-560, which requires the agency to consider comments on the proposal and respond in one of the following ways:

(a) Modifying alternatives.

(b) Developing and evaluating new alternatives.

(c) Supplementing, improving, or modifying the analysis.

(d) Making factual corrections.

(e) Explaining why no further agency response is warranted.

A majority of comments received during the public comment period on the Draft EIS express a policy preference regarding the 2024 Update rather than input on the Draft EIS. For those types of comments, the County may consider them as part of the 2024 Update process, but no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

1.5 Summary of Environmental Impacts Evaluated

This ~~Draft~~ Final EIS discusses the potential environmental impacts that could result from the 2024 Update. This ~~Draft~~ Final EIS recognizes that many of the policies and regulatory changes being ~~proposed~~ considered as part of the 2024 Update are aimed at improving environmental conditions, such as increasing conservation lands or reducing reliance on fossil fuels, often building on existing policies in the Current Plan. The ~~Draft~~ Final EIS considers whether the proposal will have significant adverse environmental impacts rather than considering whether those are outweighed by any beneficial aspects. Detailed evaluations of potential impacts to the natural and built environment are included in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, respectively. No significant adverse impacts have been identified.

2. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Planning Context

The Current Plan is based on the guiding principles of creating sustainable neighborhoods; preserving open space and natural resource land; directing development toward existing communities; providing a variety of transportation choices; addressing health, equity, and social and environmental justice; and achieving environmental sustainability. These guiding principles are consistent with the GMA. The guiding principles help to inform and guide funding decisions, the creation and operation of programs and projects, and how the County interacts with local, state, and federal governments, Indian Tribes, the community, and other interested parties. The 2024 Update proposes to make substantive policy changes, consistent with the existing and proposed new guiding principles. These policy updates are included throughout the Comprehensive Plan elements.

2.2 Proposal Objectives

The 2024 Update includes an overarching goal of fostering a welcoming community where every person can thrive and is focused on equity, housing, and climate change and the environment in order to:

- Implement the current GMA, MPPs, and CPPs.
- Reflect, create alignment with, and advance current plans, regulations, and practices.
- Ensure consistency between the Plan and the King County Code.

Specific objectives include:

- Reducing housing and business displacement and advancing equity for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those that earn less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Integrating a pro-equity and anti-racist policy framework that improves outcomes for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who earn less than 80 percent of the AMI.
- Improving health equity outcomes in communities with the greatest and most acute needs.
- Aligning housing policies and regulations with the CPPs and Washington State Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220 (Chapter 254 Laws of 2021).
- Improving affordable housing supply, especially for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants and/or refugees, especially those that earn less than 80 percent of the AMI.
- Expanding housing options at all levels of affordability.
- Aligning with and advancing the King County 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support sustainable and resilient communities, and prepare for climate change.[31]
- Integrating and implementing the County's Clean Water, Healthy Habitat goals.
- Increasing the amount of land that is preserved for conservation.

[31] King County, 2020 SCAP as adopted in Motion 15866, 2021. [LINK]

- Implementing CPPs.
- Addressing the outcomes of the County's Subarea Planning Program.
- Updating transportation policies.
- Improving regulations governing rural and natural resources.
- Implementing land use ~~designation~~ and zoning ~~classification~~ changes.

2.3 Alternatives Considered for Analysis

SEPA requires an EIS to analyze the probable adverse environmental impacts of a range of reasonable alternatives, including a "no action" alternative.[32] For non-project proposals, such as the 2024 Update, SEPA encourages agencies to describe the proposal in terms of alternative means of accomplishing a stated objective rather than a preferred solution.[33]

Accordingly, the alternatives evaluated in this ~~Draft~~ Final EIS are intended to illustrate alternate means of implementing the current GMA, MPPs, and CPPs; reflecting, creating alignment with, and advancing current plans, regulations, and practices; and updating the Current Plan and the King County Code. When adopted, the 2024 Update may be one of the alternatives or blend components of multiple alternatives together.

Potential Amendments to the Proposal

Additional details or changes to the proposal ~~will be~~ since the Draft EIS are reflected in the Final EIS, consistent with WAC 197-11-405. The 2024 Update proposed by the Executive may be accessed on the King County website and includes changes that are the same as or similar to changes included in each of the action alternatives. Since the transmittal of the Executive Recommended Plan, the Local Services and Land Use Committee has made a recommendation to the full Council. This recommended version made changes to the proposed amendments to existing code and policies in the Executive Recommended Plan.[34] The Committee recommended version includes a striking amendment, as well as a series of adopted line amendments, to the Executive's Recommended Plan. King County Councilmembers have since proposed other amendments to the Committee recommended version and amendments will continue to be considered until a final proposal is adopted.

The range of potential impacts of the Committee recommended version and the known amendment concepts in the public hearing notices fall within the range of impacts associated with the alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIS. Additional examples have been added to Table 2.3-1, Alternatives Example Table, to highlight some of the changes being considered since publication of the Draft EIS, and additional discussion of those changes is included throughout the Final EIS. King County is also considering several map amendments and has published several area zoning and land use studies, which are described and analyzed in a new Appendix B, Map Amendments and Area Zoning and Land Use Studies. ~~The King County Council may also propose variations from the Executive Recommended Plan~~

[32] WAC 197-11-402(1); WAC 197-11-060(3).

[33] WAC 197-11-442(2).

[34] See Proposed Ordinance 2024-0440 (Committee recommendation to Council), Committee amendments as of June 5, 2025 ("Do Pass" Recommendation), line amendments to the Striking Amendment to the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan, and Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440 (Striking Amendment), all at the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan "Council Amendments" website, [LINK]

~~and the proposals included in each of the action alternatives. The range of potential impacts from the action alternatives is anticipated to cover the potential impacts from the adopted 2024 Update.~~

2.3.1 Features Common to All Alternatives

Three alternatives are ~~proposed~~ being considered, as described below. All three of the alternatives, which include the No Action, Limited Change, and Extensive Change alternatives, would:

- Include goals and policies that address, to varying degrees, equity, housing, and climate change and the environment.
- Build on existing growth patterns.
- Allow growth that is below existing capacity within unincorporated King County. All alternatives assume the same estimated growth capacity within urban unincorporated areas, which was determined to be 7,386 housing units and 1,680 jobs, as identified in the 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report.[35]

While the capacity for growth is consistent among all three alternatives, the growth assumptions underlying the alternatives vary.[36]

- The No Action Alternative carries forward the growth targets from the 2012 CPPs. These growth targets are higher than the 2021 CPP targets. The No Action Alternative anticipates about 9,000 new housing units and 6,800 new jobs within urban unincorporated King County.[37]
- The two action alternatives use the policy and regulatory framework from the 2021 CPPs and the associated growth targets. The action alternatives anticipate 5,412 new housing units and 3,340 new jobs within urban unincorporated King County.

2.3.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would retain the Current Plan and associated land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards. Under this alternative, the County would not update the Current Plan or King County Code to align with the current GMA, MPPs, or CPPs that have not already been included in the Plan updates made since the last statutory update.

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[35] The Urban Growth Capacity Report uses technical assumptions that constrain calculated development capacity to a specific time period (capacity through 2035) and reflect past development densities. Under existing zoning, urban unincorporated King County has capacity for 29,600 housing units and 63,000 jobs. Zoning-based capacity is a higher estimate because it is not constrained to a time period and reflects the base densities allowed under existing zoning.

[36] The growth targets underlying the No Action Alternative are larger than those underlying the Action Alternatives for multiple reasons. First, the targets for urban unincorporated King County decreased between the 2012 and 2021 CPPs, driven partly by changes to the Regional Growth Strategy's assignment of more growth to cities and partly from local policy. Additionally, the 2012 urban unincorporated growth targets assume growth in the Bear Creek Urban Planned Development, but that development is now built out with limited capacity for additional growth. Finally, the 2021 growth targets were allocated to major PAAs to reflect the capacity estimated in the Urban Growth Capacity Report and to balance development pressure with these areas' role within King County and the Regional Growth Strategy.

[37] The growth assumptions for the No Action Alternative are based on the growth targets adopted in the 2012 King County Countywide Planning Policies. The 2006–2035 growth targets for urban unincorporated King County were extended to 2044 using the growth targets' average annual growth. Growth between 2006 and 2019 was then subtracted from this amount to create a 2019–2044 growth target consistent with the time period of the 2024 Update.

The Current Plan includes goals and policies aimed at addressing equity, housing, and climate change and the environment that would remain in effect. For example, the Current Plan policies support community development tools, such as food innovation districts and residential local improvement districts; commit to exploring increasing housing density and affordable housing near businesses and transit; and include Rural Area policies intended to avoid incompatible uses.

The No Action Alternative is described further in Chapter 3, Natural Environment – Affected Environment, Significant Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, and Chapter 4, Built Environment – Affected Environment, Significant Impacts, and Mitigation Measures.

2.3.3 Action Alternative 1: Limited Change Alternative

The Limited Change Alternative consists of amendments to the Current Plan goals and policies as well as related land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards that would meet the proposal objective through a smaller-scale approach. The Limited Change Alternative would generally:

- Implement smaller, more incremental changes over time, using essentially the same level of resources as the Current Plan and within existing regulatory authority.
- Include voluntary programs, incentives, and policies that support the proposal objectives, as opposed to mandates or requirements.
- Not expand the applicability of existing requirements, programs, incentives, or policies to new or larger geographic areas beyond where a similar framework already applies.

For example, the Limited Change Alternative would seek to achieve the proposal objectives by adopting policies that further encourage or incentivize, but not mandate, inclusionary housing.

The Limited Change Alternative is generally anticipated to facilitate more minor changes with both potential positive and adverse impacts to the environment over time. It would also include minor technical amendments and incorporate statutorily required changes. Please see Table 2.3-1, Alternatives Examples Table, for examples of 2024 Update proposals under Limited Change Alternative, <u>including additional examples being considered since issuance of the Draft EIS or responding to public comments</u>.

2.3.4 Action Alternative 2: Extensive Change Alternative

The Extensive Change Alternative consists of amendments to the Current Plan goals and policies, as well as related land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards, that would meet the proposal objective through broader, more major changes. The Extensive Change Alternative would generally:

- Implement more substantial changes than the Limited Change Alternative and could require additional resources and regulatory authority.
- Include mandatory programs and requirements that advance the proposal objectives, rather than only voluntary programs, incentives, or policies.
- In some instances, expand the applicability of existing requirements, programs, incentives, and policies to new or larger geographic areas beyond where a similar framework already applies.

For example, the Extensive Change Alternative would seek to achieve the proposal objectives by expanding mandatory inclusionary housing to all unincorporated areas.

The Extensive Change Alternative is generally anticipated to have more substantial changes with both positive and adverse impacts to the environment compared to the Limited Change Alternative. It would also include minor and technical amendments and incorporate statutorily required changes. Please see Table 2.3-1, Alternatives Examples Table, for examples of 2024 Update proposals under Extensive Change Alternative, including additional examples being considered since issuance of the Draft EIS or responding to public comments.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Equity			
Reduce housing and business displacement and advance equity for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80% of the AMI.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Support public financing techniques to promote stability, prevent displacement, and promote equitable development.	Require public financing techniques that will provide an advantage for projects that promote housing stability, prevent displacement, and promote equitable development.
		Increase bonuses and development capacity for inclusionary housing where already allowed.	Expand inclusionary housing or require mandatory inclusionary housing in all unincorporated areas, including Rural Towns.
		Stabilize economic displacement of businesses by supporting small businesses and home occupations to promote community stability and create opportunities.	Prevent economic displacement of existing businesses and promote new small businesses and home occupations to promote community stability and create opportunities.
		Make minor updates to implement the 2021 Anti-Displacement Report[38] in Skyway and North Highline, such as the following: • Community preference/right to return. • Priority hire. • Tenant relocation assistance. • Community land trust. • Manufactured housing preservation. • Increased home ownership opportunities.	Adopt all strategies in the 2021 Anti-Displacement Report for all unincorporated areas.
		Study the impact of a creative economy.	Adopt strategies and incentives that encourage a creative economy.

[38] King County, Skyway-West Hill and North Highline Anti-displacement Strategies Report, September 30, 2021. [LINK]

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Integrate a pro-equity and anti-racist policy framework into the Comprehensive Plan that improves outcomes for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80% of the AMI.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development. regulations.	Advance, with minor changes, community-driven, anti-racist, pro-equity strategies.	Implement community-driven, anti-racist, pro-equity strategies.
		Evaluate implementation of an equitable development initiative.	Implement and fully fund an equitable development initiative.
		Support equitable economic opportunities and access for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80% of the AMI.	Provide equitable economic opportunities and access for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80% of the AMI.
		Support economic and housing equity for populations that intersect with historically underserved[39] populations, including people with disabilities, seniors, people who are LGBTQIA+, and/or those who identify as women.	Provide economic and housing equity for populations that intersect with historically underserved populations, including people with disabilities, seniors, people who are LGBTQIA+, and/or those who identify as women.
		Mitigate the impacts of new development of certain kinds of uses (for example, residential, healthcare facilities, childcare facilities) on properties near major highways and freeways.	Prohibit development of certain kinds of uses (for example, residential, healthcare facilities, childcare facilities) on properties near major highways and freeway.
		Consider issues of equity, social, and environmental justice; racially and environmentally disparate health outcomes; and physical, economic, and cultural displacement when evaluating and implementing its land use policies, programs, investments, and practices.	Proactively address issues of equity, social, and environmental justice; racially and environmentally disparate health outcomes; and physical, economic, and cultural displacement when evaluating and implementing its land use policies, programs, investments, and practices.

[39] Historically underserved groups or populations are communities that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. Historically underserved groups often include Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities; immigrants; refugees; people living with low incomes; people speaking a language(s) other than English; women and gender non-conforming individuals; and LGBTQIA+ people.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		Incorporate, with minor changes, the CPP mandates for community engagement and County equitable engagement best practices.	Implement the CPP mandates for community engagement and County equitable engagement best practices.
		Advance, with minor updates, community recommendations from the King County Climate Equity Community Task Force, Immigrant and Refugee Commission, Mobility Equity Cabinet, and Open Space Equity Cabinet.	Implement community recommendations from the King County Climate Equity Community Task Force, Immigrant and Refugee Commission, Mobility Equity Cabinet, and Open Space Equity Cabinet.
		Encourage facilities that provide healthcare for people identifying as women.	Provide facilities that provide healthcare for people identifying as women.
		Encourage trauma-informed design or best practices in certain County-owned or funded facilities.	Adopt development standards that require trauma-informed design in new development.
Improve health equity outcomes in communities with the greatest and most acute needs.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Encourage culturally relevant childcare and early learning facilities and services in areas where this use is currently allowed.	Allow culturally relevant childcare and early learning facilities and services throughout all of unincorporated King County.
		Encourage access to programs for youths to build life, academic, and employment skills. Address the differences that geography, access to transportation, and affordable housing have on the ability for youths not in the contiguous UGA to achieve their full potential.	Provide programs for youths to build life, academic, and employment skills so that all youths can achieve their full potential across geographies, with consideration for the differences in access to transportation and affordable housing for youths not in the contiguous UGA.
		Encourage siting of behavioral health facilities that allow for culturally relevant care and that provide a continuum of care that is accessible to the communities where residents live.	Allow siting of behavioral health facilities that allow for culturally relevant care and that provide a continuum of care that is accessible to the communities where residents live.
		Encourage siting of community centers, aquatics, and/or community services hubs.	Provide community centers, aquatics, and/or community services hubs.
		Expand existing cannabis retail dispersion requirements in areas with a high percentage	Prohibit new cannabis retail in all unincorporated areas.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		of youth and/or Black, Indigenous, and People of Color residents.	
		Encourage additional parks and open space in urban unincorporated areas, particularly in Opportunity Areas.	Require additional parks and open spaces in urban unincorporated areas, particularly in Opportunity Areas.
		Support development that reduces heat islands and heat absorption in the unincorporated Urban Area and Rural Area, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable populations by, for example, encouraging green infrastructure and/or tree retention, the use of passive cooling, and energy efficient cooling technologies in new developments.	Adopt development standards to reduce heat islands and heat absorption in the unincorporated Urban Area and Rural Area, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable populations by, for example, requiring green infrastructure and/or tree retention or the use of passive cooling and energy efficient cooling technologies in new developments.
		Encourage cooling centers to provide access for urban and rural residents, such as in cities or urban areas adjacent to the Rural Area.	Develop cooling centers to provide access for urban and rural residents, including in the Rural Area.
		Encourage strategies to create a regional network of public hygiene, sanitation, and drinking water facilities.	Create and manage a regional network of public hygiene, sanitation, and drinking water facilities.
		Incentivize facilities or infrastructure that provide access to healthy foods, including at schools.	Provide facilities or infrastructure that provide access to healthy foods, including at schools.
		Make minor changes to the tree retention standards in the urban unincorporated area.	Adopt stringent tree retention standards for the unincorporated-wide, with enforcement mechanisms to prohibit most healthy tree removals.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Housing			
Align housing policies and regulations with the CPPs and Washington ESS House Bill 1220 (Chapter 254, Laws of 2021)	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Evaluate and advance applicable housing recommendations from the 2021 CPPs, the GMPC Affordable Housing Committee, and the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force report.	Implement the housing policies in the recommendations from the 2021 CPPs, the GMPC Affordable Housing Committee, and the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force report.
		Study impact of inflation and rising land cost on housing affordability.	Adopt strategies to reduce or eliminate the impact of inflation and rising cost of land on affordability.
		~~Evaluate density in Rural Towns.~~	~~Limit housing density in Rural Towns through methods such as capping the number of dwelling units constructed each year and requiring TDRs to be used above that cap; looking at the size and requiring affordable housing as part of subdivisions; or downzoning Rural Towns.~~
Improve affordable housing supply, especially for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants and/or refugees, especially those who earn less than 80% of the AMI.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Incentivize affordable housing in subdivisions in Residential and Rural Area zones.	Require affordable housing in subdivisions in Residential and Rural Area zones.
		Study the implementation of a Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) in designated Qualified Opportunity Zones.	Implement an MFTE to incentivize affordable housing in all Urban Areas.
		Make minor changes to the Residential Density Incentive Program to improve incentives for development of affordable housing.	Make extensive changes to the Residential Density Incentive Program, such as density bonuses, and streamline the process to encourage more utilization of the program.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Expand housing options at all levels of affordability.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Incentivize workforce housing (meaning housing that is affordable to and meets the housing needs of teachers, farmers, service providers, and others) for those who work in the Rural Area.	Determine the need for workforce housing by AMI level, ZIP code/geographic area, and transportation access and incentivize and require workforce housing to address these income brackets, including in the Rural Area.
		Make minor changes to the allowances for permanent and temporary farmworker housing.	Broaden existing allowances for more permanent and temporary farmworker housing.
		Make minor changes to allow shelters and housing for those experiencing homelessness in urban residential and commercial zones.	Allow for a continuum of emergency shelters and supportive housing types with minimal development and operational conditions in any zone where dwelling units are allowed.
		Make minor changes to allowances for congregate housing (former "dormitory") where dormitories have been allowed.	Allow congregate housing (formerly "dormitory") in all residential zones and reduce regulatory requirements.
		Make minor changes to requirements for manufactured home communities.	Allow manufactured home communities in more zones and with increased density.
		Allow some additional high-density housing near transit and employment through minor upzones (such as R-18 and R-24 zones near transit and employment).	Require high-density housing in all areas near transit and employment (such as R-12, R-24, and R-48 zones near transit and employment) and require a higher minimum density.
		Allow for some additional types of housing and densities in low-density residential zones, with strict development conditions.	Allow for additional types of housing and densities in low-density residential zones, with minimal development conditions.
		Make minor changes to requirements and fees for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).	Increase the allowed number, maximum square footage, and height, and eliminate fees for ADUs.
		Make minor changes to allow for larger, culturally relevant housing.	Incentivize culturally relevant housing for families that don't need multiple bedrooms.
		Make minor changes to the Vashon Affordable Housing Special District Overlay.	Replace the Vashon Affordable Housing Special District Overlay with an inclusionary housing program.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Climate Change and the Environment			
Align with and advance the King County 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan to reduce GHG emissions, support sustainable and resilient communities, and prepare for climate change.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Encourage reduction in GHG emissions from government operations, such as increasing the number of zero-emission, County-owned vehicles and supporting electric vehicle infrastructure.	Require reductions in GHG emissions from government operations and private development. Examples include, at a minimum: • Expanding electric vehicle use and changing infrastructure in a geographically dispersed and equitable manner, including in the Rural Area. • Requiring electric vehicle infrastructure for multiplexes at the same rate as for townhomes and require electric vehicle readiness (conduit and electrical) in multiplexes.
		Reduce climate-related health impacts.	Adopt standards aimed at eliminating climate-related health impacts.
		Address the impact of climate change on food economy, food production, APDs, and agricultural lands, with minor changes.	Make extensive changes, including programmatic and policy changes, to address the impact of climate change on food economy, food production, APDs, and agricultural lands.
		Address the impact of climate change on the County's road system.	Create a roads system that is resilient to climate change impacts.
		<u>Evaluate the creation of climate resilience hubs, where appropriate.</u>	<u>Require the creation of climate resilience hubs unincorporated-wide.</u>
		Support design standards that protect residents from air quality impacts during wildfire smoke events.	Adopt design standards that protect residents from air quality impacts during wildfire smoke events.
		Support the use of renewable energy.	Adopt regulations and programs that reduce energy use (through design or equipment requirements) and phase out fossil fuel use.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		Support wildfire planning, forest health improvements, post-fire response strategies, and associated landslide hazard mitigation through additional planning, collaboration with partners, and specific policies.	Prohibit new development in unincorporated wildland urban interface (WUI) fire-risk areas and adopt building standards and new regulations for to address landslide hazards associated with wildfires.
		Allow additional clearing of trees and vegetation for forest fire prevention in unincorporated WUI fire-risk areas without a permit, for habitable structures and utilities.	Allow additional clearing of trees and vegetation in unincorporated King County, without a permit, for habitable structures and utilities.
		Minimize GHG emission impacts of increased densities resulting from urban unincorporated TDR receiving sites.	Require mitigation of GHG emission impacts of increased densities resulting from urban unincorporated TDR receiving sites.
		Evaluate and address impacts of new renewable energy systems and associated infrastructure, including energy storage systems, in the unincorporated area.	Adopt standards to limit or prohibit the location and development of battery energy storage systems in the unincorporated area, especially near residences and places people congregate.
Integrate and implement the County's Clean Water, Healthy Habitat goals.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Encourage increased fish passage and salmon habitat restoration.	Implement and accelerate fish passage and salmon habitat restoration programs.
		• Encourage shoreline development that reduces reliance on shoreline stabilization for protection. • Encourage the use of soft shoreline stabilization methods. • Discourage new or replaced bulkheads. • Adopt additional development regulations for shoreline stabilization in geologically hazardous areas.	• Require shoreline development to be located and designed to avoid the need for future shoreline stabilization. • Restrict the replacement of hard shoreline stabilization methods for existing development. • Prohibit new or replaced bulkheads. • Prohibit new development that requires any shoreline stabilization in geologically hazardous areas.
		Support use of a multi-benefit and integrated floodplain management approach.	Require a multi-benefit and integrated floodplain management approach.
		Support implementation of the Fish, Farm, Flood recommendations for the Snoqualmie Valley APD.	Implement the Fish, Farm, Flood recommendations and expand the approach to other APDs in King County.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		Balance activities related to agricultural production, fish habitat restoration projects, and floodplain restoration projects in APDs.	Require habitat or floodplain restoration. projects in unincorporated areas to balance the goals of agricultural production, habitat quality, and floodplain and ecological functions.
		Evaluate approaches to protect and promote both small hobby farms and larger commercial farms.	Adopt different standards to promote and protect both small hobby farms and larger commercial farms.
		Support regional collaboration on stormwater management planning.	Adopt stormwater management requirements related to regional planning.
		• Update critical areas regulations with best available science and make minor updates, such as clarifying changes, using updated terminology, and reflecting changes in state law. • Make minor changes based on recommendations from alluvial fan demonstration project. • Study uniform critical areas setbacks for similar permitted uses in Agriculture, Residential, and Rural Area zones, based on best available science.	• Update critical areas and shoreline regulations with best available science and make substantive updates, such as reviewing riparian, aquatic, and/or alluvial fan regulations; stream, wetland, and/or Critical Aquifer Recharge Area mapping; climate change considerations; species and habitats of local importance; and other applicable areas to reflect state guidance. • Adopt code changes to implement recommendations of alluvial fan demonstration project. • Impose uniform critical area setbacks for similar permitted uses in Agriculture, Residential, and Rural Area zones, based on best available science.
		Support management of beaver dams.	Allow management of beaver dams without a clearing and grading permit.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Increase the amount of land that is preserved for conservation.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Make minor procedural modifications to the Four-to-One program, such as changing the application progress and requiring tri-party agreements with the project proponent and the adjacent city.	Make substantive updates to the Four-to-One program requirements, such as: • Using joint planning area boundaries. • Allowing for reduced open space ratio. • Allowing for noncontiguous open space. • Allowing urban-serving facilities in the Rural Area. • Allowing nonresidential projects. • Allowing projects not likely to be timely annexed.
		Make minor procedural modifications to the TDR program, such as clarifying study requirements when using TDRs in formal subdivisions, clarifying TDR sending site calculations, allowing for deed restrictions in addition to conservation easements on TDR sending sites, allowing for the TDR bank to sell partial TDR increments, requiring the County to maintain a supply of TDR credits, and removing a requirement for a down payment for TDRs.	Modify and expand the TDR program, such as providing bonus TDRs for sending sites that are in the Forest zone or are vacant marine shoreline without bulkheads, allowing TDR sending sites on Vashon-Maury Island, allowing urban open spaces that were previously acquired using conservation futures tax funding or urban separators to become TDR sending sites, removing specific goals for reduction of development potential outside the Urban Area, allowing TDRs to be used for duplex units in the Urban Area and Rural Towns, and allowing for payment into the TDR bank when TDRs are not available.
		Support retention of future old growth corridors, including landowner incentives and land conservation tools such as TDRs, conservation easements, and acquisition.	Implement creation and retention of future old growth corridors, such as through reducing density or intensity of uses or prohibit development in those areas.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
General			
Implement 2021 CPPs	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Implement, with minor changes, state law changes made since the 2012 GMA-required review and update.	Implement state law changes made since the 2012 GMA-required review and update.
		Include the housing and job growth targets adopted in the CPPs.	Include different housing and job growth targets than in the CPPs.
		Nominate two new Countywide centers for Skyway and White Center, with minor changes.	Nominate two new Countywide centers, for Skyway and White Center, with extensive changes to encourage full implementation.
		Allow UGA exchanges authorized by RCW 36.70A.130, but with more limitations than in state law.	Allow UGA exchanges as authorized by RCW 36.70A.130 and allow for exchanges including lands that are encumbered by critical areas.
		Encourage cities to consider the impact of large developments on the surrounding Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, including on housing affordability, roads, and infrastructure.	Require cities to pay impact fees and implement traffic demand management strategies for large developments that impact unincorporated areas.
		Encourage regional coordination to maintain rural and regional infrastructure that remains in the unincorporated area after annexation.	Require cities to contribute to maintaining rural and regional infrastructure that remains in the unincorporated area after annexation.
		Address the varying needs for accessing human services across the urban and rural geography of the county.	Provide human services across the urban and rural geography of the County. Provide metrics to measure performance to ensure the services are geographically and equitably distributed.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Address the outcomes of the County Subarea Planning Program.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Implement the subarea planning program by adopting area-wide policies and regulations that were priorities of communities during subarea plan development.	Implement the subarea planning program by modifying land use designations and/or zoning classifications to allow for additional density or intensity of uses in urban unincorporated areas.
		Make minor updates to the existing P-suffix conditions and special district overlays on Vashon-Maury Island, such as removing conditions that are in conflict or redundant to current regulations and updating to current terminology.	Make substantive updates to the existing P-suffix conditions and special district overlays on Vashon-Maury Island, such as updating the allowed uses in the Vashon Community Business and Industrial zone P-suffixes, updating standards for the Town Gateway and Town Core P-suffixes, and removing conditions that are more restrictive than the underlying code.
		Make minor updates to the existing land use designations and zoning classifications in the Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County subarea, such as removing conditions that are in conflict or redundant to current regulations, repealing conditions for properties that have since been annexed, and updating to current terminology.	Make substantive updates to the existing land use designations and zoning classifications in the Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County subarea, such as updating the allowed uses in the Fall City Business District Special District Overlay and removing some conditions to create parity with adjacent properties. For example: • Add new P-suffix conditions and special district overlays or zoning classifications, including allowing microhousing or workforce housing in the Fall City and Snoqualmie Pass Rural Towns, allowing for middle housing, and adopting design standards for residential development in Fall City Rural Town. • Provide social/human services to allow resident access to local care in areas where it is needed and closer to where people live and work. • Incentivize agritourism, including options for compatible uses (education, experiences, value-add, processing, sales). • Address food access and food justice for the subarea.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Update transportation policies.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Address equity in transportation options, access, and basic involvement in communication for historically underrepresented and historically underserved populations in each area. This includes defining action around access, opportunity, and involvement for these groups.	Ensure equity in transportation options, access, and basic involvement in communication for historically underrepresented and historically underserved populations in each area. This includes defining and implementing action around access, opportunity, and involvement for these groups.
		Support mobility equity for populations that intersect with historically underserved populations, including people with disabilities, seniors, people who are LGBTQIA+, and/or those who identify as women.	Ensure mobility equity for populations that intersect with historically underserved populations, including people with disabilities, seniors, people who are LGBTQIA+, and/or those who identify as women.
		Reduce use of cars, especially SOV use.	Reduce the cycle of car dependency.
		Study the feasibility of multimodal level of service in the Urban Area and Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.	Adopt and implement a multimodal level of service in the Urban Area and Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.
		Include trails as a component of active transportation. Define active transportation as walking, biking, and rolling (such as using wheelchairs, scooters), including electric-powered aides.	Incorporate regional trails as an integral part of the County's transportation system. Ensure trails, especially Eastrail, are open at night so commuters and others who travel at irregular hours can safely and legally use them.
		Address safe, reliable, and equitable transportation access, including to transit, for rural unincorporated areas, with connectivity to the Urban Area and within the Rural Area.	Provide safe, reliable, and equitable transportation access, including to transit, for rural unincorporated areas, with connectivity to the Urban Area and within the Rural Area. Address inherent issues in the GMA concerning the urban/rural divide and resulting fewer options for rural and natural resource area roads.
		Support increased public transportation and non-SOV access to the preserved open space and noncontiguous UGA cities.	Increase public transportation and non-SOV access to the preserved open space and noncontiguous UGA cities.
		Encourage Vision Zero, Safe System Approach, complete street infrastructure,	Adopt Vision Zero, Safe System Approach, adopting complete street standards, lowering vehicle speeds, and prioritizing safety for active transportation users.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		lowering vehicle speeds, and prioritizing safety for active transportation users.	
		Encourage investments to increase safe access to public transit.	Require investments to increase safe access to public transit.
		Increase access to fixed-route transit for people with disabilities, such as through sidewalk improvements and improved bus stops.	Ensure access to transit and affordable housing opportunities close to high-capacity transit, for people with disabilities.
Improve regulations governing rural and natural resources.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and regulations.	Clarify existing SEPA exemptions.	Expand SEPA exemptions to the maximum allowed by WAC 197-11-800.
		Further encourage active production of farmland in Agriculture zones.	Incentivize or require active production of farmland in the Agriculture zones.
		Address additional economic opportunities for farmers and for farmland, the APDs, and Farmland Preservation Properties.	Create additional economic opportunities for farmers and for farmland, the APDs, and Farmland Preservation Properties.
		Make minor changes to the agriculture code by updating definitions and correcting inconsistencies.	Make substantive changes to the agriculture code based on a study to analyze the effectiveness of the 2017 code changes of implementing agricultural-related policies.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Implement land use ~~designation~~ and zoning ~~classification~~ changes.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and regulations.	Encourage art and community space to honor Tribal cultural and historic resources in new development and government projects.	Require art and community spaces to honor Tribal cultural and historic resources in new development and government projects.
		Make minor changes to the allowances for daycares in currently allowed zones.	Reduce requirements for and encourage the siting and permitting of daycares unincorporated-wide.
		Make minor changes to allowances for doctor's office/outpatient use and social services in zones where they're currently allowed.	Allow doctor's office/outpatient and social services use as a permitted use in all zones.
		Modify regulations for resorts in forest, rural, urban reserve, and regional business zones, with minor changes to the existing permitted use.	Allow resorts in additional areas with limited development conditions, beyond the existing permitted use.
		Make minor changes to limit the impacts of material processing uses in areas where currently allowed.	Allow for additional material processing uses in additional zones, with limited development conditions.
		Make minor changes to permitting for animal rescue shelters.	Reduce permitting requirements, including operator requirements, for animal rescue shelters.
		Make minor changes to manufacturing and regional land use uses allowed in the Industrial zone and maintain existing restrictions on uses requiring a conditional or special use permit.	Make more extensive changes to manufacturing and regional land uses allowed in the Industrial zone and remove the prohibition outside the UGA or revise the uses that require a conditional or special use permit.
		Make minor changes to the allowances for certain uses unlikely to have negative impacts, such as through adjustments to conditional use permits or special use permits.	Remove regulatory barriers for all uses unlikely to have negative impacts, such as through removing requirements for conditional use permits or special use permits.
		Make minor changes to development standards in anticipation of new and innovative industrial uses.	Make more extensive changes to development standards in anticipation of new and innovative industrial uses.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		Make minor changes to allow some additional rural economic development, rural economic strategies, and tourism in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.	• Encourage rural economic development, rural economic strategies, and tourism in the rural area and on Natural Resource Lands. • Encourage agrotourism in the Rural Area, especially where there is the opportunity for compatible uses, such as educational experiences, value-added processing, and sales. • Modify the uses permitted in the Rural Area to implement rural economic development goals.
		Reduce restrictions on using innovative technologies for on-site wastewater management.	Allow the use of innovative technologies for on-site wastewater management.
		Limit housing density in Rural Towns through methods such as capping the number of dwelling units constructed each year and requiring TDRs to be used above that cap, looking at the size and requiring affordable housing as part of subdivisions, or downzoning Rural Towns.	Increase housing density in Rural Towns through methods such as applying minimum densities, raising height limits, or upzoning Rural Towns.
		Address regional economic development strategies for different geographies, including in the UGA and the Rural Area.	Implement regional economic development strategies for different geographies, including in the UGA and the Rural Area.
		Encourage broadband connectivity for those in the Rural Area as an economic development strategy.	Require or provide broadband connectivity for those in the Rural Area as an economic development strategy.
		Make minor changes to limit the impacts of mineral resource extraction operations.	Allow mineral extraction operations with fewer development conditions.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		Reduce the allowed densities of mixed-use developments in commercial and office zone properties in the Rural Area, outside of Rural Towns. Consider how mixed-use developments, at an appropriate size and scale, could support rural economic and agritourism opportunities, the number of mixed-use developments needed, and what uses would be allowed.	Prohibit mixed-use developments in commercial and office zones properties in the Rural Area.
		Make minor changes to commercial allowances in residential zones.	Expand commercial allowances in all unincorporated areas.
		Update regulations for new Urban Planned Developments and Fully Contained Communities.	Prohibit new Urban Planned Developments and Fully Contained Communities.
		Restrict temporary uses through additional permit requirements, such as limiting attendees, adding operating conditions, and requiring environmental and public review.	Allow temporary uses with fewer or no permitting requirements and standards.
		Allow for food stores in the Rural Area zone in limited circumstances.	Allow food stores in the Rural Area zone with minimal development conditions.
		Allow “event centers” as a permitted use in some zones, with development conditions.	Allow “event centers” as a permitted use in all zones.
		Evaluate approaches to address needs for large culturally appropriate cemeteries.	Modify land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations for siting a 20- to 40-acre, culturally appropriate cemetery.
		Study design standards that implement appropriate size and scale standards in the Rural Area.	Adopt design standards that implement appropriate size and scale standards in the Rural Area.
		Make minor land use designation and zoning classification changes based on area-wide evaluation of the UGA and permitted densities, such as modifying existing P-suffix conditions or making changes for consistency.	Make more extensive land use designations and zoning classification changes based on area-wide evaluation of the UGA and permitted densities, such as moving the UGA boundary and/or increasing the density and intensity of use.

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table (continued)

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
		Make minor changes to parking requirements in unincorporated activity centers and along frequent transit corridors.	Waive or reduce parking requirements for residential and commercial development.
		Evaluate lot standards.	Make substantive changes to lot standards, including allowing "lot splitting."
		Make minor changes to encourage compatibility of new subdivisions in the Rural Area with the surrounding neighborhood.	Adopt site design standards in the Rural Area that minimize the impact of new subdivisions on the surrounding neighborhood, Natural Resource Lands, and the environment.
		Make minor changes to the regulation of Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers (RNCCs).	Allow for more intensive RNCCs, such as increasing allowed densities, increasing allowed heights, expanding the range of allowed uses, and allowing the creation of new RNCCs.
		Allow for additional industrial zoning classification in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands where there are existing and historical intensive uses, such as solid waste or other similar governmental uses, materials processing, and mineral extraction or reclamation.	Allow for additional industrial zoning classification in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.
		Make minor changes to facilitate the conversion of mineral extraction sites that have been reclaimed, or are in the reclamation process, as green energy facilities on sites where infrastructure that produces renewable energy already exists.	Adopt policies and standards to incentivize conversion of mineral extraction sites that have been reclaimed, or are in the reclamation process, as green energy facilities and associated uses, including on-site energy generation from renewable sources, electric and alternative fuel vehicle manufacturing, indoor agriculture, battery storage and recycling, information technology uses, distribution and manufacturing facilities using green energy, and other similar uses.

3. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – EXISTING POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

As required by SEPA (WAC 197-11-440), this chapter summarizes the existing policy and regulatory framework and affected environment. It also describes the environmental consequences and mitigation measures related to the following elements of the natural environment: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Water Resources; Wildlife and Habitat; and Natural Resources. The discussion of each of the four elements is divided further into subsections, outlined below.

- **Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework**:
  This subsection identifies and briefly summarizes the relevant federal, state, and local guidance documents including laws, plans, policies, rules, and regulations for the elements of the environment.
- **Affected Environment**:
  This subsection introduces the study area for the elements of the environment and briefly summarizes the existing environmental setting, physical conditions, and current trends that would be affected by the alternatives. For most elements of the environment, the study area consists of unincorporated King County, which is the area governed by the Comprehensive Plan. Except where otherwise noted, maps and figures show relevant information only within the study area for each element of the environment.[40]
- **Environmental Consequences**:
  This subsection describes the analysis of potential impacts of the alternatives on the affected environment for the 20-year planning period. Impacts associated with the No Action Alternative are discussed first. These are impacts that would occur if King County continued to operate according to the Current Plan. Next, impacts common to both action alternatives—the Limited Change Alternative and the Extensive Change Alternative—are discussed together, followed by a comparison of impacts between the two action alternatives.
- **Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**:
  If potential significant adverse impacts are identified, this subsection would identify appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate environmental impacts beyond those included as features of the action alternatives. Mitigation measures (inclusive of avoidance and minimization) are designed to offset the impacts of the action alternatives on the affected environment for each discipline.

[40] The information included on the maps in this chapter has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and are subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or rights to the use of such information. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, lost revenues or lost profits resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on these maps. Any sale of these maps or information on these maps is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

3.1 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section discusses air quality and greenhouse gas emissions in King County and evaluates potential impacts that may be associated with the 2024 Update alternatives.

3.1.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Some of the primary laws, regulations, and policies guiding air quality in King County include the following:

- Clean Air Act, 42 United States Code (USC) 85, which defines the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) responsibilities for protecting and improving the nation's air quality and the stratospheric ozone layer and establishes the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- Washington Clean Air Act, Chapter 70.94 RCW, which is intended to preserve, protect, and enhance air quality and establishes county- and multicounty-level air pollution control authorities.
- Chapter 173-476 WAC, Ambient Air Quality Standards, which establishes Washington state limits for the atmospheric concentration of the six criteria pollutants listed in the NAAQS.
- Washington Climate Commitment Act, Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5126 (Chapter 316, Laws of 2021), caps and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from Washington's largest emitting sources and industries, allowing businesses to find the most efficient path to lower carbon emissions to help Washington achieve its commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 95 percent by 2050.
- Washington Healthy Environment for All Act, Chapter 70A.02 RCW, which is intended to reduce environmental and health disparities in Washington state and prioritize vulnerable populations and overburdened communities by integrating environmental justice into several state agency activities including strategic plans, community engagement plans, and decision processes for budget development, expenditures, and granting or withholding benefits.
- Chapter 70A.533 RCW, Washington Clean Fuels Standard, designed to decrease the carbon intensity of Washington's transportation fuels by increasing the range of low-carbon and renewable alternatives that reduce dependency on petroleum and improve air quality.
- Chapter 173-423 WAC, Washington Clean Vehicles Program, adopts California emissions standards, including the zero-emission vehicle program, aimed at reducing vehicle emissions and increasing the percentage of zero-emission vehicles sold in Washington beginning with model year 2026 and achieving 100 percent new sales consisting of zero-emission vehicles by 2035.
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) Regulations, which control the emission of air contaminants from all sources within King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, and implement the requirements of the federal Clean Air Act and Washington Clean Air Act.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which include countywide reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions and other related policies.
- 2020 King County SCAP, which outlines the County's priorities and commitments for climate action over a 5-year horizon.

3.1.2 Affected Environment

This section discusses air quality and greenhouse gas emissions in King County as a whole because air quality within unincorporated King County can affect, and be affected by, emissions throughout the county and beyond. For example, motor vehicle emissions from within the incorporated cities in western King County contribute to the air quality in neighboring unincorporated areas of the county, while a wildfire in unincorporated King County has the potential to affect air quality in neighboring counties, the region, and beyond. Air quality data and greenhouse gas emissions are typically evaluated and discussed at the PSCAA regional or broader levels. When possible, data is reported specific to King County and distinctions are made between effects to urbanized, densely populated areas and rural and undeveloped areas.

As part of the Clean Air Act, the EPA regulates six common air pollutants — known as criteria air pollutants — under the NAAQS. These pollutants include lead, ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter. Common sources and effects of these six criteria air pollutants are listed in Table 3.1-1, Criteria Air Pollutant Sources and Effects, below.

Table 3.1-1. Criteria Air Pollutant Sources and Effects

Criteria Air Pollutant	Common Sources	Common Effects
Lead	Ore/metal processing plants, piston-engine aircraft, waste incinerators, and utilities	Health: neurological effects in children and other serious health effects in adults, depending on exposure Environment: decreased growth and reproduction in plants and animals
Ground-Level Ozone[a]	Formed from the reaction of sunlight with chemicals from vehicle emissions, paints, and solvents such as nitrogen dioxide and volatile organic compounds	Health: respiratory problems, including increasing asthma symptoms Environment: harmful to sensitive vegetation and ecosystems
Carbon Monoxide	Fossil-fuel burning, including vehicle exhaust and other machinery	Health: dizziness, unconsciousness, and death when concentrations are high and is particularly bad for people with heart conditions
Nitrogen Dioxide	Fossil-fuel burning, including vehicle exhaust, power plants, and off-road equipment	Health: damage to the human respiratory tract and increase a person's vulnerability to, and the severity of, respiratory infections and asthma
Sulfur Dioxide	Fossil-fuel burning, including power plants, refineries, and other industrial facilities	Health: respiratory problems, including increasing asthma symptoms Environment: primary component in acid rain
Particulate Matter[b]	Emitted directly from sources such as vehicle exhaust, woodstoves, and wildfires, or formed from reactions of chemicals in the air, such as sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide	Health: PM-2.5 poses the greatest risk to health because it can be inhaled deep into the lungs, causing severe and chronic respiratory and cardiovascular problems Environment: PM-2.5 and PM-10 cause regional haze that can reduce visibility

Sources: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Criteria Air Pollutants, 2022 [LINK]; Washington State Department of Health, Outdoor Air Pollution and Health Impacts, 2022. [LINK]

[a] Different than upper atmosphere ozone, which helps prevent the earth from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.

[b] Includes particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM-2.5) and particles less than 10 microns in diameter (PM-10).

Unless state or local jurisdictions have adopted equal or more stringent air quality standards, the EPA standard applies. If the air quality in a geographic area is equal to or better than the standard, the area is considered "in attainment." When an area in nonattainment returns to meeting the standard, the area is reclassified as in attainment, though it must begin a 20-year maintenance period for that standard.

The Clean Air Act also requires the EPA to regulate emissions for hazardous air pollutants, or air toxics, which are pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects.[41] Most air toxics originate from human-made sources, including both mobile sources (e.g., vehicle exhaust) and stationary sources (e.g., powerplants and refineries); however, the increasing frequency and severity of wildfire activity across the western U.S. is playing an increasing role in the generation of air toxics such as fine particulate matter (PM-2.5). The EPA has identified 188 air toxics since 1990, including asbestos, benzene, formaldehyde, and many others. Air toxic emissions are regulated individually based on risk assessments and other factors, though the EPA is currently in the process of updating its strategy for addressing air toxics.

In the Puget Sound region, the PSCAA is responsible for monitoring air pollution (including criteria air pollutants and hazardous air toxics), adopting federal and state air quality mandates, and enforcing air quality regulations. In partnership with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), the PSCAA monitors air quality using six PSCAA monitoring stations and five Ecology monitoring stations in King County.

3.1.2.1 Air Quality

King County is currently in attainment for all the NAAQS. However, portions of the county, particularly in the western portion of King County within the contiguous Urban Area, were in nonattainment for ozone, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter in the past.[42] The County completed its 20-year maintenance periods for ozone and carbon monoxide in 2016 and particulate matter in 2021.[43] Levels of lead, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide in King County have been consistently below federal air quality standards, while ozone and particulate matter concentrations remain a potential concern with emissions from wildfire activity stagnating and beginning to reverse decades of improvement in ambient air quality concentrations of particulate matter.[44]

According to the PSCAA Air Quality Data Summary for 2022, air quality in King County was reported as "good" 70 percent of the year (256 days) and "moderate" 24 percent of the year (88 days). The remaining categories combined – "unhealthy for sensitive groups," "unhealthy," and "very unhealthy" – made up 6 percent of the year (21 days). There were no days in the "hazardous" air quality category.[45]

According to the PSCAA, many of the measured air toxics have decreased significantly from 2000 to 2021; however, diesel particulate matter and wood smoke particulate pose the greatest potential health risk in the Puget Sound area. Diesel particulate matter is emitted by diesel vehicles, and concentrations are generally higher closer to large transportation corridors such interstate and state highways. Though diesel emissions have been declining over the past two decades and newer diesel emission standards

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[41] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Hazardous Air Pollutants, 2023. [LINK]

[42] U.S. EPA, Washington Nonattainment/Maintenance Status for Each County by Year for All Criteria Air Pollutants, 2022. [LINK]

[43] Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), Plans for Maintaining Air Quality, 2023. [LINK]

[44] Burke, M. et al., "The contribution of wildfire to PM2.5 trends in the USA," *Nature*, 2023. [LINK]

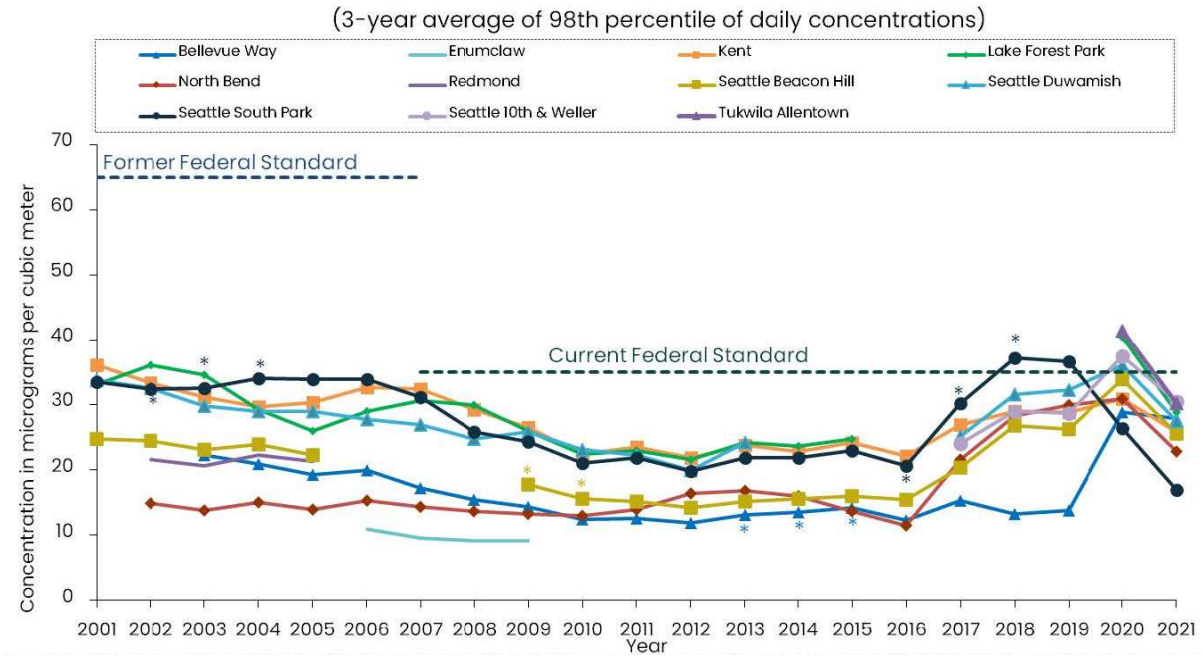
[45] Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA), Air Quality Data Summary for 2022. [LINK]

have been in effect since 2007, diesel exhaust still represents a major potential cancer risk from air pollution in the Puget Sound area.[46]

The frequency and severity of wildfires in the Pacific northwest has increased over the last several years, causing concerns over the health effects of fine particulate matter. As shown in Figure 3.1-1, Daily PM-2.5 Levels for King County, maximum daily PM-2.5 concentrations decreased at all King County monitoring sites between 2001 and 2016; however, in 2016 the trend reversed, and there were several instances of PM-2.5 concentrations above the federal air quality standard of 35 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m^3) since. When wildfire-impacted days are removed from the daily concentrations, the downward trend continues and levels remain below federal standards as shown in Figure 3.1-2, Daily PM-2.5 Levels for King County (wildfire-impacted days removed).

PSCAA has established a health goal of 25 µg/m^3 for PM-2.5 as studies have shown that there can still be significant health effects below the federal standard.[47] In 2022, air monitoring sites in King County reported up to 15 wildfire-impacted days above the 25 µg/m^3 goal.[48]

Figure 3.1-1. Daily PM-2.5 Levels for King County



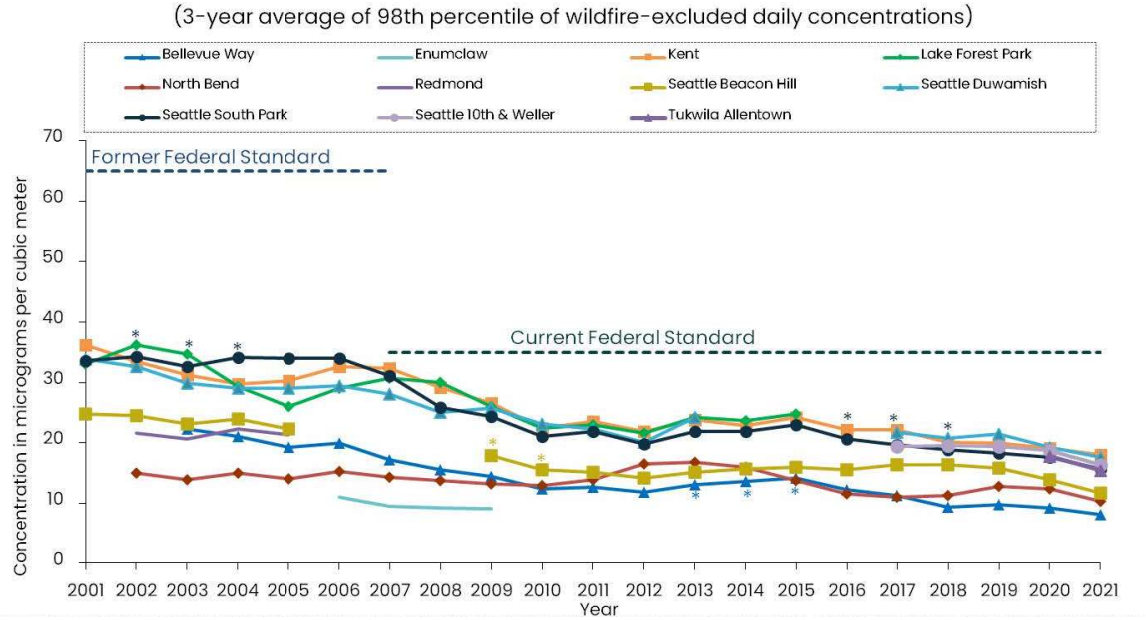
Source: Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, 2021 Air Quality Data Summary, 2022. [LINK]
Note: Asterisk indicates an estimate based on incomplete data.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Berman, J. D. et al., "Health-Related Benefits of Attaining the Daily and Annual PM2. 5 Air Quality Standards and Stricter Alternative Standards," *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* 185:A2317, 2012. [LINK]

[48] PSCAA, Air Quality Data Summary for 2022. [LINK]

Figure 3.1-2. Daily PM-2.5 Levels for King County (wildfire-impacted days removed)



Source: Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA), 2021 Air Quality Data Summary, 2021. [LINK]
Note: Asterisk indicates an estimate based on incomplete data.

3.1.2.2 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gases are chemical compounds released into the air that trap heat in the atmosphere, causing an overall warming of the planet. As the planet's atmospheric temperature rises, it affects the overall climate, leading to shifts in snow and rainfall patterns and more extreme climate events such as heatwaves, droughts, and floods. King County has adopted the SCAP to provide a blueprint for addressing climate change, including reducing countywide greenhouse gas emissions. The 2021 CPPs adopted greenhouse gas reduction targets of 50 percent reduction by 2030, 75 percent reduction by 2040, and 95 percent reduction by 2050 compared to 2007 baseline levels (which was approximately 24 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent).[49]

In 2022, King County published a community-wide geographic greenhouse gas emissions report as part of the Puget Sound Regional Emissions Analysis Project.[50] The report provides an update of trends and progress toward the County's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, an analysis of contributing factors that led to changes in emissions, and an analysis of potential future trends based on emission reduction actions and policies.

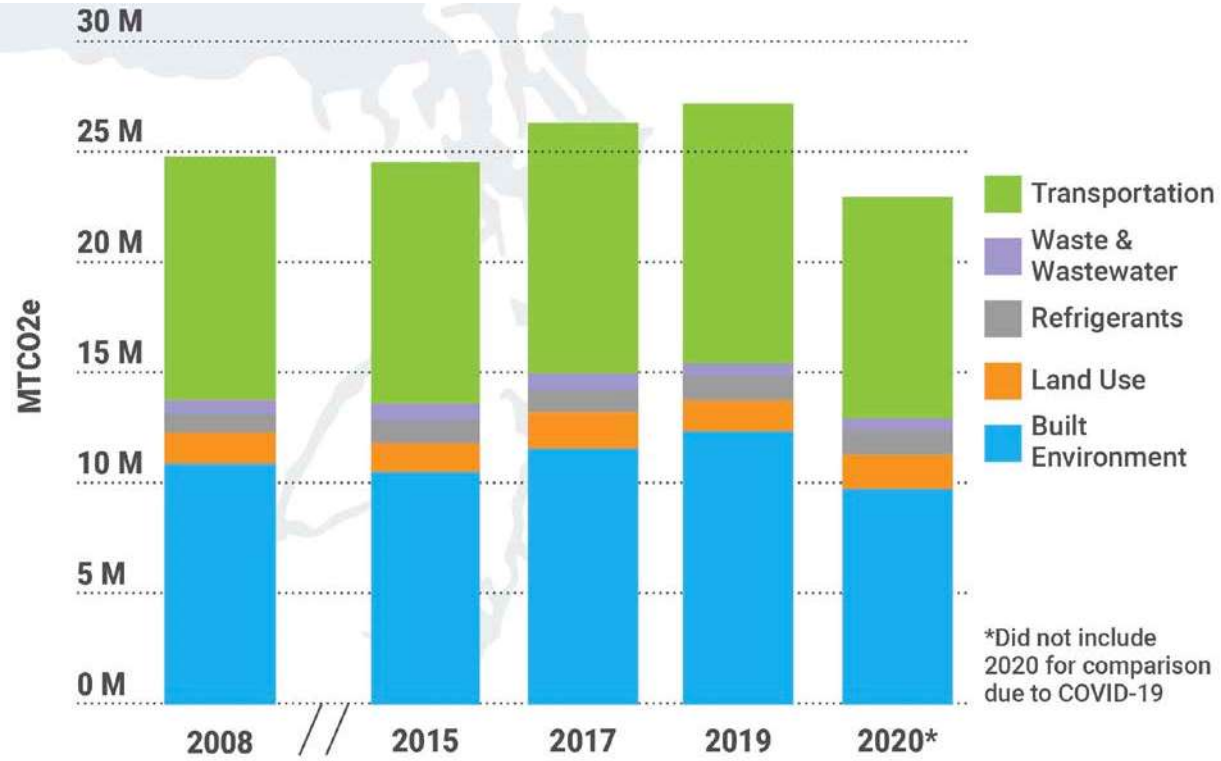
Greenhouse gas emissions in 2019 increased by approximately 3 percent as compared to 2017 and by approximately 10 percent since 2008. However, per capita greenhouse gas emissions declined by 7 percent during this same period. In general, the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in King County are from the built environment, including building electricity (25 percent) and natural gas (15 percent), and

[49] King County, 2021 King County CPPs, as amended, 2021. [LINK]

[50] Cascadia Consulting Group, King County Communitywide Geographic Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Puget Sound Regional Emissions Analysis Final Report, 2022. [LINK]

from transportation, including on-road vehicles (25 percent) and aviation (15 percent).[51] See Figure 3.1-3, Total Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends by Sector, below.

Figure 3.1-3. Total Greenhouse Gas Emission Trends by Sector



Source: Cascadia Consulting Group, King County Communitywide Geographic Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Puget Sound Regional Emissions Analysis, 2022. [LINK]

According to the 2022 report, there was a greater increase in greenhouse gas emissions between 2015 and 2019 than between 2008 and 2019. The top contributors to this increase in greenhouse gas emissions were driven by population and employment growth, fossil-fuel based electricity, local economy expansion, and increased air travel. Though they don't outweigh emissions increases, reductions in emissions between 2015 and 2019 were driven by improved vehicle efficiency, decreased commercial energy use (per job), decreased residential energy use (per home), and decreased waste generation (per capita).[52]

3.1.3 Environmental Consequences

3.1.3.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions trends would generally continue as described in the Affected Environment section.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

Air Quality

As described previously, King County is designated as in attainment for all criteria air pollutants regulated by the federal Clean Air Act. Generally, air pollution levels have been steadily declining since the early 2000s, even with increased population growth in King County. Concentrations of lead, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide have consistently been below federal standards, and this trend is expected to continue under the No Action Alternative. However, ozone and particulate matter (PM-2.5) are likely to remain challenges to air quality in the Puget Sound region, primarily due to on-road transportation and smoke from residential wood burning and wildfires.

Population and job growth under the No Action Alternative would result in additional impacts to air quality from increased development and transportation activity. Construction associated with development would generate vehicle exhaust from construction equipment, trucks, and worker vehicles and fugitive dust from demolition, grading, and other construction activities. Transportation-related emissions would increase along with population and job growth, as would emissions from greater fossil-fuel based energy use in homes, businesses, and commercial and industrial buildings. The additional development and increase in vehicle miles travelled would result in greater concentrations of ozone and particulate matter, including diesel particulate matter, in the air.

Wildfire smoke is a recurring seasonal air quality hazard in the Puget Sound region, and the number of days with unhealthy air quality levels due to wildfire smoke will likely continue to increase as climate change exacerbates wildfire seasons in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

According to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, per capita greenhouse gas emissions have declined in King County. However, due to overall population growth and commercial development, the County did not meet its greenhouse gas reduction goal of a 25 percent reduction of countywide emissions by 2020, which was the pre-2020 goal evaluated in the report.[53]

As part of the Puget Sound Regional Analysis Project, King County modeled its future greenhouse gas emissions based on two scenarios: a “no action future scenario,” which assumes an increase in emissions correlated with population and job growth (no federal, state, or regional emissions reductions policies or actions), and a “federal, state, and regional policies scenario,” which assumes implementation of existing climate, energy, and transportation policies at multiple levels that would require or incentivize greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Both scenarios capture the potential greenhouse gas impacts related to the No Action Alternative, which would implement existing policies but not adopt new ones.

[53] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, March 2022. [LINK]

Table 3.1-2, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Estimates, presents estimates under both scenarios for unincorporated King County and King County as a whole.

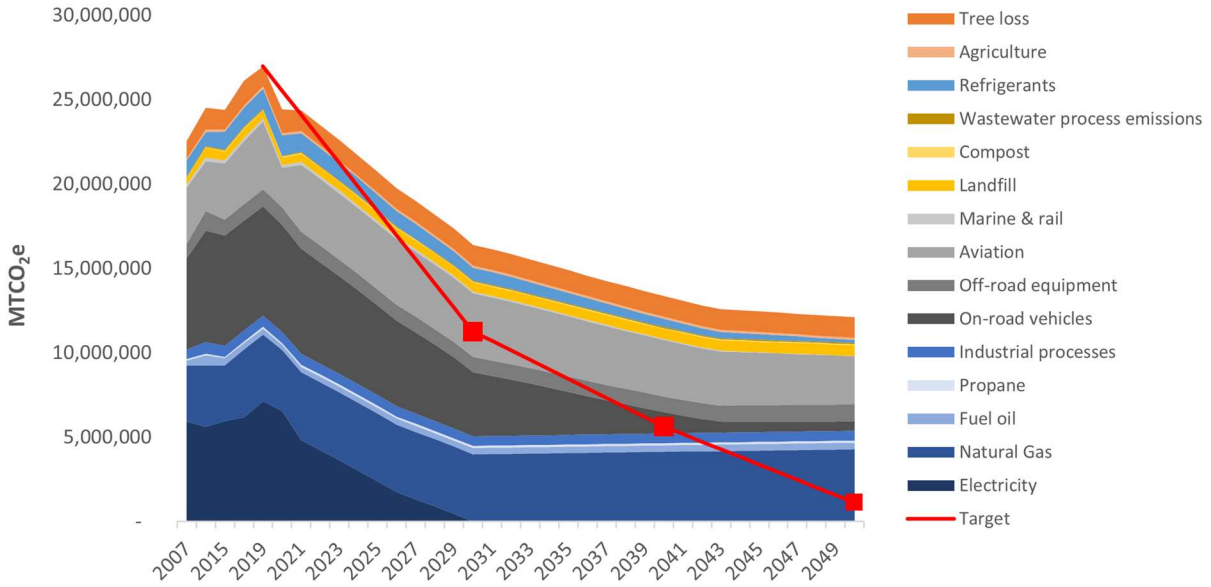
Table 3.1-2. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Estimates

	Baseline Levels	Most Recent GHG Levels	No Action Future Scenario		Federal, State, and Regional Policies Scenario	
Jurisdiction	**2007**	**2019**	**2050**	**Change Compared to Baseline (2007)**	**2050**	**Change Compared to Baseline (2007)**
Unincorporated King County	2,461,129	1,713,790	2,019,653	-18%	335,668	-86%
King County Total	22,534,611	26,983,273	37,752,459	+68%	12,108,195	-46%

Source: Cascadia Consulting Group, King County Communitywide Geographic Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Puget Sound Regional Emissions Analysis, 2022. [LINK]

Figure 3.1-4, King County Past and Projected Greenhouse Gas Emissions, displays the federal, state, and regional policies scenario described above in relation to the emissions reduction targets. Under the No Action Alternative for either greenhouse gas emission reduction scenario, King County would not meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for a 50 percent reduction by 2030, a 75 percent reduction by 2040, and a 95 percent reduction by 2050 as compared to 2007 baseline levels. Failure of the County to meet its reduction targets has the potential to slow existing progress being made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which could continue to exacerbate the adverse effects of climate change.

Figure 3.1-4. King County Past and Projected Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Source: Cascadia Consulting Group, King County Communitywide Geographic Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Geographic Greenhouse Gas Wedge Planning Tool, 2022. [LINK]

3.1.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

The action alternatives being considered for the 2024 Update would generally result in beneficial effects to air quality and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. While new development could lead to greater pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions through land use changes and increased energy and fuel use, the action alternatives would likely accelerate trends of improved air quality and lower per-capita emissions of greenhouse gases.

The action alternative proposals that would affect air quality include those that allow for greater density of residential development, promote transit use, preserve or increase tree cover and open space, promote or require reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, promote the use of electric vehicles and renewable energy, manage wildfire risk, and preserve or promote the active use of farmland.

Proposals that dissuade or restrict development near major freeways and highways would not reduce the levels of emissions coming from traffic on those roadways but would reduce the population exposed to higher concentrations of emissions, including diesel particulate matter. The action alternatives are not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

Air Quality

Both action alternatives would result in changes to the location, type, and character of development in unincorporated King County, which would result in an increase in emissions, particularly ozone and particulate matter, as described for the No Action Alternative. However, growth under the action alternatives would result in denser development in areas that are closer to transit opportunities. More efficient growth patterns, combined with proposals to promote the use of public transit, electric vehicles, and renewable energy, would result in less of an increase in emissions than under the No Action Alternative.

Particulate matter emissions would still be a concern under both action alternatives, similar to the No Action Alternative. While the action alternatives include measures to manage the risk of wildfire in King County, air quality would continue to be negatively impacted by wildfire smoke from both within and beyond the county. In addition, proposals that promote the preservation and active use of farmland could result in localized air quality impacts within areas zoned for agriculture, particularly within Agricultural Production Districts (APDs), from dust, odors, and vehicle exhaust generated by farming activities, in addition to smoke from agricultural burning.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As shown in Figure 3.1-4, King County Past and Projected Greenhouse Gas Emissions, King County will not meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets without implementing additional actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond existing climate, energy, and transportation regulations. The action alternatives would help King County meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets through proposals that go beyond existing policies and regulations, particularly in the energy and transportation sectors. These proposals include those that would promote the use of renewable energy and electric vehicles, as well as preserve open space and increase tree cover. It is important to note that the proposals enacted through the 2024 Update would pertain only to unincorporated King County and would likely have a modest effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the County as a whole. To meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets adopted in the 2021 CPPs, incorporated cities in the county would need to implement additional actions beyond current policies and the requirements of existing regulations as well.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

Air quality impacts are not expected to be substantially different between the two action alternatives due the regional influences that affect air quality in King County beyond the County's control. Both alternatives would reduce the risk of wildfires in the county—the Limited Change Alternative would support efforts for wildfire planning and improvements to forest health, while the Extensive Change Alternative would prohibit new development in fire risk areas in the WUI. Though the Extensive Change Alternative would likely prevent more impacts from wildfires than the Limited Change Alternative, the county would still be susceptible to the effects of smoke from wildfires outside the County's jurisdiction, which has had the largest adverse impact to regional air quality in recent years.

The Extensive Change Alternative includes proposals that would better help the County meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in the 2021 CPPs over those included in the Limited Change Alternative. The Extensive Change Alternative would result in a greater degree of denser development patterns, including more high-density housing near transit and employment, which would likely result in a greater reduction of per capita greenhouse gas emissions when compared to the Limited Change Alternative. In addition, the Extensive Change Alternative includes requirements, as opposed to just incentives or support, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from both County operations and private development, expand electrical vehicle use and infrastructure, and phase out fossil fuels. Collectively, these efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the County would assist broader efforts to stem the impacts of climate change.

The Extensive Change Alternative would include stronger incentives or requirements for active production of farmland in agricultural zones than the Limited Change Alternative. This would likely result in greater localized air quality impacts within areas zoned for agriculture, particularly within APDs, from dust and particulate matter from vehicle exhaust, farming activities, and agricultural burning, as compared to the Limited Change Alternative. However, these impacts are not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts as these proposals would comply with existing air quality regulations within agricultural zones.

3.1.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to air quality and greenhouse gas emissions are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts on air quality and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.

3.2 Water Resources

This section discusses water resources in King County, including surface waters, groundwater, wetlands, flood hazard areas, and shorelines, and evaluates potential impacts to these resources that may be associated with 2024 Update alternatives.

3.2.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Some of the primary laws, regulations, and policies guiding water resources in unincorporated King County include the following:

- Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1251, which establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters.
- Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 USC 300, which regulates public drinking water and its sources (rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and groundwater wells).
- Flood Control Management Act, Title 86 RCW, which designates flood control districts and flood plain management provisions.
- Shoreline Management Act, Chapter 90.58 RCW, and Chapters 173-26 and 173-27 WAC, which regulate the state's shorelines.
- Salmon Recovery Act, Chapter 77.85 RCW, which implements various means of salmon recovery.
- Chapter 173-201A WAC, Water Quality Standards for Surface Waters, which establishes water quality standards for surface waters of the state of Washington.
- Chapter 173-200 WAC, Water Quality Standards for Groundwater, which implements Chapter 90.48 RCW, the Water Pollution Control Act and Chapter 90.54 RCW, the Water Resources Act of 1971.
- Chapter 220-660 WAC, Washington State Hydraulic Code, which regulates the construction or performance of work that will use, divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or bed of any of the salt or fresh waters of the state.
- King County Code (K.C.C.) Title 9, Surface Water Management, which provides for the comprehensive management of stormwater runoff and surface water and erosion control, including programs to reduce flooding, erosion, and sedimentation; prevent and mitigate habitat loss; enhance groundwater recharge; and prevent water quality degradation through the implementation of comprehensive and thorough permit review, construction inspection, enforcement, and maintenance.
- K.C.C. Title 13, Water and Sewer Systems, which designates critical water supply areas and assures consistency between sewer and water system comprehensive plans and adopted County plans, policies, and land use controls.
- K.C.C. Chapter 21A.23, Sea Level Rise Risk Area, Chapter 21A.24, Critical Areas, and Chapter 21A.25, Shorelines, which govern development in sea level rise risk areas, critical areas, and shorelines.

- King County Board of Health Code Title 12, Water, which outlines rules and regulations for King County public drinking water systems, including protections for critical water supply areas.
- The King County Shoreline Master Program (SMP), which is composed of Chapter 6 of the Current Plan, Shorelines, and implementing regulations found in K.C.C. Chapter 21A.25, Shorelines.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which include policies regarding the management of water resources and other related policies.
- King County Surface Water Design Manual, which is a technical manual that details stormwater management requirements for development in King County.
- King County Flood Hazard Management Plan (Ordinance 17697), which includes flood risk reduction strategies and tools and flood management policies such as flood protection standards and design, river channel maintenance requirements, land acquisition processes, and floodplain land use regulations.

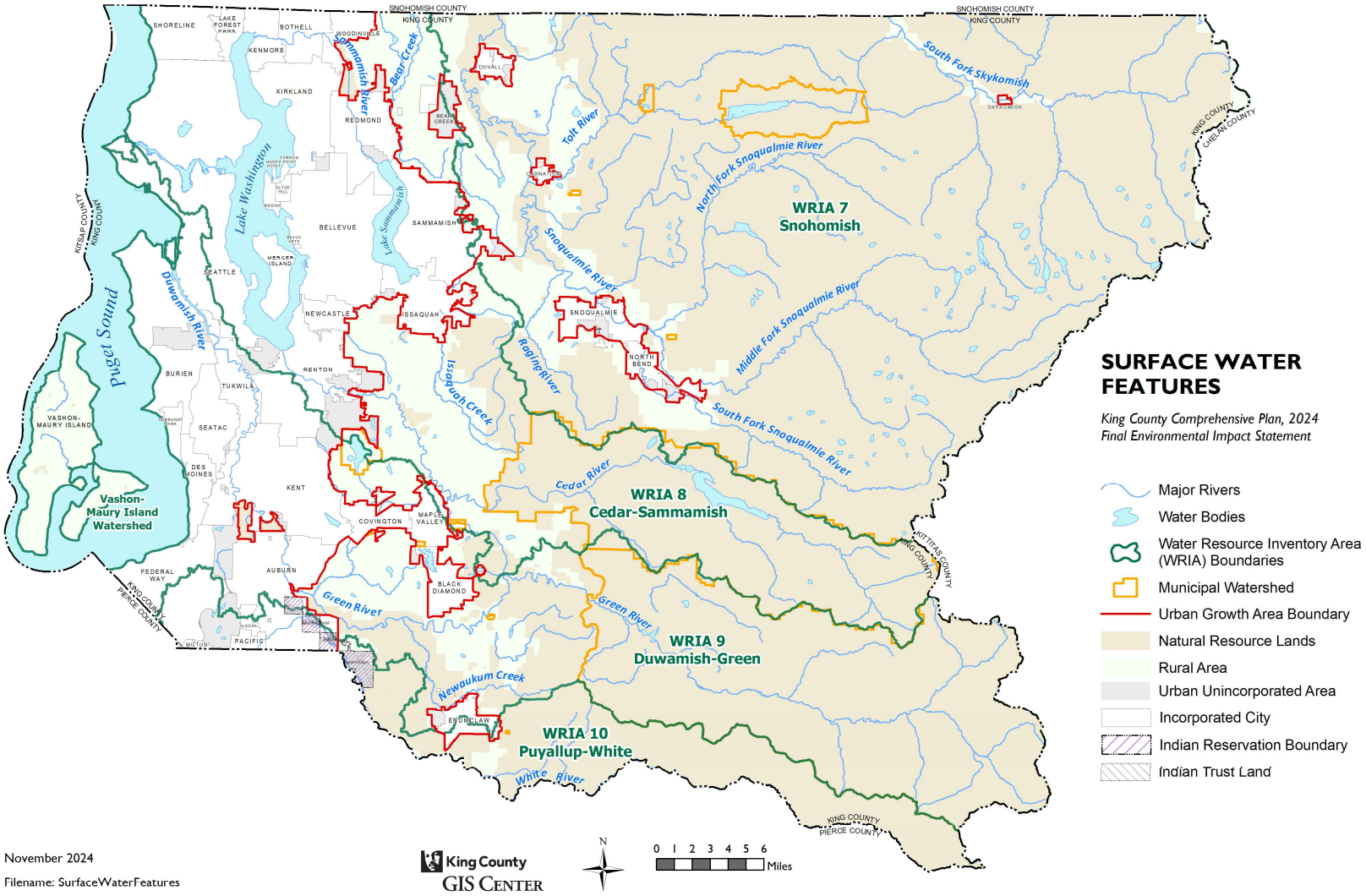
3.2.2 Affected Environment

This section discusses water resources within King County, including surface waters, groundwater, shorelines, and critical areas related to water resources, such as wetlands, flood hazard areas, and critical aquifer recharge areas. Where available, information specific to unincorporated King County is provided; however, because water resources do not conform to political boundaries, the affected environment discusses countywide water resources in a broader context.

3.2.2.1 Surface Waters

Surface waters exist on land surfaces before, during, and after stormwater runoff occurs and includes, but is not limited to, the water found on ground surfaces and in drainage facilities, rivers, streams, springs, seeps, ponds, lakes, wetlands, and the Puget Sound, including shallow groundwater. King County has six major river watersheds that carry flows from the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound. These rivers—the South Fork Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Sammamish, Cedar, Green, and White—pass through lands ranging in use from forestry to agricultural to highly urbanized. Figure 3.2-1, Surface Water Features, shows the location of lakes, rivers, streams, watersheds, and subbasins in the county.

Figure 3.2-1. Surface Water Features



The region has been scoured by ice-age glaciers that carved out hydrologic features, including Puget Sound, Lake Washington, Lake Sammamish, the Snoqualmie River Valley, and the Green River Valley, and shaped the lowland hills, leaving behind patches of conglomerate till and gravelly outwash soil. As the glaciers retreated, they formed a series of long, low gravel ridges across the lowlands, numerous kettle lakes, large lakes (Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish), Mercer Island in Lake Washington, and Vashon-Maury Island, approximately 3 miles offshore the mainland in Puget Sound.[54]

The consensus of climate change modeling predictions for the Puget Sound region indicates a general trend toward increased precipitation, with typical rainfall events increasing in frequency and magnitude during fall and winter, and an extended and more pronounced summer drought period.[55,56] The projected increases in winter precipitation and summer drought intensity are likely to result in a general increase in peak stream flows during wet months and reduced baseflows during dry months. Watersheds in King County that rely on annual snow melt may shift toward increasingly rain-dominated hydrology, altering the timing and frequency of high- and low-flow events.

The quality of surface waters (i.e., the chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of water, usually with respect to its suitability for a particular purpose) is protected through the implementation of water quality standards authorized by the federal Clean Water Act. Water quality standards are established to sustain public health and public enjoyment of the waters and the propagation and protection of fish, shellfish, and wildlife.

The Clean Water Act requires waterbodies with beneficial uses, such as drinking water, recreation, aquatic habitat, and industrial use, that are historically and currently impaired by pollutants to be listed on the Water Quality Assessment Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list.[57] Once a waterbody is listed on the 303(d) list, states are required to develop a "total maximum daily load" (TMDL) for each pollutant causing impairment, and to develop and prioritize water quality improvement projects that address those impairments. A TMDL is the calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a waterbody so that the waterbody will meet water quality standards for pollutants of concern.

Table 3.2-1, Water Quality Impairments – General Summary, provides a brief description of the types of water quality impairments identified in unincorporated King County and potential sources or contributing factors. A majority of water quality impairments are located in incorporated areas, though some examples of impaired waterbodies in unincorporated King County include Green River (dissolved oxygen), Snoqualmie River (inorganic pollutants), Raging River (pH, temperature), Newaukum Creek (bacteria), Big Soos Creek (temperature, dissolved oxygen), and Fivemile Lake (organic pollutants).[58]

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[54] King County, King County Biodiversity Report, 2008. [LINK]

[55] Mauger et al., State of Knowledge: Climate Change in Puget Sound, November 2015. [LINK]

[56] Snover et al., Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Washington State: Technical Summaries for Decision Makers, December 2013. [LINK]

[57] Ecology, Washington State Water Quality Assessment 303(d)/305(b) List, 2022. [LINK]

[58] Ecology, Water Quality Atlas Map, 2023. [LINK]

Table 3.2-1. Water Quality Impairments – General Summary

303(d) Listed Pollutant	Description	Common Sources/ Contributing Activities[a]
Bacteria	Exposure to bacterial contaminants can make recreational users sick and harm aquatic species as well as contaminate sources of drinking water. Examples include but are not limited to the following: *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), *Enterococci*, and fecal coliform.	• Septic failure. • Pet waste. • Livestock. • Illicit discharges.
Dissolved Oxygen (DO)	Levels of dissolved oxygen in water bodies outside of acceptable ranges for aquatic species can result in dead zones incapable of supporting most species.	• Decomposition of natural organic matter. • Excess nutrients. • Seasonally elevated stream temperatures (summer/fall).
pH	pH levels outside of acceptable ranges for aquatic species can cause bodies of water to become too acidic or too basic.	• Industrial waste. • Landfill contamination. • Animal farm runoff.
Temperature[b]	Temperature levels outside of acceptable ranges for aquatic species can be lethal, especially for fish like salmonids. In general, water bodies tend to warm in summer months, and often the contributing factors can compound, making solutions complex.	• Loss of vegetation along shorelines and aquatic areas. • Low flows. • Modification of natural flow volumes (water withdrawals) and timing (dams). • Climate change.
Pollutant – Organics	Pollutants in surface waters can sink and contaminate sediments. Groundwater can become contaminated when pollutants in subsoil leach to groundwater. Examples include but are not limited to the following: nutrients (e.g., phosphorous), sediments, and pathogens.	• Agricultural runoff. • Pet waste. • Illicit discharges. • Septic failures.
Pollutant – Inorganics	There as many as 300 substances. Some pollutants may be classified as "forever chemicals," due to their environmental persistence. Pollutants in surface waters can sink and contaminate sediments. Groundwater can become contaminated when pollutants in the subsoil leach to groundwater. Exposure to pollutants can lead to a variety of short- and long-term health effects. Examples include but are not limited to the following: metals, hydrocarbons, chemical pesticides, and volatile organic compounds.	• Pollution-generating impervious surface runoff. • Automobile tires. • Urban development. • Illicit discharges. • Industrial by-products. • Legacy contaminants.

[a] These sources and contributing activities are provided as general examples of commonly identified sources for each class of pollutants. This list is not intended to be used for any purpose other than general information about water quality impairments.

[b] U.S. EPA, Climate Change Indicators in the United States: Stream Temperature, August 2016. [LINK]

King County regulates the discharge of water pollutants as a Phase I permittee under Ecology's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Municipal Stormwater General Permit. This permit requires existing and new development to implement best management practices for design related to stormwater flow control and the protection of water quality as outlined in the King County Surface Water Design Manual and the King County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Manual.

Additionally, King County is committed to protecting water quality and habitat throughout King County under initiatives such as the Clean Water, Healthy Habitat Strategic Plan. This plan has six goals, each with defined outcomes, strategies, and 5-year actions: healthy forests and more green spaces; cleaner, controlled stormwater runoff; reduced toxics and fecal pathogens; functioning river floodplains; better fish habitat; and resilient marine shorelines. These goals are structured to both protect resources in the face of population growth and climate change and to achieve net gain in several natural environment and human health outcomes, including reconnection of floodplains, reduction in shoreline armoring, improving stream health, and safer fish consumption and swimming in local waters.

3.2.2.2 Wetlands

Wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.[59] There are thousands of mapped wetlands in unincorporated areas of King County.[60] Because of its size, variety of landforms, and diverse landscapes (marine to alpine), the county includes a large diversity of palustrine, lacustrine, riverine, estuarine, and marine wetlands, which are described below:[61]

- Palustrine wetlands, also called emergent wetlands, include forest, shrub/scrub, bog and peatlands, wet meadow, and marsh type wetlands; these are the most common wetlands in King County.
- Lacustrine wetlands are those associated with littoral zones (the shallow edges of lakes and ponds).
- Riverine wetlands occur along the edges of rivers and streams, in sloughs and backwaters, and in abandoned bends and oxbows.
- Estuarine wetlands occur at the interface of marine waters with freshwaters, usually at river mouths.
- Marine wetlands include saltwater-fringing marshes and backshore wetlands.

Wetlands differ widely in their function and value, which can include ecological, economic, recreational, and aesthetic benefits. Wetland functions can include water quality treatment, flood control, shoreline stabilization, aquifer recharge for drinking water and other uses, and as critical habitat for fish and wildlife. Ecology's Wetland Rating System categorizes wetlands based on specific attributes such as their sensitivity to disturbance, significance, rarity, ability to be replaced, and function.

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[59] K.C.C. 21A.06.1391.

[60] King County GIS Open Data, Wetlands defined from Critical Area Ordinance surveys in King County, 2018. [LINK]

[61] King County, King County Biodiversity Report, 2008. [LINK]

The intent of the rating categories is to provide a basis for developing standards for protecting and managing the wetlands based on their sensitivity and function, which includes the buffer widths needed to protect the wetland from adjacent development and permitted uses in, and around, the wetland.[62] Wetland systems that are extremely sensitive or have important functions require larger buffers to protect them from disturbances that may be of lesser threat to a different site. Wetland systems rated as rare or irreplaceable (e.g., high quality estuarine wetlands, mature swamps, and bogs) need greater buffer widths to lower their risk of disturbance.

Wetlands are designated as critical areas by the state of Washington, for which the County sets the policies and regulations that protect their functions and values under K.C.C. Chapter 21A.24. The County currently requires site-specific critical area designations when reviewing development applications and requires permittees to offset impacts to wetlands and their buffers with compensatory mitigation actions on the same site as the impacts, off-site, or through the purchase of credits from King County or another approved mitigation provider. Revenue from the purchase of credits from the County is used to restore, establish, enhance, and/or preserve wetlands, rivers, streams, and buffers within the same watershed as the impact.

3.2.2.3 Flood Hazard Areas

Major flood events along the rivers in King County result in two primary types of flood hazards: inundation and channel migration.[63] Inundation is defined as floodwater and debris flowing through an area that is not normally underwater. Channel migration is a natural process whereby rivers move across their floodplains, either gradually or suddenly when a river jumps course. Gradual channel migration occurs when riverbank erosion either widens the channel, causes a shift in the location of a meander bend, or is coupled with sediment deposition along the opposite bank results in the lateral movement, or migration, of a channel across its floodplain. Abrupt channel migration occurs when a channel suddenly changes in its location, a process known as ~~called~~ avulsion. Avulsion is a key process in the building of alluvial fans, which are broad, gently sloping, fan-shaped landforms made of sediment and debris deposited when a stream emerges from steep hillslopes onto a wide, flat valley. Because these streams drain upland areas, alluvial fans are more prone to floods and debris flows.

Flood hazard areas are designated as critical areas by the state of Washington, for which the County sets the policies and regulations under K.C.C. Chapter 21A.24, consistent with federal law. Flood hazard areas may contain one or more features such as floodplains, special flood hazard areas, zero-rise flood fringe, zero-rise floodways, Federal Emergency Management Agency floodways, coastal flood zones, and channel migration zones. Flood hazard areas are areas subject to inundation by the base flood or at risk from channel migration, including but not limited to an aquatic area, wetland, or closed depression. The base flood is defined as a flood having a 1 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year and is often referred to as the "100-year flood." Flood hazard areas and water resource features are shown in Figure 3.2-2, Flood Hazard Areas.

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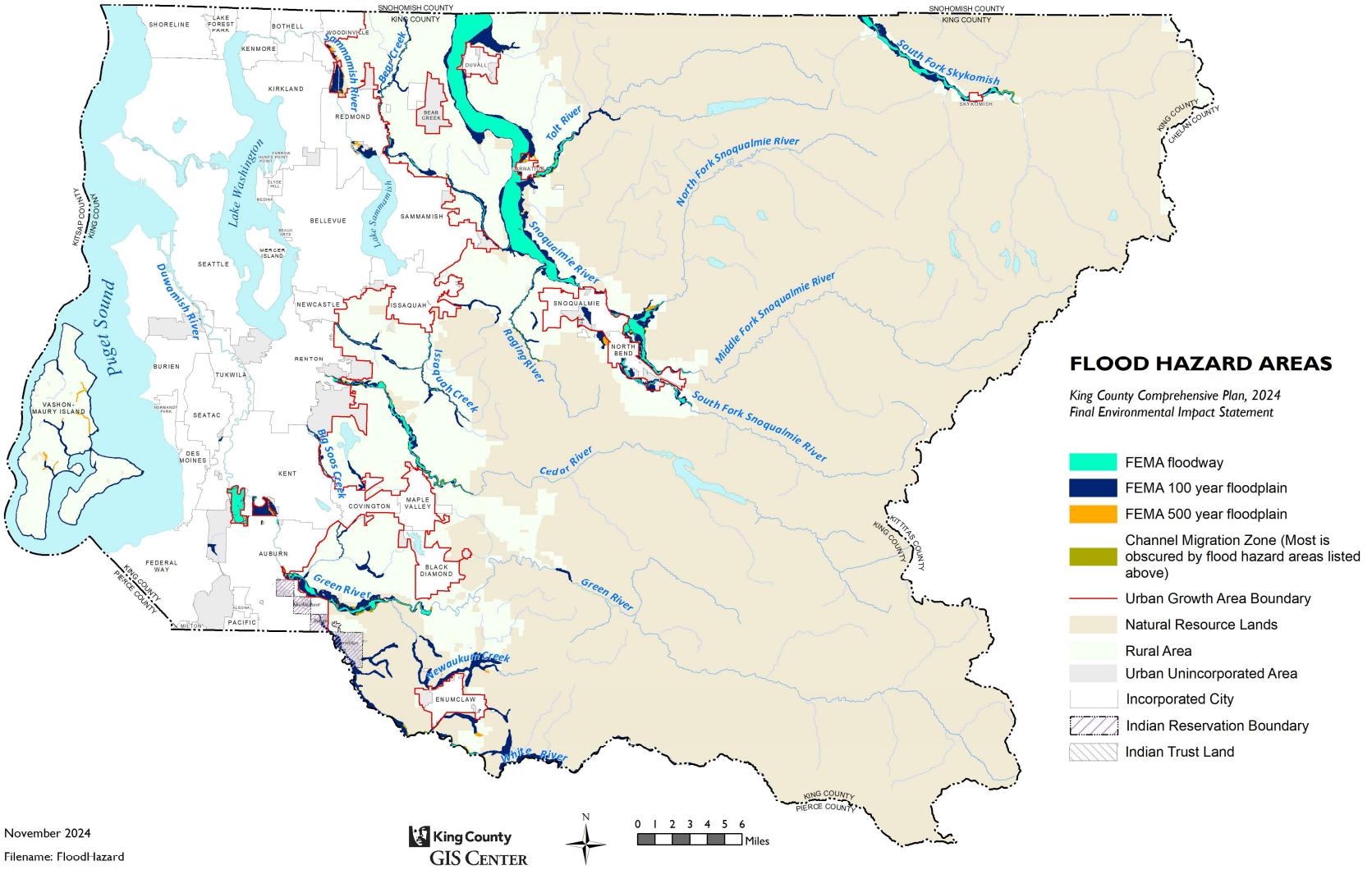
[62] Ecology, Wetland Rating System for Western WA: 2014 Update, October 2014. [LINK]

[63] King County, 2006 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan, 2007. [LINK]

Figure 3.2-2. Flood Hazard Areas



As described previously King County has six major rivers—the South Fork Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Sammamish, Cedar, Green, and White. If the flood and channel migration hazards associated with these rivers and tributary streams are not well managed, they can pose extensive risks to people who live and work in the river floodplains. Along rivers, streams, and shorelines in the county, approximately 500 flood facilities, including levees, dikes, and bank revetments, have been constructed and maintained to reduce the risk of flooding and deter channel migration, allowing areas that may otherwise be naturally inundated by floodwaters to be used for agriculture, industry, infrastructure, and urban development.[64]

The shorelines surrounding Vashon-Maury Island are classified as coastal high hazard areas, identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as coastal areas with a 1 percent or greater chance of flooding during a base flood event and an additional velocity hazard associated with storm waves.

Climate change is anticipated to result in a rise in sea level and an increase in storm surges along coastal shorelines. These climate-related effects could increase the frequency of flooding and may, in turn, lead to negative effects on coastal areas as well as stream structure and function as a result of increased erosion and sedimentation. Additionally, wildfires can change the hydrologic properties of soil, causing water to run off more easily and, when paired with a lack of vegetation, can lead to increased flooding leading to sudden catastrophic events.[65]

3.2.2.4 Shorelines

The Shoreline Management Act and the King County SMP regulate all shorelines and shorelands.[66] Shorelines include all marine shorelines, lakes greater than 20 acres, and rivers and streams with 20 cubic feet per second mean annual flow or greater. Shorelands are defined as those areas extending landward for 200 feet from the ordinary high-water mark, floodways, and contiguous floodplain areas landward 200 feet from such floodways, and all associated wetlands and river deltas. King County includes the 100-year floodplain in its shoreline jurisdiction.[67] Within the shoreline jurisdiction, some areas are further defined as Shorelines of Statewide Significance, which include Puget Sound shorelines on Vashon-Maury Island, lakes greater than 1,000 acres, and rivers with 1,000 cubic feet per second mean annual flow or greater.[68]

Shorelines are vital to maintaining the overall health of lakes and other bodies of water and help maintain water quality, protect against erosion, reduce the impacts of flooding, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. King County's shoreline jurisdiction includes nearly 2,000 miles of saltwater coastline, river floodplains, and extensive lakes and includes the marine shorelines and associated waters, sections of all rivers, and the larger streams that occur in unincorporated King County.[69]

See Figure 3.2-3, Shorelines of the State, which displays the shorelines regulated by the County's SMP, by environmental designation. The environmental designations covered in the SMP are discussed further in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics.

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[64] King County, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Annual Report, 2018. [LINK]

[65] Washington Department of Natural Resources, Floods after Fires, 2013. [LINK]

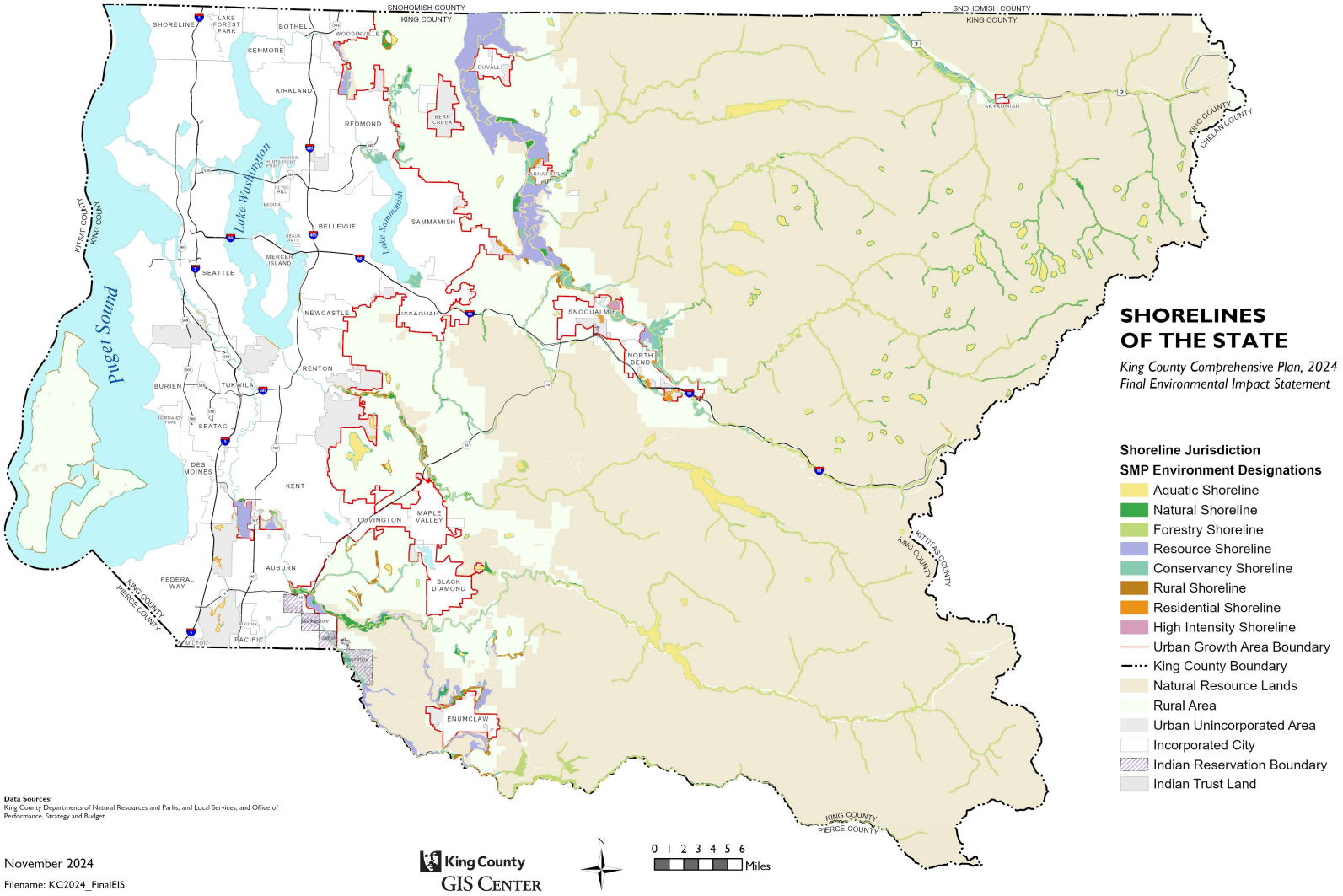
[66] King County, 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022. [LINK]

[67] Ibid.

[68] WAC 173-18-210, Shoreline Management Act, King County Streams. [LINK]

[69] King County, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Annual Report, 2018. [LINK]; 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022. [LINK]

Figure 3.2-3. Shorelines of the State



3.2.2.5 Groundwater

Groundwater is water that collects or flows beneath the earth's surface. Groundwater originates from surface waters (e.g., precipitation, rivers, stormwater) and percolates through pervious surfaces to fill aquifers.[70] In King County, groundwater is used for drinking water, irrigation, and industrial uses, and it also replenishes streams, lakes, and wetlands to supply water for fish and wildlife. An estimated 30 percent of King County's population relies on groundwater wells for drinking water, which is over half a million people.[71] Within unincorporated King County, most groundwater wells are located in the Rural Area, and a majority of these wells are for individual domestic use as opposed to public water systems.

King County has five designated groundwater management areas and a Groundwater Protection Program that aims to provide management, policy, and technical expertise to help protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater resources in King County. See Section 4.1, Utilities and Public Services, for a discussion about critical water supply areas for water service.

Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARAs) are designated as critical areas by the state of Washington, for which the County sets the policies and regulations that protect their functions and values under K.C.C. Chapter 21A.24. CARAs are defined by the County in K.C.C. 21A.06.253C as areas that have a high susceptibility to groundwater contamination, areas of medium susceptibility to groundwater contamination that are located within a sole source aquifer or are within a wellhead protection area for a municipal or district drinking water system, or areas that are over a sole source aquifer and are located on Vashon-Maury Island.

Susceptibility to groundwater contamination can occur where there is a combination of permeable soils, permeable subsurface geology, and groundwater close to the ground surface. The goal of establishing CARAs is to protect the community's drinking water by preventing pollution and maintaining supply. CARAs are categorized so that greater control can occur where land use activities are a high risk for polluting sensitive aquifers. Table 3.2-2, Critical Aquifer Recharge Area Categories, summarizes the CARA classifications the County has established, and Figure 3.2-4, Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas and Groundwater Management Areas, shows the CARAs in King County.

Table 3.2-2. Critical Aquifer Recharge Area Categories

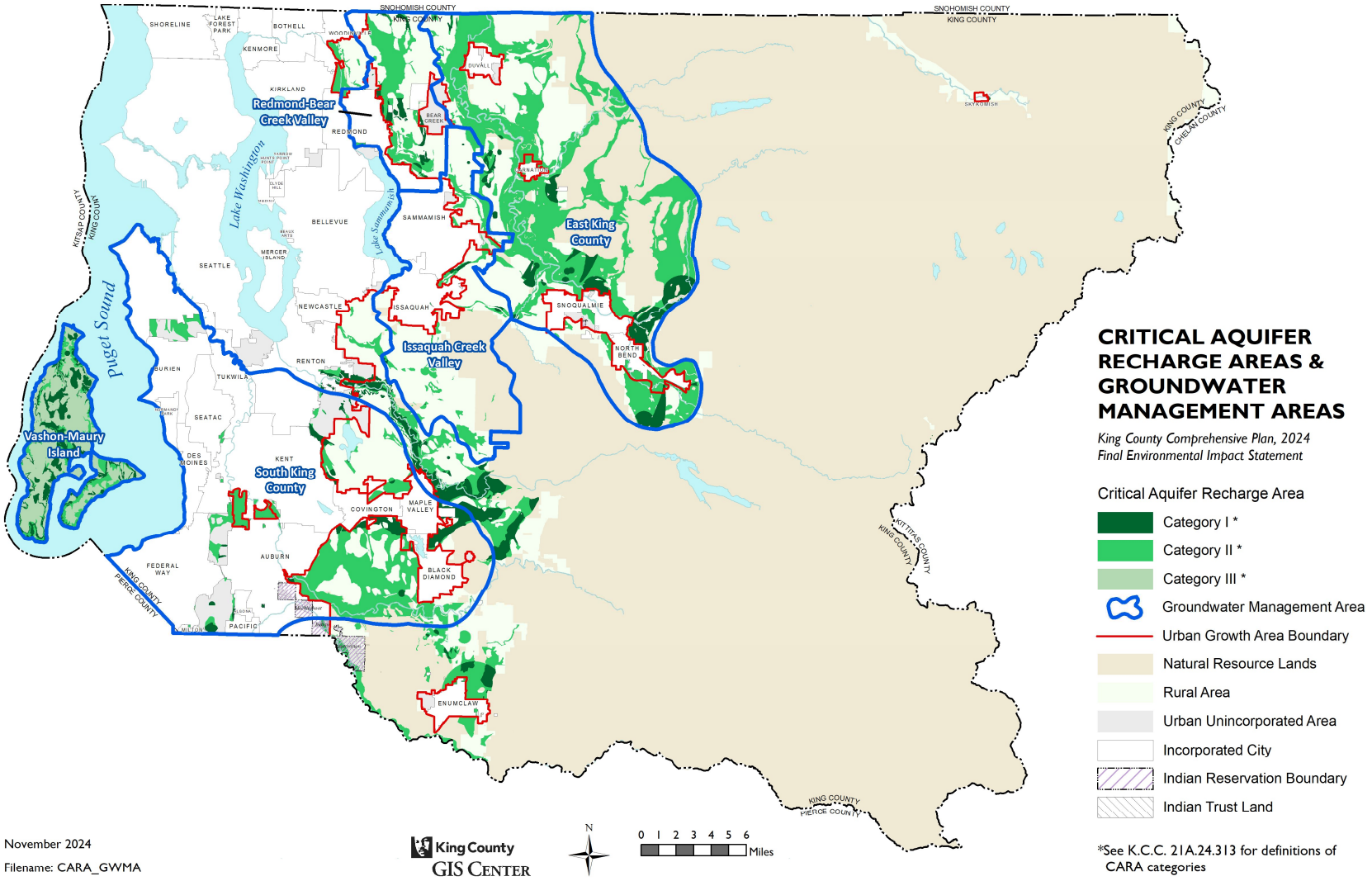
Category	Susceptibility to Contamination	Located within sole source aquifer or well head protection area	Additional Criteria
I	High	Yes	N/A
I	Any	Yes	Located in an area where hydrogeologic mapping or a transport model demonstrates a 1-year time of travel to a wellhead for a Group A water system.
II	Medium	Yes	N/A
II	High	No	N/A
III	Low	Yes	Located over an aquifer underlying an island that is surrounded by saltwater.

Sources: K.C.C. 21A.24.313; Washington State Department of Health, Owning and Managing a Group A Water System (DOH 331-084), December 2013. [LINK]

[70] Ecology, Groundwater, 2023. [LINK]

[71] King County, Groundwater Management, 2023. [LINK]

Figure 3.2-4. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas and Groundwater Management Areas



3.2.3 Environmental Consequences

3.2.3.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, water quality trends and approaches to the management of water resources would generally continue as described in the Affected Environment section.

Surface Waters

Under the No Action Alternative, anticipated development would include facilities designed to provide stormwater flow control and water quality treatment for future growth or redevelopment of existing structures. The No Action Alternative would be designed to incorporate stormwater management features that meet state and local stormwater requirements.

Construction associated with development under the No Action Alternative could affect surface water quality by increasing the potential for sedimentation and turbidity impacts resulting from clearing and grading activities and increased erosion and sedimentation runoff from active work areas. Vehicle miles traveled and transportation-related pollutant loads would increase along with population and job growth. Pollution-generating impervious surfaces, including roadways and parking areas, have the potential to accumulate contaminants that can be transported by stormwater runoff into receiving water bodies.

Development generally results in an increase in impervious surface from new parking areas, building roofs, roads, and stormwater ponds (which are considered impervious during rain events) when filled with water. These surfaces could result in an increase in runoff volumes and decrease in groundwater recharge, which may increase flooding and reduce average water flow frequencies. In places where some runoff does infiltrate into the ground, pollutants carried from pollution-generating impervious surfaces can contaminate groundwater. Also, increased surface flow volumes and water quality impairments can contribute to stream erosion and aquatic habitat degradation. However, existing regulations minimize such impacts associated with new development.

Under the No Action Alternative, the County would continue to operate under existing programs, policies, and initiatives to improve water quality by investing in upgrades and maintenance to stormwater and wastewater treatment infrastructure, reduction in toxics and fecal pathogens, and through the removal of fish passage barriers (including culverts).

One such existing program includes replacing culverts on fish-bearing streams. The relocation and redesign of heavily modified conveyance systems return them to more naturally connected states that can result in several beneficial impacts on water resources, in addition to restoring fish access. These benefits are site specific, but the designs typically include larger hydraulic openings than the existing culverts they are replacing, which can support more natural sediment transport patterns in the stream and potentially improve water quality.

Wetlands

Under the No Action Alternative, potential impacts to wetlands due to development would be site specific, and the County would continue to be guided by existing policies and regulations including applicable buffers, mitigation, and permitting requirements.

Flood Hazard Areas

Under the No Action Alternative, the County would continue to maintain existing flood structures and revetments, replace identified fish passage barriers, and require new development or redevelopment projects within flood hazard areas to comply with relevant development standards, including minimum building standards and compensatory flood storage. Compensatory storage is required to offset the placement of fill and maintain the current natural storage function and volume of the floodplain.

Shorelines

Under the No Action Alternative, the County would continue to maintain existing shoreline stabilization regulations, which limit construction of new structures, including bulkheads, levees and revetments along marine and lake shorelines to reduce shoreline erosion. This would result in overall benefits for shoreline environments, as studies have shown that bulkheads can increase erosion, decrease important sediment transport processes, contribute to a loss of shoreline vegetation and as a result shade, and contribute to habitat loss for fish and wildlife in both aquatic and terrestrial habitats.[72]

Groundwater

Under the No Action Alternative, current development patterns would continue to occur, including the conversion of undeveloped land to impervious surfaces. Impacts resulting from development activities such as clearing, grading, or altering the natural conveyance of surface overland flows have the potential to decrease groundwater and aquifer recharge rates and increase the possibility of contamination. When natural infiltration processes are disrupted, this can also impact stream flows because groundwater is an important contributor to instream flow volumes, especially in drier summer months. Low flows can result in increased stream temperature, higher pollutant concentrations, and degradation and loss of habitat for aquatic species. Additionally, runoff from new roadways, parking lots, agricultural land, landscapes, and yards carry metals, excess nutrients, and pathogens into aquifers groundwater supplies.

3.2.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Generally, both action alternatives seek to develop a framework for water resources, shorelines, and critical areas that builds on past successes, ensures accountability, encourages innovation, and uses ~~the latest science~~ best available science (BAS). Generally, both action alternatives would promote denser development by making changes to zoning allowances and incentives. To a varying degree, both action alternatives have the potential to result in improvements to water quality and greater protections for water resources and critical areas, including surface waters, groundwater, wetlands, and shorelines.

The action alternative proposals that would affect water resources include proposals that expand housing options and promote population growth and development; update critical areas regulations; change allowances for industrial zoning in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands; support fish habitat and floodplain restoration activities in APDs; and regulate shoreline stabilization. The action alternatives are not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts as future development would incorporate stormwater management features designed to provide flow control and water quality treatment that meet state and local stormwater requirements.

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[72] Ecology, Shoreline Armoring Effects on Coastal Ecology and Biological Resources in Puget Sound, Washington, August 1994. [LINK]

Surface Water

Both of the action alternatives would result in changes to the location, type, and character of development in unincorporated King County, which would result in the reduction of vegetation and increases to impervious surface, similar to the potential impacts described for the No Action Alternative.

Both action alternatives include incentives or requirements for active production of farmland in agricultural zones. This would likely result in greater water use and localized water quality impacts within areas used for agriculture, particularly within APDs. Agricultural practices can cause water quality impacts like nutrient loading, increased sedimentation and erosion, and organic and inorganic pollutants associated with agricultural farming activities. These impacts could translate to water quality impairments such as decreased dissolved oxygen, increased turbidity, high water temperatures, and water pollutants above the regulatory limits (including nutrients and bacteria from animal wastes and fertilizers) that harm aquatic species.

Wetlands

Under both action alternatives, there is the potential to improve wetland health and function by providing greater protection for critical areas and related water resources, including wetlands and floodplains. These policies and regulations would promote biodiversity and habitats with important ecological functions by updating critical area buffers and avoidance and mitigation requirements for development near wetlands located in unincorporated areas of King County.

Flood Hazard Areas

Both action alternatives would likely protect and restore the critical functions of floodplains through revisions to the County's shoreline and critical areas regulations. Both action alternatives include proposals that would update critical areas regulations with the best available science, such as to manage development within alluvial fans, and to encourage soft or natural shoreline stabilization methods. These regulations would update requirements for buffers and mitigation measures or prohibit development within areas at risk for erosion, landslides, and sudden catastrophic flooding, and reduce flood-related risks to human life and damage to property and infrastructure.

Both action alternatives would also support floodplain management efforts by incorporating recommendations from the Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee flood management strategies within APDs. This initiative would include a multifaceted approach to balance the needs of food production and management of flood-related risks to human life and property, while also addressing environmental quality and ecological habitat concerns in these areas. Potential benefits and adverse impacts would be site specific, as some areas or projects would prioritize expansion of commercial agriculture operations and others would prioritize salmon habitat restoration. Strategies that would benefit floodplain habitats include the removal of existing levee structures and revetments and replacement with more natural shorelines; replanting with native vegetation to improve riparian function and habitat; and the addition of fish-passable culverts, side channels, and large woody debris.

The addition of fish-passable culverts would have the same potential benefits described under the No Action Alternative and would be dependent on the extent in which they are implemented.

Shorelines

Both action alternatives would make updates to the County's shoreline regulations to promote the use of natural shoreline features in new development and encourage long-term stabilization approaches based on an improved understanding of shoreline processes. Additional requirements for shoreline development setbacks, preservation of native vegetation, and inclusion of natural beach contours would

help protect water quality by stabilizing shoreline slopes, absorbing wave energy, filtrating runoff, and providing shade.

Groundwater

Both action alternatives would increase the potential to disturb layers of contaminated soil and introduce migration pathways for pollutants into aquifers as a result of allowing additional development in less developed areas, such as allowing more industrial uses in the Rural Area or on Natural Resource Lands. Soil disturbance in areas with existing or historical intensive uses, such as solid waste, materials processing, or mineral extraction, carry the risk of encountering contaminated materials and soils, which could introduce contamination and impact groundwater sources. Runoff from site-specific activities associated with industrial use also has the potential to impact groundwater quality.

However, impacts to groundwater would be limited due to protections within groundwater management areas and CARA boundaries. Additionally, the action alternatives would allow more substantial increases in residential density in urban unincorporated areas as compared to the No Action Alternative, which could help concentrate future development in already developed areas and limit the conversion of additional pervious surfaces to impervious surfaces. This would be beneficial for groundwater infiltration and for preventing additional impacts to drinking water sources and stream flows.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

Stormwater quality impacts are not expected to be substantially different between the action alternatives. However, the Extensive Change Alternative proposals could result in denser development within urban unincorporated areas, closer to public transit and employment options, which could result in less development and associated increases in stormwater runoff in undeveloped areas than might occur under the No Action Alternative.

The Extensive Change Alternative would include more substantive updates to critical areas codes governing water resources and would require, restrict, or prohibit certain types of development within designated floodplains and shorelines. Stronger critical areas protections under the Extensive Change Alternative would likely benefit water resources more than the less stringent proposals included in the Limited Change Alternative. Additionally, the Extensive Change Alternative would expand the geographical extent of habitat and floodplain restoration efforts as compared to the Limited Change Alternative. For example, under the Limited Change Alternative implementation of the Fish, Farm, Flood recommendations would apply to the Snoqualmie Valley APD; under the Extensive Change Alternative, it would expand to all APDs.

The Extensive Change Alternative would also include stronger incentives or requirements for active production of farmland in agricultural zones than the Limited Change Alternative. This would likely result in greater localized water quality impacts within areas zoned for agriculture, particularly within APDs, from nutrient loading, increased sedimentation and erosion, and organic and inorganic pollutants associated with agricultural farming activities as compared to the Limited Change Alternative. However, these impacts are not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts as these proposals would comply with existing water quality regulations in agricultural zones.

The Extensive Change Alternative would allow some additional industrial uses in the Rural Area and on Natural Resources Lands, including past intensive use sites, which could increase the potential for impacts to surface water and groundwater resources from soil contamination and site runoff as compared to the Limited Change Alternative.

3.2.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to water resources are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts on water resources, such as compliance with local stormwater management requirements, using best management practices during construction, encouraging sustainable low-impact development approaches where feasible, and by preparing for climate-related uncertainties where practicable. In addition, updates to the County's Critical Areas Ordinance will be informed by the Best Available Science Review and Updates to Critical Areas Protection report, which assessed the County's consistency with GMA mandates and BAS and identified regulatory updates necessary to improve alignment.[73]

[73] King County, Best Available Science Review and Updates to Critical Areas Protections, February 2024. [LINK]

3.3 Wildlife and Habitat

This section discusses wildlife and habitat in King County and evaluates potential impacts to these resources that may be associated with the 2024 Update alternatives.

3.3.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Some of the primary laws, regulations, and policies guiding wildlife and habitat resources in unincorporated King County include the following:

- Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 USC 1531, which establishes protections for fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered.
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 USC 703-712, which prohibits the taking of protected migratory bird species without prior authorization.
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, 16 USC 668-668C, which prohibits the taking of bald or golden eagles.
- Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 USC 1361-1407, which establishes a moratorium on taking and importing marine mammals.
- Title 77 RCW, Fish and Wildlife, which includes regulations to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and shellfish in state waters and offshore waters.
- Chapter 17.10 RCW, Noxious Weeds, which regulates noxious weeds on all terrestrial and aquatic areas of the state.
- Title 220 WAC, Department of Fish and Wildlife, which sets out department rules related to the preservation, protection, perpetuation, and management of fish and wildlife of the state, including fish passage.
- K.C.C. Chapter 21A.24, Critical Areas, and Chapter 21A.25, Shorelines, which govern development in and protection of critical areas and shorelines.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which include policies aimed at maintaining biodiversity and protecting species, including salmon, and other related policies.
- 2020 SCAP, which outlines the County's priorities and commitments for climate action over a 5-year horizon, including goals to protect high-value forests and farmland, expand forest canopy, restore the health, viability, and climate resilience of forests and farmland.
- Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 7, 8, 9, 10, and Vashon-Maury Island watershed and salmon recovery plans, which outline goals and recommendations for watershed-level water quality and salmon conservation efforts.

3.3.2 Affected Environment

The sections below discuss existing conditions and trends related to wildlife and habitat. Where available, information specific to unincorporated King County is provided; however, because plants and animals do not conform to political boundaries, policies and regulations implemented in unincorporated King County have the potential to impact wildlife and habitat countywide and beyond.

King County has a diverse array of landscapes and habitats, ranging from the Puget Sound lowlands to the Cascade Mountain highlands. These habitats are home to over 200 species of breeding and non-breeding birds, over 70 species of mammals, over 20 species of amphibians and reptiles, over 200 species of freshwater and marine fish, over 500 species of invertebrates, and thousands of vascular plant species.[74]

King County has three major ecoregions, which are the largest units of biodiversity used by the County for landscape level planning: the Puget Lowland ecoregion, the North Cascades ecoregion, and the Cascades ecoregion (Figure 3.3-1, Wildlife Habitat Network and Ecoregions).[75] These ecoregions exclude the Puget Sound marine environment which forms the county's western border and is dominated by shoreland and open water ecosystems.[76]

- The Puget Lowland ecoregion (comprised of the Eastern Puget Riverine Lowlands, Eastern Puget Uplands, and Central Puget Lowlands subregions) is the largest with over one-third of the county's total area, though much of it is within incorporated cities of western King County. The ecoregion contains relatively low biodiversity in the western lowlands which are dominated by urban and suburban land uses, but species and habitat diversity increase in the eastern uplands where agriculture and forest production lands are protected by the County.
- The Cascades ecoregion (comprised of the Western Cascades Lowlands and Valleys and Western Cascades Montane Highlands subregions) is in the southeastern portion of the county and is almost entirely within unincorporated King County. This ecoregion contains the Cedar River, Green River, and White River watersheds, and is dominated by agriculture and timber harvest.
- The North Cascades ecoregion (comprised North Cascades Lowland Forests, North Cascades Highland Forests, and North Cascades Subalpine/Alpine subregions) is in the northeastern and east central parts of the county. It consists of mostly unincorporated King County from the upslope valleys of King County's major rivers systems (Skykomish, Tolt, and Snoqualmie rivers) to the alpine forests. The ecoregion is characterized by dense timber and includes the least disturbed landscapes in King County (Alpine Lakes and Henry M. Jackson wilderness areas).

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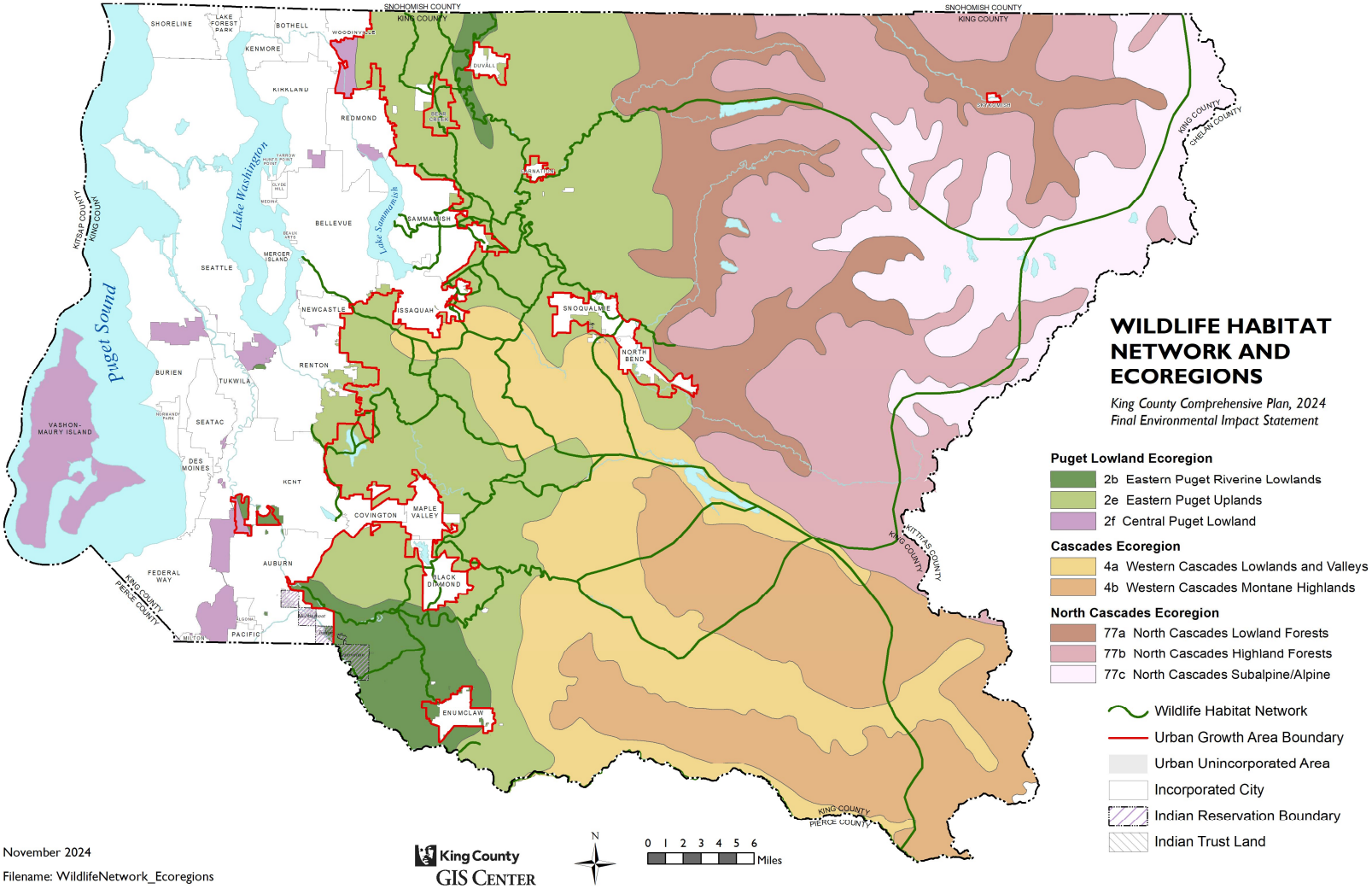
[74] King County, Defining Biodiversity, 2023. [LINK]

[75] King County, King County Biodiversity Report, 2008. [LINK]

[76] King County, Ecoregions, 2023. [LINK]

Figure 3.3-1. Wildlife Habitat Network and Ecoregions



3.3.2.1 Habitats, Conservation Areas, and Networks

King County includes aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Aquatic habitats include a variety of wetland types, lakes, rivers, and streams, along with their riparian areas, and the estuaries and nearshore habitat of the Puget Sound. Terrestrial habitats include distinct land-based vegetation communities in the lowlands, highlands, and subalpine areas of the county.[77] Ongoing development, however, has threatened ecosystem health and wildlife and vegetation populations for over 150 years, especially in the western half of the county. Much of the forests, wetlands, and grassy meadows have been impacted resulting in loss of native habitats and species. Development, associated habitat loss, and fragmentation are the top threats to biodiversity in King County along with invasive species and climate change.[78]

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WFDW) uses the Priority Habitats and Species Program to identify species and habitat types for which special conservation measures should be taken. Priority habitats are those with unique or significant value to multiple species, and they consist of a unique vegetation type, dominant plant species, or specific habitat feature. Of the 20 types of priority habitats in Washington, King County is home to 13, including six terrestrial habitats (biodiversity areas and corridors, herbaceous balds, old growth/mature forest, Oregon white oak woodlands, Westside prairie, riparian), three aquatic habitats (freshwater wetlands and fresh deepwater, instream, Puget Sound nearshore) and four habitat features (caves, cliffs, snags and logs, and talus).[79] Several of these habitat types are also designated as Habitats of Local Importance in the Current Plan.[80]

Additionally, King County restricts development activities in fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, which include active breeding sites and the surrounding areas for nine species: bald eagle, great blue heron, marbled murrelet, northern goshawk, osprey, peregrine falcon, northern spotted owl, Townsend's big-eared bat, and Vaux's swift.[81] Wildlife habitat conservation areas also protect all active breeding sites of any federal or state listed endangered, threatened, sensitive, and candidate species, as well as King County Species of Local Importance, which are discussed in the following section. These habitat conservation areas are evaluated on a case-by-case basis during project design and construction.

Finally, the County has identified almost 460 miles of wildlife habitat network, over 400 of which are currently located within unincorporated King County. The wildlife habitat network, defined and mapped in the Current Plan, links wildlife habitat with critical areas and buffers, priority habitats, trails, parks, open space, and other areas to provide for wildlife movement and alleviate habitat fragmentation.[82] Figure 3.3-1, Wildlife Habitat Network and Ecoregions, shows biodiverse areas and corridors that connect critical wildlife habitats and protected lands throughout the county.

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[77] King County, King County Biodiversity Report, 2008. [LINK]

[78] King County, Threats to Biodiversity in King County, 2023. [LINK]

[79] WDFW, Priority Habitat and Species List, 2023. [LINK]

[80] King County is updating the Species of Local Importance in the 2024 Update.

[81] K.C.C. 21A.24.382.

[82] K.C.C. 21A.06.1424.

3.3.2.2 Special Status Species

Several plant and animal species in King County are protected by a combination of federal, state, and local regulations. Chapter 5, References and Supporting Information, includes a list of federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species and descriptions for various designation types, as well as County-designated Species of Local Importance.

Federal protections exist for species listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There are 17 federally listed, proposed, and candidate animal species known to occur in King County, including six fish, four bird, four mammal, one amphibian, one reptile, and one invertebrate species. WDFW identifies priority species via the Priority Habitat and Species list, which includes all state endangered, threatened, sensitive, and candidate species; vulnerable animal groups; and vulnerable species of recreational, commercial, or Tribal importance. There are 33 state-listed animal species known to occur in King County, including five fish, nine bird, eight mammal, three amphibian, one reptile, and seven invertebrate species.[83] Additionally, the Washington Natural Heritage Program identifies 34 special-status plant species found in King County, 26 of which are ESA listed or proposed species.

At the local level, King County code protects Species of Local Importance, which are listed in the comprehensive plan. These include all federal and state-listed threatened and endangered species and other species that are of local concern because of their population status or their sensitivity to habitat manipulation. King County Species of Local Importance are identified so that they and their habitats may be considered during land use planning and protected during project construction.

3.3.2.3 Fish Passage Barriers

Fish passage barriers, including road culverts, dams, dikes, and other obstructions, are one of the primary threats to ESA-listed fish species—Chinook salmon, Bull Trout, and Steelhead—because they prevent fish from accessing upstream rearing habitat. Several ESA listed fish species are present within major rivers and streams throughout King County, including waterbodies in both unincorporated areas and incorporated cities. The presence of these fish species can serve as an indicator for the health of other species because they have well-defined and documented aquatic habitat requirements and are sensitive to small changes in environmental conditions.[84]

There are almost 11,000 fish passage barriers located within the county, of which approximately half are in unincorporated King County.[85] In a countywide inventory of fish passage barriers, King County identified over 900 County-owned barriers (Figure 3.3-2, Fish Passage Barrier Assessment).[86] The County is prioritizing barriers for removal and restoration based on the potential habitat gain for each barrier, using a formula that characterizes stream habitat quantity and quality based on intrinsic potential of juvenile rearing, connectivity based on surrounding upstream and downstream barriers, habitat quality based on land cover, and the potential for use by Chinook or Lake Sammamish kokanee.

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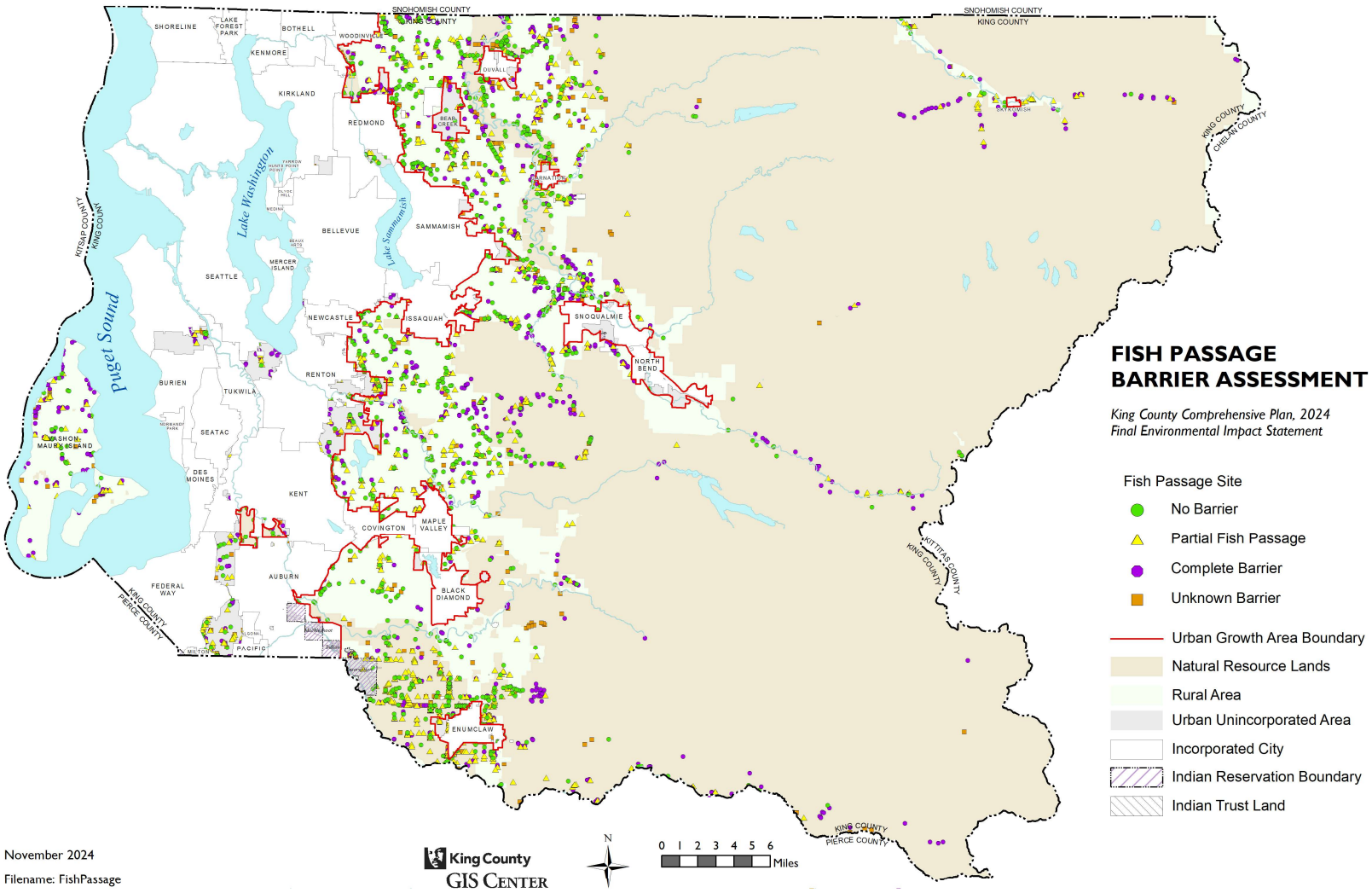
[83] WDFW, Priority Habitat and Species List, 2023. [LINK]

[84] NOAA, Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish; Federal Register Vol. 82, No. 219, Wednesday, November 15, 2017, Notices, pp. 52884–52888.

[85] King County, GIS Open Data – Fish Passage Sites, October 2021. [LINK]

[86] King County, King County Fish Passage Barrier Prioritization Summary Report, June 2022. [LINK]

Figure 3.3-2. Fish Passage Barrier Assessment



3.3.2.4 Invasive Species

As development throughout the county has expanded and disrupted native habitats, non-native plant species have been accidentally or intentionally introduced. Some of these introduced plants have been designated as noxious weeds. In King County, there are currently over 150 noxious weeds that have been identified by the King County Noxious Weed Control Board, 88 of which are regulated as Class A, B, or C noxious weeds that require eradication or control within the county.[87]

Native habitats and disturbed areas are at risk from noxious weeds and non-native species that colonize these areas, making these areas potentially more susceptible to the effects of climate change. For example, wildfires can create habitats with decreased water retention and monolithic habitats, which can result in reduced ecosystem functions for the support of healthy plant and wildlife communities. The King County Noxious Weed Board adopts a county weed list annually, provides public education and resource assistance to control or eradicate noxious weeds, and surveys roadways and conservation lands to help eradicate and manage the spread of noxious weeds in the county.

3.3.3 Environmental Consequences

3.3.3.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, King County would retain the Current Plan's policies and initiatives, such as the Fish Passage Restoration Program, 2020 SCAP, and WRIA watershed and salmon recovery plans. These programs and policies work in conjunction and seek to improve, restore, and protect wildlife and vegetation habitats and maintain biodiversity to support healthy ecosystems through ongoing fish passage restoration work; protect riparian, streams, wetlands, and species and habitats of importance; restore habitat and floodplains; and retain healthy forests as carbon sinks to prepare for climate change. Anticipated development patterns would align with the existing allowed uses and development standards within each zoning district.

While the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report does not evaluate specific performance measures for wildlife and habitat, it does evaluate the County's performance in protecting open space and reducing greenhouse gases, both of which contribute to the health of plant and animal species. The County has been successful in increasing the area of permanently protected priority non-resource open space lands, although it has not been able to meet its targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.[88] Impacts from climate change would continue to have wide-ranging impacts on the natural environment, including severe weather events such as heat waves, winter storms, and summer droughts; decreased water supplies for fish; and changes to habitat and species distribution. Other existing trends, such as increased urbanization and development and the spread of invasive species, would also continue to impact biodiversity in the county.[89]

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[87] King County, 2023 King County Noxious Weed List, 2023. [LINK]

[88] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, March 2022. [LINK]

[89] King County, Threats to Biodiversity in King County, 2023. [LINK]

3.3.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Changes under both action alternatives that may affect wildlife and habitat include proposals that support renewable energy and electric vehicle use, clearing vegetation that supports wildfire planning, updating critical areas regulations, planning for fish habitat and floodplain restoration activities in APDs, and allowing new or expanded uses on resource lands, such as materials processing, mineral extraction, or other industrial uses. The action alternatives are not anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to wildlife or habitat.

Both action alternatives would advance the County's climate change strategy to encourage and incentivize electric vehicle use and promote electric vehicle infrastructure to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The construction of charging station infrastructure ~~may~~ would require more land development in the Rural Area or on Natural Resource Lands; however, regulations and policies already in place would help mitigate any additional development in these areas. Potential local wildlife species of importance and important wetland habitats would remain protected in these areas.

Updates to the County's critical areas regulations under both action alternatives, including updates to be consistent with BAS, would likely promote biodiversity and habitats with important ecological functions in the county and protect wetland and stream areas. The critical area regulations define buffers and require mitigation measures for development near wetlands, lakes, wildlife habitat, and streams and areas at risk for erosion, landslides, and flooding located in unincorporated areas of King County. They would remain in place under both action alternatives.

Proposals that encourage removing fish barriers and improve fish habitat and floodplain restoration planning would help protect endangered salmon populations, which could increase food production for endangered orcas beyond the No Action Alternative. Changes related to fish and habitat restoration would be implemented in conjunction with agricultural production goals to protect remaining farmlands for food production in APDs while reducing flood risk for farms.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

The main difference between the action alternatives is how aggressively they pursue changes that can support progress towards the 2024 Update objectives. While the Limited Change Alternative encourages policies and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and supports electric vehicle use and supporting infrastructure, the Extensive Change Alternative requires greenhouse gas reduction and the construction of electric vehicle charging stations in geographically dispersed and equitable areas in the Urban Area and Rural Area. The Extensive Change Alternative also requires providing electric vehicle infrastructure at multiplexes (including duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes). More population in these multiplex buildings may result in more electric vehicles present that need chargers to support them. As a result, more land may be needed to build wind, solar, and battery facilities to charge electric vehicles under the Extensive Change Alternative, which could have a greater impact to wildlife and habitat in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.

Another difference between the action alternatives is in the rate of fish habitat restoration and fish culvert mitigation in and around unincorporated King County and specifically within ADPs. The Limited Change Alternative supports balancing agricultural production, fish habitat, and floodplain restoration projects in the Snoqualmie Valley APD, as recommended by the Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee. The Extensive Change Alternative would require fish and floodplain habitat restoration projects to balance against agricultural production goals throughout all APDs. Potential benefits and impacts would

be site-specific, as some areas or projects would prioritize expansion of commercial agriculture operations, and others would prioritize salmon habitat restoration.

The Limited Change Alternative would encourage making minor updates to the County's critical area codes; this may include clarifying changes, using updated terminology, and reflecting changes to state law. The Extensive Change Alternative would make substantive updates, such as requiring larger buffers around wetlands, aquatic, and riparian areas, based on current, best available scientific findings to protect fish, wildlife, and plant communities. Because the Extensive Change Alternative would be more restrictive to development projects than the Limited Change Alternative, it would have better protections for wildlife and habitat, thus reducing the impact.

3.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to wildlife or habitat are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts on wildlife and habitat.

3.4 Natural Resources

This section discusses natural resources in King County, including agriculture, forest lands, and mineral resources, and evaluates potential impacts to these resources that may be associated with the 2024 Update alternatives.

3.4.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Some of the primary laws, regulations, and policies guiding natural resources in unincorporated King County include the following:

- Chapter 78.44 RCW, Surface Mining, and Chapter 332-18 WAC, Surface Mine Reclamation, which govern the extraction of minerals through surface mining and the reclamation of mined lands.
- Chapter 78.56 RCW, Metals Mining and Milling Operations, which regulates the design, construction, and operation of mining or milling operations.
- K.C.C. Chapter 21A.30, Livestock Management Ordinance, which is intended to support the raising and keeping of livestock in a way that minimizes the adverse impacts of livestock on the environment, particularly related to their impacts on water quality and salmonid fisheries habitat in King County watersheds.
- K.C.C Chapter 76.09, Forest Practices, which governs all forest practices in non-federal lands.
- K.C.C. Chapter 21A.37, King County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program, which is a voluntary, incentive-based, and market-driven approach to preserve the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands by directing growth into King County's Urban Area.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which include policies to promote and support forestry, agriculture, and mineral extraction, to protect the natural resources related to those uses, and other related policies.
- Farmland Preservation Program, which is a voluntary program that is intended to preserve farmland by purchasing the right to develop it, restricting the property to agriculture or open space uses, limiting the number of residences permitted, and imposing other limitations on the property.

3.4.2 Affected Environment

King County natural resources include agricultural lands for food production, forest lands for recreation and timber production, and lands for mineral extraction. In addition to implementing policies and regulations to manage privately owned agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands, the County also manages more than 14,000 acres of natural and working resource lands through its Natural Resources Land Program in the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP).[90] These lands include historic farmlands, working forest lands, and protected riparian ecosystems.

Lands managed by the Natural Resource Lands Program are divided into two categories: ecological lands and working resource lands. Ecological lands are intended to protect valuable ecological systems to preserve native habitat and biodiversity, and are discussed in Section 3.3, Wildlife and Habitat. This

[90] King County, Natural Resource Lands, 2022. [LINK]

section focuses on the working resource lands, which includes farmland and forestland that generate farm or forest products as part of a commercial enterprise.

3.4.2.1 Agriculture

King County includes approximately 48,000 acres of farmland, half of which produce food. Over 41,000 acres of land are included in APDs and over 15,000 acres of farmland are permanently protected through the Farmland Preservation Program (shown in Figure 3.4-1, Protected Farmlands).[91] King County APDs identify areas where agriculture is the predominant land use, with the understanding that those areas also provide critically important salmon habitat and are subject to natural floodplain processes. The Farmland Preservation Program allows King County to purchase development rights to properties to preserve high quality farmland.

King County has five APDs: Sammamish River, Snoqualmie River, Lower Green River, Upper Green River, and Enumclaw Plateau. Most farmable lands are located within APDs and the Rural Area.[92] Within APDs, approximately 27,000 acres (65 percent) are considered farmable, and the remaining 14,000 acres are not farmable, including forests, developed areas, and waterbodies. Of the farmable lands, approximately 25,000 acres (93 percent) are in production. Table 3.4-1, Agricultural Land Uses by Agricultural Production District, lists the acreage of each APD, as well as the types of agricultural land uses.

[91] King County, Agriculture in King County, Washington, 2022. [LINK]

[92] Cedar River Group, Recommendations of the King County Farms and Food Roundtable, June 2014. [LINK]

Figure 3.4-1. Protected Farmlands

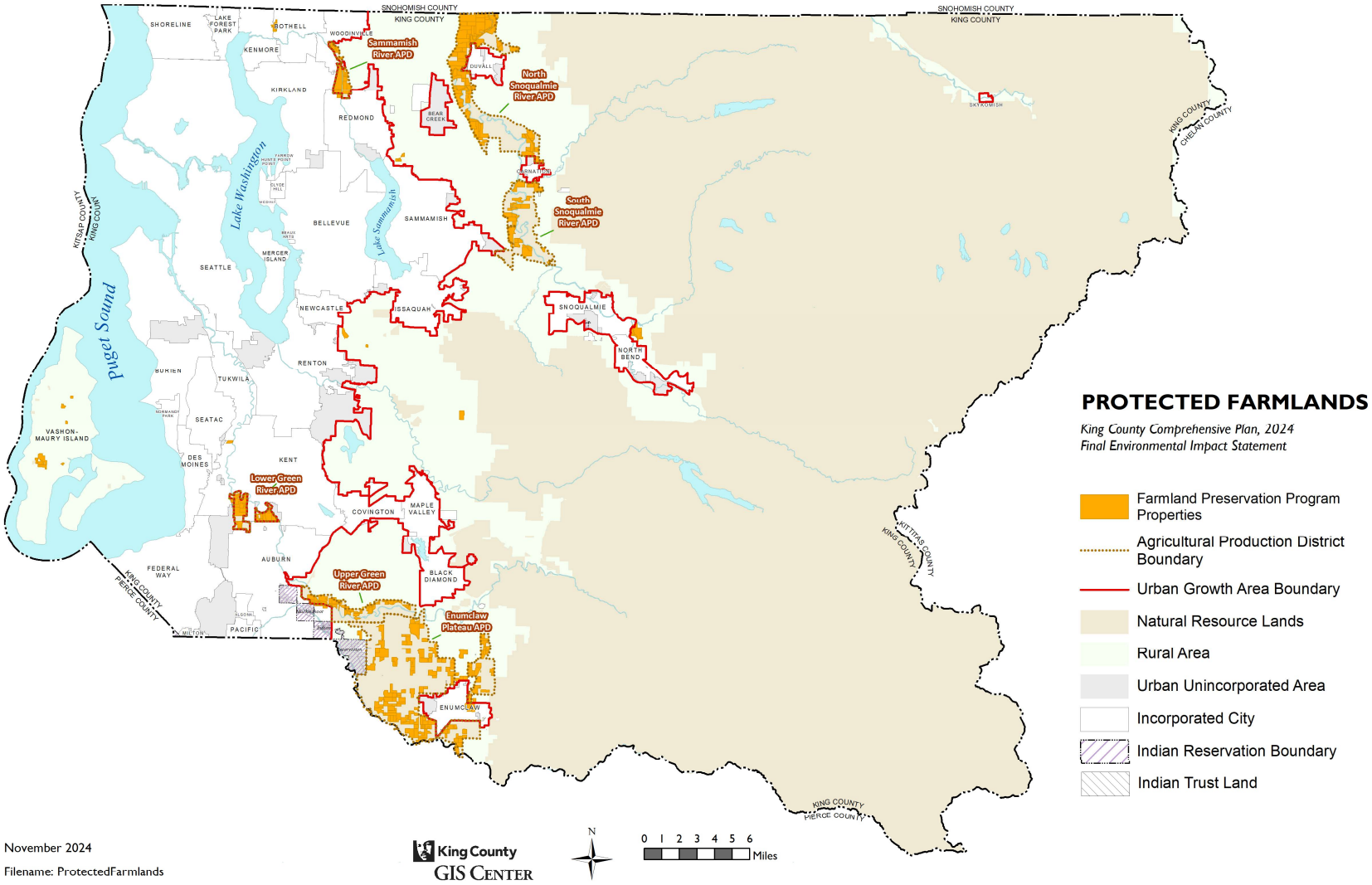


Table 3.4-1. Agricultural Land Uses by Agricultural Production District

APD Name	Acreage[a]	Agricultural Land Uses
Enumclaw APD	20,680	Livestock/forage, equestrian facilities, grassland/managed field, produce/market crops
Lower Green River APD	1,460	Livestock/forage, nursery, orchard, produce/market crops
Upper Green River APD	3,420	Livestock/forage, equestrian facilities, produce/market crops, nursery, tree farms
Sammamish APD	1,090	Produce/market crops, sod farms, tree farms, nursery
Snoqualmie APD	14,780	Livestock/forage, equestrian facilities, produce/market crops, nursery, orchard, grassland/managed field

Source: King County, GIS Open Data – Agricultural Production Districts, 2023. [LINK]
[a] Rounded to the nearest 10 acres.

There are approximately 1,800 farms in King County and total annual farm sales exceed $135 million.[93] The county supports many different types of commercial farm operations including both crops (e.g., fruits, vegetables, grains, herbs, flowers, sod, Christmas trees) and livestock products (e.g., meat, dairy, eggs, other animal products). Of the agricultural goods produced in King County, approximately 70 percent of products sold are crops, and the remaining 30 percent are livestock and animal products. The top three crops by area are forage (70 percent), corn (13 percent), and vegetables (10 percent). Additionally, nearly all fruits and vegetables grown in King County are sold to the fresh market locally. In 2022, there were 39 farmers markets in operation in King County, which generated nearly $35 million in sales and were visited by 1.8 million shoppers.[94]

3.4.2.2 Forest Lands

The forests in King County provide cover to cool streams and urban areas, enhance salmon and other wildlife habitat, provide wood and non-timber products, provide recreational opportunities, improve air and water quality, reduce stormwater runoff, provide scenic views to enhance quality of life, and provide cultural resources and support cultural heritage. Approximately 60 percent of the entire county (811,000 acres) is covered by forests (Figure 3.4-2, Forest Cover and Distribution).

Forest cover is most dense along the foothills of and within the Cascade Mountains and on Vashon-Maury Island. Overall, 74 percent of the forested land in King County is evergreen forest, 6 percent is deciduous forest, and 20 percent is mixed forest (dominated by both evergreen and deciduous tree species).[95] Tree cover in the urban areas of unincorporated King County varies depending on the intensity of development, as high as 46 percent in the community of Maplewood, and as low as 21 percent in the more intensely developed White Center neighborhood.[96] Between 1992 and 2016, forest cover held steady in rural King County (from 70 percent to 71 percent total cover) but declined from 37 percent to 29 percent total cover in urban unincorporated areas.

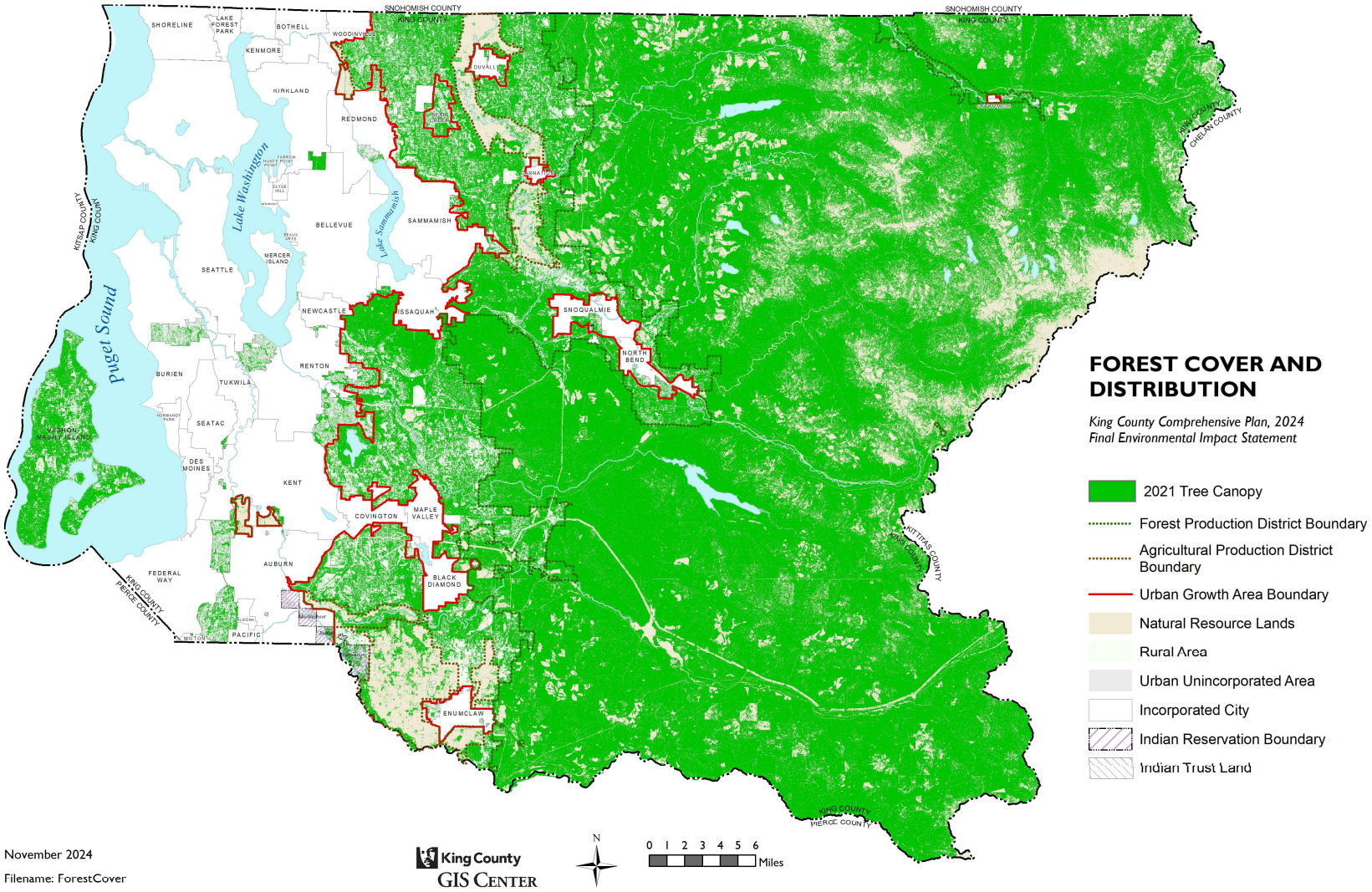
[93] U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2017 Census of Agriculture County Profile: King County, 2017. [LINK]

[94] King County, King County Farmers Markets: 2022, September 2023. [LINK]

[95] King County, Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy, July 2022. [LINK]

[96] King County, King County 30-Year Forest Plan, February 2021. [LINK]

Figure 3.4-2. Forest Cover and Distribution



In 2020, a majority of forested areas (approximately 64 percent) were in public ownership, 32 percent of forestlands were privately owned, and 4 percent of forestlands were owned by Tribes.[97] Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest is the largest block of public lands in King County, with other significant public land holdings managed by Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Parks, and municipal watersheds. King County owns and manages more than 29,000 acres of forestland for natural resource conservation and recreation.[98] County-owned forestlands are managed to restore natural composition and structure and to demonstrate sustainable timber production.

Development is limited in Forest Production Districts (FPDs) to preserve large blocks of forest and in Rural Forest Focus Areas to provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development. The FPD was designated to preserve an intact forested landscape and a viable timber industry. Over 825,000 acres of land in King County are designated as FPD lands, which includes forested and non-forested lands, including waterbodies, roads, and lands that have been converted to other uses. Rural Forest Focus Areas are "mapped geographic areas where special efforts to maintain forest cover and the practice of sustainable forestry are warranted."[99] There are 55,000 acres of Rural Forest Focus Areas in the county that are all located in the Rural Area.[100] Of the 10 individual Rural Forest Focus Areas, the largest is Cedar River/Ravensdale (11,000 acres) and the smallest is Bear Creek (600 acres). Parcels located in Rural Forest Focus Areas are eligible sending sites for the TDR Program and may be granted bonus development rights.[101]

Wildland Urban Interface

The WUI is the zone of transition between development and undeveloped land or vegetative fuels.[102] For the most part, WUI areas are in unincorporated King County, though some are present in incorporated cities as well. The WUI in King County includes two primary wildfire zones: interface and intermix, as shown in Figure 3.4-3, Wildland Urban Interface. Interface areas are those in which development and structures are bordered by wildlands on at least one side. Intermix areas are defined as a development or structure that is surrounded on two or more sides by wildlands. Interface and intermix areas are spread throughout the populated areas of unincorporated King County, particularly in central King County and on Vashon-Maury Island, following the UGA boundary between incorporated cities and rural unincorporated King County and along major highways.

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[97] King County, King County Rural Forest Commission Strategic Priorities: Recommendations and Actions for Conservation of Forestland, February 2022. [LINK]

[98] King County, Forest Stewardship, 2023. [LINK]

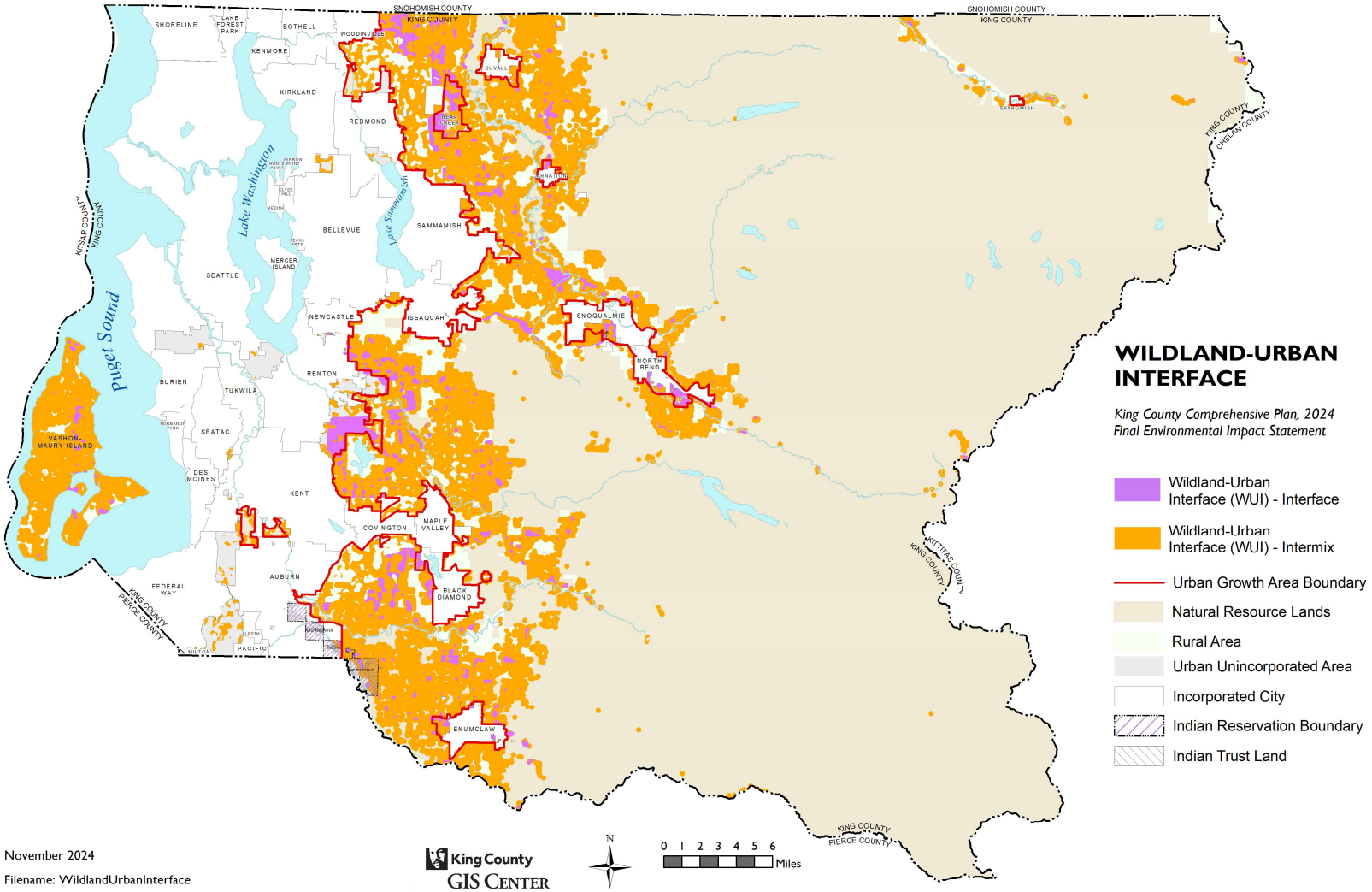
[99] K.C.C. 21A.06.1014.

[100] King County, Rural Forest Focus Area of King County, 2019. [LINK]

[101] King County, Sending Site Information, 2023. [LINK]

[102] King County, 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022. [LINK]

Figure 3.4-3. Wildland Urban Interface



3.4.2.3 Mineral, Oil, and Gas Resources

Currently, there are over 3,500 acres of zoned mineral lands within unincorporated King County, though not all of these are actively used for mining. The County identifies Designated Mineral Resource Sites, which are zoned for mining or are currently operating; Potential Surface Mineral Resources Sites, where the County may allow future surface mining; and Nonconforming Mineral Resource Sites, where mining operations predated King County zoning regulations.[103] In addition, mineral extraction is allowed within the FPD and Forest zone.

Most of the Designated Mineral Resources Sites are sand and/or gravel. Figure 3.4-4, Mineral Resources, below shows mineral resource site locations, including designated, potential, and nonconforming sites. These sites are roughly within central King County between the FPD and the incorporated cities of Renton and Issaquah to the west; east of Enumclaw and Black Diamond in southern King County; between Maple Valley and Issaquah and around Snoqualmie and North Bend in central King County; and around Duvall in northern King County.

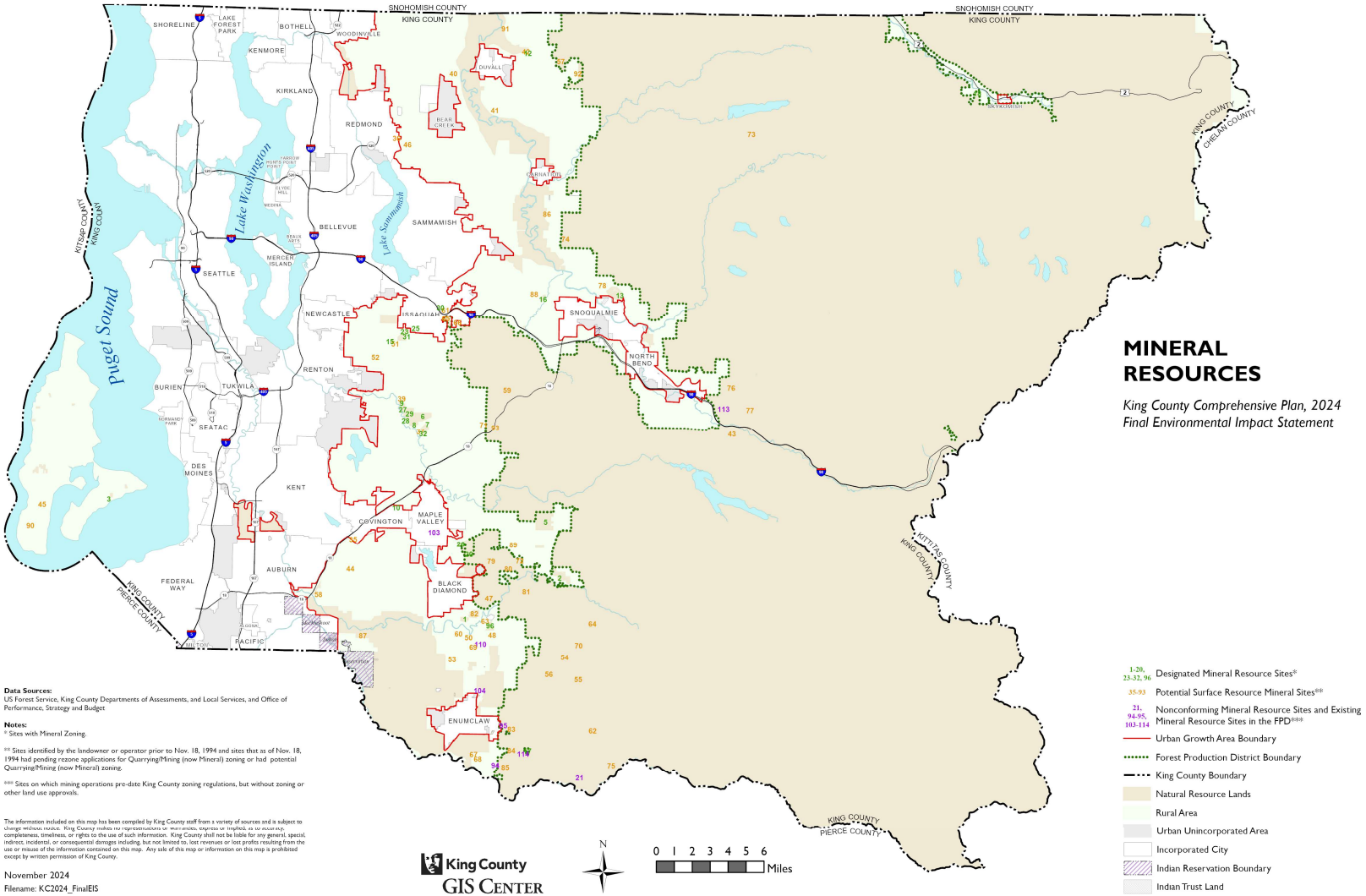
There are two coal fields, or areas of coal deposits, in King County: one near the town of Black Diamond and the other in the vicinity of Issaquah and Renton. Although there are no coal mines currently operating in the county, there are several locations that have been designated as hazard areas due to historic coal mining activity. Approximately 90 acres within the coal field boundaries have been designated as coal mine critical areas by K.C.C. Chapter 21A.24. Development of new coal mines, however, is prohibited within King County by K.C.C. 21A.08.090.

Currently, there is no active oil or natural gas production in Washington, and development of new oil and gas extraction sites is also prohibited within unincorporated King County by K.C.C. 21A.08.090.[104]

[103] King County, 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022. [LINK]

[104] Washington Department of Natural Resources, Oil and Gas Resources, 2022. [LINK]

Figure 3.4-4. Mineral Resources



3.4.3 Environmental Consequences

3.4.3.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, King County would continue to implement and administer current regulations, policies, programs, and partnerships to sustain agricultural, forestry, and mining practices in the county. For example, regulations concerning land use and development within APDs and the FPD would continue to protect agricultural and forest resources respectively, and the County's TDR Program would continue to direct development away from the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.

According to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, the acreage of both designated farm and forest lands have increased in the last decade under existing agricultural and forest zoning and programs directed toward preserving farmland, keeping existing farmland in agricultural use, and expanding farmland in active production.[105] Under the No Action Alternative, this trend is expected to continue; however, population and job growth within unincorporated King County could add pressure to develop farm, forest, and mineral lands not protected under existing laws, particularly within the Rural Area. This pressure could lead to designation changes that result in a reduction of farmland through conversion of these lands to residential or other uses.

3.4.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

The action alternative proposals that would affect natural resources include those that modify program requirements for the TDR program (described further in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics); promote the use of renewable energy; support wildfire management within the WUI; support implementation of the Fish, Farm, Flood recommendations; protect and promote both small hobby farms and larger commercial farms in the Rural Areas and on agricultural lands; encourage active production of farmland in agricultural zones and APDs; and allow new or expanded uses on resource lands, such as materials processing, mineral extraction, or other industrial uses.

The action alternatives would generally result in benefits to natural resources by increasing efforts to preserve agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands. However, the action alternatives do include some proposals that would allow, promote, or cause changes to land uses within Natural Resource Lands, which could result in some adverse impacts. However, these impacts are not anticipated to be significant.

Agriculture

The action alternatives include several proposals to protect and promote farming activity through incentives or requirements to promote small farms, restrict non-agricultural uses on farmland, and for farmland to be in active production in the Agricultural zone. Other proposals would seek to implement the Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee recommendations for balancing farming activities with fish habitat restoration projects and floodplain management, which could reduce the risk of floods while improving agricultural productivity.

Proposals that encourage the growth of renewable energy could result in the use of the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands being used for solar or wind farms rather than agricultural uses. Similarly, proposals that would expand allowable uses in the Rural Area or on Natural Resource Lands, such as for

[105] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, March 2022. [LINK]

materials processing, or convert Natural Resource Lands to industrial zoning, could also result in a loss of farmable lands.

Forest Lands

Most of the proposals included in the action alternatives would not affect forest lands. However, proposals that would allow for the expansion of existing uses or new uses within the Forest zone, such as resorts or material processing, or that would convert Natural Resource Lands to industrial zoning, could result in the reduction of forest land or adverse impacts to the ecological health of forest land. Proposals that could benefit forest lands include those that support the creation and retention of old growth corridors by providing landowner incentives or restricting development. Additionally, updates to the TDR Program, which provide bonus points for sending sites in the Forest zone, could encourage the protection of more forest lands.

Wildland Urban Interface

Both action alternatives include proposals to increase awareness of and manage wildfire risk, which would protect populations living in and near the WUI areas, as well as the ecological health of the WUI environment. For example, both action alternatives would expand allowances for clearing of trees and vegetation around habitable structures and utilities, which could lead to a reduction in plant cover; however, this reduction is negligible when compared to potential vegetation loss in the event of a wildfire.

Mineral, Oil, and Gas Resources

Both action alternatives include proposals that would make changes to the development conditions for mineral resource extraction operations, to materials processing allowances on Mineral zoned land within the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands, and to standards for the conversion of reclaimed mineral extraction sites for future use as green energy facilities. These proposals could expand mineral resource extraction activities in some areas.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

The primary difference between the action alternatives is the extent and geography to which they would implement the 2024 Update proposals related to agriculture, forest lands, and mineral resources. As described previously, both action alternatives would result in overall benefits to Natural Resource Lands. The Extensive Change Alternative would likely result in a greater degree of protection of Natural Resource Lands, particularly agricultural lands, than the Limited Change Alternative.

Under the Limited Change Alternative, the Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee recommendations would be implemented in the Snoqualmie Valley APD, while the Extensive Change Alternative would implement the recommendations in all APDs. Implementation of these recommendations is anticipated to result in a greater benefit for farming interests, salmon recovery, and flood risk reduction, though individual actions would need to be tailored to each APD since the recommendations were developed specifically for the Snoqualmie APD.

Although an overall benefit to Natural Resource Lands is anticipated, some conversion of Natural Resource Lands is possible. The Extensive Change Alternative would potentially cause a greater loss or conversion of Natural Resource Lands than the Limited Change Alternative. For example, by requiring the use of renewable energy and the phasing out of fossil fuels, the Extensive Change Alternative would help drive the need for alternative sources of energy, such as solar or wind farms, which would likely be constructed on less developed Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands locations. However, there are existing efforts at the county, regional, and state level to increase the use of renewable energy (see Sections 3.1, Air Quality and

Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and 4.1, Utilities and Public Services), which is already encouraging the development of alternative sources of energy in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.

Other Extensive Change Alternative proposals would allow, in limited circumstances, the conversion of Natural Resource Lands to industrial zoning. The Limited Change Alternative, in contrast, would only make minor adjustments to the regulations or development conditions. It would restrict the conversion to industrial zoning to those areas where there are existing or historical intensive uses, which would lessen the impact of a new industrial use. As a result, the Limited Change Alternative would be less likely to convert Natural Resource Lands or impact the ecological health of the natural resource area.

3.4.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to natural resources are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands.

4. BUILT ENVIRONMENT – EXISTING POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

As required by SEPA (WAC 197-11-440), this chapter, like Chapter 3, summarizes the existing policy and regulatory framework and affected environment and describes the environmental consequences and mitigation measures related to the following elements of the built environment: Utilities and Public Services; Land Use and Aesthetics; Housing; Parks, Open Space, and Recreation; Historic and Cultural Resources; Transportation; and Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice. The discussion of each of the elements is divided further into subsections, outlined below.

- **Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework**:
  This subsection identifies and briefly summarizes the relevant federal, state, and local guidance documents, including laws, plans, policies, rules, and regulations for the elements of the environment.
- **Affected Environment**:
  This subsection introduces the study area for the element of the environment and briefly summarizes the existing environmental setting, physical conditions, and current trends that would be affected by the alternatives. For most elements of the environment, the study area consists of unincorporated King County, which is the area governed by the Comprehensive Plan. Except where otherwise noted, maps and figures show relevant information only within the study area for each element of the environment.[106]
- **Environmental Consequences**:
  This subsection describes the analysis of potential impacts of the alternatives on the affected environment for the 20-year planning period. Impacts associated with the No Action Alternative are discussed first. These are impacts that would occur if King County continued to operate according to the Current Plan. Next, impacts common to both action alternatives—the Limited Change Alternative and the Extensive Change Alternative—are discussed together, followed by a comparison of impacts between the two action alternatives.
- **Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures**:
  If potential significant adverse impacts are identified, this subsection would identify appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate environmental impacts beyond those included as features of the action alternatives. Mitigation measures (inclusive of avoidance and minimization) are designed to offset the impacts of the action alternatives on the affected environment for each discipline.

[106] The information included on the maps in this chapter has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and are subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or rights to the use of such information. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, lost revenues or lost profits resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on these maps. Any sale of these maps or information on these maps is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

4.1 Utilities and Public Services

This section discusses utilities and public services in King County, such as water supply, wastewater, solid waste, telecommunications, emergency services, and schools, and it evaluates potential impacts to these resources that may be associated with the 2024 Update alternatives.

4.1.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Utilities

Some of the laws, regulations, and policies guiding utilities in unincorporated King County include the following:

- Chapter 70A.100 RCW, Public Water Systems Coordination Act of 1977, which guides water utility planning and development.
- Chapters 70A.120 through 70A.140 RCW, which govern public water systems and water quality.
- Chapters 290 through 296 WAC, Water Systems, which implements regulations related to public water supply.
- K.C.C. Title 9, Surface Water Management, which provides for the comprehensive management of stormwater runoff and surface water and erosion control, including programs to reduce flooding, erosion, and sedimentation; prevent and mitigate habitat loss; enhance groundwater recharge; and prevent water quality degradation through the implementation of comprehensive and thorough permit review, construction inspection, enforcement, and maintenance.
- K.C.C. Title 10, Solid Waste, which regulates solid waste in King County, including solid waste sites, waste reduction, and construction and demolition waste.
- K.C.C. Title 13, Water and Sewer Systems, which sets out County rules for water and sewer systems.
- King County Board of Health Code Title 12, Water, which outlines rules and regulations for King County public drinking water systems.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which establish the framework for developing comprehensive plans, including the services, facilities, and utilities element.
- King County Regional Wastewater Services Plan (Ordinance 13680), which is a planning document intended to ensure the continuation of high-quality wastewater treatment services throughout King County and includes a proposal for a new treatment plant, conveyance system improvements, regional infiltration and inflow control, combined sewer overflow control, odor control, loop biosolids recycling, and expanded water reuse.

Public Services

Some of the laws, regulations, and policies guiding public services in unincorporated King County include the following:

- RCW 9.46.210, which governs enforcement and commissioning by law enforcement agencies.
- Title 28A RCW, Common School Provisions, which governs school provisions, including but not limited to school facilities, school programs, student attendance, health, learning assistance, school and district funding, and teaching standards and regulations.
- RCW 36.32.470, which governs fire protection, ambulance, and other emergency services provided by municipal corporations within the county.
- Chapter 43.70 RCW, Department of Health, which governs the department of health, including services provided, licenses, fines, and funding.
- Title 52 RCW, Fire Protection Districts, which provides for formation of fire protection districts, including the formation of regional fire protection authorities whose boundaries are coextensive with two or more adjacent fire protection jurisdictions.

4.1.2 Affected Environment

The study area for utilities and public services is generally King County as a whole. Where possible, data is reported for just unincorporated King County.

4.1.2.1 Utilities

Water Supply

Approximately 2,000 public water systems serve residential, commercial, and industrial development within King County countywide. These public water systems are regulated based on the number of connections and future system growth expectations. The majority of public water systems, (approximately 1,680) are Group B systems, which have between two and 14 water service connections. Of the 149 Group A systems, which have 15 or greater connections, 43 water systems serve more than 1,000 water connections. While these systems are referred to as “public” water systems, the ownership type includes associations, investor, cities, private, and special districts.[107] ~~See~~ Table ~~3.~~4.1-1, Public Water Systems Serving Unincorporated King County, lists the public water systems serving unincorporated King County ~~with More Than 1,000 Connections, below~~.

[107] Washington State Department of Health, Environmental Health Division, Office of Drinking Water, Sentry Database, 2023. [LINK]

Table 4.1-1. Public Water Systems Serving Unincorporated King County ~~with More Than 1,000 Connections~~

Cities	~~Algona~~	Kirkland
	Auburn	~~Mercer Island~~
	Bellevue	North Bend
	Black Diamond	~~Pacific~~
	~~Bothell~~	Redmond
	Carnation	Renton
	Duvall	Seattle
	Enumclaw	Snoqualmie
	Issaquah	~~Tukwila~~
	Kent	
Special Districts	Cedar River Water & Sewer District	King County Water District No. 125
	Coal Creek Utility District	~~Lake Meridian Water District~~
	Covington Water District	Lakehaven Water and Sewer District
	Fall City Water District #127	NE Sammamish Sewer & Water District
	Highline Water District	~~North City Water District~~
	King County Water District No. 19	~~Northshore Utility District~~
	King County Water District No. 20	Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District
	~~King County Water District No. 49~~	Skyway Water & Sewer
	~~King County Water District No. 54~~	Snoqualmie Pass Utility District
	King County Water District No. 90	Soos Creek Water & Sewer District
	King County Water District No. 111	Woodinville Water District
	King County Water District No. 119	
	King County Water District No. 123	
Associations and Companies	Ames Lake Water Association	
	Dockton Water Association	
	Edgehill Water Association	
	Foothills Water Association	
	Mirrormont (Washington Water Service Company)	
	River Bend Homesites Association	
	Sallal Water Association	
	Union Hill Water Association	
	Westside Water Association	

It is estimated the 32 largest water utilities in the county serve roughly 94 percent of its population. Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is the primary water supplier in the county, as it provides water to approximately 80 percent of the county's population, either through direct service connections or wholesale customers. Consequently, the majority the county water supply currently originates from two SPU surface water reservoirs: the Cedar River and the South Fork Tolt River. SPU estimates the Cedar River system supplies between 60 and 70 percent of the water, and the South Fork Tolt River typically supplies the remaining water used by its direct customers or conveyed to its wholesale customers. SPU

has two groundwater wells as backup supply sources for peak season usage and in emergency situations.[108]

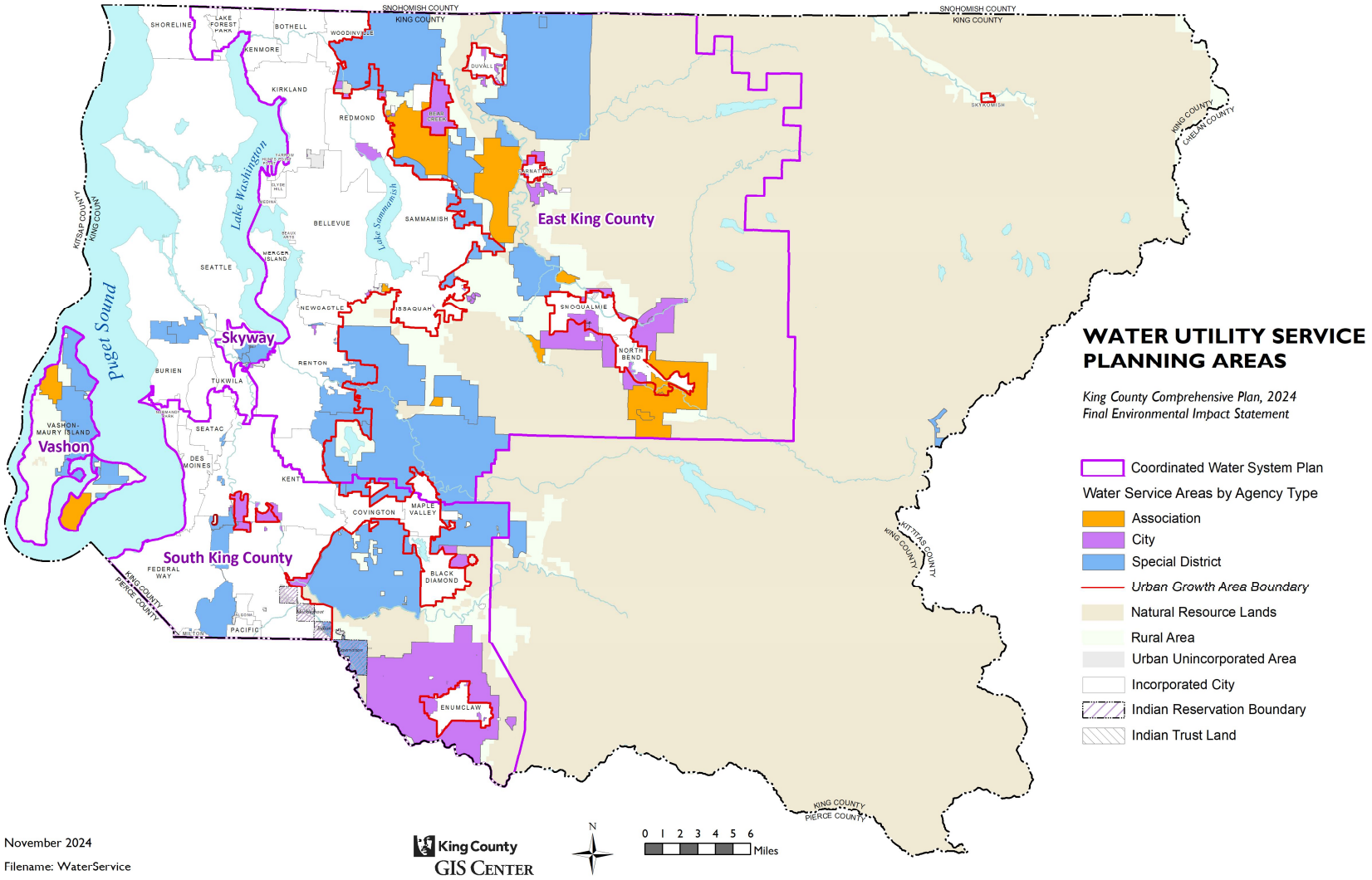
The Cascade Water Alliance (Cascade) is an organization comprised of five cities and two water and sewer districts. Through Cascade, participating water purveyors receive wholesale water through SPU in addition to local water sources. Cascade owns Lake Tapps as a future municipal drinking water supply. It is anticipated Lake Tapps may be needed as a water supply source in the 2030s or 2040s. Cascade also pursues water conservation efforts for its member water purveyors.[109]

King County has approved Coordinated Water System Plans (CWSPs) to coordinate water services within the County. The CWSPs encompass the four designated critical water supply service areas in King County: East King County, South King County, Skyway, and Vashon (Figure 4.1-1, Water Utility Service Planning Areas). Critical water supply service areas are managed by the King County CWSPs for each area, as established by Chapter 70A.100 RCW and K.C.C. Chapter 13.28. The CWSPs are intended to coordinate the planning and development of water facilities and service. The procedures in the planning documents provide guidelines for providing future water service in the most efficient manner with the objectives of coordinating development by geographical area and integrating water system development with future land use plans. The CWSPs strive to assure that an adequate supply of water is available for residential, commercial, and industrial uses within the service areas and establish minimum design and planning standards.

[108] SPU, 2021 Annual Survey of Wholesale Customers: Summary of Results Consumption Data for 2020 – Rates for 2021, October 2021. [LINK]

[109] Cascade Water Alliance, Homepage, accessed November 6, 2023. [LINK]

Figure 4.1-1. Water Utility Service Planning Areas



Stormwater and Wastewater

King County manages stormwater to comply with its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase 1 Permit, as described in its Stormwater Management Program Plan. Phase 1 permits regulate discharge from municipal separate storm sewer systems owned and operated by Washington's largest cities and counties and require local governments to manage and control stormwater to prevent polluting downstream waters.

The County maintains a variety of stormwater facilities throughout unincorporated King County in roadway rights-of-way, on County-owned tracts, and within residential subdivisions. These include flow control facilities, such as detention ponds, infiltration ponds, and underground vaults, and water quality facilities, such as oil-water separators, sand filters, constructed stormwater ponds, and wetlands. Facilities in private developments, including ~~multifamily~~ multiunit and commercial developments, are typically privately owned and maintained.

The King County DNRP Wastewater Treatment Division provides wastewater treatment services to about 1.9 million residents over 424 square miles. This service area includes the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, 18 cities, and 15 local sewer utilities throughout King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties.[110] The County collects wastewater from local agencies which own and operate independent collection systems, including pipelines and pump stations, and transports wastewater to King County's regional systems for treatment and disposal. Regional facilities include infrastructure like pipelines, pump stations, and treatment plants. Figure 4.1-2, Regional Wastewater System and Facilities, shows these facilities including Brightwater near Woodinville, South Plant in Renton, West Point in Seattle, and two small treatment plants on Vashon-Maury Island and in Carnation. Collectively, these treatment plants treat an average of 185 million gallons per day of sewage, with a peak day flow of 720 million gallons per day.[111]

There are over 85,000 on-site sewage systems throughout the county that treat wastewater from homes and buildings not connected to a public sewer system. These systems are concentrated throughout residential areas on Vashon-Maury Island, within incorporated cities, and within the Urban Area and Rural Area of unincorporated King County.[112] Table 4.1-2, Public Sewer Utilities Serving Unincorporated King County, lists the public sewer systems serving unincorporated King County.

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[110] King County, Facts about the King County Regional Wastewater System, 2022. [LINK]

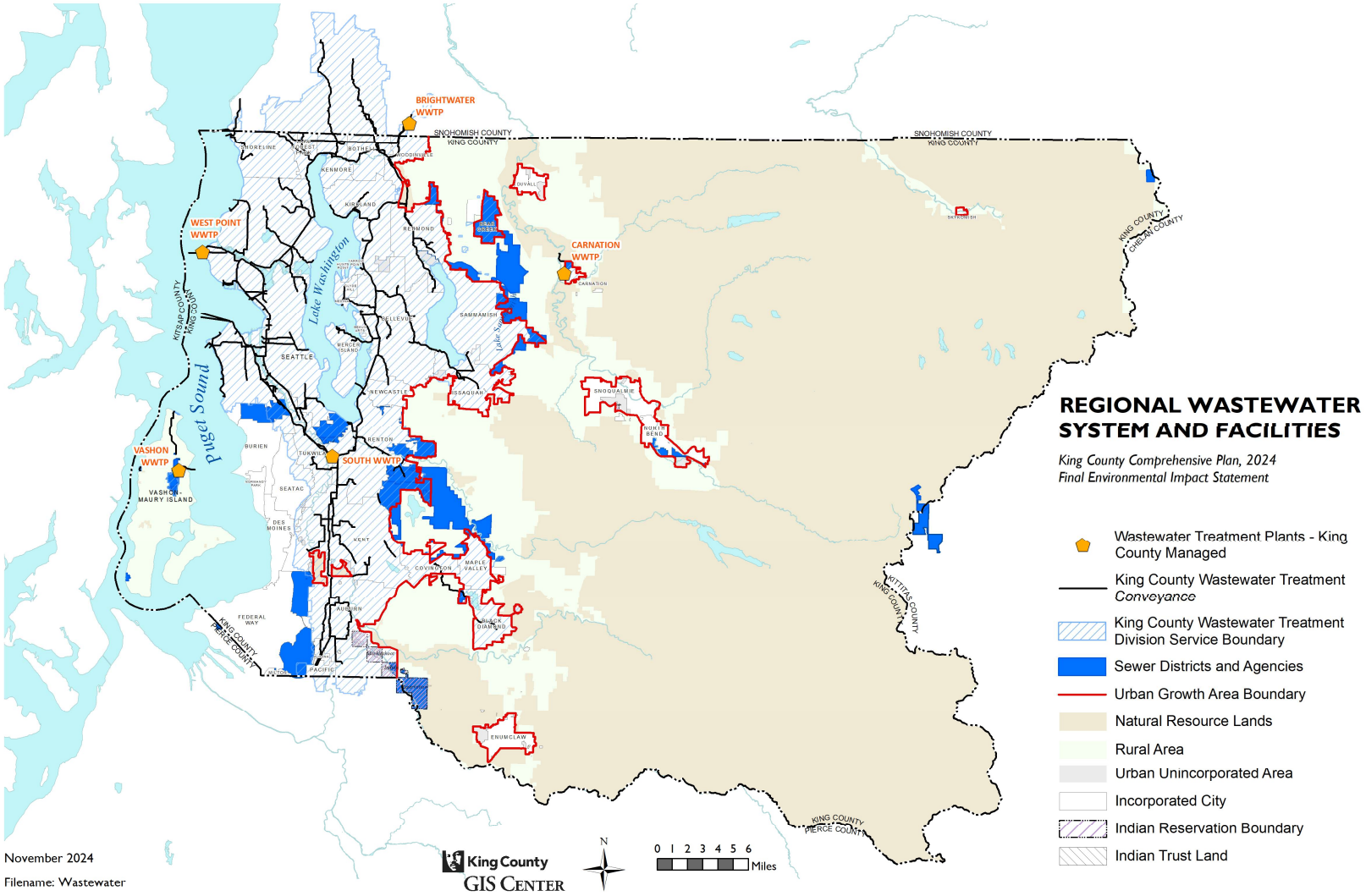
[111] Ibid.

[112] King County, Current Status of On-site Sewage Systems in King County: Location, Age, and Failure Mapping Project, 2019. [LINK]

Table 4.1-2. Public Sewer Utilities Serving Unincorporated King County

Cities	Auburn	North Bend
	Bellevue	Redmond
	Carnation	Renton
	Kent	Snoqualmie
Special Districts	Cedar River Water & Sewer District	Soos Creek Water & Sewer District
	Coal Creek Utility District	Southwest Suburban Sewer District
	Lakehaven Utility District	Stevens Pass Sewer District
	NE Sammamish Sewer & Water District	Valley View Sewer District
	Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District	Vashon Sewer District
	Skyway Water and Sewer District	Woodinville Water District
	Snoqualmie Pass Utility District	

Figure 4.1-2. Regional Wastewater System and Facilities



Solid Waste and Recycling

The King County DNRP Solid Waste Division operates the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill, which serves about 70 percent of the county's population and is located in the Rural Area east of Renton. The landfill is 920 acres and in 2021 accepted 869,150 tons of mixed municipal solid waste received from residential and nonresidential sources.[113] The Solid Waste Division also maintains several closed landfills throughout the county and offers garbage and recycling services for King County residents at transfer stations and drop boxes located in Algona, Bow Lake, Cedar Falls, Enumclaw, Factoria, Houghton, Renton, Skykomish, Shoreline, and Vashon.

Garbage collection in unincorporated King County is performed by private service providers, except in Enumclaw and Skykomish, which provide municipally managed garbage collection. Most of the collection services in unincorporated areas are provided by two companies, Waste Management, Inc. and Republic Services, and their subsidiaries. Recology and Waste Connections operate in Shoreline and on Vashon-Maury Island, respectively.

Electricity and Natural Gas

Puget Sound Energy provides electricity to most of King County and provides natural gas to areas within the county, as shown on Figure 4.1-3, Puget Sound Energy Service Area. Seattle City Light provides electricity to areas of unincorporated King County between the Seattle city limits, Burien, and Renton. Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy both use a mix of energy sources, including hydropower produced at hydroelectric facilities on the Cedar, Snoqualmie, and South Fork Tolt rivers in eastern King County and from hydroelectric facilities outside the county. They also use wind, solar, natural gas, and coal power purchased from other suppliers.[114]

Other public renewable energy sources in King County include natural gas and electricity from wastewater treatment plants and landfill gas. The South and West Point treatment plants both capture biogas from wastewater treatment processes, which can be used to produce heat or electricity within the facility or sold the community.[115] The South Treatment Plant purifies renewable natural gas and sells it back to local energy utilities for use in buildings and homes. The West Point Treatment Plant uses cogeneration systems to produce electricity, which is sold to Seattle City Light. Additionally, the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill utilizes a system of pipes to collect and route landfill gas to Bio Energy Washington to generate renewable energy. [116] There are no commercial wind or solar energy production sites located within King County.

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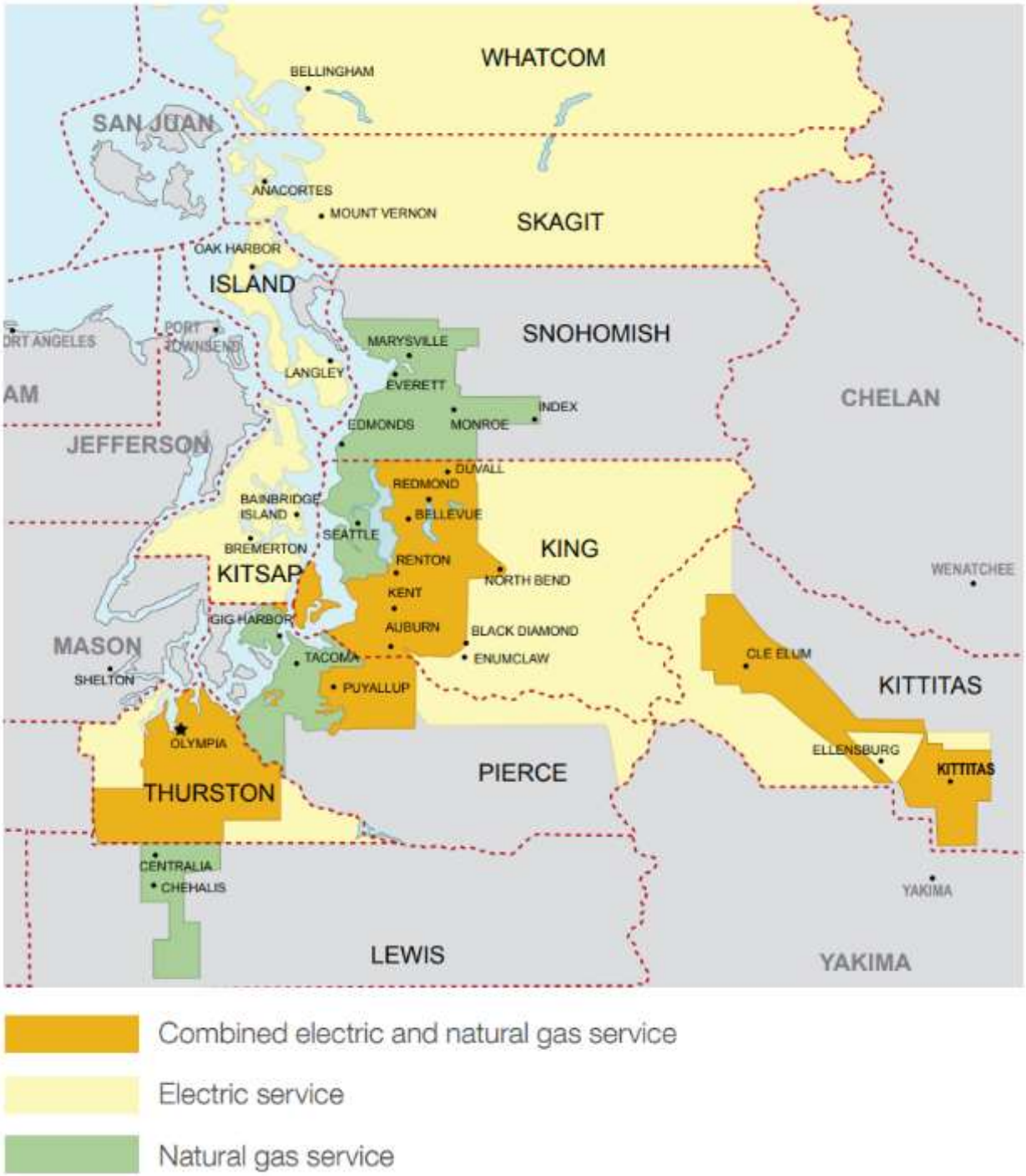
[113] King County, Cedar Hills Regional Landfill Fact Sheet, May 2022. [LINK]

[114] Seattle City Light, Power Supply and Delivery, 2023. [LINK]; Puget Sound Energy, Hydroelectric Projects, 2023. [LINK]

[115] King County, Renewable Energy, 2023. [LINK]

[116] King County, Cedar Hills Regional Landfill Fact Sheet, May 2022. [LINK]

Figure 4.1-3. Puget Sound Energy Service Area



Source: Puget Sound Energy, PSE Locations, 2023. [LINK]

Telecommunications

Cable and telecommunications are provided by private utilities in unincorporated King County. King County has signed franchise agreements with two cable companies, Comcast and Astound (WAVE) Broadband. These cable companies, along with CenturyLink, also provide internet to most parts of King County. AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon provide standard and cellular telephone services within King County. Areas without broadband internet access are limited to low-population areas across central King County, including along the I-90 corridor in eastern King County, and along the SR 2 corridor in northeastern King County.[117] Internet service is available in these areas, but not at broadband levels.

4.1.2.2 Public Services

Emergency Services

The King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) consists of over 1,200 sworn and professional staff who provide law enforcement services to people in King County, including unincorporated areas. The KCSO includes three precincts: Precinct 2 services northeast King County, including Carnation, Sammamish, Skykomish, and Woodinville; Precinct 3 services southeast King County, including Beaux Arts Village, Covington, Maple Valley, Muckleshoot Tribe, and Newcastle; and Precinct 4 services portions of west King County, including Burien and Vashon-Maury Island.

KCSO also provides law enforcement services for King County Airport, King County Metro, Sound Transit, and partnering contract cities including Kenmore, SeaTac, and Shoreline. The locations of KCSO precincts and contract cities can be found in Figure 4.1-4, Sheriff Office Precincts and Contract Cities.

[117] King County, Broadband Access and Availability in King County, 2020. [LINK]

Figure 4.1-4. Sheriff Office Precincts and Contract Cities

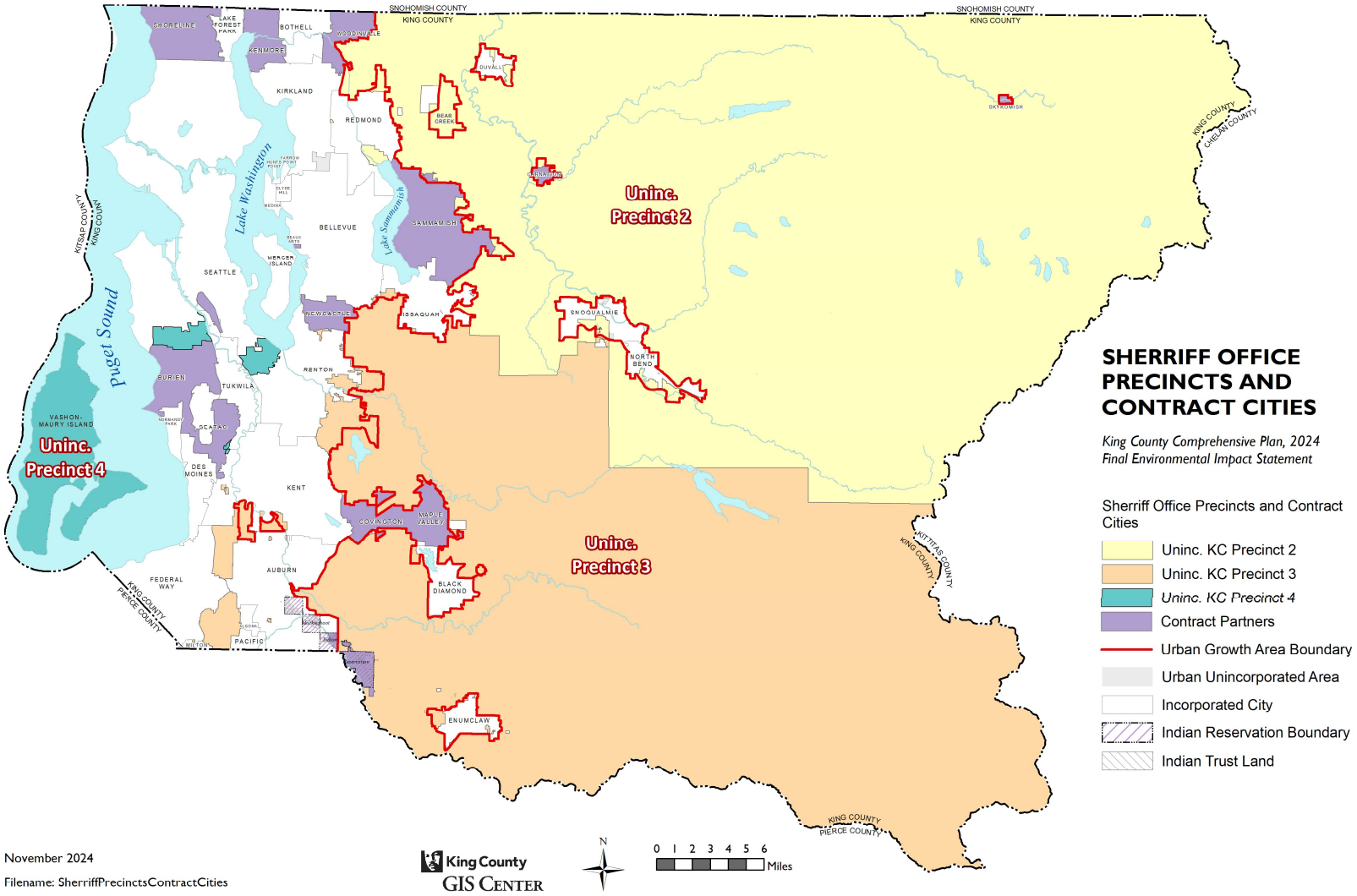


Table 4.1-3~~2~~, Violent and Property Crime in Unincorporated King County, lists information on violent and property crime rates for the KCSO jurisdiction and Washington state. Crime rates are provided from the FBI National Incident Based Reporting System, which provides statistics for violent crimes (e.g., murder, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assaults) and property crimes (e.g., burglary, theft, and arson). Crime rates for the KCSO's jurisdiction is lower than those for all of Washington state.

Table 4.1-3~~2~~. Violent and Property Crime in Unincorporated King County

Jurisdiction	Violent and Property Crimes	Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000 population)[118]	Property Crime Rate (per 1,000 population)
King County Sheriff's Office	4,377	1.6	10.6
Washington State	239,394	2.9	28.1

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Incident Based Reporting System, 2020. [LINK]
Note: The KCSO population for crime rates includes unincorporated King County and contract cities.

Fire protection is provided by fire protection districts, municipal fire departments, and regional fire authorities, encompassing both incorporated and unincorporated King County. Table 4.1-4~~3~~, Fire Protection Providers and Service Areas in Unincorporated King County, lists the names of the fire protection districts, fire departments, and regional fire authorities in the county. Where available, the table includes personnel information, number of service calls, and population served. A map of fire service coverage is shown in Figure 4.1-5, Fire Protection Districts and Departments.

Table 4.1-4~~3~~. Fire Protection Providers and Service Areas in Unincorporated King County

Name	No. of Firefighters	No. of Service Calls (approx.)	Population Served (incorporated and unincorporated residents)
~~Burien Fire (Fire District No. 2 and 11 [contract])~~	~~70 career 12 volunteer~~	~~12,239~~	~~56,000~~
Duvall (Fire District No. 45)	25 career	Not available	Not available
Eastside Fire ~~and~~ & Rescue (Fire District No. 10, 38, and 36 [contract])	191 career 34 volunteer	15,044	181,000
Enumclaw Fire ~~Department~~ District (Fire District No. 28)	19 career	2,824	22,500
King County Fire ~~Protection~~ District No. 20	6 career 25 volunteer	2,326	16,000
King County Fire ~~Protection~~ District No. 27	Not available	Not available	Not available
~~King County Fire Protection District No. 45~~	~~25 career~~	~~Not available~~	~~Not available~~
King County Fire ~~Protection~~ District No. 47	24 volunteer	Not available	3,000
King County Fire ~~Protection~~ District No. 50	Not available, primarily volunteer	Not available	Not available
King County Fire District No. 51 (Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue)	3 career 22 volunteer	550	Not available

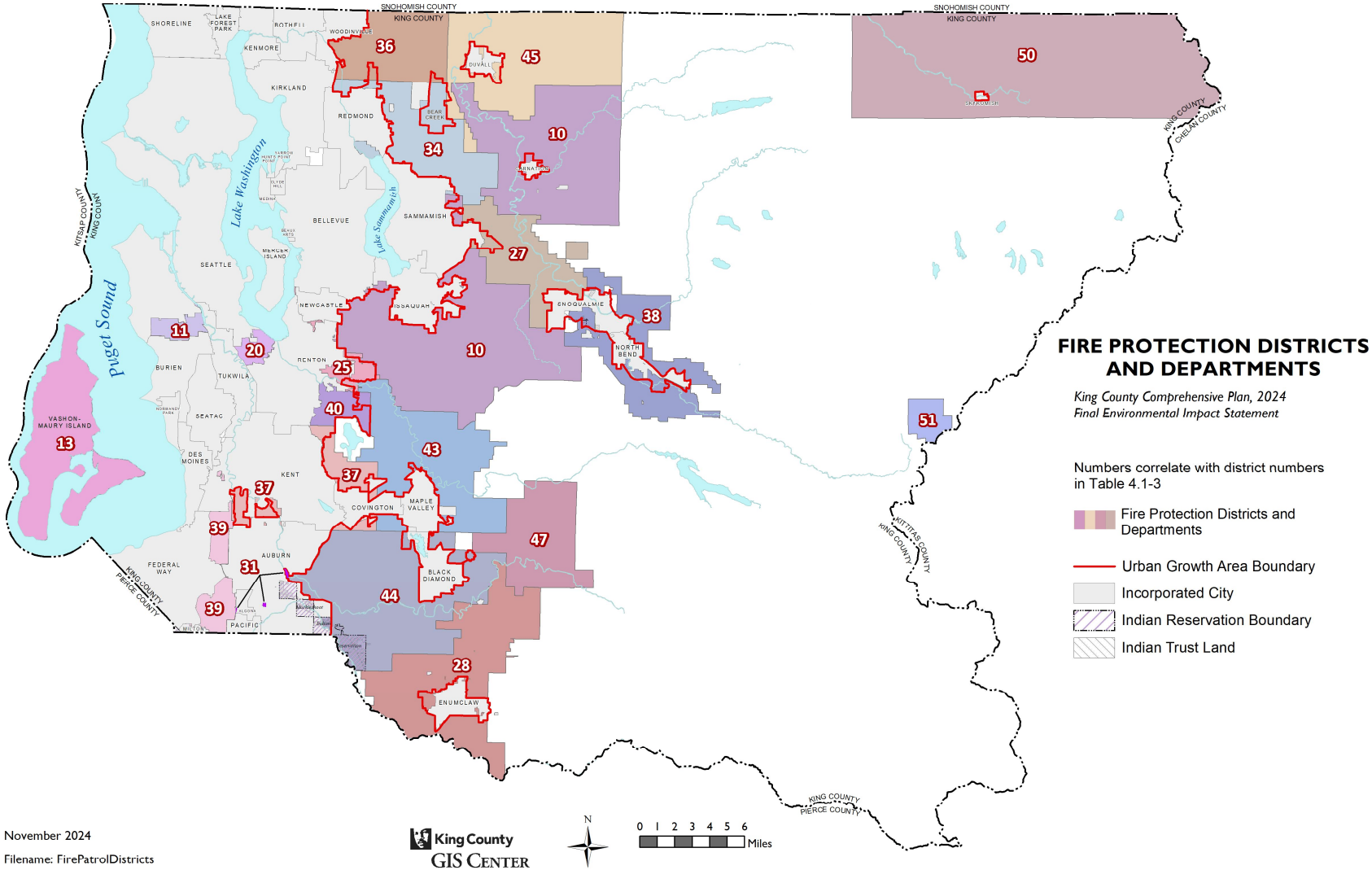
[118] Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), April 1, 2023, Population of Cities, Towns and Counties, 2023. [LINK]

Table 4.1-4~~3~~. Fire Protection Providers and Service Areas in Unincorporated King County (continued)

Name	No. of Firefighters	No. of Service Calls (approx.)	Population Served (incorporated and unincorporated residents)
Mountain View Fire ~~and~~ & Rescue (Fire District No. 44)	35 career 10 volunteer	2,483	32,000
North Highline Fire District (Fire District No. 11)	24 career 12 volunteer	Not available	19,000
Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (Fire District No. 37 and No. 43)	345 career	36,042	230,265
Redmond Fire District (King County Fire ~~Protection~~ District No. 34)	Not available	Not available	23,000
Renton Regional Fire Authority (Fire District No. 25 and No. 40)	140 career	23,687	138,035
~~Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue (Fire District No. 51)~~	~~3 career~~ ~~22 volunteer~~	~~550~~	~~Not available~~
South King Fire ~~and~~ & Rescue (Fire District No. 39)	138	23,325	150,000
Valley Regional Fire Authority (Fire District No. 31)	108 career	Not available	Not available
Vashon Island Fire ~~and~~ & Rescue (Fire District No. 13)	13 career 8 volunteer	1,630	Variable: 11,000 year-round, up to 25,000 during summer tourism season

Sources: Eastside Fire and Rescue, 2022 Annual Report, 2022. [LINK]; Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority, About Puget Sound Fire, 2023. [LINK]; Renton Regional Fire Authority, 2022 Annual Report, 2022. [LINK]; Mountain View Fire and Rescue, About Us, 2023. [LINK]; South King Fire & Rescue, 2022 Operating and Capital Budgets, 2021. [LINK]; Snoqualmie Pass Fire and Rescue, About Us, 2023. [LINK]; Vashon Island Fire and Rescue, History, 2023. [LINK]; Shoreline Fire Department, About, 2023. [LINK]; Enumclaw Fire Department, Fast Facts, 2023. [LINK]; ~~King County Fire Protection District No. 2, About Us, 2023. [LINK];~~ North Highline Fire District, About Us, 2023. [LINK]; King County Fire Protection District No. 20, 2018 Annual Report, 2018. [LINK]; King County Fire Protection District No. 27, History, 2023. [LINK]; Valley Regional Fire Authority, About, 2023. [LINK]; King County Fire Protection District No. 34, KCFD 34, 2023. [LINK]; King County Fire Protection District No. 45, Duval Fire, 2023. [LINK]; King County Fire Protection District No. 47, Department History, 2023. [LINK]; King County Fire Protection District No. 50, Skykomish Fire Department, 2023. [LINK]

Figure 4.1-5. Fire Protection Districts and Departments



Health Services

Public health services in King County are provided by Public Health – Seattle & King County, and the Washington State Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health – Seattle & King County has 14 public health centers throughout incorporated and unincorporated King County. These centers provide a variety of health services including but not limited to adult, child, and teen health care clinics, dental health clinics, and maternity and infant health services. The White Center Public Health Center at Greenbridge is the only public health center within unincorporated King County and provides maternity, women's health, and infant health care, and nutrition services.[119]

The King County Department of Community and Human Services provides behavioral health services for vulnerable populations including, but not limited to, crisis services, outpatient mental health treatment, and substance use disorder treatment. These services are provided through licensed mental health centers and providers throughout King County. The Department of Community and Human Services also provides a variety of social services to at-risk individuals within King County. These services provide education, employment, and legal aid to adults and young adults, intervention, and prevention for at risk youth, and assistance for those with developmental disabilities, in addition to other services.[120]

There are 11 major hospitals in King County, all of which are located in incorporated cities but serve those in both incorporated and unincorporated areas. In addition, there are a number of private practitioners and nonprofit entities that provide additional healthcare services to unincorporated King County.[121]

Schools

As of 2023, there are 532 public schools serving approximately 289,000 students in all of King County.[122] King County is divided into 20 school districts, encompassing both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county, illustrated on Figure 4.1-6, School Districts, and listed with enrollment numbers in Table 4.1-5~~4~~, King County School District Enrollment. However, 4 ~~3~~ of the 20 school districts in King County do not encompass any region of unincorporated King County (Bellevue, Mercer Island, ~~and~~ Shoreline, and Tukwila School Districts) and are not included below.

[119] King County, Public Health Centers, 2023. [LINK]

[120] King County, About Department of Community and Human Services, 2023. [LINK]

[121] King County, Hospitals for a Healthier Community, King County Community Health Needs Assessment 2018/2019, 2019. [LINK]

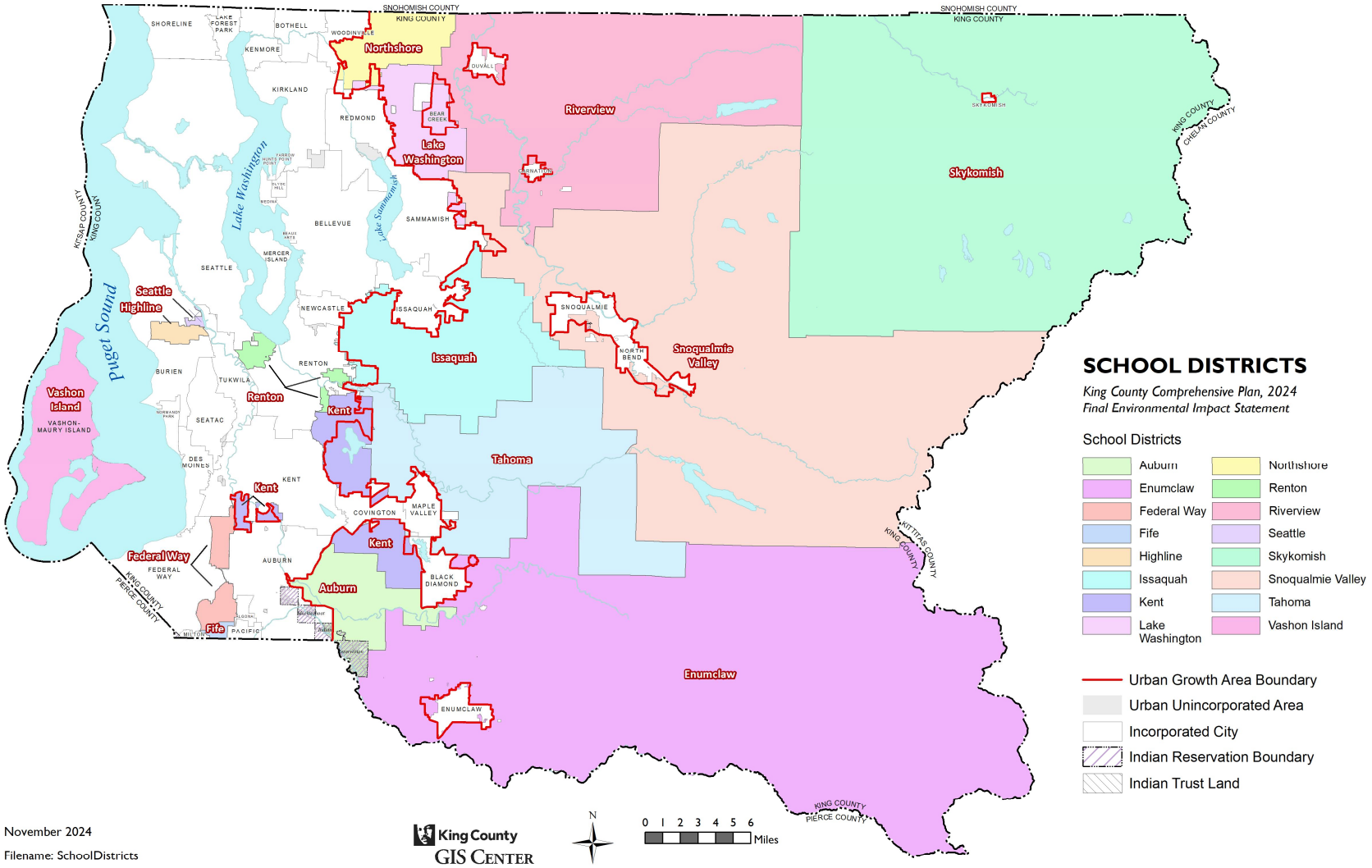
[122] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Washington State Report Card, 2023. [LINK]

Table 4.1-54. King County School District Enrollment

School District	Enrollment (2022–2023)
Auburn School District	17,893
Enumclaw School District	4,390
Federal Way School District	21,698
Fife School District	3,825
Highline School District	18,077
Issaquah School District	19,679
Kent School District	25,303
Lake Washington School District	31,169
Northshore School District	23,103
Renton School District	15,276
Riverview School District	3,089
Seattle Public Schools	51,542
Skykomish School District	40
Snoqualmie Valley School District	7,091
Tahoma School District	9,129
~~Tukwila School District~~	~~2,733~~
Vashon Island School District	1,510

Source: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card, 2023. [LINK]

Figure 4.1-6. School Districts



4.1.3 Environmental Consequences

4.1.3.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would maintain current and planned levels of utilities and public services. Current service levels vary throughout unincorporated King County, with higher service levels in the more populated Urban Area and lower service levels in the less populated Rural Area. Utility and public service providers would continue to accommodate growth within unincorporated King County according to existing development requirements, growth patterns, and service standards.

4.1.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Potential changes under either of the action alternatives that would affect utilities and public services include proposals that expand housing options, support the growth of business and employment in certain areas, support regional collaboration of stormwater management, expand healthcare services, and create public hygiene, sanitation, and drinking water facilities. Both action alternatives would result in changes to the location, type, and character of development in unincorporated King County. However, new development under either action alternative would be gradual and distributed throughout unincorporated King County and would generally be distributed within or near existing development. Therefore, neither action alternative would be likely to have significant adverse impacts to utilities or public services because of increased demand.

Utilities

Several of the proposals under the action alternatives would change housing density allowances in residential zones, which could require utility infrastructure upgrades or extensions for new development. These impacts would be greater in locations with less existing development and, therefore, less utility infrastructure, such as where residents and buildings rely on private wells and on-site sewage systems instead of to public water supply and sewer systems.

Both action alternatives include proposals that support the use of renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind, or hydropower) and electrification of the transportation and energy sectors, which ~~may~~ <u>would</u> result in an increased demand for electricity. Any increase in electrical demand because of the action alternatives~~, however,~~ would represent a small fraction relative to the areas served by Puget Sound Energy and Seattle City Light. <u>However, any increased load in unincorporated King County would still require a corresponding increase in the development of electrical facilities to support the increased demand.</u>

Public Services

As discussed above, the action alternatives would change housing density allowances in residential zones which, depending on where the new development would occur, could lead to increased demand for public services above current service levels. This may require the hiring of additional staff and potentially include adding new or expanding existing stations for emergency services, such as police and fire. Similarly, depending on where new development occurs, school districts may need to expand capacity to accommodate additional students in areas where new growth occurs. However, given the modest growth targets for the action alternatives as compared to the existing population currently served throughout the county, it is anticipated that any increases or adjustments needed for public services would be minor.

Proposals that expand allowances for emergency housing and shelters for those experiencing homelessness could increase development of permanent and temporary housing options in urban unincorporated areas. This may increase demand for services offered by the Department of Community and Human Services under both action alternatives.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

While both action alternatives would have the same type of impacts, they may be at different scales or locations. For example, the Extensive Change Alternative may create additional demand for public services and utilities but within a smaller geographic area than the Limited Change Alternative, as it would direct more dense development to existing urban areas. This may result in fewer impacts to public services and utilities, as denser development can be served more efficiently. The Limited Change Alternative may result in less efficient development patterns, which could impact utility and public services if service areas were needed to be expanded over a larger geographic area.

Both action alternatives include proposals that support the increased use of renewable energy in the built environment. The Extensive Change Alternative would change existing regulations to reduce energy use and phase out fossil fuel use, which would reduce current demand for nonrenewable energy sources and increase demand for electricity. Programs under the Limited Change Alternative would be voluntary and, therefore, would likely result in a more gradual shift in energy sources and demand. Renewable energy facilities, such as battery storage systems, may cause public safety concerns (e.g., over potential explosions and fire), but all storage facilities would comply with fire codes. The County and energy industry are working to develop additional policy and regulatory solutions for public safety issues.

The Limited Change Alternative includes minor changes to allowances for emergency housing and shelters in urban residential and commercial zones, which could slightly increase the population in urban unincorporated areas. This may lead to an increased demand for social services offered by the County's Department of Community and Human Services. The Extensive Change Alternative includes substantial changes to allowances for temporary and permanent emergency housing and shelters with minimal development and operational conditions in all Rural Towns and urban unincorporated area zones. In addition, the Extensive Change Alternative would allow increased housing density in Rural Towns through methods such as expanding allowed housing types, applying minimum densities, raising height limits, or upzoning Rural Towns. Therefore, the Extensive Change Alternative would result in further increased residential density and more extensive usage of the County's social service options, which may necessitate an expansion of staff and service areas.

4.1.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to utilities or public services are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to utilities and public services.

4.2 Land Use and Aesthetics

4.2.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Land use in unincorporated King County is governed by the GMA and guided by the PSRC VISION 2050 (the MPPs), the CPPs, and the Current Plan, which are all discussed further in Chapter 1. In addition, some of the primary laws, regulations, and policies that guide land use and aesthetics in unincorporated King County include the following:

- Shoreline Management Act, Chapter 90.58 RCW, and Chapters 173-26 and 173-27 WAC, which regulate the state's shorelines.
- K.C.C. Title 21A, Zoning, which includes the County's development standards, design standards, shoreline and critical areas regulations, and other provisions related to the use and development of land in King County.
- The King County SMP, which is composed of Chapter 6 of the Current Plan, Shorelines, and implementing regulations found in K.C.C. Chapter 21A.25, Shorelines.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which establish the framework for developing comprehensive plans, including land use and development patterns within unincorporated King County.
- King County Zoning Map, including property-specific conditions, which applies zoning classifications and site- or district-specific regulations on properties in unincorporated King County.
- 2021 King County Urban Growth Capacity Report, which helps guide land use planning by identifying the available land capacity, whether growth targets are being met, and whether urban areas are achieving their planned densities.

4.2.2 Affected Environment

This section provides an overview of the impacted environment, including the existing land uses and aesthetics as well as the Current Plan's land use designations in unincorporated King County.

Table 4.2-1, King County Present Land Use Parcel Data, shows the current land uses within King County based on 2023 King County assessment data. Residential uses account for 13 percent of unincorporated King County, primarily concentrated in the Rural Area in terms of area. The Rural Area consists of 51 percent residential uses, 5 percent recreational uses, and 1 percent commercial uses. Residential uses form the majority (almost 54 percent) of the land uses within the UGA, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas. Residential uses constitute approximately 3 percent of the Natural Resource Lands in the county.

Table 4.2-1. King County Present Land Use Parcel Data

			Unincorporated King County		
	Countywide (Acres)	**All UGA (Acres)**	**Unincorporated Urban Area (Acres / % Urban Area)**	**Rural Area (Acres / % Rural Area)**	**Natural Resource Lands (Acres / % Natural Resource Lands)**
Residential	255,490	127,283	11,790 / 54%	104,147 / 51%	24,009 / 3%
Commercial	20,972	18,971	352 / 2%	1,229 / 1%	772 / <1%
Industrial	6,150	5,767	131 / 1%	347 / <1%	36 / <1%
Natural Resource Land	8,104	2,799	169 / 1%	778 / <1%	4,521 / 1%
Utilities and Transportation	72,764	7,673	304 / 1%	5,822 / 3%	59,268 / 7%
Government, Civic, and Institutions	16,153	12,961	845 / 4%	2,527 / 1%	651 / <1%
Recreation	26,765	14,760	1,556 / 7%	9,138 / 5%	2,743 / <1%
Other[a]	904,131	55,174	6,734 / 31%	78,291 / 39%	769,208 / 89%
Total	**1,310,528**	**245,388**	**21,881**	**202,278**	**861,208**

[a] Other land uses include vacant, parking, water bodies and tidelands, accessory, and undefined uses. The large percentage of Natural Resource Lands in "other" current land uses reflects undefined current uses in the assessment data.

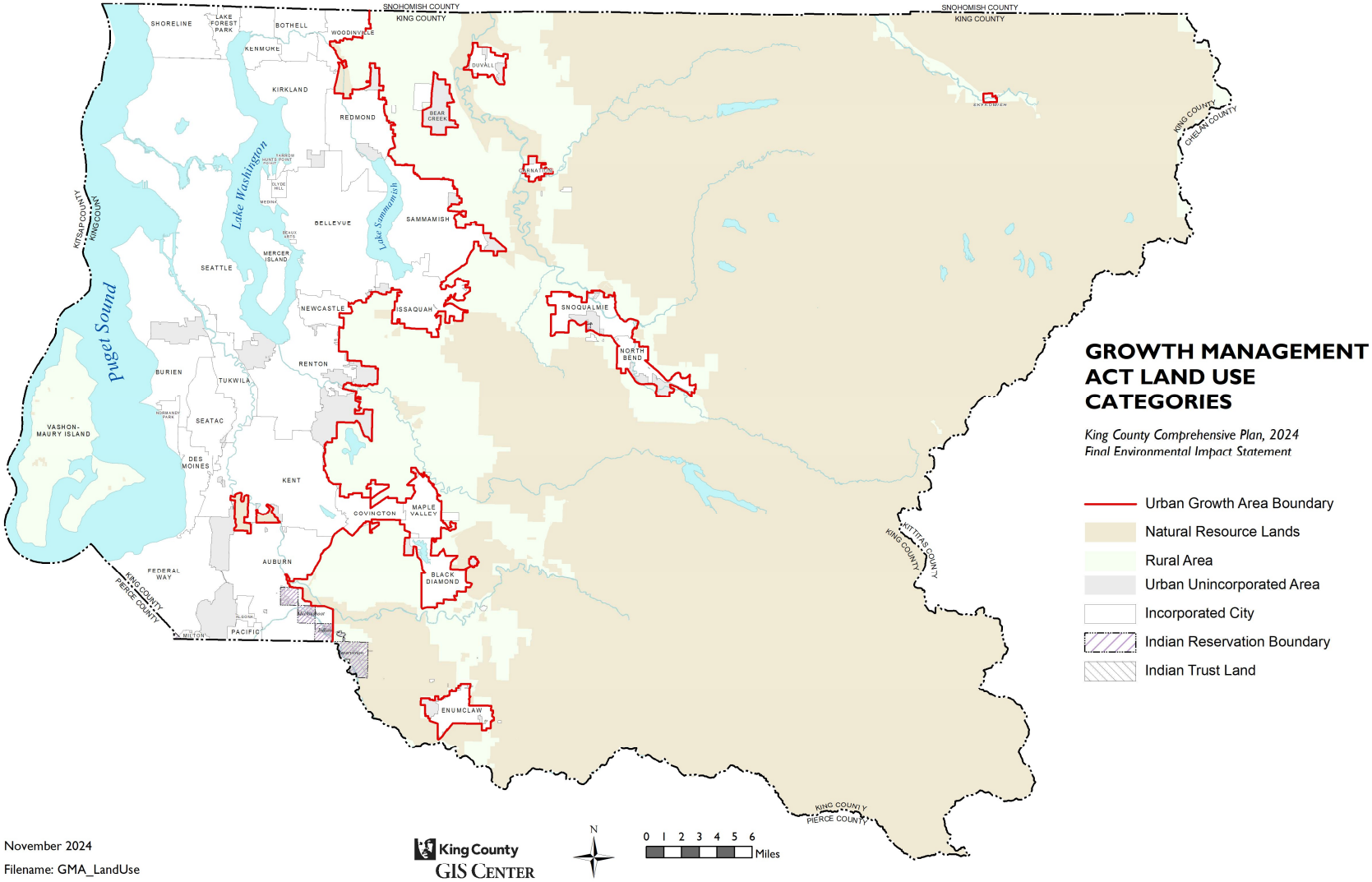
4.2.2.1 Land Use, Development Patterns, and Aesthetics

As described in Section 1.3, Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework, the GMA distinguishes three overarching land use categories: Urban Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands. The Current Plan utilizes these GMA land use categories as part of its planning framework to achieve the County's vision of protecting the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands from the expansion of urban growth, consistent with the GMA, MPPs, and CPPs. Figure 4.2-1, Growth Management Act Land Use Categories, illustrates the general distribution of the Urban Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands countywide, as well as identifying Tribal lands.

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map is depicted in Chapter 1 of the Current Plan, Regional Growth Management Planning, and was most recently updated in 2022 (see Figure 4.2-2, Land Use). The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map shows the 20-year vision for preferred land use patterns within the county by identifying specific land use designations for the Urban Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands. The land use map designations indicate the general locations and extents of various land uses, including agriculture, forestry, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open spaces, and other uses as required by the GMA. Each land use designation is implemented through zoning classifications and development regulations, ensuring consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the development regulations that implement the plan's goals and policies.

Residential land use designations account for approximately 61 percent of the unincorporated areas within the County's UGA. King County designates approximately 94 percent of its Natural Resource Lands as Forest, 6 percent as Agricultural, and less than 1 percent as Mineral Lands.

Figure 4.2-1. Growth Management Act Land Use Categories



Urban Area

King County's UGA includes all cities within the county, PAAs of these cities, and other unaffiliated urban unincorporated areas.

The majority of land in the urban unincorporated area has a residential land use map designation. The Current Plan includes a minimum density requirement for all new urban residential developments, stipulating a zoned density of 4 or more homes per acre. Urban residential zoning classifications (UR and R-1 to R-48) range from allowing single detached houses on large lots to ~~multifamily~~ multiunit development up to 7 stories, in addition to townhouses, mobile home parks, and cottage housing. The Current Plan also incorporates policies that guide the location of growth, densities, and rezoning in urban unincorporated areas to align with existing neighborhoods, infrastructure, services, and the environment.

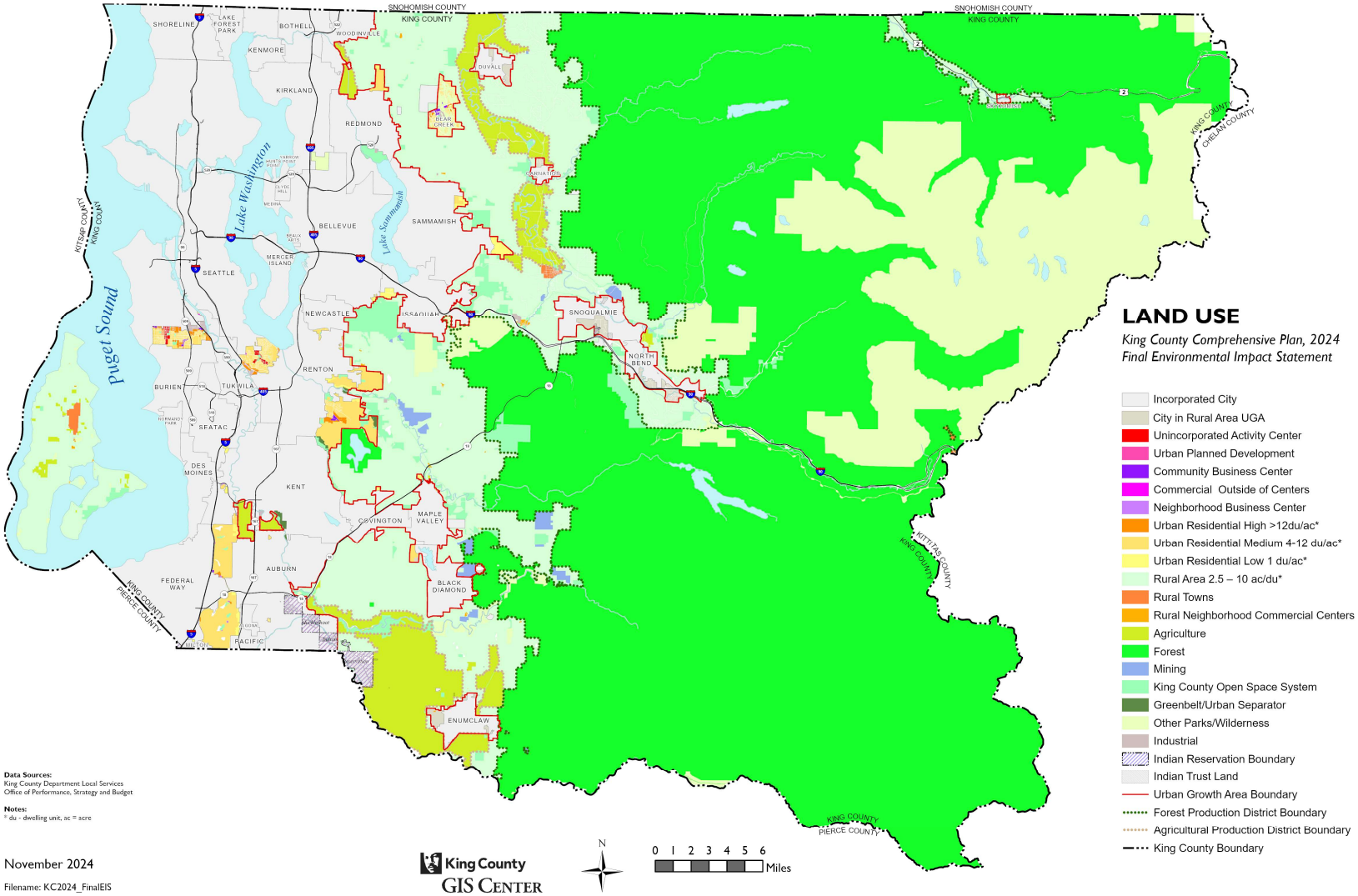
The Current Plan also emphasizes locating a substantial portion of new jobs and housing within cities and urban centers, which are concentrated areas of employment and housing. All of King County's regional centers, designated in VISION 2050, are situated within cities. But the Current Plan also includes three County-specific categories of centers in urban unincorporated areas:

- *Unincorporated Activity Centers:* Higher-density, more concentrated industrial and commercial areas intended as primary locations for such commercial development and include Skyway and White Center.
- *Community Business Centers*: Primarily retail developments designed to serve a nearby market area of 15,000 to 40,000 people, designed to be compatible with adjacent residential uses and include Fairwood, Roxhill, Glendale, and Top Hat.
- *Neighborhood Business Centers:* Smaller, local centers that offer convenience goods and services to local residents, such as Avondale Corner, Beverly Park, Jovita, Lake Geneva, Spider Lake, and along Martin Luther King Jr. Way between 60th and 64th Avenue S, and along Rainier Avenue S between S 114th and S 117th Street.

All of the existing urban centers are shown on the Current Plan's Urban Centers map, which can be found at the end of Chapter 2 of the Current Plan, Urban Communities. Commercial and industrial areas outside of urban centers cover relatively small areas. Zoning classifications for these areas allow typical commercial and industrial uses.

King County's urban centers, such as the unincorporated activity centers or neighborhood business centers described above, can generally be categorized into two types of development styles based on the transportation modes common at the time of their development. Prior to World War II ("pre-war"), urban centers and towns were laid out with buildings tightly spaced to shorten walking distances, and grids of streets were laid to allow easy options to a range of destinations. After World War II ("post-war"), urban places were designed to accommodate increasing use of automobiles, with widely spaced buildings, larger parking lots, and hierarchical, rather than gridded, street patterns.

Figure 4.2-2. Land Use



Pre-War Urban Centers

Pre-war centers include White Center, Skyway, and Top Hat. They are organized within a grid of streets with compact rectangular lots centered around a "main street" with commercial buildings on both sides. Figure 4.2-3, Illustration of Pre-War Urban Centers, shows two views of pre-war urban centers.

Figure 4.2-3. Illustration of Pre-War Urban Centers

Above: Mainstreet retail in White Center. Source: Google Street View, 2023.
Below: Aerial view of Top Hat, a pre-war urban center. Source: Google Earth/Landsat Copernicus, 2023.

Main street commercial buildings tend to be 1 or 2 stories high, sometimes with apartments above a commercial ground floor. They tend to be oriented towards the street or sidewalk and have large windows, creating an engaging pedestrian environment. Such buildings are often "zero lot line" buildings, meaning their side walls touch, and they typically have limited off-street parking. Relatively affordable rents in older commercial buildings are supportive of small, independent businesses and often serve as cultural anchors for local communities. Newer commercial buildings located nearby often stand alone, surrounded on several sides by surface parking lots.

A mix of pre- and post-war residential buildings like detached houses, low-rise apartment complexes (2 to 4 stories), and townhouses typically surround the commercial core, often within a grid of low-traffic streets. Industrial uses, public facilities, schools, churches, and/or parks may be located nearby as well. Older buildings may feature attractive building materials or decorative patterns that are uncommon in new construction, and older lots may feature mature trees.

Post-War Urban Centers

Post-war urban centers are located on or around major arterials, with a cluster of free-standing 1-story commercial buildings with surface parking lots. Figure 4.2-4, Illustration of Post-War Urban Centers, shows an example of a post-war urban center in the Bear Creek area. Other nearby buildings, like low-rise apartment complexes, detached houses, and manufactured home parks, tend to be located nearby but are clearly separated from commercial development by fences or greenbelts. Street systems tend to have few connections and are highly differentiated between wide multilane arterials and smaller access roads. Post-war centers include Fairwood Community Business Center or the Martin Luther King Jr. Way/60th Avenue S to 64th Avenue S Neighborhood Business Center, all of which share similar aesthetic characteristics.

Figure 4.2-4. Illustration of Post-War Urban Center

Bear Creek planned urban development. Source: Google Earth/Landsat Copernicus, 2023.

Urban Residential

Urban residential areas outside of urban centers are mostly composed of detached houses (1 and 2 stories), although attached townhouses (2 to 3 stories), low-rise apartment complexes (2 to 4 stories), and manufactured home parks are also common. In a few places, podium-style mid-rise apartment buildings (5 to 7 stories) have been built in recent years. Figure 4.2-5, Illustration of Urban Residential, shows a typical view of urban residential areas outside of urban centers; this example is south of Top Hat.

Figure 4.2-5. Illustration of Urban Residential

Source: Google Earth/Landsat Copernicus, 2023.

Detached houses that were developed as subdivisions typically have consistent building appearance and design, whereas houses built piecemeal outside of subdivisions typically vary more in appearance. Older houses tend to feature more unique elements added by homeowners over time. Subdivisions built in the mid-20th century tend to feature short, wide buildings with ample yards, while subdivisions built in the late 20th century tend to have 2-story houses with smaller yards and more prominent garages. Many older lots feature mature trees.

In residential areas developed or platted before World War II, streets form a grid of rectangular blocks, although this grid of rights-of-way is not always fully developed, such as near the Spider Lake and Jovita centers, where many rights-of-way are unpaved or overgrown. In areas developed after World War II, streets tend to form a curving semi-connected network with many cul-de-sacs and have a pronounced street hierarchy with wide multi-lane arterials fed by smaller local access streets.

Urban residential areas continue to see new development of housing at a range of scales, including subdivisions of detached houses on vacant land, low-rise walkup ~~multifamily~~ multiunit buildings, and podium-style midrise development. Recent residential development reflects planning goals for a mixture of uses, walkable communities, and quality design that contributes to local aesthetics. Examples of

recent developments include the Greenbridge and Seola Gardens mixed-income communities near White Center, which feature sidewalks, green stormwater treatment infrastructure, a dense mix of housing types, small retail and community amenity spaces, and neo-traditional design. New residential subdivisions and public facilities like schools also feature sidewalks, landscaped screening, and green stormwater features. Several areas in North Highline have also been developing recently with compact, human-oriented development styles mixing in with older auto-oriented and pre-war styles (see Figure 4.2-5, Illustration of Urban Residential).

The County has also established urban separators, which are low-density areas inside the UGA that serve as open space corridors, provide visual contrast to continuous development, and enhance the distinct identities of communities. Urban separators are designated in the CPPs and are shown in the official land use map in the Current Plan (see Figure 4.2-2, Land Use). Urban separators aid in preserving environmentally critical areas, protecting habitat for fish and wildlife, offering recreational benefits like parks and trails, and fulfilling the GMA requirement for greenbelts and open space within the UGA.

Rural Area

King County's Rural Area is situated east of the contiguous UGA, with the exception of Vashon-Maury Island. In accordance with the GMA, King County has designated the Rural Area with the purpose of protecting these lands from urban levels of development and preventing encroachment from sprawl. This is achieved by permitting land uses that support and align with the established rural character, while accommodating a variety of rural uses and densities. The Rural Area also supports natural resource-based industries and uses, including working farms and forests. Figure 4.2-6, Illustration of Rural Area, shows an example of a Rural Area in southeast King County.

Although the primary land use in the Rural Area is residential, a handful of nonresidential uses also exist. Some of the primary land use categories include the following:

- *Rural Area:* Encompassing low-density residential developments, forestry, farming, livestock uses, recreation, and other traditional rural activities.
- *Rural Town:* Housing historical settlements and commercial establishments serving rural residents, including Fall City, Vashon, and Snoqualmie Pass.
- *Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers*: Catering to nearby rural residents with small-scale convenience services, such as Cumberland and Preston.

King County's Rural Area is home to communities such as the Hobart Plateau, Vashon-Maury Island, the Snoqualmie Valley, and the Enumclaw Plateau. These rural communities are characterized by elements such as low-density residential development, farms, ranches, small-scale commercial and industrial uses, forests, watersheds that support fisheries and flood hazard management, mining activities, historic sites and structures, archaeological sites, and recreational areas. These rural uses complement and support the more extensive resource-oriented areas within the designated Natural Resource Lands. The positioning of the Rural Area, generally between the UGA boundary and designated Natural Resource Lands, helps protect agriculture and forest uses against incompatible activities. The land use designations and implementing zoning in the Rural Area are designed to provide services and essential goods for rural residents and local businesses, with surrounding cities serving as the primary location for urban services.

The GMA and RCW 36.70A.011 acknowledge the importance of rural lands and seek to protect rural character, where applicable, to accomplish a variety of rural economy, lifestyle, wildlife, open space, and quality of life goals. The Current Plan defines "rural character" as the "pattern of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan" and includes the following provisions:

a. In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
b. That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in Rural Areas;
c. That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in Rural Areas and communities;
d. That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
e. That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
f. That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
g. That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas.[123]

Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Rural Towns are designated in the unincorporated Rural Area where there is an existing concentration of higher residential densities and economic activity. Approximately 1,056 acres are designated as Rural Towns and include Vashon, Fall City, and Snoqualmie Pass.

Nearly all zone types may be adopted in Rural Towns, potentially allowing a wide range of buildings. County policies direct growth to be de-prioritized in the Rural Area, including Rural Towns, so applied zones are likely to be reflective of existing building types in most areas. For instance, Current Plan policy RP-203 states that "King County shall continue to support the reduction of sprawl by focusing growth and future development in the Urban Growth Area, consistent with adopted growth targets." However, because of parking minimums, dimensional standards in zoning, building code stipulations, and other rules, the form and layout of new buildings may have quite different form and layout than pre-existing buildings of similar uses.

Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers are small areas that currently are or historically were the site of nonresidential uses serving the surrounding area. There are 26 Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers designated, comprising a total of 272 acres.

Rural Towns tend to have similar aesthetics to pre-war urban centers. Development activity in Rural Towns has been limited in recent decades, with occasional infill development occurring when vacant lots become available or older structures are replaced. Those trends would likely continue under the action alternatives; however, changes to roadways can also have aesthetic impacts.

[123] King County, 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022. [LINK]

Rural Area Outside of Towns and Centers

Outside of towns, Rural Area zoning prevents new development at densities above 1 unit per 5 acres in most of the Rural Area (although there are denser RA-2.5 parcels), meaning the principal form of new residential development is often houses on large lots. The Rural Area is characterized by scattered development across human-influenced landscapes of farmland, forests, or other natural areas. Development patterns are typified by detached houses on large lots, low-intensity industrial uses like farms, ranches, and food processing, and vacant land. Historic barns and farm buildings are a prominent visual feature in many areas. Schools, fire stations, medical facilities, churches, and other special or public buildings constructed in recent decades may also be visually prominent.

Many parts of the Rural Area are forested, often with dense coverage of conifers that limit sightlines and create year-round shade. Houses and other land uses nearby may be invisible from the road or neighboring properties in forested areas. Agricultural areas and areas along shorelines tend to have long, open sightlines, showcasing landforms, watersheds, buildings, and distant mountains.

Figure 4.2-6. Illustration of Rural Area

Aerial view of rural lands in southeast King County. Source: Google Earth/Landsat Copernicus, 2023.

Natural Resource Lands

King County has established three land use designations for Natural Resource Lands: Agriculture, Forest, and Mining. These land use designations are intended to ensure the continued conservation and productive utilization of the Natural Resource Lands. These designations and areas are described further in Section 3.4, Natural Resources.

Tribal Land

There are two federally recognized Tribes located in King County: the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. The County does not have land use jurisdiction over land held in trust or assert land use jurisdiction on fee simple parcels owned by members of the Tribes or the Tribes themselves.

It is important to note that not all Tribal Land is shown on the land use map. County records indicate that there are approximately 99 square miles (over 63,000 acres) designated as Tribal lands held in trust or land in fee.[124]

Additional background information on Tribes and Tribal Lands in the county is included in Section 4.5, Historic and Cultural Resources.

4.2.2.2 Land Use Designations and Implementing Zoning

The Current Plan's land use designations and the corresponding implementing zones organized by Urban Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands are listed in Table 4.2-2, Current King County Land Use Designations and Implementing Zoning.

Table 4.2-2. Current King County Land Use Designations and Implementing Zoning

King County Land Use ~~Map~~ Designation	Implementing Zoning Classifications[a]
Urban Area (UGA)	
Unincorporated Activity Center This designation is one of the primary locations for commercial and industrial development in urban unincorporated King County. White Center and Skyway are the only designated unincorporated activity centers.	R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, O, I
Urban Planned Development There are no Urban Planned Developments in unincorporated King County.	R-1, R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, RB, O, I
UGA for Cities in Rural Area	UR The following two zones were in place in the North Bend UGA when the 1994 Comprehensive Plan was adopted: I, RB
Residential	
Urban Residential High This designation allows for residential densities of greater than 12 dwelling units per acre in urban areas that are served at the time of development by adequate public sewers, water supply, roads, and other needed public facilities and services.	R-18, R-24, R-48
Urban Residential Medium This designation allows for residential densities of 4 to 12 dwelling units per acre in urban unincorporated areas that are predominantly environmentally unconstrained and are served at the time of development by adequate public sewers, water supply, roads, and other needed public facilities and services.	R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12
Urban Residential Low This designation is for limited circumstances in urban unincorporated areas in order to protect floodplains, critical aquifer recharge areas, high function wetlands and unstable slopes from degradation, and the link these environmental features have to a network of open space, fish and wildlife habitat, and urban separators.	R-1

[124] King County GIS Center, Parcel Record Assessor Extract Table, August 2023. [LINK]

Table 4.2-2. Current King County Land Use Designations and Implementing Zoning (continued)

King County Land Use ~~Map~~ Designation	Implementing Zoning Classifications[a]
Commercial	
Community Business Center This designation is for primarily retail developments designed to serve a nearby market area of 15,000 to 40,000 people. Community business centers should be sited so they do not adversely affect other centers and are easily accessible by motor vehicles, public transportation, walking, or bicycling.	NB, CB, O
Commercial Outside of Centers This designation recognized commercial uses predating the adoption of the County's first GMA mandated Comprehensive Plan. These are isolated urban unincorporated areas outside of a designated center (i.e., unincorporated activity center, community business center, or neighborhood business center).	NB, CB, RB, O, I – this is the range of existing zoning in place when the 1994 Comprehensive Plan was adopted.
Neighborhood Business Center This designation is for smaller local business centers.	NB, O
Industrial This designation provides for the location and grouping of industrial enterprises and activities involving manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, processing, bulk handling and storage, research facilities, warehousing, and heavy trucks. The industrial designation also protects the County's industrial land base for industrial economic development and employment opportunities.	I
Rural Area	
Rural Area Characterized by low-density residential development, farms, ranches, forests, watersheds crucial for both fisheries and flood hazard management, mining areas, ~~small cities and~~ unincorporated towns, historic sites and buildings, archaeological sites, and regionally important recreation areas.	RA-2.5, RA-5, RA-10, RA-20
Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center These centers provide limited, local convenience shopping, restaurants, and services to meet the daily needs of rural residents. Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers are small commercial developments, or in some cases historic towns or buildings, that are too small to provide more than convenience shopping and services to surrounding residents. They generally do not have infrastructure or services such as water supply or sewage disposal systems any different from those serving the surrounding area.	NB
Rural Town Rural Towns are unincorporated towns governed directly by King County but may provide a focal point for community groups, such as chambers of commerce or community councils, to participate in public affairs. The purposes of the Rural Town designation are to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in the Rural Area, whether by virtue of historical rural settlements or redesignation of an urban commercial center; provide a physical focus for the historic identity of rural communities; and allow for modest growth of residential and economic uses within these designations if supported by the community and adequate utilities and other public services are available.	R-1, R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, RB, O, I

Table 4.2-2. Current King County Land Use Designations and Implementing Zoning (continued)

King County Land Use ~~Map~~ Designation	Implementing Zoning Classifications[a]
Natural Resource Lands	
Agriculture The County's designation of Agriculture includes land used for commercial purposes for either the raising of crops or livestock or the production of agricultural products or both, including land within APDs. APDs are blocks of contiguous farmlands where agriculture is supported through the protection of agricultural soils and related support services and activities.	A-10, A-35
Forestry The County's designation of Forestry includes regionally and nationally significant forests devoted primarily to growth and harvesting forest and timber products, including FPDs as well as land outside of FPDs such as U.S. Forest Service Lands. FPDs conserve large blocks of commercially valuable forestland for the long term. The designation and zoning are designed to prevent intrusion of incompatible uses, manage adjacent land uses to minimize land use conflicts, and prevent or discourage conversion from forestry to other uses.	F, M
Mining The County's designation of Mining includes those sites that had Potential Mineral zoning prior to the date of the adoption of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and those sites that had Mineral zoning as of the date of the adoption of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan Update.	M
Other/Unclassified	
Greenbelt/Urban Separator Urban Separators are low-density areas within the UGA that create open space corridors, provide a visual contrast to continuous development, and reinforce the unique identities of communities. Urban separators protect adjacent resource land, environmentally sensitive areas, or the Rural Area, and create open space corridors within and between urban areas which provide environmental, visual, recreations and wildlife benefits. They also provide recreational benefits, such as parks and trails, and meet the GMA's requirement for greenbelts and open space in the UGA.	R-1
King County Open Space The County's designation of open space includes those lands that are part of the King County open space system as well as state parks and natural resource conservation areas and federal wilderness areas in unincorporated King County.	All zones
Other Parks/Wilderness	All zones

Source: King County Comprehensive Plan, 2022.
Notes: A = Agricultural (10- or 35-acre minimum lot area); F = Forest (80-acre minimum lot area); M= Mineral; RA = Rural Area (2.5-acre, 5-acre, 10-acre, or 20-acre minimum density); UR = Urban Reserve; R = Urban Residential (base density in dwelling units per acre); NB = Neighborhood Business; CB = Community Business; RB = Regional Business; O = Office; I = Industrial

[a] This is the range of zoning that may be allowed within each comprehensive plan land use designations subject to comprehensive plan and subarea plan policies. Actual zoning on a specific property is determined through the area-wide zoning process or through a quasi-judicial rezone application.

Zoning and Development Standards

K.C.C. Title 21A, Zoning, includes a variety of development standards regulating height, bulk, and scale, as well as design standards. Height, density, setbacks, minimum lot sizes, and other standards are defined in K.C.C. Chapter 21A.12, Development Standards – Density and Dimensions. In residential zones, dwelling unit densities are allowed roughly according to the numeral in the zone name. For example, R-18 generally allows development of 18 units per acre. RA zones (RA-2.5 through RA-20) allow lower densities of residential development from 1 unit per 5 acres to 1 unit per 20 acres.

Height limits for new buildings are assigned by zone, with most zones having a base height that can be exceeded through participation in various incentive programs. Generalized current height limits (see specifics and exceptions in the code) are:

- RA zones: 40-foot base; 75-foot maximum.
- UR and R-1: 35-foot base; 75-foot maximum.
- R-4, R-6, and R-8: 25- or 35-foot base; 30-, 45-, or 75-foot maximum.
- R-12: 60-foot base; 75-foot maximum.
- R-18, R-24, and R-48: 60foot base; 75- or 80-foot maximum.
- Resource zones (A-10, A-35, F, and M): 35-foot base, 75-foot maximum.
- Commercial/industrial (NB, CB, RB, O, I): 35- or 45-foot base; 45-, 65-, 75-, 80-, or 85-foot maximum.

Minimum street setbacks in RA zones are 30 feet and are 30 to 50 feet in resource zones. Street setbacks in other residential and commercial zones are 10, 20, and 25 feet. A similar pattern exists for maximum impervious surface standards, which greatly limit hard surfaces in zones within the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands and are more flexible in other residential and commercial zones.

Together, these regulate the allowed building envelope and set the pattern for the spectrum of lower intensity, smaller, more spread out uses in the Rural Area to greater intensity, larger, denser uses in more urban areas.

More detailed design standards are also included in K.C.C. Title 21A. For example, K.C.C. Chapter 21A.14, Development Standards – Design Requirements, includes site layout, mixed-use development design features, residential open space, and subdivision standards. In addition, K.C.C. Chapter 21A.38, General Provisions – Property-Specific Development Standards/Special District Overlays, applies site-specific standards to select places and/or types of development throughout the county (e.g., pedestrian-oriented commercial development in CB, RB, and O zones in Urban Centers; North Highline commercial and industrial; aviation facilities; highway-oriented development; Bear Creek office and retail; Fall City business district; Martin Luther King Jr. Way South mixed use; Vashon Rural Town affordable housing; and Skyway microenterprise). These standards often allow additional land uses or limit certain land uses and sometimes require human-oriented design characteristics.

Critical Areas

Specific land use and development regulations, codified in K.C.C. Chapter 21A.24, Critical Areas, apply to critical areas and their buffers in unincorporated King County. Critical area regulations typically restrict the size and type of development and use of property located in a critical area to protect public health and safety and to promote environmental health in the region. Critical areas include areas at high risk for erosion, landslides, seismic liquefaction, channel migration, or flooding; subsidence due to

abandoned underground coal mines; critical aquifer recharge areas; wetlands; and aquatic areas such as streams, rivers, lakes, and marine waters. These critical areas are described further in Section 3.2, Water Resources, and Section 3.3, Wildlife and Habitat. The County's policies for designating and safeguarding critical areas within unincorporated regions of the county are included in Chapter 5 of the Current Plan, Environment.

Shorelines

Like critical areas, the county's shoreline is also regulated by specific land use and development regulations. The King County SMP, which is composed of Chapter 6 of the Current Plan, Shorelines, and implementing regulations found in K.C.C. Chapter 21A.25, Shorelines, is described further in Section 3.2, Water Resources.

The County's SMP identifies eight shoreline environment designations, along with the purpose, criteria, and management policies for each. Shoreline environment designations are classifications that reflect local shoreline conditions, including ecological functions and shoreline development. A description of each shoreline environmental designation is listed in Table 4.2-3, King County Shoreline Environmental Designations. These shoreline environment designations provide the framework for implementing specific shoreline policies and regulatory measures tied to use and development in each shoreline environment designation.[125] Figure 3.2-3, Shorelines of the State, illustrates the extent of shoreline managed under the County's SMP and identifies the shoreline environmental designation.

Table 4.2-3. King County Shoreline Environmental Designations

Shoreline Environmental Designation	Description
High Intensity	Applied to areas that provide high-intensity, water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses.
Residential	Applied to accommodate residential uses at urban densities while allowing for nonresidential uses that are consistent with the protection of the shoreline jurisdiction.
Rural	Applied to accommodate rural residential shoreline development, while allowing for rural nonresidential uses that are consistent with the protection of the shoreline.
Conservancy	Applied to protect and conserve the shoreline for ecological, public safety, and recreation purposes. Includes areas with important shoreline ecological processes and functions, valuable historic and cultural features, flood and geological hazards, and recreational opportunities. Residential areas can also be designated as conservancy shorelines.
Resource	Applied to allow for mining and agriculture land uses, except for shorelines that are relatively intact or that have minimally degraded shoreline processes and functions.
Forestry	Applied in areas to allow for forest production and protect municipal water supplies.
Natural	Applied to shorelines that are relatively intact or have minimally degraded shoreline processes and functions that are intolerant of human use.
Aquatic	Applied to the areas waterward of the ordinary high water mark.

Source: King County, 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan, last updated December 2022. [LINK]

[125] WAC 173-26-191(1)(d).

In general, the King County SMP protects natural resources, encourages land uses that require a waterfront location (with the exception of single detached residences), and encourages public access to public shorelines. Specifically, the SMP establishes mandatory preferences for uses that are unique to or dependent upon a shoreline location.[126]

Wildland Urban Interface

As described in Section 3.4, Natural Resources, the WUI is the zone of transition between development and undeveloped land or vegetative fuels. Additional fire protection standards are required in areas in proximity to the WUI. The State Building Code, implemented through K.C.C. Titles 16 and 17, requires certain development standards for structures within the WUI, such as driveway access; ignition-resistant construction, including decks; and the creation and maintenance of defensible space around buildings within WUIs.[127]

4.2.3 Environmental Consequences

4.2.3.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would maintain the Current Plan's goals and policies, land use map designations, and UGA boundary. The county would experience development, redevelopment, and conversion of existing land uses over time. Anticipated growth patterns would align with the existing zoning classifications' allowed land uses and development standards already in place, which would continue to guide growth patterns. Existing zoning and development regulations would continue to shape the footprints and envelopes of new and redeveloped buildings.

Almost 90 percent of housing growth in unincorporated King County under the Current Plan has been in urban areas.[128] Adequate zoning capacity exists to accommodate growth targets, which the County is on track to meet.[129] These development trends and patterns would continue and include new development that would be at a greater height, bulk, and scale than existing conditions. PAAs could potentially be annexed by adjacent municipalities. This could result in changes to land use and a reduction in the size of the urban unincorporated area; however, annexation levels have been minimal since 2016.[130]

The No Action Alternative assumes an increase in population and employment consistent with 2012 CPP growth targets, which are higher than the 2021 CPP targets. Neither growth target is anticipated to result in a substantial change in population growth or a meaningful differentiation between the No Action Alternative and the action alternatives. Between 2012 and 2018, an average of 200 new residential units per year were permitted in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands, and this small percentage of growth outside of the Urban Area would be expected to continue.[131]

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[126] King County, Shoreline Master Program Technical Appendix, Volume 1. Shoreline Inventory and Characterization: Methodology and Results, 2007. [LINK]

[127] Chapter 51-55 WAC, Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code. 2023. [LINK]

[128] Eighty-nine percent of housing unit growth 2010-2020, from a King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau block-level data, Decennial Census, 2010 and 2020. Growth assumes a constant 2020 unincorporated area boundary to control for population annexed to cities.

[129] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, March 2022. [LINK]

[130] Ibid.

[131] King County, 2021 King County Urban Growth Capacity Report, June 2021. [LINK]

The No Action Alternative could result in inconsistency between the Current Plan and recent amendments to the GMA, such as Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220 (Chapter 254, Laws of 2021) which directs more intensive planning for affordable housing. The No Action Alternative would not implement updates mandated by the MPPs or the 2021 CPPs. By not amending the Current Plan to align with new GMA mandates, the MPPs, and the CPPs, the County's ability to accommodate and manage urban growth effectively may not align with coordinated regional planning efforts. Furthermore, the County could lose eligibility for state grants and other funding if plan updates and development codes are not adopted consistent with the GMA, MPPs, and CPPs.

4.2.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Both action alternatives would involve amendments to the Current Plan's goals, policies, and land use designations, as well as implementing development standards that are necessitated by updates and amendments to the GMA, MPPs, and CPPs.

Both action alternatives, like the No Action Alternative, assume some increase in population and employment in unincorporated King County over the 20-year planning period, which could lead to new development as well as redevelopment in some areas, with a clear focus on accommodating the allocated growth targets within the Urban Area. The actual type of land use and the rate and distribution of future development would be influenced, in part, by the implementation of existing and amended Comprehensive Plan policies, related regulations and actions, and by decisions made by individual property owners and developers. Though the action alternatives would result in changes to land use and aesthetics, neither alternative would result in significant, unavoidable adverse impacts to land use or aesthetics.

The action alternatives may result in the following types of impacts:

- Greater height, bulk, or scale of development than what would occur under the No Action Alternative.
- Changes to certain uses within urban and rural lands, thereby changing some physical, natural, and cultural components of the landscape, such as landforms, vegetation, water features and land uses.
- Changes to perceived beauty or character of the rural landscape, which includes the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.
- Changes to visual access to nature, such as where higher-intensity development patterns are expected.

For example, under both action alternatives, more buildings would likely develop at a larger scale and in more locations than under the No Action Alternative because of upzoning and increased development capacity incentives or requirements, including changes to parking requirements or lot standards. With greater housing densities allowed, there may be localized impacts in neighborhoods transitioning from more suburban to urban densities that include more closely spaced and a greater variety of housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, and garden apartments. More 3-story buildings may develop adjacent to existing 1- and 2-story buildings than under the No Action Alternative, though the base height limit would remain at 35 feet (or in some cases, 25 feet) under both action alternatives.

New allowed uses or reduced permitting requirements could increase the number of certain types of uses, such as animal rescue shelters, daycares, doctor's office/outpatient use, social services, eating and drinking places, or personal services in zones where those uses are currently not allowed or allowed with greater limitations.

Under both action alternatives, proposals to amend development standards and land use allowances in industrial zones could cause an increase in industrial buildings and structures in the Rural Area or on Natural Resource Lands. Depending on the scale and type of industry, these could be bulkier buildings than would otherwise have developed and potentially less consistent with existing and planned land use.

Both action alternatives include proposals that encourage or require the use of renewable energy to phase out fossil fuel use. Renewable energy infrastructure, such as wind turbines, solar panel fields, and other facilities, can require large land areas, meaning that they would likely develop in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands. A large-scale facility would have aesthetic impacts on rural views, with turbines, panels, and large battery storage systems replacing natural, agricultural, industrial, or other resource uses. Facilitating or incentivizing conversion of former mineral extraction sites as green energy facilities may be seen as a neutral or positive aesthetic impact.

Proposals that change allowances for the development of resorts could cause more resorts to develop, which may be of a different aesthetic than existing uses or those that would develop under the No Action Alternative.

With increased allowances for tourism and rural economic development uses in the Rural Area and agricultural zones, more development may occur in the Rural Area, especially at the rural/urban divide. However, this could also be considered a positive aesthetic impact compared to other uses allowed under the No Action Alternative in the same areas.

Both action alternatives include proposals that seek to improve regulations for working resource lands in the county, including farmlands and forest lands. Improvements to preservation programs and encouragement of active production on farmland would maintain an agricultural aesthetic in more places in the APDs and agricultural zones. This would generally be seen as a positive aesthetic impact and consistent with existing and planned land use, but some perceived negatives may occur with semi-industrial farm buildings and operations. While many forest and natural areas are protected through public or private preservation programs, normal activities on working resource lands can cause significant aesthetic changes, similar to under the No Action Alternative. Timber harvesting on unpreserved forests, especially clear cutting, can affect the quality of view from surrounding properties and rights of way. Changes to infrastructure, such as the expansion of roads or construction of electric transmission lines, can also affect aesthetic conditions.

Under both action alternatives, modifications to the TDR Program may result in program goals being achieved more quickly, including more development in urban unincorporated areas and further protection of open spaces in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands. This may be seen as an overall positive aesthetic impact, though urban unincorporated areas would experience more intrazonal (i.e., adjacent lots) transitions in height, bulk, and scale. Additionally, adjustments to the UGA boundary or changes to the Four-to-One program may impact where urban and rural development is allowed and could potentially change the character of the area. More urban development could potentially occur in formerly Rural Area locations that have been redesignated as urban, most likely near Black Diamond, Snoqualmie, North Bend, on the edge of the UGA, and potentially in Sammamish and Renton.

Both action alternatives include proposals that encourage or require parks and open space and green infrastructure, which may improve visual access to nature in urban unincorporated areas and would generally increase the total area of these land uses. Additionally, proposals that discourage or prohibit development of hard shoreline stabilization (e.g., bulkheads), shorelines would slowly redevelop with a more natural shoreline with housing set further back from the water. Though many may see this as a positive aesthetic change, natural shorelines can appear "messy" to some without the rigid human-designed geometries separating land/housing and water that provide deck/yard space and non-naturalized gardens. The shift away from hard shoreline stabilization is consistent with the goals of the Shoreline Management Act and the County's SMP.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

The action alternatives have differing approaches to residential density incentives, zoning changes, and revisions to the Four-to-One Program and TDR programs, all of which would result in differences in the type and scale of impacts between the action alternatives. The primary difference between the action alternatives is the proposed scale of development and the approach to guiding the location and type of land use and development within unincorporated King County.

For example, the Extensive Change Alternative proposes allowing more intensive RNCCs, such as by increasing allowed heights, or expanding the range of allowed uses, or allowing the creation of new RNCCs, whereas the Limited Change Alternative would make only minor changes unlikely to affect the scale of development in existing RNCCs. ~~For example,~~Under either action alternative, increasing development capacity bonuses to incentivize inclusionary housing could result in larger buildings. Under the Limited Change Alternative, the areas that would be eligible for these increases would be limited to Skyway-West Hill and North Highline. Expanding or requiring inclusionary housing in all unincorporated areas under the Extensive Change Alternative could result in larger scale buildings in more places if accomplished through development capacity incentives. This may be particularly noticeable in the unincorporated Rural Area, where building density allowed under the No Action Alternative would be lower.

Under the Limited Change Alternative, allowing some additional high-density housing near transit and employment through minor upzones (e.g., upzoning R-18 to R-24 or R-12 to R-18) may result in modest changes to bulk and scale of redevelopment. In general, the height limits and setbacks would remain constant. An upzone from R-12 to a more intense zone would also result in an increased maximum height limit, from 75 feet to a potential for up to 80 feet with incentive bonuses. Under the Extensive Change Alternative, requiring high-density housing in all areas near transit and employment could result in greater bulk and scale of development than with the Limited Change or No Action alternatives. On the other hand, it could also slow redevelopment if the construction types required for those densities are not currently economically feasible. This would be especially true if residential parking requirements are not reduced. Structured parking would be economically feasible in very few places in unincorporated areas, so it would be challenging to achieve the higher densities required. This may result in fewer short-term bulk and scale aesthetics impacts under the Extensive Change Alternative, but ultimately the same or more than under the Limited Change Alternative.

Currently, a 3-story building may develop adjacent to existing 1- and 2-story buildings in R zones, but this may accelerate under the action alternatives with increased densities allowed. Under the Limited Change Alternative, allowing up to 8 dwelling units per acre in R-1 through R-8 zones would increase opportunities for middle housing—the types of homes that have densities somewhere between detached single unit houses and large buildings with many units—redevelopment in R zones, which are in Rural Towns and urban zones. This may be especially noticeable in R-1, where only 1 unit per acre is currently allowed, and noticeable in R-4 and R-6. Buildings may be smaller, more closely spaced, or include ADUs, duplexes/triplexes, or a mix of housing types to achieve the greater density allowed.

However, under the Limited Change Alternative, housing density in Rural Towns could be limited through methods such as capping the number of dwelling units constructed each year and requiring TDRs to be used above that cap, looking at the size and requiring affordable housing as part of subdivisions, or downzoning Rural Towns. Under the Extensive Change Alternative, a greater variety of housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, cottage houses, stacked flats, townhouses, carriage houses, ADUs, and/or garden apartments may develop in R-4 through R-8 zones, where up to 12 dwelling units per acre would be allowed. The Extensive Change Alternative could also increase housing density in Rural Towns through methods such as applying minimum densities, raising height limits, or upzoning. Though densities would increase, height limits, setbacks, and other development standards would limit visual impacts.

The action alternatives proposals include programmatic or regulatory modifications (e.g., UGA boundary exchange rules, TDR Program, Four-to-One Program) that may redefine what is designated rural or urban. Cumulatively, the Limited Change Alternative would likely result in limited designation of rural versus urban. The Extensive Change Alternative would potentially:

- Permanently conserve more rural land through the TDR Program, especially on Vashon-Maury Island, preserving rural character in places already considered rural.
- Shift land to the Urban Area from the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands in more places, resulting in changes to where urban development is allowed.
- Increase urban development within the unincorporated Rural Area as compared to the Limited Change Alternative.

Related to the Four-to-One Program, a voluntary program that has led to the conservation of 1,300 acres of permanent open space since its inception, the Limited Change Alternative would include minor procedural modifications that could increase participation and result in more land conservation outside of the UGA boundary. The Extensive Change Alternative considers making more substantive updates to the Four-to-One Program requirements, including using a different UGA boundary, increasing the minimum residential density for land allowed within the UGA, and other changes that are more likely to increase participation in this program and could alter the geographic pattern of land designated for conservation. In some instances, the total amount of land preserved for conservation purposes could be reduced in exchange for preserving a smaller but higher quality of land conserved for open space.

The Limited Change Alternative also proposes making minor modifications to the TDR Program, which could include clarifying study requirements and site calculations, allowing for deed restrictions in addition to conservation easements on TDR sending sites, and/or allowing for the TDR bank to sell partial TDR increments. These minor changes would be unlikely to significantly increase the rate of land conservation. The Extensive Change Alternative would expand TDR incentives, such as providing bonus TDRs for Forest zoned land and vacant marine shoreline sending sites without bulkheads, allowing TDR sending sites on Vashon-Maury Island, and allowing urban open space previously acquired using conservation futures tax funding sites to become TDR sending sites. The Extensive Change Alternative is not expected to greatly increase the rate of land conservation; however, the quality of the land conserved may be of higher environmental value through the use of bonuses or incentives given to lands with less development or altered conditions present.

A variety of uses that would not be allowed in the Rural Area under the No Action Alternative are proposed under the action alternatives. Beyond the impacts common to both alternatives, the Extensive Change Alternative may have the following types of consequences over the Limited Change Alternative:

- Industrial zoning would be allowed in more places, which means much bulkier buildings and structures could be developed in the Rural Area than would otherwise have occurred.
- More former mineral extraction sites may be converted to green energy facilities under the Extensive Change Alternative, which may be seen as a positive or neutral aesthetic change.
- Resorts may develop in more places than where they are currently allowed. Development may be of a greater bulk or scale, or generally a different aesthetic.
- Additional tourism and economic development-oriented building, including event centers, may occur in Rural Area and agricultural zones, which may be of a different aesthetic than existing uses. If the business depends on agriculture or a natural environment for its success, there may be no or limited aesthetic impacts. However, if the use is unrelated, such as a theme park, there may be aesthetic impacts depending on the design.
- Improvements to farmland preservation programs may have a greater positive impact on maintaining an agriculture aesthetic, but also potentially more impacts due to semi-industrial farm buildings and operations.

The action alternatives also propose different ways to address materials processing uses. Under the Limited Change Alternative, adjusting setback and buffer requirements may reduce impacts of potentially aesthetically incompatible neighboring uses. Under the Extensive Change Alternative, allowing materials processing in more zones with limited development conditions could result in development that impacts the adjacent property in more places. Depending on the neighboring use, materials processing may be considered a negative aesthetic impact.

Lastly, several proposals under both action alternatives would increase visual access to nature and vegetation. In general, the Extensive Change Alternative does so to a greater degree, such as by requiring parks and open spaces in urban unincorporated areas, proposing stronger development standards for green infrastructure, and restricting hard shoreline stabilization techniques in favor of more natural shorelines. Additional urban parks and open spaces, particularly in Opportunity Areas, may decrease development feasibility in the near term unless paired with public investment, so there may be fewer aesthetics impacts with less redevelopment. However, in the long term, more development would include open spaces, improving visual access to nature if designed with natural elements. If large recreational spaces are developed, sports field or other significant lighting, without proper design, could impact adjacent properties.

4.2.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to land use and aesthetics are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to land use and aesthetics.

Though aesthetic changes may occur, none are considered significant adverse impacts, because any increased height, bulk, or scale could be considered as positive aesthetic impacts if they occur in alignment with the Plan's vision for an area. Two proposals may be perceived as adversely impactful: increased residential densities in residential zones for middle housing and changes to allowed uses in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands. Although not required, existing design and development standards could be strengthened to emphasize design that is human oriented, encourages social interactions and neighborly trust-building, respects privacy needs, clarifies ownership of public and private space and includes appropriate and feasible open space to mitigate potential aesthetic impacts of increasing residential densities. Likewise, additional or updated commercial and industrial development and design standards, beyond those in K.C.C. Title 21A, may be used to set bounds around the design of resort, tourism, and economic development-oriented properties; materials processing facilities; wind and solar farms; and other uses that may be perceived by some as being aesthetically out of place.

4.3 Housing

This section discusses housing supply, housing affordability, and household characteristics in King County, including unincorporated King County where available, and evaluates potential impacts to housing that may be associated with 2024 Update alternatives.

4.3.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Some of the primary laws, regulations, and policies guiding housing development in unincorporated King County include the following:

- GMA, RCW 36.70A.020, which requires local governments to plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock, including but not limited to the following recent amendments:
  - Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220 (Chapter 254, Laws of 2021), which amended the GMA to instruct local governments, including the County and its incorporated jurisdictions, to "plan for and accommodate" housing affordable to all income levels.
  - Engrossed House Bill 1337 (Chapter 334, Laws of 2023), which amended the GMA to require local governments to adopt local development regulations that allow for the construction of ADUs within UGAs and comply with certain policies.
- K.C.C. Title 21A, Zoning, which includes the County's development standards, design standards, shoreline and critical areas regulations, and other provisions related to the use and development of land in King County.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which establish the framework for developing comprehensive plans, including the housing element.

4.3.2 Affected Environment

This section highlights key information about household, housing supply, and housing affordability characteristics that are most relevant for differentiating the potential impacts of the alternatives. For a more detailed analysis of housing needs in unincorporated King County, see the Housing Needs Assessment in Appendix B to the Public Review Draft of the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan (Housing Needs Assessment).[132]

4.3.2.1 Household Characteristics

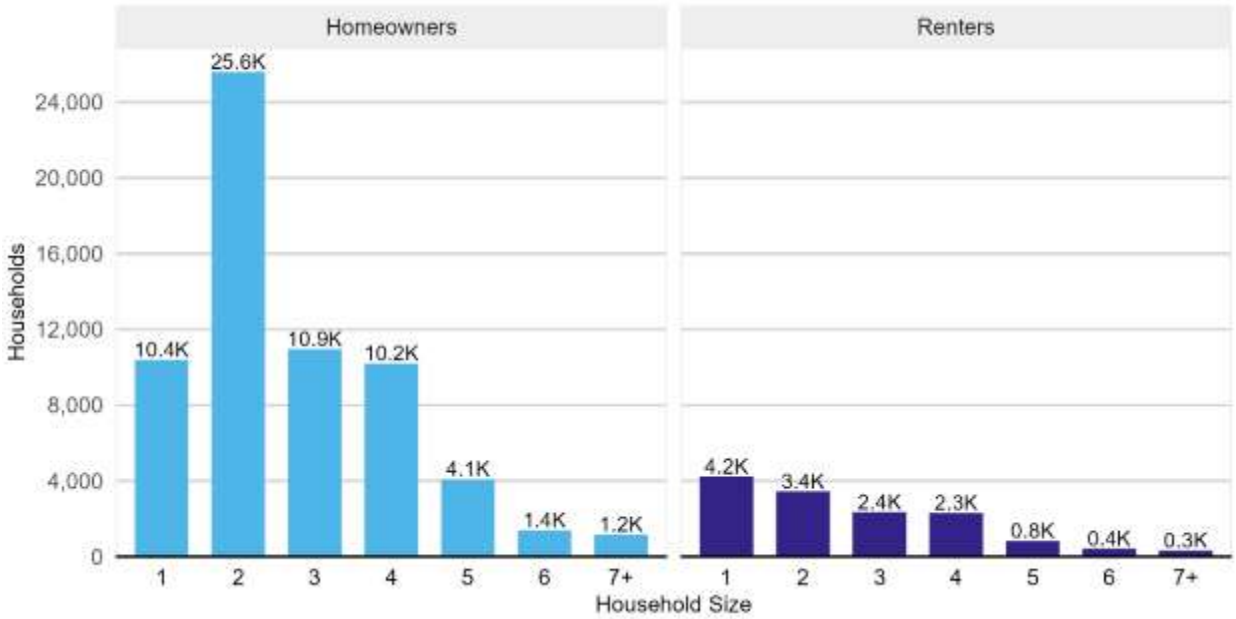
As of 2020, unincorporated King County was home to 77,671 households.[133] Most of these households (54,177 or 70 percent) live in the Rural Area, while the remainder (23,494 or 30 percent) live in unincorporated portions of the UGA, such as Skyway-West Hill and North Highline. About 18 percent of all households in unincorporated areas are renters, while 82 percent own their homes. In urban unincorporated King County, 63 percent of all households are homeowners, and in rural unincorporated

[132] King County, Public Review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B: Housing Needs Assessment, June 2023. [LINK]

[133] King County analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Tenure by Household Size by Units in Structure (B25009), 2016-2020 5-year American Community Survey, 2022.

King County, 91 percent of households are homeowners. For comparison, countywide, about 56 percent of households own their homes, while 44 percent rent. Among both groups, over half of all households have only one or two members, and over a quarter of households have four or more members, as shown in Figure 4.3-1, Unincorporated King County Households by Size and Tenure.

Figure 4.3-1. Unincorporated King County Households by Size and Tenure



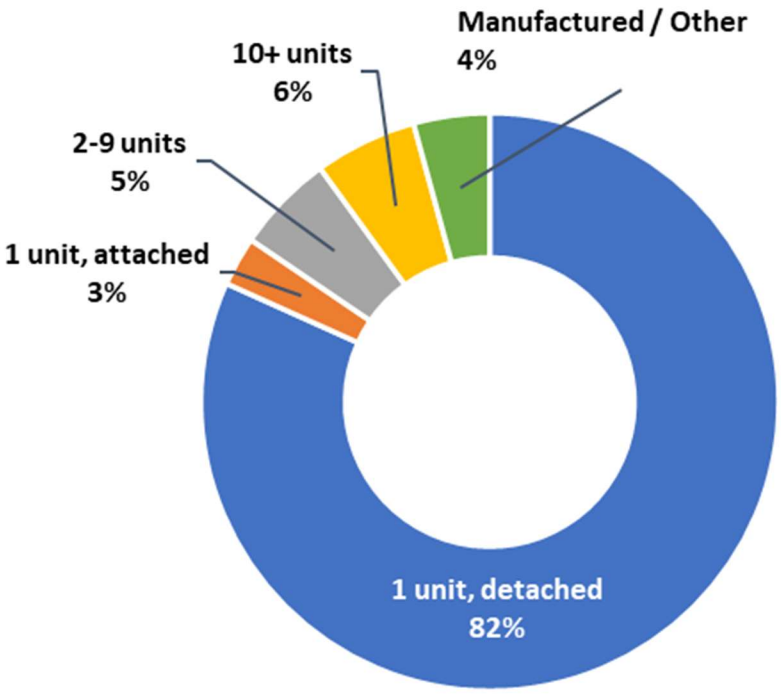
Source: King County, Public Review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, June 2023. [LINK]

4.3.2.2 Housing Supply

As of 2020, there were 82,196 housing units in unincorporated King County.[134] Figure 4.3-2, Housing Stock in Unincorporated King County by Units in Structure, shows the breakdown of this housing by units in structure. Over 80 percent of all homes in unincorporated King County are single detached homes, while less than 20 percent are other housing types, such as townhomes, duplexes, apartments, or manufactured homes. Single detached houses are typically the largest and most expensive of housing types, by unit. The lack of housing diversity in unincorporated King County limits the options available to meet the variety of housing needs that exist, particularly the need for smaller unit types that may provide more affordable options for smaller households that have just one or two members.

[134] King County analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Occupancy Status/Vacancy Rate, 2016-2020 5-year American Community Survey, 2022.

Figure 4.3-2. Housing Stock in Unincorporated King County by Units in Structure



Source: King County, Public Review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, June 2023. [LINK]

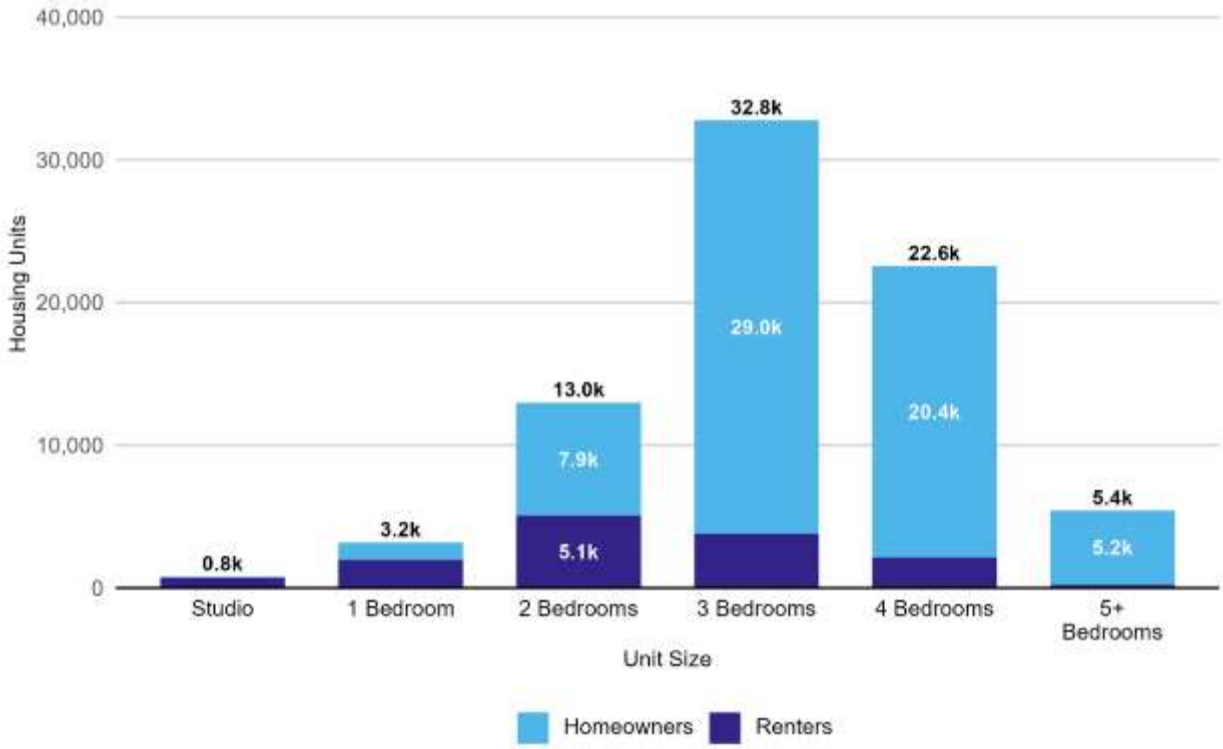
As shown in Figure 4.3-3, Housing Stock in Unincorporated King County by Number of Bedrooms and Tenure, most owner-occupied homes have three or more bedrooms. Among homes occupied by renters, two- and three-bedroom units are most common. The supply of smaller units such as studios or one-bedroom is very limited, despite the fact that the majority of households in unincorporated King County have only one or two members.

There are some notable differences about housing in urban and rural portions of unincorporated King County, as reported in the Housing Needs Assessment. First, while the majority of all households in unincorporated King County are in the Rural Area, nearly two-thirds of all rental housing units are located in urban unincorporated areas.[135] Additionally, the housing vacancy rate in urban unincorporated King County is only 3 percent compared to over 6 percent in the Rural Area.[136] A healthy housing market has around a 6 percent vacancy rate. When the rate dips much below this level, competition for available housing can drive up rents and housing prices. This is likely contributing to the rapid growth in housing prices detailed in the following section.

[135] U.S. Census Bureau, Rental Unit Occupancy Status/Vacancy Rate, 2016-2020 5-year American Community Survey, 2022.

[136] U.S. Census Bureau, Occupancy Status/Vacancy Rate, 2016-2020 5-year American Community Survey, 2022.

Figure 4.3-3. Housing Stock in Unincorporated King County by Number of Bedrooms and Tenure



Source: King County, Public Review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, June 2023. [LINK]

An analysis of residential development in unincorporated King County between the years 2012 and 2018 found that over three-quarters of all new homes built were relatively low in density, less than 10 units per acre.[137] This is the typical density level of suburban single detached housing production. During the study period, only 24 percent of all new homes built were at density levels typical of ~~multifamily~~ multiunit housing, such as townhomes or apartments. This indicates that recent housing production resembles the current housing stock rather than shifting to a more diverse housing supply in terms of unit types or size of homes.

4.3.2.3 Housing Affordability

Household Income

In 2022, the AMI in King County was $134,600.[138] This analysis groups households by income level relative to AMI for summarizing housing affordability and cost-burden status, as detailed below.

Incomes vary significantly across different parts of unincorporated King County. Urban unincorporated areas in south King County, including Skyway-West Hill and North Highline, have a much higher share of lower-income households compared to many rural and urban unincorporated areas on the east side of Lake Washington, as well as neighborhoods closer to Puget Sound and Lake Washington. See the Comprehensive Plan Housing Needs Assessment as well as Section 4.7, Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice, for more details about income disparities by geography, race, and ethnicity.

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[137] King County, Urban Growth Capacity Report, 2021. [LINK]

[138] HUD, Income Limits, 2022. [LINK]

Housing Costs

Between 2016 and 2022, median home sales prices countywide increased by about 50 percent to $850,000.[139] A household would likely need to have an annual income well above the AMI in unincorporated King County to afford a house at that price.

Average rents in King County are somewhat more affordable than homeownership prices but are still higher than many low-income households can afford. In the fourth quarter of 2022, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment was $1,898, which was affordable for a household earning 78 percent AMI in 2022.[140]

Housing Cost Burden

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development classifies a household as cost-burdened if it is spending more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs and severely cost-burdened if it is spending more than 50 percent of its income on housing costs.[141] In 2021, there were a total of 21,370 cost-burdened households in unincorporated King County, of which approximately 9,029 were severely cost-burdened (42 percent of all cost-burdened households).[142]

Figure 4.3-4, Cost-Burdened Households in Unincorporated King County by Income Level, compares moderately cost-burdened households (those spending between 30 percent and 50 percent of income on housing costs) to severely cost-burdened households. The majority of severely cost-burdened households have incomes below 50 percent of AMI. Table 4.3-1, Cost Burdened Households in Unincorporated King County by Income Level and Tenure, provides a more detailed summary of households by cost-burden status and tenure. About 50 percent of all renter households within unincorporated King County were cost-burdened, and nearly a quarter were severely cost-burdened. Among owner-occupied households, the rate of cost burden was much lower. When comparing urban and rural households in unincorporated King County, the Housing Needs Assessment found that urban households were more likely to be cost-burdened.

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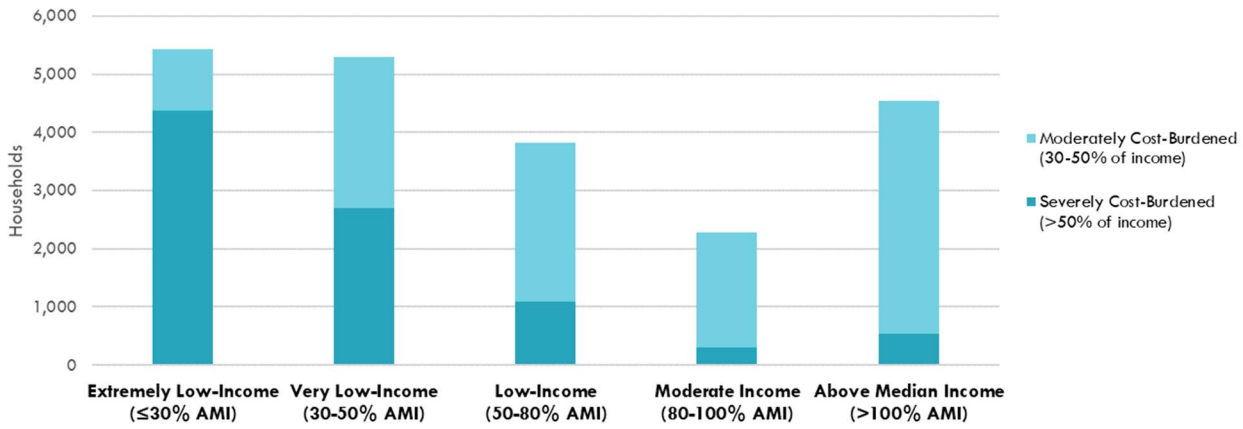
[139] Washington Center for Real Estate Research, Washington State's Housing Market Report, 2022. [LINK]

[140] Ibid.; Washington State Housing Finance Commission publishes a table of affordable rents by apartment size that can be used to estimate affordability levels relative to AMI. [LINK]

[141] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Glossay of Terms to Affordable Housing, 2011. [LINK]

[142] King County analysis of HUD CHAS data, based on 2014–2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2021.

Figure 4.3-4. Cost-Burdened Households in Unincorporated King County by Income Level



Source: King County analysis of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, based on 2014–2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2021.

Table 4.3-1. Cost-Burdened Households in Unincorporated King County by Income Level and Tenure

	Owner Occupied			Renter Occupied		
Income Level Relative to AMI	**Not Cost Burdened**	**Moderately Cost Burdened**	**Severely Cost Burdened**	**Not Cost Burdened**	**Moderately Cost Burdened**	**Severely Cost Burdened**
0–30% AMI	333	399	2,209	579	655	2,169
30–50% AMI	1,415	1,280	1,430	453	1,314	1,269
50–80% AMI	2,735	1,515	970	1,044	1,210	129
80–100% AMI	2,814	1,324	285	1,290	650	25
100%+ AMI	34,530	3,695	543	4,679	299	0
All incomes	**41,827**	**8,213**	**5,437**	**8,045**	**4,128**	**3,592**

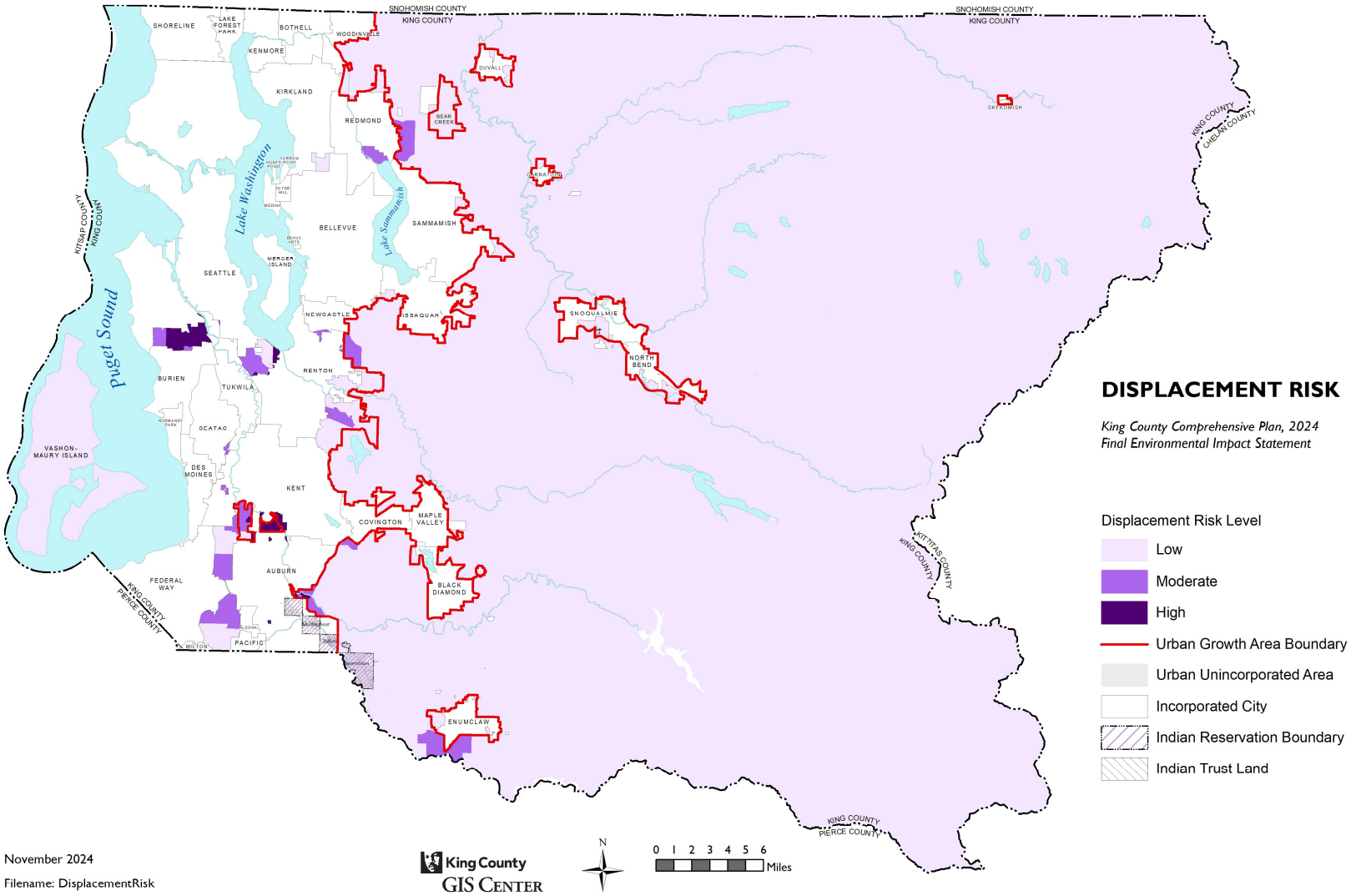
Source: King County analysis of HUD CHAS data, based on 2014–2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2021.

4.3.2.4 Displacement Risk

Rising housing costs in King County have contributed to housing insecurity and the risk of displacement. A household is economically displaced if they are compelled to move out because they can no longer afford the rent or housing costs. Physical displacement occurs when the landlord evicts the tenant or terminates the lease. This can happen if the property owner wishes to redevelop or rehabilitate an older property. Finally, cultural displacement occurs when residents are compelled to move because the people and institutions that make up their cultural community have left or are leaving the area. Many displaced households are forced to move further away from their jobs, schools, family, and/or community to find housing that is affordable to them. Others are forced into homelessness.

Not all households are equally vulnerable to displacement pressure, and the factors that contribute to displacement risks are not equitably distributed across the county. Therefore, PSRC developed a Displacement Risk Index that maps relative displacement risk at the Census tract level. Figure 4.3-5, Displacement Risk, shows this measure of relative displacement risk along with the boundaries of the UGA and the urban unincorporated area and Rural Area. Among unincorporated areas, the Displacement Risk Index is highest in North Highline. The County has also identified portions of Skyway-West Hill as challenged by high displacement risk.

Figure 4.3-5. Displacement Risk



4.3.3 Environmental Consequences

4.3.3.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the county can expect to see a continuation of the recent housing affordability trends described in the Affected Environment section. According to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, housing in the county is not keeping up with population and job growth and, while the overall cost burden of housing has decreased, it remains high and has increased for specific populations.[143]

Unless there is a significant change in housing market conditions, both ownership and rental housing would continue to become less affordable over time. The rate of income-restricted housing production and preservation would not be expected to change significantly. Over time, recently adopted inclusionary housing incentives in Skyway-West Hill and North Highline could result in the development of some additional income-restricted units. But the rate of this new production would not be likely to keep pace with the high demand for affordable housing options.

As referenced in Section 4.3.1, Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework, new changes to the GMA require that King County adopt local development regulations that allow for and encourage the construction of ADUs within the UGA. This change has potential to impact future housing construction and increase the diversity of the housing supply under all alternatives, including the No Action Alternative.

4.3.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Both action alternatives include proposals that allow for additional density in some residential zones or otherwise reduce barriers for additional density, such as reducing or eliminating fees for ADUs. These changes would allow for a wider diversity of housing types and sizes to be built within unincorporated areas compared to the No Action Alternative. This could help to increase the supply of apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, ~~or~~ cottage-style detached housing, ADUs, or manufactured homes. In doing so, both action alternatives have the potential to provide King County residents with a wider variety of housing options that can address the needs of a wider variety of household types and income levels.

Both action alternatives also include new proposals, such as changes to the Residential Density Incentive Program and inclusionary housing, to encourage additional income-restricted affordable housing production. As a result, these alternatives have potential to increase the supply of housing affordable at or below 80 percent AMI compared to the No Action Alternative. These changes could provide more opportunity for low-income households to live in King County.

The action alternatives both consider additional regulations that limit or prohibit residential development near shorelines and the WUI. These impacts would be mostly limited to the Rural Area and urban unincorporated areas that border the Rural Area. While there would be some impacts to capacity for lower-density single detached residential development, these changes would mostly redirect housing development to other unincorporated areas.

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[143] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, March 2022. [LINK]

Both action alternatives include actions to facilitate the development of both permanent and temporary emergency shelters, as well as congregate housing (formerly "dormitory"). These actions could result in increased development in urban unincorporated areas. However, neither action alternative is anticipated to have significant adverse impacts to housing.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

The primary difference between the action alternatives is the proposed scale and approach to increasing the diversity of housing options in unincorporated King County and increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Diversity of Housing Options

Both action alternatives include proposals to increase allowed densities within residential zones. Increasing density in unincorporated King County could increase the diversity of housing options available and support meeting the diverse housing needs of current and future King County residents of all income levels. This is because new apartments, condominiums, and middle housing types like townhomes, multiplexes, and ADUs can be provided at a much lower cost per unit than new, single detached homes. However, the changes considered in the Limited Change Alternative are modest and primarily impact the R-1 zone to allow for single detached homes on smaller lots than are currently allowed there. Additionally, this alternative would increase the allowed density near transit, potentially enabling larger ~~multifamily~~ multiunit or middle housing projects with more units.

The Extensive Change Alternative, on the other hand, would apply more substantial increases in allowed density to all residential zones and more allowed housing types, including manufactured home communities, congregate housing, and ADUs. This has potential to allow for a greater diversity of housing options in areas that currently allow only single detached homes, thereby supporting a greater diversity of households and income levels in those areas. In areas near transit, this alternative would require high density housing and allow for the greatest increases in density. This change would have potential to create the greatest amount of new housing supply near transit and enable more households to save money on transportations costs.

Affordable Housing Supply

Among the proposals under consideration in the action alternatives, inclusionary housing has the greatest potential to impact the amount of new income-restricted affordable housing development. The Limited Change Alternative considers increases to the number of bonus units and development capacity allowed for projects that include affordable housing in locations where this incentive is currently available. In contrast, the Extensive Change Alternative considers expanding this incentive to all unincorporated areas and changing the current voluntary incentives to mandatory requirements. It also considers increasing bonuses and development capacity in areas where these inclusionary housing requirements apply.

These more substantial changes considered in the Extensive Change Alternative, including the implementation of an MFTE and other incentives, would have the potential to increase affordable housing production compared to the Limited Change Alternatives. However, the amount of affordable housing production would depend upon many factors and still requires private developers to choose to build the new housing. Finally, the Extensive Change Alternative would make it easier to build and operate both emergency and supportive housing, which could result in more housing and services for persons and households struggling with housing insecurity and homelessness.

Displacement Risk

Proposals that increase development capacity also encourage redevelopment of parcels with older housing. In doing so, they may slightly increase the risk of physical displacement for some renter households. However, the extent of this impact is uncertain. For example, housing located near high-capacity transit would likely increase in value regardless of County actions to change zoning. So, owners of rental properties in these areas may choose to renovate these units and/or increase rents even without these changes. Furthermore, some of the proposals under consideration, such as mandatory inclusionary zoning, have the potential to make new housing development less profitable for private developers, thereby reducing the amount of redevelopment activity.

4.3.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to housing are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to housing.

4.4 Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

This section discusses parks, open space, and recreation in King County and evaluates potential impacts to these resources associated with 2024 Update alternatives.

4.4.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Some of the primary laws, regulations, and policies guiding parks, open space, and recreation in unincorporated King County include the following:

- K.C.C. Title 7, Parks and Recreation, which sets out requirements for designating parks, improving parks and recreation property, and establishing rules of use.
- K.C.C. Chapter 21A.37, King County TDR Program, which is a voluntary, incentive-based, and market-driven approach to preserve the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands by directing growth into King County's Urban Area.
- K.C.C. Chapter 20.18, King County Four-to-One Program, which allows additional area to be added to the UGA in exchange for the conservation of open space, seeking to create a continuous band of open space along the UGA boundary.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which establish the framework for developing comprehensive plans, including the parks and open space element.
- King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas (Open Space Plan), which provides the policy framework for how the County plans, develops, manages, and expands its complex system of parks and open space and enables King County to be eligible for certain federal and state grants.
- King County Land Conservation Initiative, which is a regional collaboration between the County, cities, businesses, farmers, and environmental partners to develop strategy for protecting high conservation value lands and urban green spaces.

4.4.2 Affected Environment

The King County park and open space system consists of more than 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, 250 miles of backcountry trails, 32,000 acres of open space, and 150,000 acres of working forests and conservation easements countywide. Most park facilities in unincorporated King County are located to the east of major urban centers and in the foothills of the Cascade Range. See Figure 4.4-1, Open Space System, and Figure 4.4-2, Regional Trails System.

Figure 4.4-1. Open Space System

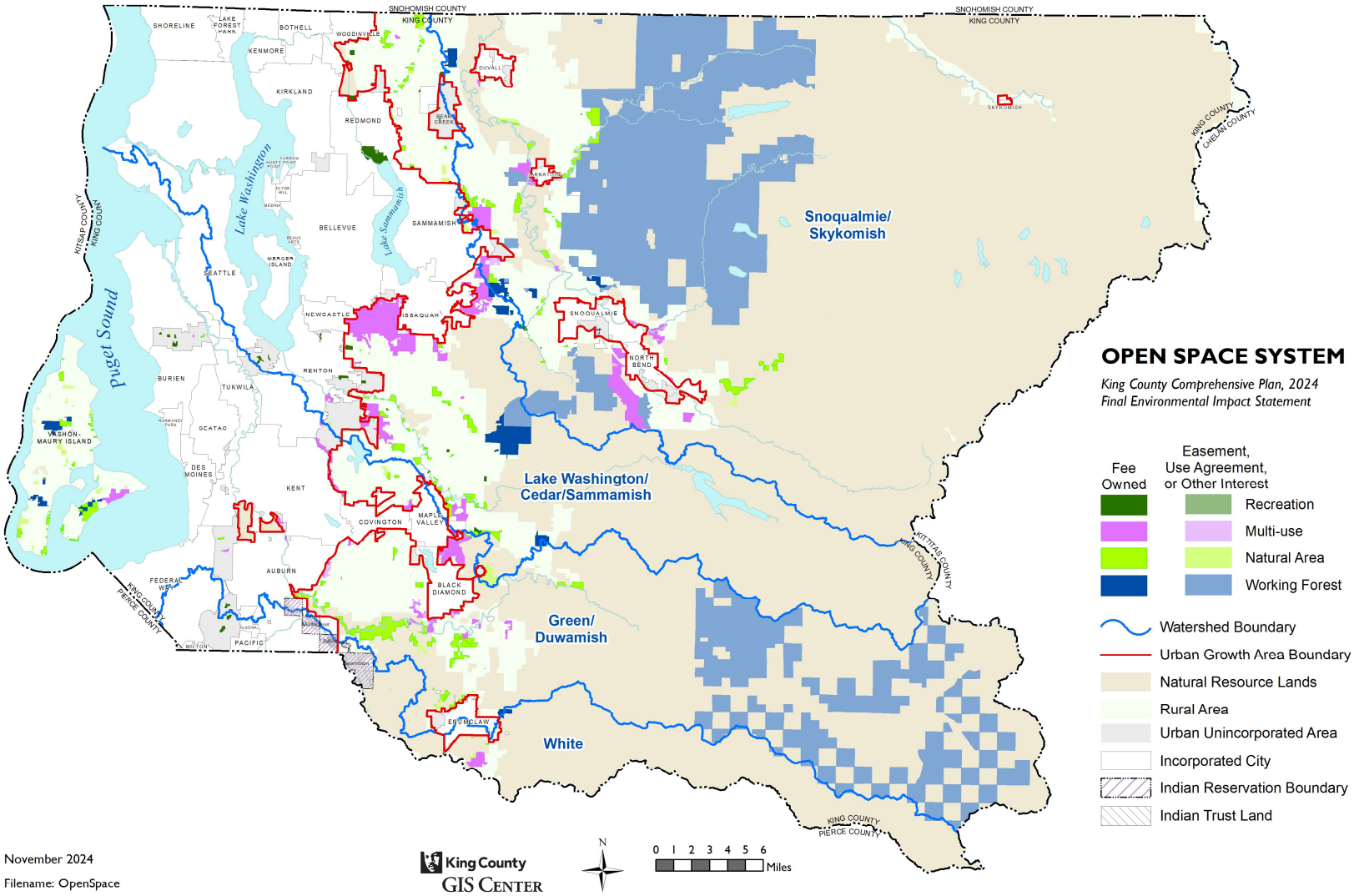
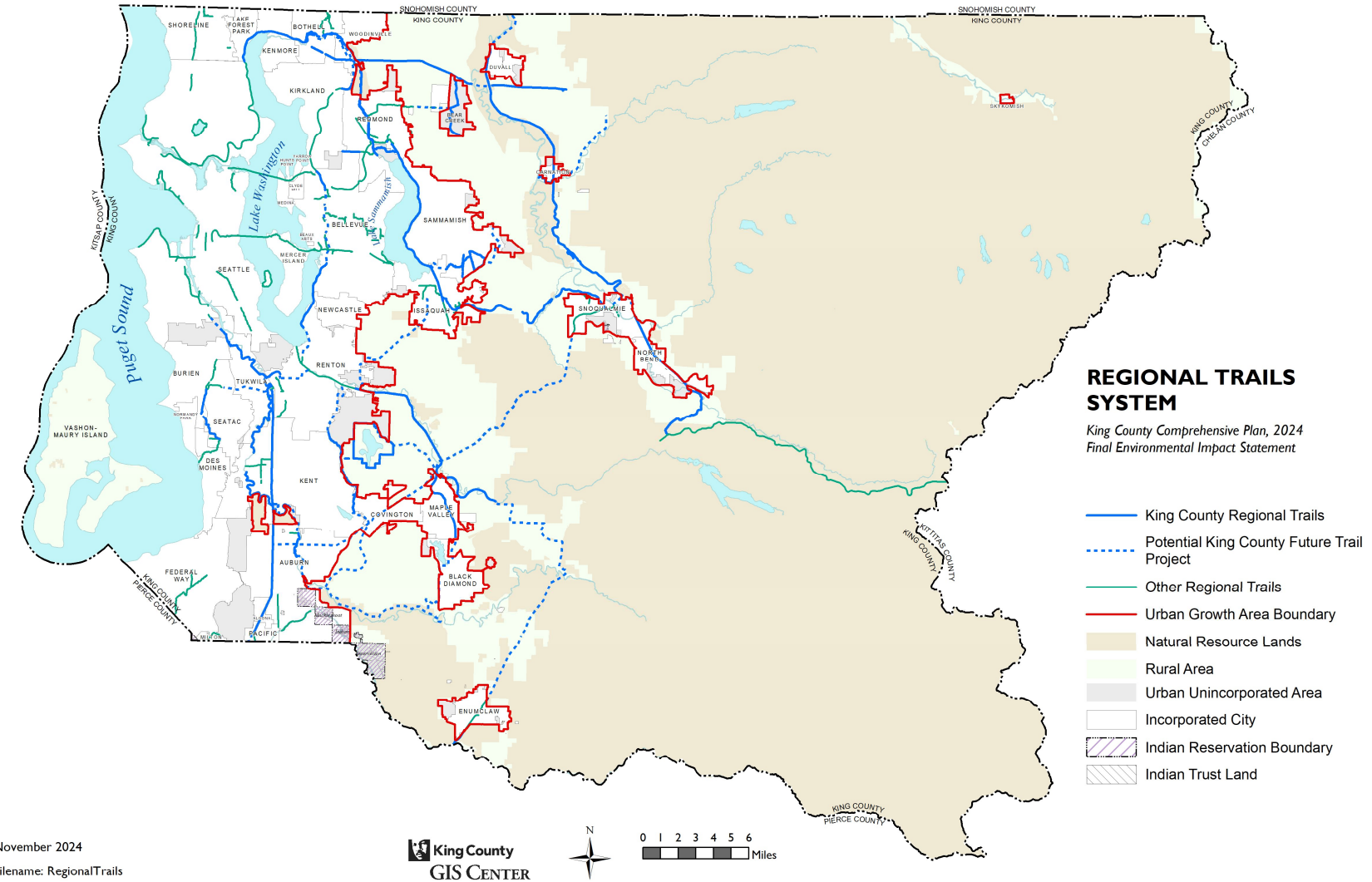


Figure 4.4-2. Regional Trails System



King County parks and open spaces support both active and passive recreation and are categorized as regional or local. Active recreation requires highly developed infrastructure to support a high intensity of use for organized recreation activities (e.g., an athletic field complex). Passive recreation has a lower intensity of use and requires minimal or no developed infrastructure for more informal recreation (e.g., hiking, biking). Regional recreation sites are larger sites that serve as destinations from longer distances and multiple jurisdictions from all over King County and beyond. Local recreation sites are smaller sites and facilities that serve the close-to-home park and recreation needs of a community or neighborhood. Regional recreation sites are owned and managed by the County, though some sites with both local and regional characteristics may be managed via a partnership between the County and cities or other agencies. Both regional and local parks and open space are further classified by type, described below in Table 4.4-1, King County Parks and Open Spaces: Classifications, Descriptions, and Examples.

Table 4.4-1. King County Parks and Open Spaces: Classifications, Descriptions, and Examples

Classification Type	Current Area (acres)	Description	King County Examples
Recreation Sites	1,357 total (582 local and 775 regional)	Support both active and passive recreation opportunities and usually receive a higher level of public use.	Marymoor Park, Sixty Acres Park, White Center Heights Park
Regional Trails	2,780 total	Primarily for nonmotorized use (e.g., pedestrians, bikes, horses) and can be soft surface (e.g., gravel, dirt), paved, or both.	Burke-Gilman Trail, Lake to Sound Trail, Sammamish River Trail
Natural Areas	9,415 total (116 local and 9,299 regional)	Support natural features like wetlands, streams, ponds, riparian areas, forests, and other vulnerable or rare habitats.	Green River Natural Area, Moss Lake Natural Area, Upper Preston Natural Area
Working Forests	146,631 total (all regional)	Preserve contiguous tracts of forest lands, contribute significant ecological benefits, and provide economic value.	Island Center Forest, Snoqualmie Forest, Sugarloaf Mountain Forest
Multiuse Sites	14,612 total (702 local and 13,460 regional)	Lands that have ecological value and support passive and active recreation with less intensively developed facilities.	Cedar Creek Park, Black Diamond Open Space, Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area

Source: King County, Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas – 2022 Update, 2022.
Note: Areas include fee and easement lands.

Approximately three-quarters of King County's parks and open spaces are regional. Of these, a majority of sites are located in the Rural Area (79 percent) and natural areas are the most common classification type. The other one-quarter of King County's parks and open spaces are local. Of these, about half are located in rural and urban unincorporated areas, and recreation sites are the most common classification type. Table 4.4-2, Regional and Local King County Parks and Open Spaces, shows the breakdown of all classification types and locations for both regional and local parks and open spaces.

Table 4.4-2. Regional and Local King County Parks and Open Spaces

	Regional	Local
Classification Type		
Recreation Sites	16	30
Regional Trails	18	0
Natural Areas	92	6
Working Forests	18	0
Multiuse Sites	25	20
Location		
Urban	20	26
Rural	134	28
Urban/Rural	15	2
Total	**169**	**56**

Source: King County, Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas – 2022 Update, 2022.
Note: Areas include fee and easement lands.

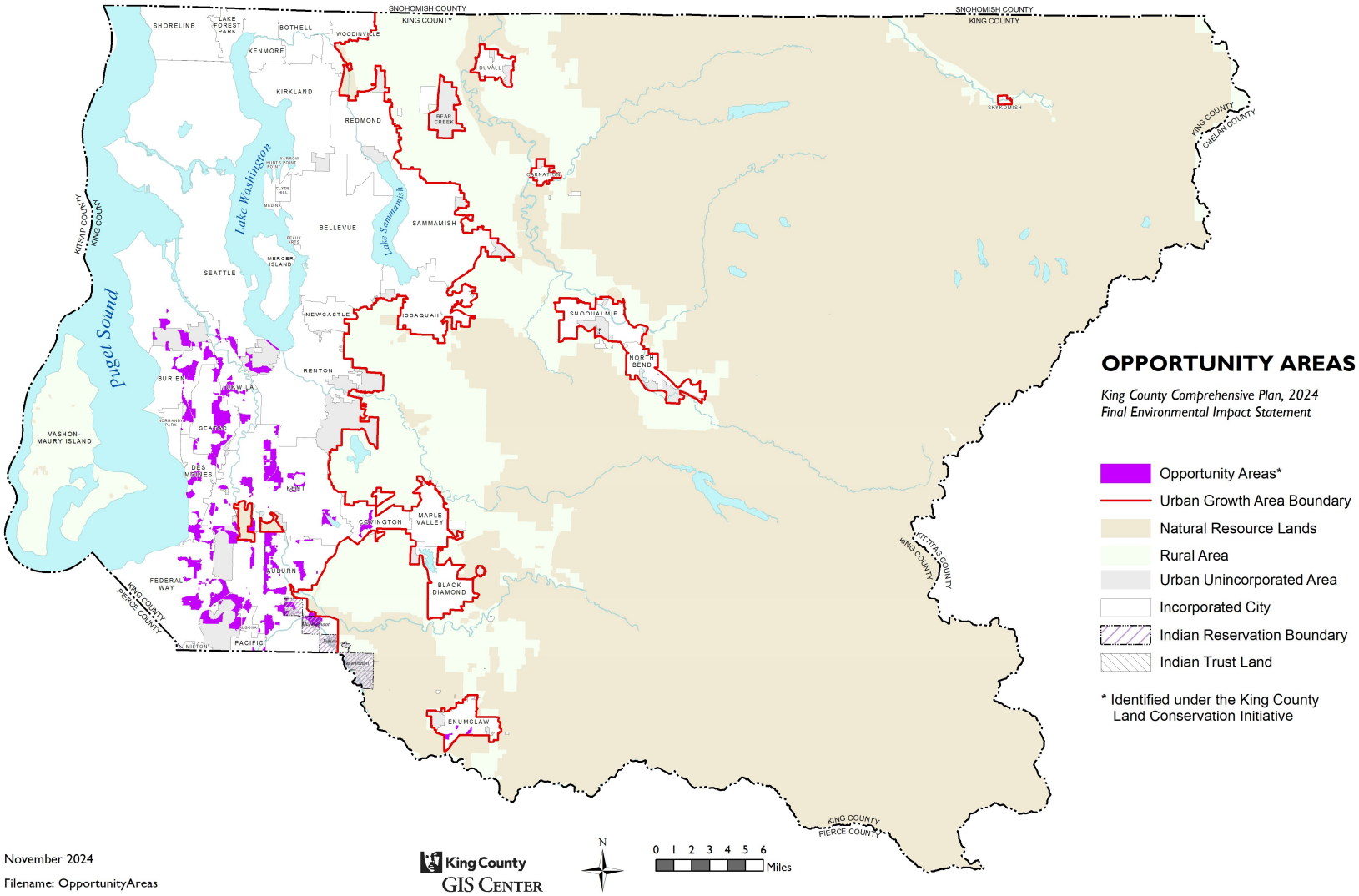
King County plans for and manages park and open spaces at a landscape level using the County's five major watersheds, which are briefly described below:

- Snoqualmie/Skykomish Rivers watershed: mostly unincorporated Natural Resource Lands that include large areas of working forests, some larger multiuse sites (e.g., Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area), and natural areas along the Snoqualmie River and its tributaries.
- Cedar/Sammamish Rivers and Lake Washington watershed: mostly urban incorporated areas with a couple large multiuse sites (e.g., Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park), recreation sites (e.g., Marymoor Park), and natural areas along the Cedar and Sammamish Rivers.
- Green/Duwamish River watershed: mostly urban incorporated areas with several smaller multiuse and recreation sites (e.g., Black Diamond Open Space) and natural areas along the Green River (e.g., Green River Natural Area).
- White River watershed: mostly urban unincorporated areas and Tribal lands (Muckleshoot Reservation) with some small multiuse and recreation sites (e.g., Pinnacle Peak Park).
- Vashon-Maury Island watershed: mostly rural unincorporated areas with several working forests (e.g., Island Center Forest) and natural areas (e.g., Maury Island Marine Park).

Open spaces benefit residents and the environment by absorbing pollution, improving air and water quality for humans and wildlife, and making living in these areas desirable. Starting in 2015, the County developed the Land Conservation Initiative to identify and conserve up to 65,000 acres of high-conservation-value lands, including urban green space, regional trails, natural lands, rivers, farmlands, and forests over a 30-year period. In order to address disparities in access to parks and open spaces, the Land Conservation Initiative Equity Framework identifies Opportunity Areas where households lack open space access and meet certain demographic criteria.

Specifically, Opportunity Areas are defined as households that have the lowest one-third median incomes and the highest one-third hospitalization rates and have no parks within 0.25 mile for those in the Urban Area or within 2 miles for those in the Rural Area. Although many of these Opportunity Areas are within incorporated cities, some are located within urban unincorporated King County, such as North Highline, Skyway-West Hill, and East Federal Way (Figure 4.4-3, Opportunity Areas).

Figure 4.4-3. Opportunity Areas



4.4.3 Environmental Consequences

4.4.3.1 No Action Alternative

As the King County population continues to grow and shift, the use of existing public recreational spaces will intensify and there will be additional demand for new parks, trails, and open spaces. Additionally, demand for outdoor recreation increased dramatically during the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic and is expected to continue.[144] According to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, priority open space lands have increased nearly 4,000 acres since 2016, and 79 percent of King County residents live near a park or open space amenity. However, 49 percent of urban unincorporated residents have limited access to nearby parks and open space, and Black, Hispanic and Latinx, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander residents have lower access to nearby parks and open spaces.[145] These trends are expected to continue under the No Action Alternative.

Under the No Action Alternative, the King County Open Space Plan along with other County initiatives (such as the Four-to-One Program; TDR Program; Clean Water, Healthy Habitat Strategic Plan; SCAP; Land Conservation Initiative; and 30-Year Forest Plan) would collectively work to expand the open space system and remove barriers to public access to parks, natural areas, and outdoor recreation. This cooperative effort would need to be maintained and stewarded as population growth intensifies the use of existing public recreational spaces and creates additional demand for new parks, trails, and open spaces and greater maintenance needs for existing resources.

4.4.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Generally, both action alternatives seek to expand and improve access to local parks and green spaces through possible changes to the Four-to-One Program, the TDR Program, and the Conservation Futures Fund. To varying degrees, both action alternatives would increase green space and parks in underserved communities, including in Opportunity Areas, acquire land for habitat restoration, and protect tree canopy.

Both action alternatives propose improved access to open spaces and public recreational facilities to all county residents and address disparities in park distribution and access through changes in policies and regulation. Expanding green and open spaces within and near residential areas, especially in areas where greater disparities exist due to historic and ongoing underinvestment, can improve public health and help build equitable communities. Neither action alternative is anticipated to have significant adverse impacts to parks, open space, or recreation resources.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

The main difference between the action alternatives is how aggressively they pursue changes that can support progress towards the 2024 Update objectives. For example, both action alternatives would make modifications to the Four-to-One Program, although the modifications under the Limited Change Alternative would not change the program requirements substantively and, therefore, are not expected to have any adverse impacts to open space conservation. The Extensive Change Alternative, however, would allow substantive changes to program requirements for both the open space component (i.e., the

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[144] King County, King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas, 2022. [LINK]

[145] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, 2022. [LINK]

"four") and the development component (i.e., the "one"), including a reduced open space ratio, noncontiguous open space, urban-serving facilities in the Rural Area, and nonresidential development. While not significant, these changes could reduce the amount of land conserved under the Four-to-One Program for open space and increase the amount of development adjacent to the UGA boundary as compared to the No Action or Limited Change alternatives.

The Limited Change Alternative would encourage increasing open space in urban unincorporated areas, while the Extensive Change Alternative would require the County to provide local parks and green spaces in the urban unincorporated areas of King County, including areas such as East Federal Way, North Highline, Skyway-West Hill, Fairwood, and East Renton. New or additional park and open spaces areas would likely be local parks, as opposed to regional parks, since their primary purpose would be to serve local, urban unincorporated areas.

Encouraging parks and green spaces in urban unincorporated areas may provide easier access to more residents who live in Opportunity Areas (see Figure 4.4-3, Opportunity Areas). While the Limited Change Alternative encourages access to local parks and green spaces in Opportunity Areas, the Extensive Change Alternative would require the County to improve access to parks and green spaces in Opportunity Areas where greater disparities exist due to historic and ongoing underinvestment. Expanding access to public spaces, recreational facilities, and trail access within and near Opportunity Areas would help address the County's goal of improving equitable access to parks, open space, and recreational resources. The Extensive Change Alternative would allow the County to reach that goal faster than the Limited Change Alternative.

Another difference between the two action alternatives is the open space that would be provided by new development projects. The Limited Change Alternative encourages open space inclusion in new development plans while the Extensive Change Alternative requires open space inclusion in new development plans.

4.4.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to parks, open space, and recreation are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to parks, open space, and recreational resources.

4.5 Historic and Cultural Resources

This section discusses historic and cultural resources in King County and evaluates potential impacts to these resources that may be associated with the 2024 Update alternatives.

4.5.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

Some of the primary federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies guiding historic and cultural resources in unincorporated King County include the following:

- National Historic Preservation Act (16 USC 470 et seq.), which requires agencies involved in a federal undertaking to consider the undertaking's potential effects to historic properties.
- Chapter 27.53 RCW, Archaeological Sites and Resources, which prohibits knowingly disturbing historic or prehistoric archaeological resources or sites located on public and private land without an archaeological permit from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.
- Chapter 27.44 RCW, Indian Graves and Records Act, which prohibits knowingly disturbing Indian burial sites, cairns, and glyptic markings located on public and private land.
- Chapter 68.60 RCW, Abandoned and Historic Cemeteries and Historic Graves Act, which outlines steps to restore, maintain, and protect historical cemeteries and graves.
- K.C.C. Chapter 20.62, Protection and Preservation of Landmarks, Landmark Sites, and Districts, which established the Landmarks Commission, whose goal is to ensure that the historic places, material culture, and traditions which best reflect the region's 13,000 years of human history are preserved for future generations.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which include policies promoting historic preservation and cultural awareness, as well as other related policies.
- King County Executive Policy LUD 16-1-1-EP, which requires all County departments/divisions to consider protection and management of cultural resources in project planning and identifies the County as responsible for ensuring compliance with Chapter 27.53 RCW for projects that are initiated or permitted by the County and do not have a state or federal nexus.

4.5.2 Affected Environment

Archaeological, ethnographic, and historical investigations completed over the past several decades provide a regional context for the archaeological record in King County.[146] In 2016, an archaeological chronologic sequence was developed for King County based on existing cultural history and selectionist and evolutionary ecological studies of western Washington.[147]

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[146] Carlson, R.L., Cultural Antecedents in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7: Northwest Coast*, edited by W. Suttles, 1990, pp. 60–69; Greengo, R.E. (editor), *Prehistoric Places on the Southern Northwest Coast*, 1983; Larson, L.L., and D.E. Lewarch (editors), *The Archaeology of West Point, Seattle, Washington: 4,000 Years of Hunter-Fisher-Gatherer Land Use in Southern Puget Sound*, 1995; and Nelson, C.M., Prehistory of the Puget Sound Region in *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7: Northwest Coast*, edited by W. Suttles, 1990, pp. 481-484.

[147] Kopperl, R. et al., *Archaeology of King County, Washington: A Context Statement for Native American Archaeological Resources*, 2016.

Human history in western Washington corresponds with the most recent retreat of glacial ice in the region, approximately 14,000 years Before Present (BP).[148] Descendants of these earliest inhabitants of King County include members of the present-day Duwamish Tribe, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Snoqualmie Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and Tulalip Tribes.[149] Over the next 6,000 years, Native peoples lived in small, mobile groups that moved seasonally between productive hunting, fishing, and gathering locations. Archaeological evidence dating to immediate postglacial periods is limited to isolated stone tools such as spear points, typically found on upland drift plains. Beginning around 8,000 to 3,000 years BP, Native peoples established a broader range of residential and resource procurement site types and sizes in various settings including on upland glacial landforms, in lowland river valleys, and along marine shorelines. Harvest of and occupation near coastal and nearshore resources—activities that often produced sizable shell middens—emerged approximately 4,500 years BP. The expansion in site type and size during this era coincided with decreased mobility as Native groups developed specialized adaptations to local environments.

After around 3,000 years BP, the archaeological record is characterized by diverse site and artifact types located in a range of environments. Semi-permanent winter village sites appear for the first time. Villages contained large shed- or gable-roofed plank houses built along marine shorelines and major waterways. During the non-winter months, Native peoples established single- and multiple-resource acquisition camps in lowland and upland areas. They harvested an array of plant and animal foods, and some sites, especially large coastal shell middens, exhibit evidence of intensive collection of resources such as salmon and shellfish.

The arrival of Euro-Americans in the Pacific Northwest in the late 18th century marked the beginning of the ethnographic period, when historic documentation supplements archaeological data for our knowledge of past Indigenous land use in the county. The establishment of the Pacific fur trade, and later the transformation of Washington and Oregon into U.S. settler colonies, upended regional demography and ecology. Native peoples grappled with the impacts of introduced diseases and nonnative plants and animals, and land seizure and removal policies.[150] Amid these changes, Native peoples acquired new materials and adapted settlement and subsistence practices to emerging economic opportunities and settler incursion.[151] Beginning around 1850, Native people and non-Native newcomers established new archaeological site types, including forts, logging camps, industrial areas, and urban centers. Materials and structures associated with these sites dominate the archaeological record of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

4.5.2.1 Historic, Built-Environment Resources

Historic built environment resources have been identified in a variety of urban and rural settings throughout unincorporated King County. As of August 2023, the King County and City Landmarks List includes 62 King County Landmarks, 13 King County Bridges, and eight Community Landmark Heritage

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[148] Before Present (BP) is a time scale often used in archaeology, geology, and other scientific disciplines to specify when events occurred relative to the origin of practical radiocarbon dating in the 1950s. It uses January 1, 1950, as the commencement date of the age scale.

[149] Kopperl, R. et al., 2016.

[150] Boyd, R.T., *The Coming of Spirt and Pestilence: Introduced Diseases and Population Decline among the Northwest Coast Indians, 1774–1874*, 1999.

[151] Wilson, D.C., The Fort and the Village: Landscape and Identity in the Colonial Period of Fort Vancouver in *British Forts and Their Communities*, edited by C.R. DeCorse and Z.J.M. Beier, 2018, pp. 91-125.

Corridors in unincorporated King County.[152] There are also 43 historic districts, sites, buildings, or objects that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Washington Heritage Register, and 33 barns listed on the Washington Heritage Barn Register in unincorporated King County.[153] These listings include archaeological sites, historic infrastructure and settlements, farms, and residences, and one cultural landscape. The County also maintains a historic resource inventory that consists of more than 3,000 properties that may be historically significant and eligible for County landmark designation or the National Register of Historic Places.

4.5.2.2 Archaeological Resources

As of August 2023, nearly 1,700 archaeological sites are recorded in King County in the Washington Information System for Architectural and Archeological Records Data, which is maintained by the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Under RCW 42.56.300(1) and (2), specific locations of archaeological sites, historic sites, artifacts, or the sites of traditional religious, ceremonial, or social uses and activities of affected Tribes are exempt from disclosure to prevent the looting or depredation of such sites.

The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation maintains a predictive model that uses environmental data associated with documented archaeological sites to identify areas at which undocumented sites may be found. A county-specific archaeological sensitivity model was also developed as a part of an archaeological context statement for King County.[154] In both models, areas of unincorporated King County with a higher probability for archaeological sites are typically located along shorelines, in river valleys, and areas with relatively level, open terrain. However, it is worth noting that archaeological sites have been recorded in unincorporated King County on diverse landforms from the shoreline of Puget Sound on Vashon-Maury Island to the crest of the Cascade Range, including in locations not flagged as high probability by the predictive models.

4.5.3 Environmental Consequences

4.5.3.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, development under the Current Plan has the potential to affect historic and cultural resources as any ground-disturbing activity would. Archaeological sites may be impacted by ground disturbance associated with construction. Historic structures may be modified, demolished, or subjected to increased stress. Traditional cultural places and cultural landscapes may be impacted by changes to viewsheds or circulation patterns. However, the Current Plan contains several policies that seek to guide development in a way that preserves historic and cultural resources, as does existing County code and policy.

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[152] King County and City Landmarks List, last update November 2021. [LINK]

[153] The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), Washington Information System for Architectural and Archeological Records Data, 2023. [LINK]

[154] Kopperl et al. 2016.

4.5.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Neither of the action alternatives includes changes to policies in the Current Plan that pertain directly to historic and cultural resources, but any development, including under both alternatives, has the potential to affect historic and cultural resources. The action alternative proposals that would affect historic and cultural resources include those that seek to increase the amount of land that is preserved for conservation, reduce housing and business displacement, expand housing options, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, no significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources are anticipated under either action alternative.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

In general, proposals that encourage more dispersed growth pose greater risk to historic and cultural resources, while those that encourage retention of existing buildings and open spaces have the potential to benefit historic and cultural resources. The types of changes proposed in the Extensive Change Alternative are generally of greater magnitude in terms of the potential risks and benefits to historic and cultural resources than those included in the Limited Change Alternative.

Under the Limited Change Alternative, increased bonuses and development capacity for inclusionary housing where it is already allowed may generate impacts to cultural and historic resources more than the No Action Alternative. The expansion of inclusionary housing or requiring mandatory inclusionary housing in all unincorporated areas under the Extensive Change Alternative has the potential to create more intense development in rural and urban areas. This would concentrate the potential impacts to historic and cultural resources from such development within smaller areas relative to both the No Action Alternative and the Limited Change Alternative.

Similarly, allowing some additional high-density housing near transit and development through minor upzones under the Limited Change Alternative may lead to more development with potential for slightly greater impacts to historic and cultural resources in those locations relative to the No Action Alternative. Requiring a higher minimum density for housing in all areas near transit and employment under the Extensive Change Alternative has potential to generate greater impacts to cultural and historic resources within those areas as compared to the Limited Change Alternative and the No Action Alternative, but may reduce development pressure and the accompanying risks to cultural and historic resources elsewhere in the county.

While the Limited Change Alternative calls for supporting the use of renewable energy, which is unlikely to generate any more impacts to cultural and historic resources than the No Action Alternative, the Extensive Change Alternative entails adopting regulations and programs that reduce energy use and phase out fossil fuel use. Developing new energy facilities such as wind or solar farms requires large areas of land and would likely cause greater impacts to cultural and historic resources than either the No Action Alternative or the Limited Change Alternative.

The minor procedural modifications to the Four-to-One Program proposed under the Limited Change Alternative would not cause any greater impacts to cultural and historic resources than the No Action Alternative. Updating the Four-to-One Program to allow a reduced open space ratio under the Extensive Change Alternative would have the potential to cause greater impacts to cultural and historic resources than the No Action and Limited Change alternatives, since it allows for more area to be converted to urban relative to the area required to remain open space.

Minor procedural changes to the TDR Program under the Limited Change Alternative are not anticipated to cause impacts to cultural and historic resources that are any different from the No Action Alternative. Expanding TDR incentives and allowing TDR sending sites in new areas, as proposed under the Extensive Change Alternative, has the potential to conserve more land, with lower impacts to cultural and historic resources than under the No Action and Limited Change alternatives.

4.5.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to historic and cultural resources.

4.6 Transportation

This section discusses the transportation system in King County, including roadways, public transit, nonmotorized transportation, and marine, rail and air travel, and evaluates potential impacts to these resources that may be associated with the 2024 Update alternatives.

4.6.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

4.6.1.1 Policy and Regulations

Transportation in unincorporated King County is primarily guided by the following laws, regulations, and policies:

- Title 47 RCW, Public Highways and Transportation, which sets out state legislative policies, regulations, and laws related to statewide transportation facilities, including state highway and roadways, freight corridors, state ferry systems, multimodal programs, as well as other transportation-related activities.
- K.C.C. Title 14, Roads and Bridges, which sets out policies and regulations and laws related to King County transportation facilities, including traffic control, road standards, right-of-way requirements, nonmotorized transportation, concurrency, intersection standards, amongst other items.
- King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021–2031, which establishes goals for the King County Metro Transit Department (Metro), as well as objectives, outcomes, and strategies to achieve them and measures to track progress.
- King County Metro Service Guidelines, which informs Metro's evaluation, design, and modification of transit services.
- King County Metro Connects, which is Metro's vision for improving mobility services over the next 30 years through additional, frequent, reliable, and fast service through an innovative regional and integrated mobility network.
- King County Strategic Plan for Road Services, which guides the planning, development, and implementation of the unincorporated road system.
- King County International Airport Strategic Plan, which guides the planning, development and implementation of the airport facilities and services.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which establish the framework for developing comprehensive plans, including the transportation element.
- PSRC Regional Transportation Plan, which outlines and supports regional growth strategy built around the concept that additional infrastructure and services are to be provided in areas that accept an increased share of the region's growth. Additionally, it promotes the concept of maximizing mobility choices through a multimodal approach to moving people, goods, and services efficiently within and beyond the region.

4.6.1.2 Transportation Concurrency and Level of Service

The Department of Local Services Road Services Division administers King County's Transportation Concurrency Program, which began in 1995. The program is mean to ensure that sufficient transportation facilities are in place to support new development. Under the program, unincorporated King County is divided into 13 travel sheds, which are areas where travel patterns share common characteristics; see Figure 4.6-1, Transportation Concurrency Travel Shed Boundaries. Of the 13 travel sheds, seven are rural (labelled 1 through 7) and six are urban (labelled A through F).

Every 2 years, or when directed by the King County Council, travel time data is collected for the principal and minor arterials within each travel shed and evaluated against their Level of Service (LOS) standards to calculate the percentage of failing arterial segments within each travel shed. If more than 15 percent of tested miles of roadway within a travel shed fail their LOS standard, then the travel shed fails the concurrency test and the travel shed is subject to development restrictions, unless necessary enhancements can be constructed to maintain LOS standards.

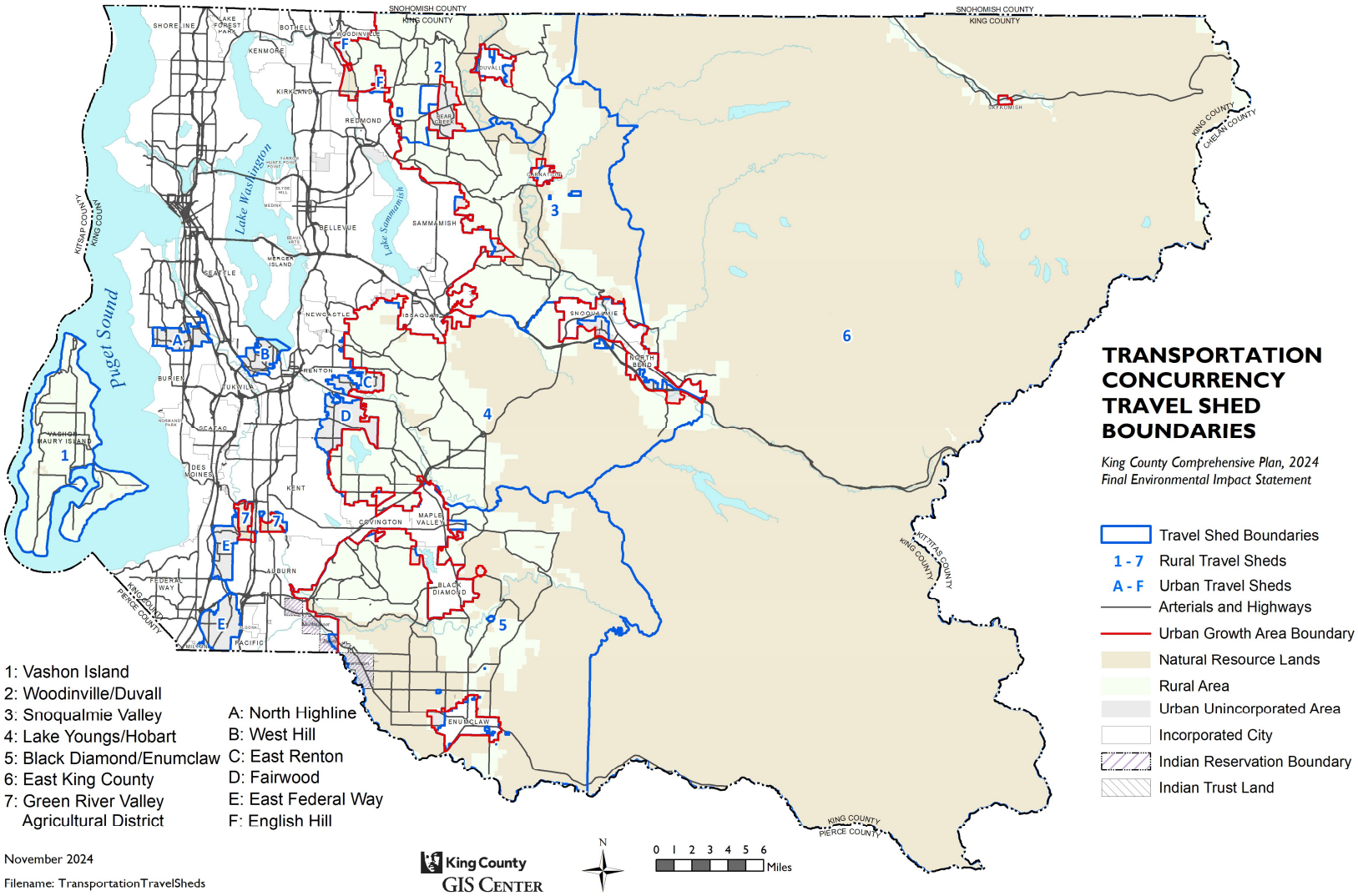
King County uses average travel speeds to define LOS standards for principal and minor arterial road classifications as defined in K.C.C. 14.70.220. There are different LOS standards for urban areas than for the Rural Area. Additionally, mobility areas established in the Rural Area and selected rural neighborhood commercial centers have their own LOS standard. Specific LOS standards for county roads are summarized in Table 4.6-1, County Road Level of Service Standards.

State routes, including Highways of Statewide Significance and highways of regional significance, are not included in concurrency calculations. Highways of Statewide Significance in the County's concurrency areas, which include Interstate 5 (I-5), Interstate 90 (I-90) and portions of State Route (SR) 99, are explicitly exempt from concurrency, while regionally significant routes, which include all other state routes, have LOS standards adopted into the PSRC Regional Transportation Plan.

Table 4.6-1. County Road Level of Service Standards

County Road Areas	LOS Standard
Urban Area	E
Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands	B
Certain Minor Residential and Minor Commercial Development, Certain Public and Educational Facilities	F
Rural Mobility Areas (Rural Towns)	E
Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers (Cottage Lake, Preston, Cumberland)	D

Figure 4.6-1. Transportation Concurrency Travel Shed Boundaries



4.6.2 Affected Environment

This section describes the existing transportation system in King County, including highways and roadways, public transit, rail, nonmotorized transportation, and air travel. Some information is provided at a countywide level, while other sections only discuss the unincorporated area.

4.6.2.1 State and Federal Highways

The highway system in Washington consists of a comprehensive network of federal and state facilities, including interstate, U.S., and state highways maintained by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). King County is served by four federal highways (interstates and U.S. routes) and 23 state routes that serve mobility needs within and beyond the county, as shown in Figure 4.6-2, Highways.

WSDOT tracks vehicle miles traveled on federal and state facilities in King County and reports the data at the countywide scale. In 2022, approximately 14 million vehicle miles were traveled along interstate highways in King County each day (on average); approximately 9 million vehicle miles were traveled along U.S. routes and state routes combined in King County each day (on average).[155]

Of particular importance are the Highways of Statewide Significance, which encompass interstate highways and other state principal arterials crucial for connecting major communities across the state. The Highway of Statewide Significance designation plays a vital role in guiding the allocation and direction of funding for these essential transportation routes, ensuring the efficient and effective movement of people and goods throughout the region. The Highways of Statewide Significance located wholly or partially within King County include US 2, SR 522, SR 520, SR 518, SR 509, SR 99, SR 18, SR 167, SR 164, SR 169, I-405, I-5, and I-90.

Washington State Scenic and Recreational Highways

Within King County exists a network of approximately 100 miles of designated Scenic and Recreational Highways, aimed at promoting the region's natural beauty and recreational opportunities.[156] Notable among these are portions of I-90, known as the Mountains to Sound Greenway; US 2, referred to as the Stevens Pass Greenway; SR 410, recognized as the Chinook Pass Scenic Byway; and SR 202, known as the Cascade Valleys Scenic Byway.

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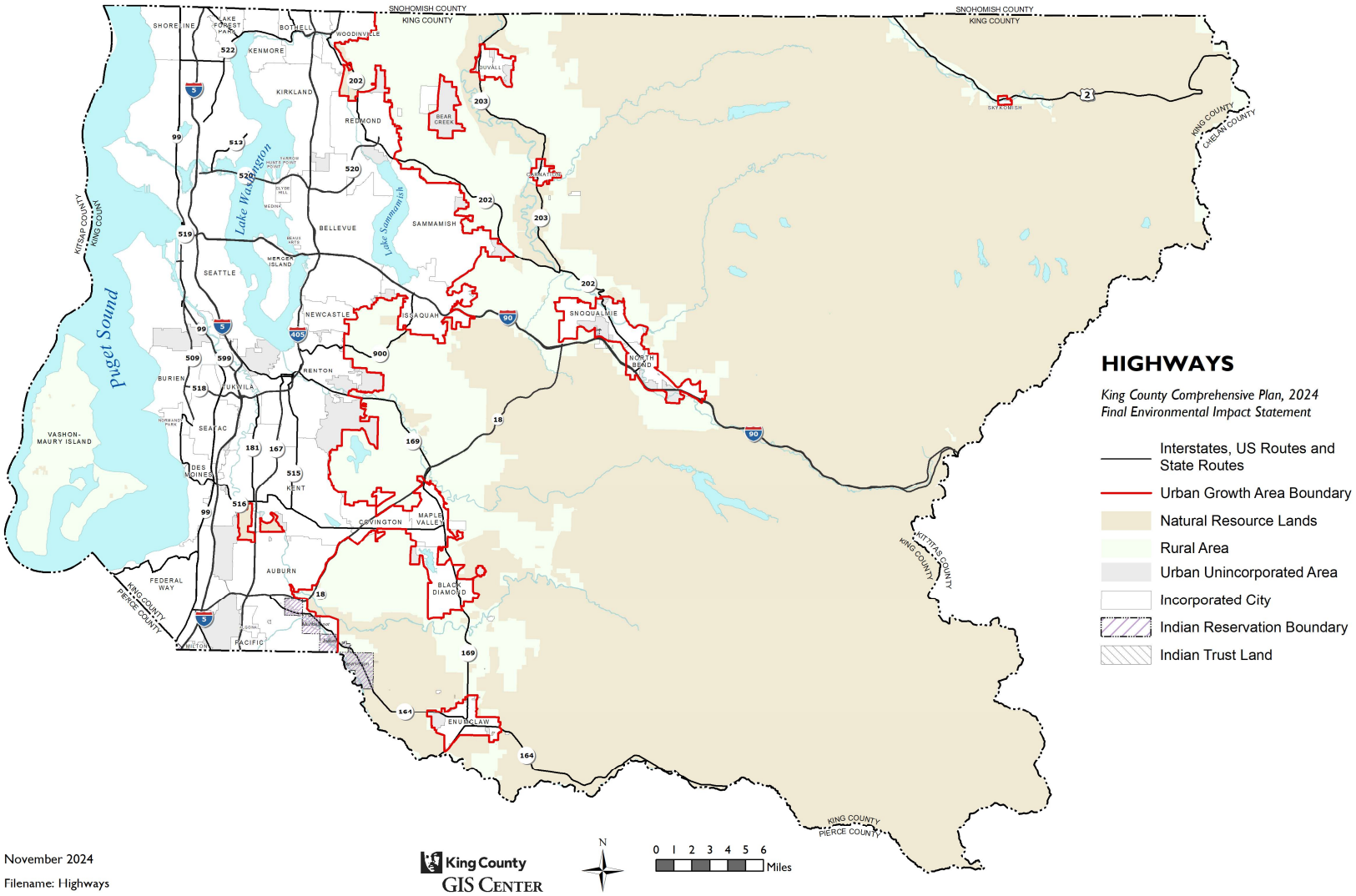
[155] WSDOT, Annual mileage and travel information, 2023. [LINK]

[156] King County, 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Public Review Draft, Appendix C: Transportation, June 2023. [LINK]

Figure 4.6-2. Highways



4.6.2.2 Unincorporated King County Roads

The Roads Services Division~~s~~ manages approximately 1,500 miles of County-owned roadways, which support over 1 million trips per day. King County maintains an inventory of assets that includes bridges, sidewalks, pathways, bicycle facilities, guard rails, drainage facilities, traffic control equipment, and traffic cameras.[157] As of fall 2022, the County-owned unincorporated area road system included approximately:[158]

- 1,467 miles of roadway.
- 185 bridges, including several jointly owned with cities.
- 275 miles of sidewalks.
- 723 marked crosswalks.
- 79 traffic signals.
- 47,000 traffic control signs.
- 58 traffic cameras.
- 118 miles of protective guardrail.
- 4.6 million linear feet of drainage ditch.
- 3.5 million linear feet of drainage pipes.

The Roads Services Division faces an increasing maintenance backlog, due to aging infrastructure, greater demands on the transportation network, and structural deficiencies in funding. As a result, County-owned transportation infrastructure is in a state of decline, near or past its design life, and at risk of failure. In addition, this under-investment in transportation infrastructure in urbanized areas has contributed to inequities in traditionally underserved communities.[159]

King County Arterial Functional Classifications

The Roads Services Division classifies arterial roadways within the county into groups according to the function each road serves or is intended to provide. The arterial functional classifications consider roadway characteristics such as lane capacity and average daily traffic volumes along the roadway.

In unincorporated King County, there are three types of arterial functional classifications:

- Principal Arterials.
- Minor Arterials.
- Collector Arterials.

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[157] ~~King County, Road Services Division 2021-2022 Business Plan, 2020. [LINK]~~ King County Road Services Division Facts and Figures, City-Owned Assets. [LINK]

[158] King County, 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Public Review Draft, Appendix C: Transportation, June 2023. [LINK]

[159] King County, Road Services Division 2023-2024 Business Plan, 2023. [LINK]

The classification system and King County Road Standards are used to distinguish between different types of roads for planning purposes, road design, and the allocation of public funds for transportation improvements. The current adopted Arterial Classifications are shown in Figure 4.6-3, Regional Arterial Functional Classification.

The county road network is largely rural; nearly 75 percent of county road miles are located outside the UGA. Principal arterials comprise approximately 7 percent of total network miles, minor arterials comprise approximately 9 percent, and collector arterials comprise 14 percent. Most of the network—70 percent—consists of local roads. Within the Urban Area, local roads comprise a greater share of the road network—nearly 80 percent—reflecting the denser, more grid-based urban transportation network.

Transportation Concurrency Test Results

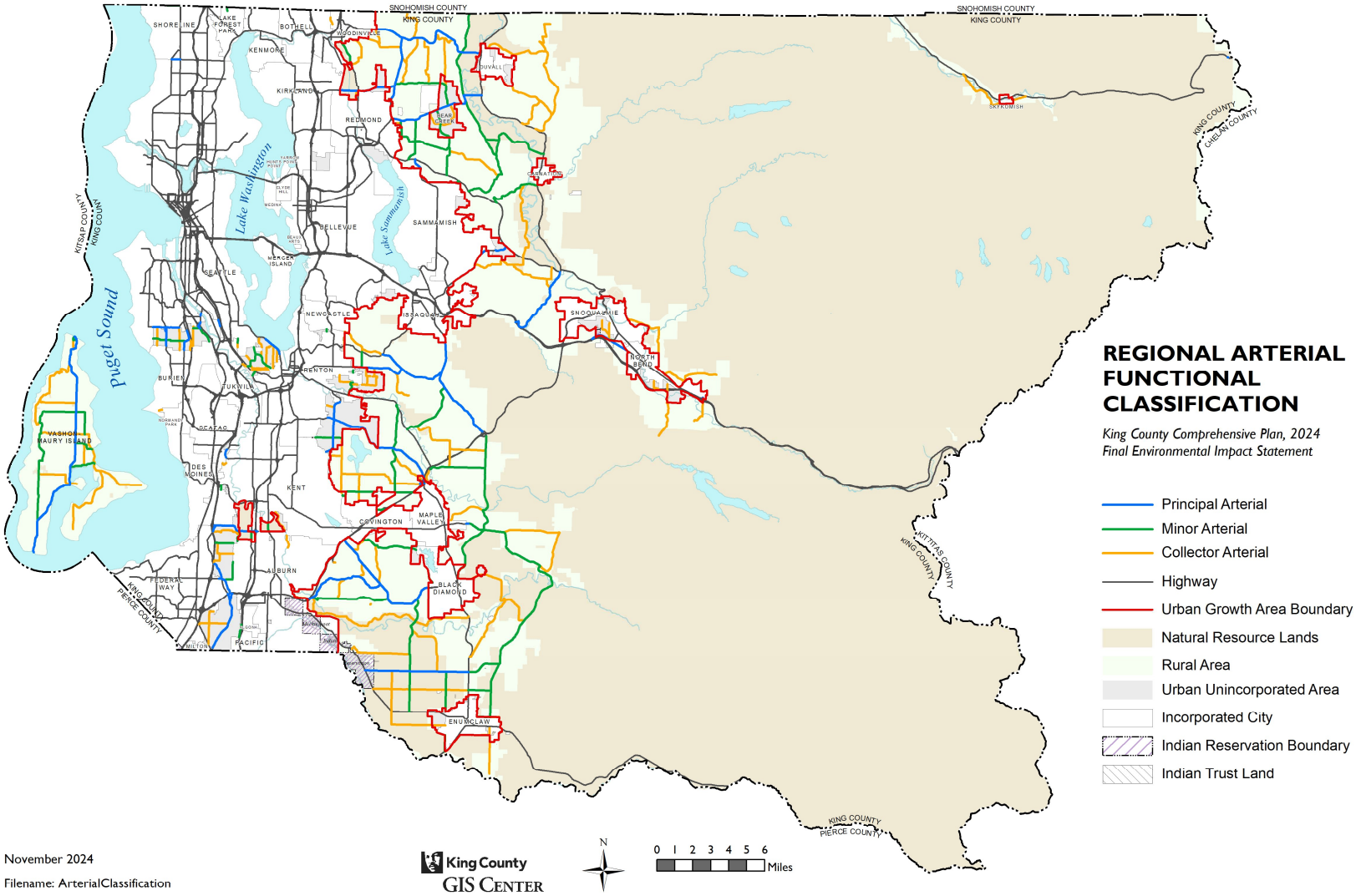
The Roads Services Division completed a Transportation Concurrency update in 2022. As shown in Table 4.6-2, 2022 Transportation Concurrency Test by Travel Shed, all six urban travel sheds (ID A through F) and all seven rural travel sheds (ID 1 through 7) received a rating of "pass." Of the 13 travel sheds, eight had no roadway segments within the travel shed exceeding the LOS standard. Five travel sheds (Vashon, Woodinville/Duvall, Snoqualmie Valley, Lake Youngs/Hobart, and North Highline) had some portion of the existing roadway segments exceeding the LOS standard, but all of those had less than 15 percent of roadway segments exceeding the standards.

Table 4.6-2. 2022 Transportation Concurrency Test by Travel Shed

ID	Travel Shed Name	Location Type	Total Mileage	Failed Mileage	Percent of Travel Shed Failing	Travel Shed Results
1	Vashon	Rural	26.62	1.22	5%	PASS
2	Woodinville/Duvall	Rural	36.74	3.42	9%	PASS
3	Snoqualmie Valley	Rural	22.90	0.22	1%	PASS
4	Lake Youngs/Hobart	Rural	39.81	1.44	4%	PASS
5	Black Diamond/Enumclaw	Rural	61.44	0.00	0%	PASS
6	East King County	Rural	0.00	0.00	0%	PASS
7	Green River Valley	Rural	1.94	0.00	0%	PASS
A	North Highline	Urban	7.14	0.29	4%	PASS
B	West Hill	Urban	3.97	0.00	0%	PASS
C	East Renton	Urban	1.69	0.00	0%	PASS
D	Fairwood	Urban	8.28	0.00	0%	PASS
E	East Federal Way	Urban	11.84	0.00	0%	PASS
F	English Hill	Urban	1.55	0.00	0%	PASS

Source: King County, Road Services Division 2022 Transportation Concurrency Update Report, 2022. [LINK]

Figure 4.6-3. Regional Arterial Functional Classification



4.6.2.3 Public Transit

Public transit services in King County are managed by four public transit agencies. The primary provider, King County Metro, offers a wide array of transit services, including regular bus services, RapidRide bus rapid transit, fixed-route transit, paratransit, vanpools, water taxi service, and flexible mobility solutions for residents. Pierce Transit and Community Transit operate commuter bus services that connect urban centers in Pierce County and Snohomish County to select urban centers within King County, such as downtown Seattle, downtown Bellevue, the University District in northeast Seattle, and Federal Way in South King County.

Sound Transit is responsible for regional High-Capacity Transit across sections of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. This is facilitated through commuter rail (Sounder), light rail (Link), and a regional express bus network (ST Express). Within King County, Link light rail and ST Express bus operations are presently managed and maintained by King County Metro under the jurisdiction of Sound Transit, as is the operation of the Seattle Streetcar.

In fall of 2023, King County Metro's transit network includes over 156 bus routes and approximately 7,400 bus stops. In 2022, Metro facilitated around 3.7 million annual service hours dedicated to fixed route and Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART) services, exclusive of Sound Transit and flexible services.[160]

Metro's fleet, as of 2022, consists of over 1,400 fuel-efficient buses. The County also operates 115 park-and-ride facilities, which collectively provide a total of 26,065 vehicle spaces for commuters and residents.[161] A summary of the public transit ferry service provided within King County is provided in Section 4.6.2.5, Marine Transportation.

Public transit service provision is most robust in dense urban areas, which are typically located in incorporated areas of the county. As of 2023, unincorporated King County is served by Metro fixed-route service, one RapidRide bus rapid transit line through urban unincorporated North Highline, paratransit, vanpools, water taxi service to Vashon-Maury Island, and flexible mobility solutions (Metro Flex). Sound Transit provides one regional express bus route through North Highline.

In 2020, Metro's unincorporated area transit network included 23 Metro bus and DART routes; an estimated 12 percent of Metro's budgeted annual service hours were dedicated to fixed-route and DART services directly serving the unincorporated area, exclusive of Sound Transit and flexible service. As of 2023, King County manages 14 park-and-ride facilities in unincorporated King County providing a total of 602 parking spaces.

4.6.2.4 Nonmotorized Transportation

Roadside Nonmotorized Transportation Facilities

The Road Services Division constructs and maintains nonmotorized transportation facilities, including bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and road shoulders on unincorporated County roads. These facilities also include crosswalks, traffic signals, pavement markings, and signage to support safe nonmotorized and active transportation.

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[160] King County, 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Public Review Draft, Appendix C: Transportation, June 2023. [LINK]

[161] Ibid.

As of 2021, the pedestrian facilities within the unincorporated King County road system includes approximately 335 miles of existing sidewalks, paved shoulder walkways, and paved separated walkways; 5,194 existing curb ramps; and 436 pedestrian pushbuttons for signal activation.[162]

Bicycle Parking at Transit Facilities

King County has equipped its park-and-ride lots and transit centers with bicycle racks and/or bicycle lockers for people to store their bicycles while accessing transit services. Bicycle parking and secure storage support transit ridership and overall mobility by increasing options for people to connect to bus service or to transition to carpool or vanpool. Currently, Metro provides one secure bike parking location in unincorporated King County.

Regional Trails Network

The regional shared-use path network extends broadly across both incorporated and unincorporated King County, establishing connections between various cities, other counties within the Central Puget Sound region, and other regions within the state. This interconnected network, including trails such as the Snoqualmie Valley Trail (and connecting Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail), John Wayne Trail, and Burke-Gilman Trail, spans beyond 30 cities within King County and is extensively used for nonmotorized transportation and recreational activities. King County manages approximately 175 miles of the comprehensive 300-mile network of multipurpose paved and unpaved shared-use paths.[163] Approximately 85 miles of the County-managed regional trail network are located in unincorporated King County; of those, 30 miles are paved, and 55 miles are soft-surface trails. Several cities, the Port of Seattle, and the state of Washington are responsible for the remaining portions of trail network. See Figure 4.4-2, Regional Trails System, for a visual representation of the trail network.

4.6.2.5 Marine Transportation

The marine transportation system within King County plays a key role in the movement of people and goods within King County, serving as the main commuter link between Seattle's central business district and the west Puget Sound corridor and serving as the hub network for local, regional, and international freight movements. Passenger ferry services provide reliable transportation as regional waterways are not subjected to the typical congestion of the roadway network.

Figure 4.6-4, Marine, Rail, and Air Travel, shows the marine transportation network. The marine facilities that serve King County include ferry terminals and vessels servicing ferry routes. Ferry services are provided by Washington State Ferries, the King County Marine Division, and Kitsap Transit. Other passenger-only ferry operators, such as Argosy and FRS Clipper, offer more recreational and travel-related services.

Vashon-Maury Island relies on WSDOT ferries and King County Water Taxi services.

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[162] King County, Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan, 2021. [LINK]

[163] King County, Parks and Recreation, Rural King County, 2023. [LINK]

4.6.2.6 Rail and Freight

Freight transport is a major function of the regional transportation system. Regional planning for freight is coordinated by PSRC and incorporated into the 2022–2050 PSRC Regional Transportation Plan. Key elements of the regional freight system include roadway corridors used for truck transport and railroads used for train transport. See Figure 4.6-4, Marine, Rail, and Air Travel, which shows the rail and freight network.

WSDOT maintains a statewide Freight and Goods Transportation System that classifies the state's freight corridors by modes based on annual freight tonnage. Freight corridors primarily consist of the major interstate, U.S., and state highways in the county, in addition to major arterials that connect industrial and shipping areas throughout the county.

The Class I freight railroad system within King County includes the BNSF Railway and the Union Pacific Railroad, which primarily serve the inland transportation component of the supply chain for large volumes of import and export cargo moving through the Port of Seattle.

For passenger rail, Amtrak provides long-distance passenger rail service between Seattle and Chicago, Illinois (the Empire Builder) and Seattle and Los Angeles, California (the Coast Starlight).[164] Ridership for both services declined from 2013 to 2019 but is expected to increase steadily through 2040. Amtrak also provides intercity passenger rail service, known as Amtrak Cascades, along the I-5 corridor between Eugene, Oregon, and Vancouver, British Columbia; the service is supported by WSDOT funding. Ridership for intercity rail is expected to increase steadily, pending WSDOT service investments.

Sound Transit's Sounder commuter rail uses diesel-powered locomotives and multilevel passenger coach trains that run on BNSF Railway freight tracks, while Sound Transit's Link light rail is electric powered and operates on its own dedicated tracks. Ridership for Sound Transit's passenger service is expected to increase as the Link system continues to expand.

4.6.2.7 Air Travel

Within King County, there is a network of 16 airports that play a critical role in the broader regional and national transportation network, serving as a vital conduit for swift and efficient intrastate, interstate, and international travel for both passengers and cargo.[165] These airports vary widely in scale and function, encompassing key facilities, such as the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and King County International Airport-Boeing Field, as well as supporting seaplane facilities and privately owned airstrips. Unincorporated King County airports include the state-owned Bandera airport located east of the City of North Bend and Skykomish Airport located east of the City of Skykomish, the King County Airport Special District Number One publicly owned and operated Vashon Airport on Vashon-Maury Island, the privately owned public Norman Grier Airfield east of the City of Covington, and smaller private airstrips. Figure 4.6-4, Marine, Rail, and Air Travel, shows the public airports network within King County.

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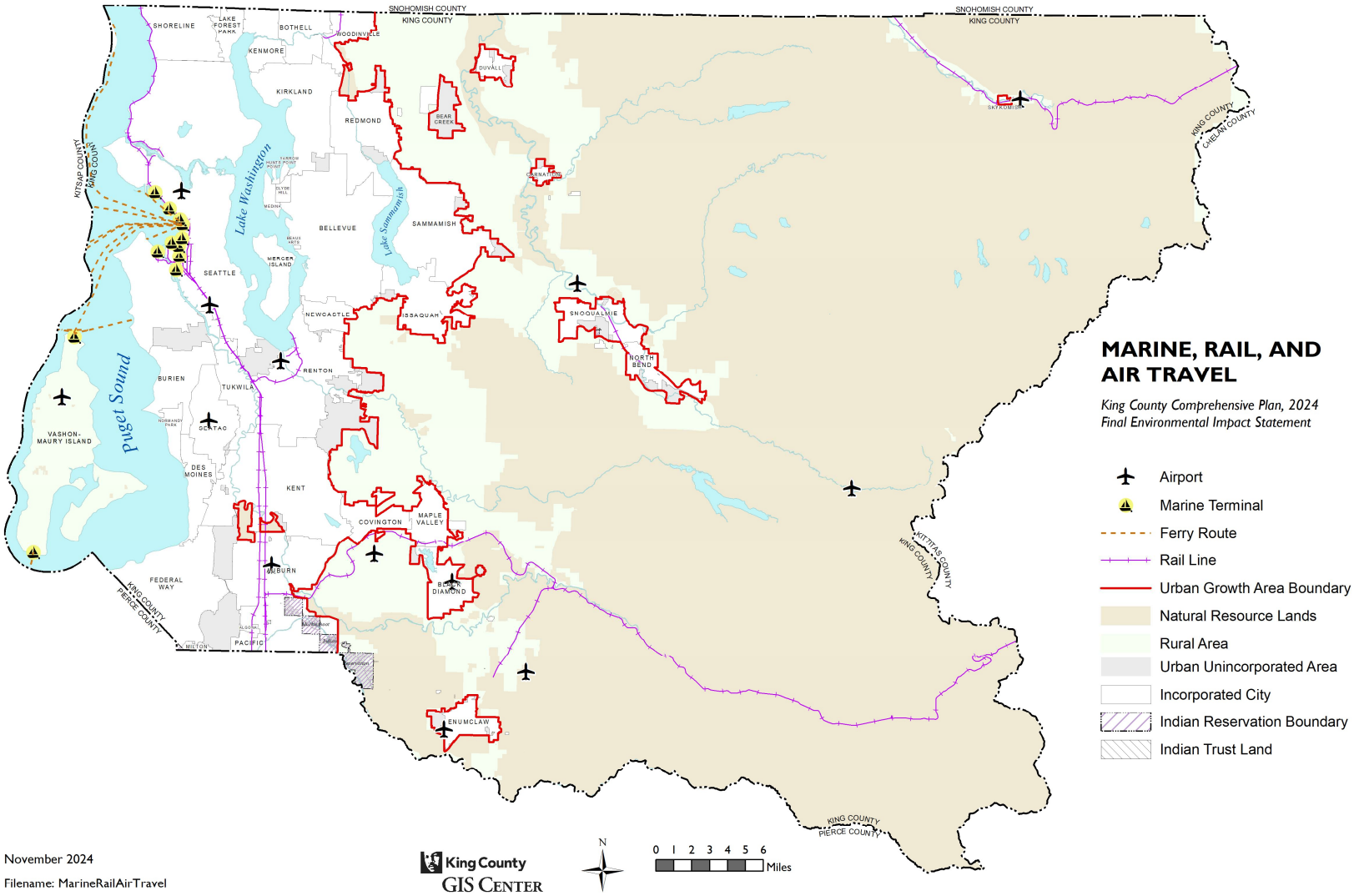
[164] King County, 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Public Review Draft, Appendix C: Transportation, June 2023. [LINK]

[165] King County, GIS Open Data: Airports in King County, 2018. [LINK]

Figure 4.6-4. Marine, Rail, and Air Travel



4.6.3 Environmental Consequences

4.6.3.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative is the alternative with the least change to current traffic conditions and would maintain the current implementation of adopted policies, zoning, and regulations. According to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, travel times have not worsened with population and job growth, though congestion remains high on many routes. The number of vehicle miles traveled has decreased per capita along with the percent share of single-occupancy vehicle commute trips. The vast majority of new homes (85 percent) and new jobs (92 percent) have been located near transit.[166] With current policies and regulations, there would be a minor increase in traffic demand related to planned growth.

Investments in transit, transit-oriented development, and nonmotorized transportation facilities would continue at current levels. However, as mentioned previously, the Road Services Division faces a growing maintenance backlog and deficient revenue to address it, which could impact funding for future transportation infrastructure investments. Without adequate funding to operate and maintain the existing transportation infrastructure, there would likely be degradation of the existing roadway and nonmotorized transportation network. The County would need to identify new funding sources to continue to support future growth through the maintenance and development of the transportation system.

4.6.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

Potential changes under either of the action alternatives that would affect the transportation network include those that increase density allowances for residential areas—including for housing near transit and employment—those that add business growth through land use and zoning changes, and those that prioritize safety for nonmotorized transportation by contributing to the state Vision Zero goal, using a Safe Systems approach, and adopting complete street policies. Proposals that allow new or expanded uses, such as resorts or industrial facilities in the Rural Area or on Natural Resource Lands could also impact transportation. However, neither action alternative is anticipated to have significant adverse impacts.

Roads and Highways

Land use proposals that increase the number of dwelling units allowed in certain residential zones or increase the density of housing around transit and employment centers would likely generate more vehicular traffic that would operate on the surrounding roadway network in areas where development occurs. Similarly, land use and zoning changes that allow for resorts to develop in additional areas have the potential to generate more vehicular trips on the roadway network within the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.

Currently, all the travel sheds within King County's development areas are meeting the current LOS standards and are open for development. Proposals that encourage increased density for residential development would primarily affect rural town and urban unincorporated areas; however, the level of impact of the proposed alternatives would depend on the location and the intensity of the redevelopment within specific travel sheds. As described above, five of the travel sheds currently have some portion of their roadway network that does not meet LOS standards, particularly the

[166] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, March 2022. [LINK]

Woodinville/Duvall travel shed, which has 9 percent of roadways exceeding standards. Those travel sheds likely have less existing capacity to accommodate additional growth while meeting concurrency standards than the eight travel sheds that have all roadway segments operating below the LOS limits; however, all travel sheds have capacity to accommodate some level of future growth.

Transportation proposals that incorporate complete street standards have the potential to reduce the capacity of the existing roadway network if nonmotorized facilities such as sidewalks and bike lanes are added in locations that are constrained by right-of-way. If right-of-way is available to add nonmotorized facilities, or if the County acquires additional right-of-way, the costs associated with reconstructing roadways will likely increase due to the wider cross section, additional paving, and resulting impacts to drainage and utilities associated with those changes, thereby reducing the number of projects that could be constructed within the County's already underfunded roads budget.

Public Transit

The action alternative proposals could be beneficial to public transportation by increasing residential development near public transportation. King County Metro makes adjustments to transit services biannually in September and March of each year, in which the allocation of service hours or route adjustments may be updated based on changes in ridership, reliability, and available funding for transit service hours. Metro's adopted Service Guidelines provide direction on how and when to adjust service. It is anticipated that changes in ridership due to action alternatives that increase residential development and employment in areas near public transportation would be addressed through Metro's established biannual transit service adjustments process.

However, while King County Metro continues to make investments to grow its service network and improve reliability, it continues to face challenges that are outside its control. These include major transportation construction projects and traffic congestion within the county, staff shortages, and supply chain issues.[167] As a result, Metro will need to continue to make service-level and route adjustments to align schedules with operational capacity and maintain service reliability, which may constrain its ability to increase service.

Nonmotorized Transportation

Transportation proposals that address serious injuries and fatalities, adopt a Safe System approach, and incorporate complete street standards have the potential to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Marine, Rail, and Air Transportation

The action alternative proposals are not likely to affect marine, rail, and air transportation. Transportation proposals that would allow for more industrial zoning outside of the UGA may result in localized increases in truck freight activity to those areas where redevelopment occurs. However, the redevelopment for industrial land uses would have to meet the County's concurrency LOS standards before being approved for construction.

[167] King County, Metro Transit 2023 System Evaluation, November 2023. [LINK]

Comparison of Action Alternatives

Both action alternatives would have the same type of impact to the transportation network, therefore the difference between the action alternatives is in terms of the scale or intensity of the proposed changes.

Proposals related to land use and housing would likely create more transportation impacts under the Extensive Change Alternative through adoption of requirements or mandatory changes that would increase housing density within certain areas. Areas with more intensive redevelopment would likely have higher increases in traffic volumes, which could result in more congestion and result in additional roadway segments failing to meet LOS standards. However, as stated previously, even if a project results in additional roadway segment failing the LOS standard, it does not preclude all development in a travel shed as long as at least 85 percent of roadway segments in that travel shed are meeting LOS standards. All travel sheds currently have capacity to accommodate additional growth, but as shown in Table 4.6-2, 2022 Transportation Concurrency Test by Travel Shed, some travel sheds may be able to accommodate more intensive development than others.

The effects of the Extensive Change and Limited Change alternatives related to transit-oriented development may be similar. Both alternatives would encourage a greater use of public transit, which could help offset the potential increase in roadway congestion from a greater density of development. However, as stated previously, the County's ability to expand transit service is already constrained, and reallocation or reduction in service hours may result regardless of changes to land use policy or regulations.

Proposals related to transportation and public safety, such as Vision Zero, Safe System approach, and complete streets would be adopted under the Extensive Change Alternative whereas only encouraged under the Limited Change Alternative. Adopting proposals under the Extensive Change Alternative would require that safety design measures were included in all projects, increasing the safety of both motorized and nonmotorized users. As described above, adoption of these design standards could result in a potential reduction in roadway capacity or result in more significant cost increases for roadway projects to maintain the existing vehicular roadway capacity. That would result in more widespread changes than if the proposals were only encouraged in the Limited Change Alternative.

4.6.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable, significant adverse impacts to transportation are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to transportation resources.

4.7 Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

This section discusses socioeconomics and environmental justice in King County and evaluates potential impacts that may be associated with the 2024 Update alternatives.

4.7.1 Existing Policy and Regulatory Framework

SEPA does not specifically provide guidance for an analysis of environmental justice effects. However, there are state- and county-level policies and orders in place that speak to environmental justice and equity considerations. Some of the primary laws, regulations, policies, and tools that provide the framework for equity and social justice analyses in King County include:

- Governor's Executive Order 93-07, Affirming Commitment to Diversity and Equity, which directed all state executive agencies and institutions of higher education to integrate principles of diversity into all facets of the workplace, commit to the elimination of all barriers to employment based on individual characteristics not related to job performance, and maintain affirmative action programs.[168] This order reestablished affirmative action and prohibited discrimination in state workplaces by recognizing that without intervention, there is inequity created through a history of systemic racism.
- The Healthy Environment for All Act, which was the first statewide law in Washington to create a coordinated state agency approach to environmental justice.[169] Though it covers only seven state agencies, the Department of Ecology is included, and others may opt in. The Act requires these agencies to incorporate environmental justice as part of agency work, promote the equitable sharing of environmental benefits and investing in communities that experience the greatest environmental burdens, and requires the Department of Health to maintain and update the Environmental Health Disparities Map.[170]
- K.C.C. Chapter 2.10, Performance, Management, and Accountability, which implements the "fair and just principle" defined in King County Ordinance 16948. The Ordinance requires equity and social justice foundational practices be applied to County actions and encourages the integration of such practices into the County's plans, management, budget, and reporting systems for accountability and performance. The documents describe determinants of equity as the social, economic, geographical, political, and physical conditions in which people in King County lead their lives that lead to the creation of a fair and just society. To create equity, all people must have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential. To be "fair and just," the County promotes fairness and opportunity through actions to which equity and social justice foundational practices are applied.
- 2021 King County CPPs, which establish the framework for developing comprehensive plans, and include the guiding principle of "centering social equity and health" throughout.
- The Determinants of Equity and Data Tool, which provides data sources to measure community level indicators for 14 Determinants of Equity established in King County Ordinance 16948, plus an additional Determinant not yet adopted.[171] These were originally described in the

[168] Washington Governor Executive Order 93-07, Sept. 27, 1993. [LINK]

[169] State Bill 5141, 2021 Reg. Sess., 2021. [LINK]

[170] Washington State Department of Health, Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map, 2023. [LINK]

[171] King County, Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice Determinants of Equity and Data Tool, 2023. [LINK]

Determinants of Equity Baseline Report that describes preliminary indicators for establishing a baseline of equity conditions in King County and have since been updated.[172]

- 2020 SCAP, which provides a climate justice framework for King County.[173] The framework encourages the County to be coordinated across departments and responsive to the ways that communities identify with climate impacts regarding community resilience, health, and economic capacity. The framework identifies root causes, biological factors, and social factors that lead to increased sensitivity to climate change.
- King County Equity Impact Review Tool, which was created to evaluate County programs' impact on equity. The Equity Impact Review is a process and a tool to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impact of a policy or program on equity.[174] The tool encourages agencies to consider how an action will affect and/or serve low-income populations, communities of color, and limited-English speaking residents to ensure equity.

4.7.2 Affected Environment

This section provides a demographic overview of the residents and the socioeconomic conditions within unincorporated King County. The values for similarly named attributes (e.g., total population) may vary across tables and figures in this section because of different years or data sources available at the time of writing. In some cases, a specific datapoint was selected to be consistent with other data references. Additionally, for some population demographics, the "universe" (the total number of people for whom the demographic describes) differs from total population. For example, the universe for people who speak languages other than English is the total population age five and older, not the total population overall.

4.7.2.1 Population Growth

As shown in Table 4.7-1, Population and Population Growth (2000–2050), the 2020 population of unincorporated King County was approximately 246,300, which is about 11 percent of the King County population as a whole.[175] Based on available U.S. Census data, while most incorporated cities within the county experienced growth between 2000 and 2020, there was a decline in growth in the unincorporated parts of King County during this period; see Figure 4.7-1, King County Population Estimates (2000–2020). This trend owes to population growth centered in cities and the annexation of unincorporated areas into cities and is consistent with King County's growth management strategy and the County's Urban Growth targets.[176] Between 2006 and 2018, 54 percent of housing unit growth in King County occurred within the cities of Seattle and Bellevue, while 4 percent of housing unit growth occurred in urban unincorporated areas, and 3 percent occurred in rural unincorporated areas.[177]

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[172] King County, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, The Determinants of Equity: Identifying Indicators to Establish a Baseline of Equity in King County, 2015. [LINK]

[173] King County, 2020 SCAP as adopted in Motion 15866, 2021. [LINK]

[174] King County, King County Equity Impact review Tool, 2010. [LINK]

[175] U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census, 2022. [LINK]

[176] King County, Office of Economic and Financial Analysis Demographic Trends of King County, 2022. [LINK]

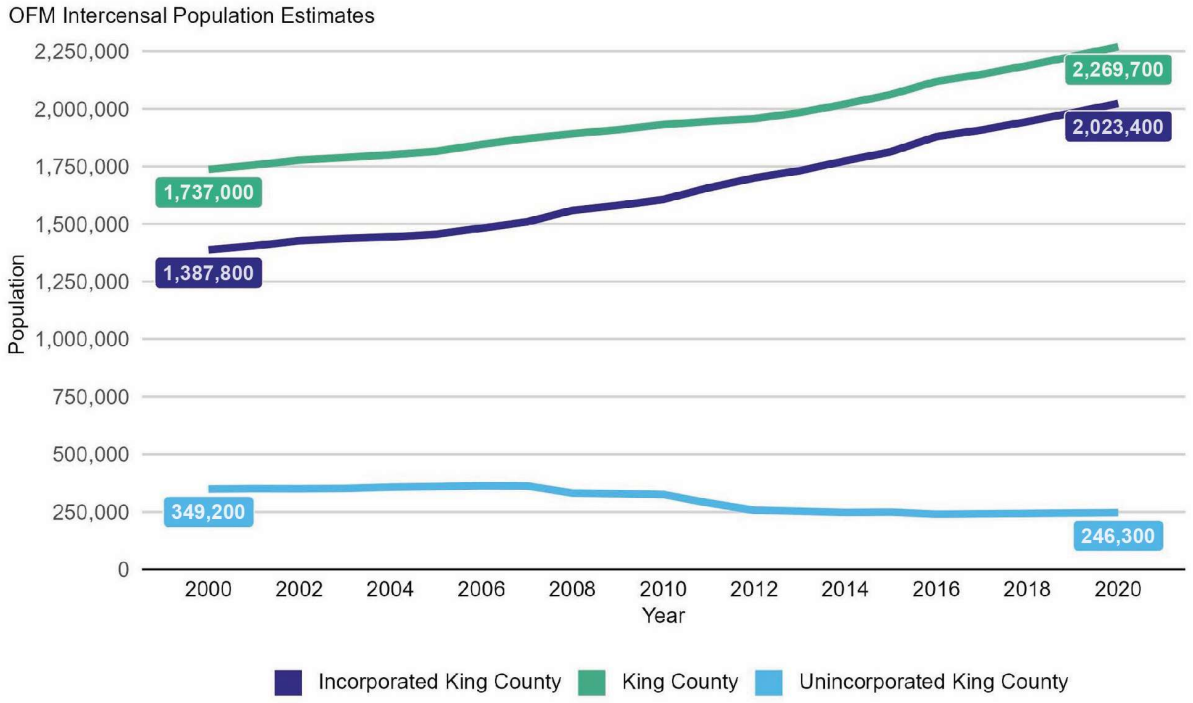
[177] King County, 2021 King County Urban Growth Capacity Report, 2021, page 30. [LINK]

Table 4.7-1. Population and Population Growth (2000–2050)

Year	Population and Population Growth[a]		
	King County	Unincorporated King County[b]	Washington
Population			
2000	1,737,000	349,200	5,894,100
2005	1,808,300	364,500	6,256,400
2010	1,931,200	300,200	6,733,300
2015	2,052,800	253,300	7,061,400
2020	2,269,700	246,300	7,706,300
2025	2,377,700	249,700	8,100,400
2030	2,487,400	253,200	8,502,800
2035	2,591,500	256,700	8,884,500
2040	2,690,900	260,100	9,248,500
2045	2,786,600	263,600	9,598,600
2050	2,879,200	267,000	9,937,600
Population Growth			
2000–05	4%	4%	6%
2005–10	7%	-21%	7%
2010–15	6%	-19%	5%
2015–20	11%	-3%	8%
2020–25	5%	1%	5%
2025–30	5%	1%	5%
2030–35	4%	1%	4%
2035–40	4%	1%	4%
2040–45	4%	1%	4%
2045–50	3%	1%	3%

Sources:
PSRC, Vision 2050, 2023. [LINK]; OFM Growth Management Act County Projections (Medium Series), 2022.
[a] Population values are rounded to the nearest 100, and population growth percentages are rounded to the nearest 1%. The blue-shaded rows represent data based on projected populations.
[b] To create population projections after 2020 for Unincorporated King County, urban unincorporated housing growth targets for 2019–2044 were added to a 2019 base and converted to population to estimate 2044. Urban unincorporated population was then added to the 2044 population projection for rural King County used in the growth target development process. Estimated population growth for 2020–2044 was annualized to interpolate and extrapolate values for 5-year increments, 2020–2050.

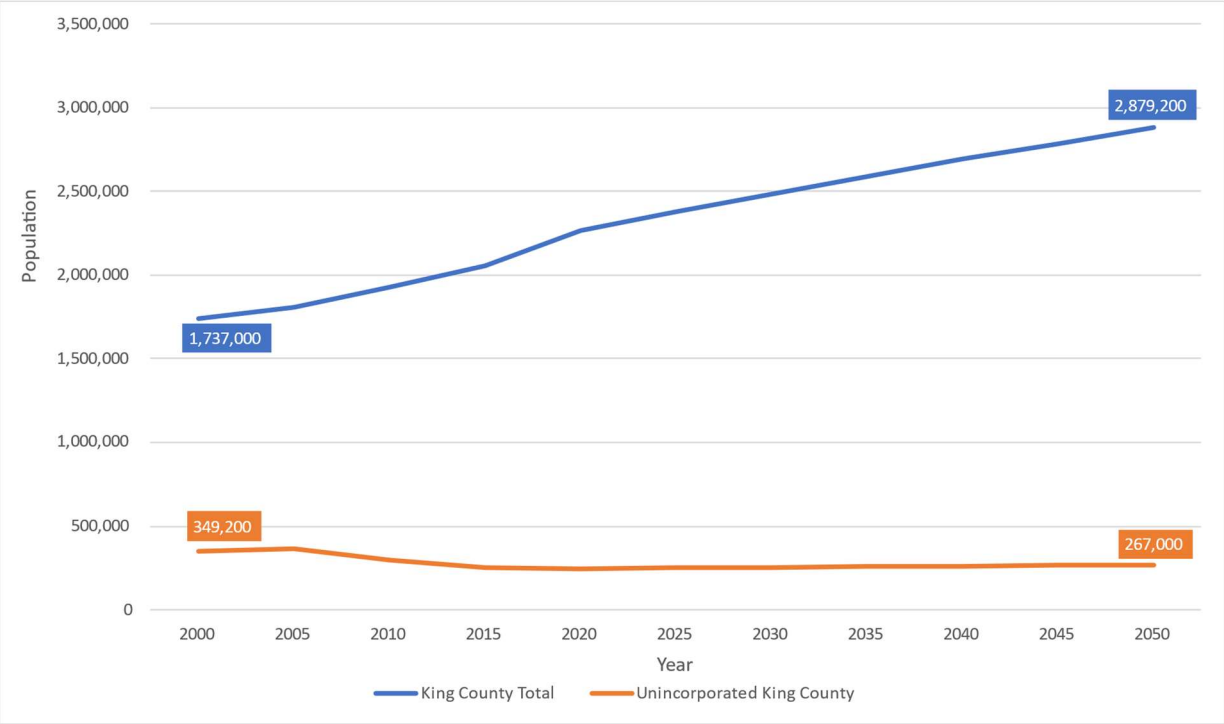
Figure 4.7-1. King County Population Estimates (2000–2020)



Sources: OFM Growth Management Act County Projections (Medium Series), 2022; King County, Public Review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B: Housing Needs Assessment, 2023.

Population projections through 2050 for King County and unincorporated parts of the county are shown on Figure 4.7-2, King County Projected Population Growth (2000–2050). Between 2020 and 2050, the unincorporated county population is projected to increase by over 4 percent, reaching approximately 267,000 individuals.[178] The King County population as a whole is projected to increase by about 27 percent during the same period.[179] Though the growth rate is much smaller for the unincorporated areas of King County compared to the King County as a whole, these areas can still anticipate the addition of approximately 9,000 people over the next 30 years.

Figure 4.7-2. King County Projected Population Growth (2000–2050)



Sources: Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), Vision 2050, 2023; OFM Growth Management Act County Projections (Medium Series), 2022.
Note: To create population projections after 2020 for Unincorporated King County, urban unincorporated housing growth targets for 2019–2044 were added to a 2019 base and converted to population to estimate 2044. Urban unincorporated population was then added to the 2044 population projection for rural King County used in the growth target development process. Estimated population growth for 2020–2044 was annualized to interpolate and extrapolate values for 5-year increments, 2020–2050.

[178] PSRC, Vision 2050, 2020. [LINK]

[179] OFM, Growth Management Act County Projections (Medium Series), 2022. [LINK]

4.7.2.2 Population Demographics

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic composition of the populations of King County as a whole, unincorporated King County, urban incorporated King County, rural King County, and Washington state are presented in Table 4.7-2, Race and Ethnicity Demographics. Populations in unincorporated King County, driven by rural King County, are less diverse than in the county overall, with many areas having lower percentages of all racial minority and ethnic groups compared to King County as a whole. Census data for unincorporated King County shows that approximately 64 percent of the population identifies as White, 13 percent as Asian, 7 percent as Two or More Races, and 9 percent as Hispanic or Latino.[180]

In terms of minority communities, American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) is the only group that makes up a higher percentage of unincorporated area population relative to the King County as a whole. With an almost 79 percent White population, the percentages of all minority communities are lower in rural King County in comparison to urban unincorporated King County. Populations in urban unincorporated King County are more diverse than the county overall, with 53 percent of urban unincorporated area residents identifying as Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color communities. The urban unincorporated area has a greater share of Black and African American, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino residents than reflected in King County as a whole or rural King County.

Table 4.7-2. Race and Ethnicity Demographics

		Race							Ethnicity
Jurisdiction	**Total Population**	**White**	**Black/ African American**	**AIAN**	**Asian**	**NHOPI**	**Other Race**	**Two or More Races Total**	**Hispanic or Latino[a]**
King County	2,269,700	1,230,600	147,800	11,800	449,700	19,300	13,500	153,800	243,000
		54%	*7%*	*<1%*	*20%*	*<1%*	*<1%*	*7%*	*11%*
Unincorporated King County	246,300	151,400	12,600	2,300	31,500	1,400	1,500	16,700	22,900
		64%	*5%*	*<1%*	*13%*	*1%*	*1%*	*7%*	9%
Urban Unincorporated King County	118,700	57,000	11,600	800	25,000	1,200	700	8,000	14,400
		48%	*10%*	*<1%*	*21%*	*1%*	*<1%*	*7%*	*12%*
Rural King County	127,500	100,400	1,000	1,500	6,500	200	800	8,700	8,400
		79%	*<1%*	*1%*	*5%*	*<1%*	*<1%*	*7%*	*7%*
Washington State	7,705,300	5,130,900	307,600	121,500	730,600	64,900	513,100	836,700	1,059,200
		67%	*4%*	*2%*	*10%*	*<1%*	*7%*	*11%*	*14%*

Sources: King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020.
Notes: AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native; NHOPI = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.
Population values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.
[a] Population may belong to any race.

[180] King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020.

Income-Related Measures

Table 4.7-3, Income and Unemployment Demographics, presents median household income and poverty rates for King County, unincorporated King County, and Washington state.

Table 4.7-3. Income and Unemployment Demographics

Jurisdiction	Population (2020)	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate
King County Total	2,269,700	$99,200	9%	4%
Unincorporated King County	246,300	$116,800	6%	4%
Urban Unincorporated KC	118,700	$100,600	8%	5%
Rural King County[a]	127,500	$126,500	5%	4%
Washington State	7,705,300	$77,000	10%	5%
Unincorporated King County				
White	157,400	–	4%	4%
Black/African American	12,600	–	18%	9%
AIAN	2,300	–	15%	10%
Asian	31,500	–	6%	3%
NHOPI	1,400	–	12%	7%
Other Race	1,500	–	17%	4%
Two or More Races Total	16,700	–	8%	6%
Hispanic or Latino origin	22,900	–	13%	5%
Total King County by Race				
White	1,230,600	$103,800	7%	4%
Black/African American	147,800	$54,000	24%	8%
AIAN	11,800	$52,300	19%	10%
Asian	449,700	$114,300	9%	4%
NHOPI	19,400	$73,300	14%	7%
Other Race	13,500	$62,700	16%	5%
Two or More Races Total	153,800	$82,100	11%	6%
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	243,000	$71,100	14%	5%

Sources: King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020 and 2016–2020 5-year American Community Survey, 2022.
Notes: Population values rounded to the nearest 100, incomes rounded to the nearest $100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Median household income values by race are suppressed for data availability and accuracy.
[a] Rural King County includes King County's unincorporated Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.

The median household income in unincorporated King County is $116,800, with higher income in the rural unincorporated areas compared to urban unincorporated areas. King County overall has a median household income of approximately $99,200, representing the highest median household income of all counties in Washington.[181] Both unincorporated King County and King County as a whole have higher median household incomes compared to the state ($77,000). While King County benefits from relatively higher incomes, there are disparities in income by race, as well as by area. Looking at the county as a whole, Asian households have the highest median household income ($114,300), followed by White households ($103,800). AIAN households have the lowest median household income among King County households ($52,300), with Black/African American households about the same ($54,000). Median household income data by race and ethnicity are not readily available for the unincorporated part of the county. Income disparities are evident in some areas compared to the county. For example, in 2019, North Highline residents had a median household income of approximately $58,000, while that for Skyway-West Hill residents was about $71,000.[182]

As shown in Table 4.7-3, Income and Unemployment Demographics, about 6 percent of the population in unincorporated King County lived below the federal poverty level compared to 9 percent in King County overall.[183] In 2020, the federal poverty threshold was about $13,200 for a one-person household. The data suggest that the poverty rates are higher for every racial and ethnic group other than White and Asian compared to that for the entire unincorporated King County. However, the poverty rates for every group are higher in King County as a whole relative to just unincorporated King County, except for those who identify as "Other Race."

In unincorporated King County, the Black/African American population has the highest poverty rate at 18 percent, followed by Other Race at 17 percent, AIAN at 15 percent, Hispanic or Latino at 13 percent, and NHOPI at 12 percent. The lowest poverty rates in unincorporated King County are associated with the White population at 4 percent, followed by 6 percent for the Asian population.

The unemployment rate is 4 percent for both unincorporated King County and King County as a whole, which is slightly lower than the state's unemployment rate of 5 percent. When broken down by race and ethnicity, unemployment rates are considerably higher for Black/African American, AIAN, and NHOPI populations in both unincorporated King County and King County as a whole. Like the poverty rate in unincorporated King County, all racial and ethnic groups except for White, Asian, and Other Race have higher unemployment rates than that for King County as a whole. The unemployment rates are very similar for King County as a whole and unincorporated King County. In unincorporated King County, the AIAN population has the highest unemployment rate (10 percent) followed by the Black/African American population (9 percent), NHOPI (7 percent), Two or More Races (6 percent), and Hispanic/Latino (5 percent).

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[181] King County, Household Income in King County, 2023. [LINK]

[182] King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020.

[183] King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020 and 2016–2020 5-year American Community Survey, 2022.

4.7.2.3 Other Social Indicators

Age and Gender

Table 4.7-4, Age Group Demographics, includes the number and percentage of population by age range in King County and unincorporated King County. Unincorporated King County has a higher share of population aged 19 or younger than King County overall. Unincorporated King County has a higher percentage of individuals between the ages of 50 to 80 compared to the King County as a whole and a significantly lower percentage of individuals between the ages 20 to 40.

Table 4.7-4. Age Group Demographics

	King County		Unincorporated King County	
Age Group	**Population**	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**
0–9	251,100	11%	28,300	11%
10–19	256,200	11%	31,800	13%
20–29	344,700	15%	23,400	10%
30–39	395,800	17%	32,100	13%
40–49	310,800	14%	33,900	14%
50–59	279,400	12%	37,000	15%
60–69	229,500	10%	33,600	14%
70–79	133,400	6%	18,800	8%
80+	68,800	3%	7,300	3%
Total	**2,269,700**		**246,300**	

Sources: King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020.
Notes: Population values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.

Table 4.7-5, Age and Gender Demographics, provides the numbers and percentages of youth (under 18 years) and elder (over 65 years) populations, as well as those for female and male populations in King County as a whole and unincorporated King County (for both urban unincorporated and rural King County). Compared to King County as a whole, unincorporated King County has a higher percentage of youth and elder population. The youth population is similar across the two geographies (20 to 22 percent), while the elder population is 4 percent higher for unincorporated King County as a whole. Urban unincorporated and rural portions of King County have similar percentages of youth population, while rural King County has a higher share of elder population.[184] In terms of gender distribution, King County, unincorporated King County, urban unincorporated King County, and rural King County are all within 1 percent of a 50/50 distribution.

Table 4.7-5. Age and Gender Demographics

	King County		Unincorporated King County		Urban Unincorporated King County		Rural King County	
	Population	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**
Total Population	2,269,700		246,300		118,700		127,500	
Age[a]								
Youth Population	456,200	20%	54,800	22%	27,100	23%	27,700	22%
Elder Population	306,200	13%	41,300	17%	18,100	15%	23,200	18%
Gender								
Female Population	1,133,000	50%	122,200	50%	59,300	50%	62,900	49%
Male Population	1,136,600	50%	124,000	50%	59,400	50%	64,600	51%

Source: King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020.
Notes: Population values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.
[a] Youth Population includes those under 18 years of age; Elder Population includes those over 65 years of age.

[184] King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020.

Education

Table 4.7-6, Education Demographics, compares education level by number and percentage between King County, unincorporated King County, and Washington State. Unincorporated King County (6 percent), King County as a whole (6 percent), and Washington State (9 percent) have low percentages of the population with less than a high school diploma or equivalent. King County and unincorporated King County have similar levels of educational attainment, though King County as a whole has a greater share of residents with a graduate or professional degree (22 percent in King County compared to 17 percent in unincorporated King County), while unincorporated King County has a greater share of residents with a high school diploma (18 percent in unincorporated King County compared to 15 percent in King County). The greatest share of residents over age 25 in unincorporated King County and King County as a whole have a bachelor's degree (30 percent and 32 percent respectively), King County overall has a higher percentage of the population with some amount of college education (79 percent), which is similar to unincorporated King County (76 percent), and higher compared to Washington state's population (70 percent).[185]

Table 4.7-6. Education Demographics

	King County		Unincorporated King County		Washington State	
Education Level	**Population**	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**
Population 25 years and over	**1,594,800**		**208,700**		**5,199,800**	
Less than 9th grade	52,400	3%	5,400	3%	181,400	4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	52,500	3%	7,100	3%	250,000	5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	236,800	15%	38,100	18%	1,133,700	22%
Some college, no degree	274,400	17%	41,800	20%	1,201,500	23%
Associate's degree	126,900	8%	18,700	9%	525,900	10%
Bachelor's degree	506,000	32%	61,800	30%	1,183,900	23%
Graduate or professional degree	345,900	22%	35,700	17%	723,300	14%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016–2020 5-year American Community Survey for King County and Washington State, 2022.
Notes: Population values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.

[185] U.S. Census Bureau, 2016–2020 5-year American Community Survey for King County and Washington State, 2022.

Language

Table 4.7-7, Language Demographics, compares languages spoken at home and English proficiency for King County as a whole and unincorporated King County. Both populations have a majority of households that only speak English. For Unincorporated King County, the second most common language spoken at home is Spanish (6 percent). For the population of King County as a whole, Spanish was also the second most common language spoken at home (7 percent), followed by Chinese (4 percent), and then other Indo-European languages (4 percent) and Other Asian and Pacific Island Languages (4 percent). Unincorporated King County has a similar or lower percentage of households that speak a language other than English at home for every language when compared to King County as a whole. Unincorporated King County also has 7 percent more households that speak only English at home compared to King County as a whole.

Table 4.7-7. Language Demographics

	King County		Unincorporated King County	
Language Spoken at Home	**Population**	**Percentage**	**Population**	**Percentage**
Only English	1,502,400	72%	158,700	79%
Spanish	138,100	7%	11,400	6%
Chinese, including Mandarin and Cantonese	91,800	4%	3,800	2%
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic Languages	40,200	2%	4,200	2%
Vietnamese	36,100	2%	4,000	2%
Tagalog, including Filipino	27,000	1%	1,900	<1%
Korean	23,000	1%	1,000	<1%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	13,300	<1%	1,100	<1%
German or other West Germanic Languages	10,700	<1%	1,000	<1%
Arabic	10,100	<1%	600	<1%
Other Indo-European Languages [a]	80,500	4%	3,400	2%
Other Asian and Pacific Island Languages	76,100	4%	4,600	2%
Other Languages not Listed	48,000	2%	4,600	2%
Total [b]	2,097,200		200,100	
English Proficiency	**Households**	**Percentage**	**Households**	**Percentage**
English Proficiency	848,000	94%	74,600	96%
Limited English Proficiency	52,100	6%	3,100	4%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016–2020 5-year American Community Survey for King County and Washington State, 2022; King County, Public review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B: Housing Needs Assessment, 2023.
Notes: Language spoken at home reported by number of individuals, and English proficiency reported by number of households. Population and household values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.

[a] Indo-European Languages include French, Haitian, Italian, Portuguese, German, Russian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Ukrainian or other Slavic languages, Armenian, Persian (including Farsi, Dari), Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Nepali, Marathi or other Indic languages, other Indo-European languages (Albanian, Lithuanian, Pashto/Pushto, Romanian, Swedish), Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, or other Dravidian languages.

[b] Total population in this table is the population age 5 and up.

Disabled Population

Table 4.7-8, Disabled Population Demographics, provides the numbers and percentages of disabled populations in King County as a whole, as well as in unincorporated King County. The percentage of the population with a disability in unincorporated King County is about the same as that in King County as a whole (9 percent and 10 percent, respectively). The breakdown of the population of King County having a disability by race and ethnicity indicates that many racial groups have a higher percentage of people with disabilities compared to the total population. For example, 17 percent of the AIAN population has a disability, followed by the Black/African American population (12 percent), and the NHOPI population (11 percent). People identifying as Other Race, Asian, Hispanic or Latino, and Two or More Races have lower percentages of disabled populations relative to the county percentage of those with a disability (10 percent).

Table 4.7-8. Disabled Population Demographics

	King County	Unincorporated King County
Total Population (2019)[a]	2,182,500	309,700
Disabled Population (2019)	206,400	28,500
Percentage of Total Population	10%	9%
Percent Population with a Disability by Race/Ethnicity[b]		
White alone	11%	–
Black/African American alone	12%	–
AIAN alone	17%	–
Asian alone	6%	–
NHOPI alone	11%	–
Other Race	6%	–
Two or More Races	9%	–
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	11%	–
Hispanic or Latino Origin (of any race)	7%	–

Source: King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, 2015-2019 5-year American Community Survey.
Note: Population values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.
[a] Total population in this table is the civilian, noninstitutionalized population.
[b] Race and ethnicity demographics for disabled populations are only available for King County as a whole, due to geography limitations to preserve confidentiality.

Housing Tenure

Table 4.7-9, Housing Tenure by Race and Ethnicity, includes both the numbers and percentages of households by tenure for King County as a whole and unincorporated King County. For King County as a whole, 57 percent of households own their homes, while 43 percent are renters. For unincorporated King County, the percentage of homeowners is higher (78 percent of households), and the percentage of renters is lower (22 percent of households). Further, the percentage of homeowners in rural unincorporated King County (83 percent) is higher than the percentage of homeowners within urban unincorporated King County (63 percent). The higher proportion of homeowners in unincorporated King County compared to King County as a whole, particularly in the Rural Area, may be an indicator that homes are more affordable to buy in unincorporated King County.

Table 4.7-9. Housing Tenure by Race and Ethnicity

	King County		Unincorporated King County					
			Total Unincorporated King County		Rural		Urban	
Tenure	**Households**	**Percentage**	**Households**	**Percentage**	**Households**	**Percentage**	**Households**	**Percentage**
Homeowner	502,300	57%	86,700	78%	58,200	83%	28,500	68%
Renter	379,700	43%	25,100	22%	11,700	17%	13,400	32%
Total Households	**882,000**		**111,800**		**69,900**		**41,900**	
	Homeowner	**Renters**	**Homeowner**	**Renters**				
White	61%	39%	88%	12%				
Black/African American	28%	72%	43%	57%				
AIAN	43%	57%	52%	48%				
Asian	58%	42%	75%	25%				
NHOPI	23%	77%	81%	19%				
Other Race	32%	68%	40%	60%				
Two or More Races	41%	59%	66%	34%				

Source: King County 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data; King County, Public review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B: Housing Needs Assessment, 2023.
Note: Household values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.

The table also indicates that while non-White households are more likely to rent their homes in King County as a whole, racial groups have higher rates of homeownership in unincorporated King County. In unincorporated King County, Other Race households, and Black/African American households are more likely to be renters (60 percent and 57 percent, respectively), while 48 percent of AIAN households, 34 percent of Two or More Race households, 25 percent of Asian households, 19 percent of NHOPI households, and 12 percent of White households rent their homes.[186]

[186] King County, 2023 analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data, Decennial Census, 2020.

Homelessness

Table 4.7-10, Sheltered and Unsheltered Individuals Experiencing Homelessness, looks at the living conditions for individuals experiencing homelessness in King County overall. Of the approximately 13,400 individuals experiencing homelessness in the county, approximately 7,600 of them are unsheltered (57 percent), while approximately 5,800 are sheltered (43 percent). These data are not readily publicly available for unincorporated King County.

Table 4.7-10. Sheltered and Unsheltered Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Status	Number of Individuals
Unsheltered	7,600
Sheltered	5,800
Total	**13,400**

Source: King County, Public Review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B: Housing Needs Assessment, 2023.

Table 4.7-11, Households Experiencing Homelessness by Race and Ethnicity of Head of Households, examines how homelessness trends differ by race in King County. It focuses on the percentage of households experiencing homelessness compared to the overall percentage of the county's population by race and ethnicity. White and Asian households experience homelessness at a lower percentage than their makeup in the overall population. However, every other racial group experiences a higher percentage of homelessness than their overall percentage in King County's population.

For example, AIAN households experience homelessness at rates nine times greater than their percentage of the county population, NHOPI households experience homelessness at rates over four times greater, and Black/African American households experience homelessness at rates over three times greater. These data are not readily publicly available for unincorporated King County.

Table 4.7-11. Households Experiencing Homelessness by Race and Ethnicity of Head of Households

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of King County Households Experiencing Homelessness	Overall Percentage of King County Population
Total Households (2020)	882,000	
Total Population (2020)	2,269,700	
White	48%	64%
Black/African American	25%	7%
AIAN	9%	1%
Asian	2%	21%
NHOPI	4%	<1%
Two or More Races	13%	6%
Hispanic or Latino [a]	17%	10%

Source: King County, Public Review Draft of 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B: Housing Needs Assessment, 2023
Notes: AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native; NHOPI = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.
Population values rounded to the nearest 100, and percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. Rounding may affect totals.
[a] Population may belong to any race.

Housing Affordability

As discussed in detail in Section 4.3, Housing, the current supply of affordable housing is insufficient and especially affects individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; people with disabilities; people with low incomes; and other people from historically underserved populations. In addition, housing costs in King County have also increased rapidly, with the median list prices increasing to $850,000 in March 2022, or by 50 percent between July 2016 and March 2022 (see Section 4.3.2.3, Housing Affordability). Median rents in King County are slightly more affordable but are still out of reach for most low-income and other historically underserved populations. In the fourth quarter of 2022, the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment was $1,898 (see Section 4.3.2.3, Housing Affordability).

4.7.3 Environmental Consequences

4.7.3.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the County can anticipate a continuation of trends and the implementation of Current Plan policies related to health, equity, and social and environmental justice.

According to the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, progress is being made toward improving equity and socioeconomic conditions in the county, but improvements are still needed. Underproduction of housing continues to limit supply and contribute to lack of affordability. Housing cost burden is still high for low-income and renter households, particularly for those making less than 80 percent of AMI, and nearly 60 percent of urban unincorporated King County's development capacity is in neighborhoods with an elevated risk for displacement. Over 40 percent of residents in urban unincorporated King County do not live near healthy food options, and nearly half of urban unincorporated residents have limited access to nearby parks and open spaces.[187]

As discussed in more detail in Section 4.3, Housing, housing is anticipated to become even less affordable over time as both rents and home prices continue to rise. This continued lack of affordability is due, at least in part, to the fact that housing supply is not keeping up with the pace of growth under the Current Plan. This, coupled with no significant change in the production and preservation of income-restricted housing, would continue to put pressure on the limited available affordable housing options for low-income and other underserved communities. The high housing costs increase financial burdens on vulnerable communities in both unincorporated King County and the county as a whole. It is anticipated that differential rates of homeownership by race and income will also continue to persist under the Current Plan. Some additional income-restricted units are anticipated to be developed in urban unincorporated King County, especially in Skyway-West Hill and North Highline where affordable units have been developed, but these would not be sufficient to meet the unmet and growing demand for affordable housing. In addition, an increase in the diversity of housing types under the No Action Alternative could result from King County potentially encouraging the development of ADUs within the UGA based on changes to the GMA.

Access to and availability of public transit options differentially affect low-income and other underserved populations and those who are unable to drive, such as elderly and youth. The network of public transit provides these groups access to places of work, health facilities, healthy food, and recreation opportunities. Per the discussion under the No Action Alternative in Section 4.6,

[187] King County, 2022 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report, March 2022. [LINK]

Transportation, while current levels of investments in transit and transit-oriented development would continue, the Road Services Division faces a growing maintenance backlog and deficient revenue to address it. This would impact funding for future transportation infrastructure investments, resulting in further degradation of the existing roadway and nonmotorized transportation network, including routes to access public transit.

Access to parks and other recreation sites provides all residents opportunities to stay physically and emotionally healthy. Parks located in or near neighborhoods with low-income and other underserved households, or those that are accessible through public transport, can provide low-cost and healthy recreation to these groups. As elaborated in Section 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation, the King County Open Space Plan, along with other County initiatives, will continue to expand the parks and open space system under the No Action Alternative. This could lead to more parks in or near neighborhoods with low-income and other underserved households and potentially provide better access to healthy recreation to these communities.

4.7.3.2 Action Alternatives

Impacts Common to Both Action Alternatives

As described in Chapter 2, Proposed Action and Alternatives, the 2024 Update seeks to advance equitable outcomes around housing, health, and climate resiliency, particularly for historically underserved populations. The proposed action alternatives would generally result in these socioeconomic benefits through proposals that improve access to such things as affordable housing, parks and open space, public transit, and a healthy environment. As a result, no significant adverse socioeconomic impacts are expected under either of the action alternatives.

As elaborated in Section 4.3, Housing, under both action alternatives, it is anticipated that additional housing densities would be created in some residential zones through some of the action alternative proposals. These would not only increase the number of housing units within unincorporated King County, but also add more diversity to housing options. A diverse supply of lower-cost housing options created through the development of apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, or cottage-style detached housing would potentially increase affordable options for low-to moderate income- households and provide additional ownership opportunities for moderate-income households in an expensive housing market. Proposals such as changes to the Residential Density Incentive Program and inclusionary housing are especially anticipated to add income-restricted affordable housing production within King County. Therefore, compared to the No Action Alternative, both action alternatives would provide more housing options for low-income and other underserved communities within unincorporated King County.

While proposals to increase housing density near transit and employment areas would increase opportunities for affordable housing, they could also pose an increase in the risk of displacement for existing households and businesses as compared to the No Action Alternative. However, the extent of the risk is unknown as it would depend on the location and extent of any new developments. In addition, the action alternatives include proposed strategies and incentives to avoid displacements in addition to the existing laws and regulations that govern displacements and relocations.

Development of permanent and temporary emergency shelters is anticipated under both action alternatives. These could benefit extremely low-income individuals and households and those at the risk of becoming homeless in unincorporated King County.

As described further in Section 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation, both action alternatives strive to expand and improve access to local parks, green spaces, open spaces, and recreational facilities in urban unincorporated areas and Opportunity Areas. To varying degrees, both action alternatives would increase such opportunities in urban unincorporated areas and address disparities in access to parks, open space, and recreational opportunities for underserved populations.

Comparison of Action Alternatives

As stated previously, both action alternatives would generally result in socioeconomic benefits through policies that improve access to such things as affordable housing, parks and open space, public transit, and a healthy environment for historically underserved populations. The key difference between the two action alternatives is the scale and intensity at which advances toward these equity goals are pursued.

Both action alternatives support proposals that could lead to an increase in the number of housing units and diversity of housing options available in unincorporated King County to add to the supply of affordable housing. However, such proposals would be pursued more aggressively under the Extensive Change Alternative compared to the Limited Change Alternative. For example, in comparison to the Limited Change Alternative, the Extensive Change Alternative would allow for a higher number of units per acre in the Urban Area and Rural Area, include stronger requirements to increase density development near transit and employment, include a greater expansion of inclusionary housing requirements, and make more extensive changes to the Residential Density Incentive Program to encourage more affordable housing.

The Extensive Change Alternative could pose a larger risk of displacement for existing households and businesses than the Limited Change Alternative, as proposals that increase density, particularly within existing urban areas near transit and employment centers, could increase land values and spur redevelopment, creating economic and physical displacement pressure. As stated previously however, the extent of that risk is unknown as it would depend on the location and extent of any new developments. At the same time, the Extensive Change Alternative includes more robust strategies and incentives than the Limited Change Alternative to address displacement through the protection and support of existing residents and businesses.

Both action alternatives would expand access to public spaces, recreational facilities, and trail access in urban unincorporated areas, and particularly within Opportunity Areas, which would help increase equitable access to parks, open spaces, and recreational resources. However, in comparison to the Limited Change Alternative, the Extensive Change Alternative would include requirements for construction of parks and open spaces as opposed to simply encouraging the construction of parks and open spaces. In addition, the Extensive Change Alternative would include more robust requirements to address heat islands through tree retention and green infrastructure, which would help contribute to a healthier outdoor environment.

4.7.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

No unavoidable and significant adverse impacts to minority, low-income, and other underserved communities are expected under either the Limited Change Alternative or the Extensive Change Alternative, so no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that minimize potential disproportionate impacts to these groups.

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5.5 Distribution List

Auburn School District
Bellevue School District
Cedar River Water and Sewer District
City of Algona
City of Auburn
City of Bellevue
City of Black Diamond
City of Bothell
City of Burien
City of Carnation
City of Clyde Hill
City of Covington
City of Des Moines
City of Duvall
City of Enumclaw
City of Federal Way
City of Hunts Point
City of Issaquah
City of Kenmore
City of Kent
City of Kirkland
City of Lake Forest Park
City of Maple Valley
City of Medina
City of Mercer Island
City of Milton
City of Newcastle
City of Normandy Park
City of North Bend
City of Pacific
City of Redmond
City of Renton
City of Sammamish
City of SeaTac
City of Seattle
City of Shoreline
City of Snoqualmie
City of Tukwila
City of Woodinville
City of Yarrow Point
Coal Creek Utility District
Covington Water District
East Pierce Fire & Rescue
Enumclaw Fire Department
Enumclaw School District
Federal Way School District
Fife School District
Highlands Sewer District
Highline School District
Highline Water District
Issaquah School District
Kent School District
King County Department of Local Services
King County Department of Metro Transit
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
King County Fire District #2
King County Fire Protection District No. 16
King County Fire Protection District No. 20
King County Fire Protection District No. 27
King County Fire Protection District No. 34
King County Fire Protection District No. 40
King County Fire Protection District No. 45
King County Fire Protection District No. 47
King County Fire Protection District No. 50
King County Fire Protection District No.10 & 38
King County Parks Division
King County Sheriff
King County Solid Waste Division
King County Wastewater Division
King County Water District 119
King County Water District 125
King County Water District 19
King County Water District 20
King County Water District 49
King County Water District 54
King County Water District 90
Kittitas County
Lake Forest Park Water District
Lake Meridian Water District
Lake Washington School District
Lakehaven Water and Sewer District
Mercer Island School District
Midway Sewer District

Mountain View Fire and Rescue

Muckleshoot Tribe
North City Water District
North Highline Fire District
Northeast Sammamish Sewer and Water District
Northshore School District
Northshore Utility District
Pierce County
PSRC
Puget Sound Clean Air Agency
Puget Sound Partnership
Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (37&43)
Puyallup Tribe
Renton Regional Fire Authority & KC Fire Protection District PD No. 25
Renton School District
Riverview School District
Samish Indian Nation
Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District
Seattle Public Utilities
Seattle School District
Shoreline Fire Department
Shoreline School District
Skykomish School District
Skyway Water and Sewer District
Snohomish County
Snoqualmie Pass Fire Department
Snoqualmie Pass Utility District
Snoqualmie Tribe
Snoqualmie Valley School District
Soos Creek Water and Sewer District
Sound Transit
South King Fire and Rescue
Southwest Suburban Sewer District
Squaxin Island Tribe
Stillaguamish Tribe
Suquamish Tribe
Tahoma School District
Town of Beaux Arts Village
Town of Skykomish
Tukwila School District
Tulalip Tribe
Valley Regional Fire Authority
Valley View Sewer District
Vashon Island Fire and Rescue
Vashon Island School District
Vashon Sewer District
WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
WA State Department of Archaeology
WA State Department of Commerce
WA State Department of Health
WA State Department of Natural Resources
WA State Department of Transportation
WA State Department of Wildlife
WA State Dept of Agriculture
Woodinville Fire & Rescue
Woodinville Water District

5.6 Special Status Species

The following tables support Section 3.3, Wildlife and Habitat. Table 5.6-1, Summary of Special Status Designations, describes the types of federal and state designations for listed species that are referenced in subsequent tables, including endangered, threatened, proposed endangered or threatened, candidate endangered or threatened, and sensitive species. Table 5.6-2, Special Status Animal Species in King County, lists the federally or state-listed animal species that are known or thought to occur in King County, in addition to those listed in the Current Plan and/or 2024 Update as Species of Local Importance. Table 5.6-3, Special Status Plant Species in King County, lists the federally or state-listed plant species that are known or thought to occur in King County.

Table 5.6-1. Summary of Special Status Designations

Federal Designations		Washington State Designations	
Endangered	Species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.	Endangered	Species in danger of becoming extinct or extirpated from Washington.
Threatened	Species likely to become Endangered in the foreseeable future.	Threatened	Species likely to become Endangered in Washington.
Proposed	Species formally proposed for listing as Endangered or Threatened, but no formal rule yet.	Sensitive	Vulnerable, or declining species that could become Threatened or Endangered in Washington.
Candidate	Species being evaluated for potential listing as Endangered or Threatened, but not formal proposal published yet.	Candidate	Species being evaluated for listing as Threatened or Endangered based on best available science.

Source: WDFW, Understanding Conservation Categories for Washington Wildlife: Endangered and Protected, May 2023. [LINK]; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Listing Status, 2023. [LINK]

Table 5.6-2. Special Status Animal Species in King County

			Listing Status		Species of Local Importance	
Animal Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal	State	Current Plan	2024 Update
Bird	American bittern	*Botaurus lentiginosus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	American three-toed woodpecker	*Picoides tridactylus*				Yes
Bird	Bald Eagle[a]	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*				Yes
Bird	Barrow's Goldeneye	*Bucephala islandica*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Belted kingfisher	*Ceryle alcyon*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Black Scoter	*Melanitta nigra*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Black-Backed Woodpecker	*Picoides arcticus*		Candidate		Yes
Bird	Bufflehead	*Bucephala albeola*				Yes
Bird	Cinnamon teal	*Anas cyanoptera*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Common Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Common Loon	*Gavia immer*		Sensitive		Yes
Bird	Golden Eagle	*Aquila chrysaetos*		Candidate		Yes

Table 5.6-2. Special Status Animal Species in King County (continued)

Animal Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Listing Status		Species of Local Importance	
			Federal	State	Current Plan	2024 Update
Bird	Great Blue Heron[a]	*Ardea herodias*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Hairy Woodpecker	*Picoides villosus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Harlequin Duck	*Histrionicus histrionicus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Hooded merganser	*Lophodytes cucullatus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Marbled Murrelet[a]	*Brachyramphus marmoratus*	Threatened	Endangered		Yes
Bird	Northern Goshawk[a]	*Accipiter gentilis*		Candidate		Yes
Bird	Northern Spotted Owl[a]	*Strix occidentalis*	Threatened	Endangered		Yes
Bird	Olive-sided Flycatcher	*Contopus cooperi*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Oregon Vesper Sparrow	*Pooecetes gramineus affinis*	Under Review	Endangered		Yes
Bird	Osprey[a]	*Pandion haliaetus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Pacific coast band-tailed pigeon	*Columba fasciata*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Peregrine Falcon[a]	*Falco peregrinus*				Yes
Bird	Pileated Woodpecker	*Dryocopus pileatus*				Yes
Bird	Purple Finch	*Carpodacus purpureus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Purple Martin	*Progne subis*				Yes
Bird	Sooty grouse	*Dendragapus fuliginosus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Surf Scoter	*Melanitta perspicillata*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Trumpeter Swan	*Cygnus buccinator*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Tundra Swan	*Cygnus columbianus*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Vaux's Swift[a]	*Chaetura vauxi*				Yes
Bird	Waterfowl Concentrations (Anatidae excluding Canada Geese in Urban Areas)	*Varies*				Yes
Bird	Western Grebe	*Aechmophorus occidentalis*		Candidate	Yes	Yes
Bird	Western High Arctic Brant	*Branta bernicla*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Western Meadowlark	*Sturnella neglecta*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Western Washington nonbreeding concentrations of Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*), Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), and Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*)	*Varies*				Yes
Bird	Western Washington nonbreeding concentrations	*Varies*				Yes

Table 5.6-2. Special Status Animal Species in King County (continued)

Animal Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Listing Status		Species of Local Importance	
			Federal	State	Current Plan	2024 Update
	of plovers (*Charadriidae*) and sandpipers (*Scolopacidae*), and phalaropes (*Phalaropodidae*)					
Bird	White-winged Scoter	*Melanitta fusca*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Wood duck	*Aix sponsa*			Yes	Yes
Bird	Yellow-Billed Cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	Threatened	Endangered		Yes
Fish	Bocaccio Rockfish	*Sebastes paucispinis*	Endangered			Yes
Fish	Brown Rockfish	*Sebastes auriculatus*				Yes
Fish	Bull Trout	*Salvelinus confluentus*	Threatened	Candidate		Yes
Fish	Canary Rockfish	*Sebastes pinniger*	Threatened			Yes
Fish	Chinook Salmon (Puget Sound)	*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*	Threatened			Yes
Fish	Chum salmon	*Oncorhynchus keta*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Coastal resident/searun cutthroat	*Oncorhynchus clarki clarki*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Coho/silver salmon	*Oncorhynchus kisutch*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Copper rockfish	*Sebastes caurinus*				Yes
Fish	Dolly Varden	*Salvelinus malma*			Yes	Yes
Fish	English sole	*Parophrys vetulus*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Kokanee salmon	*Oncorhynchus nerka*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Lingcod	*Ophiodon elongatus*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Longfin smelt	*Spirinchus thaleichthys*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Olympic mudminnow	*Novumbra hubbsi*		Sensitive		Yes
Fish	Pacific herring	*Clupea pallasii*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Pacific lamprey	*Entosphenus tridentatus*				Yes
Fish	Pacific sand lance	*Ammodytes hexapterus*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Pink salmon	*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Pygmy whitefish	*Prosopium coulteri*		Sensitive		Yes
Fish	Quillback rockfish	*Sebastes maliger*				Yes
Fish	Rainbow trout	*Oncorhynchus mykiss*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Sockeye/red salmon	*Oncorhynchus nerka*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Southern rock sole	*Pleuronectes bilineatus*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Steelhead (Puget Sound)	*Oncorhynchus mykiss*	Threatened	Candidate		Yes
Fish	Surf smelt	*Hypomesus pretiosus*			Yes	Yes
Fish	Western river lamprey	*Lampetra ayresii*		Candidate	Yes	Yes
Fish	White sturgeon	*Acipenser transmontanus*			Yes	Yes

Table 5.6-2. Special Status Animal Species in King County (continued)

Animal Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Listing Status		Species of Local Importance	
			Federal	State	Current Plan	2024 Update
Fish	Yelloweye rockfish	*Sebastes ruberrimus*	Threatened			Yes
Mammal	California sea lion	*Zalophus californianus*				Yes
Mammal	Cascade red fox	*Vulpes vulpes cascadensis*		Endangered		Yes
Mammal	Columbian black-tailed deer	*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*			Yes	No
Mammal	Dall's porpoise	*Phocoenoides dalli*				Yes
Mammal	Douglas squirrel	*Tamiasciurus douglasii*				Yes
Mammal	Fisher	*Martes pennanti*		Endangered		Yes
Mammal	Gray whale	*Eschrichtius robustus*	Endangered	Sensitive		Yes
Mammal	Gray wolf[b]	*Canis lupus*	Endangered	Endangered		Yes
Mammal	Harbor porpoise	*Phocoena phocoena*		Candidate		Yes
Mammal	Harbor seal	*Phoca vitulina*				Yes
Mammal	Hoary marmot	*Marmota caligata*				Yes
Mammal	Killer (Orca) whale	*Orcinus orca*	Endangered	Endangered		Yes
Mammal	Mink	*Mustela vison*			Yes	No
Mammal	Mountain goat	*Oreamnos americanus*			Yes	Yes
Mammal	Northern flying squirrel	*Glaucomys sabrinus*				Yes
Mammal	Pacific marten	*Martes caurina*			Yes	Yes
Mammal	Pika	*Ochotona princeps*			Yes	Yes
Mammal	Roosevelt elk	*Cervus canadensis roosevelti*			Yes	Yes
Mammal	Steller sea lion	*Eumetopias jubatus*				Yes
Mammal	Townsend chipmunk	*Tamias townsendii*				Yes
Mammal	Townsend's big-eared bat[a]	*Corynorhinus townsendii*		Candidate		Yes
Mammal	Wolverine	*Gulo gulo*	Proposed Threatened	Candidate		Yes
Amphibian	Larch mountain salamander	*Plethodon larselli*		Sensitive		Yes
Amphibian	Northern red-legged frog				Yes	Yes
Amphibian	Oregon spotted frog	*Rana pretiosa*	Threatened	Endangered		Yes
Amphibian	Western toad	*Bufo boreas*		Candidate		Yes
Reptile	Northwestern pond turtle	*Actinemys marmorata*	Proposed Threatened	Endangered		Yes
Reptile	Western fence lizard	*Sceloporus occidentalis*			Yes	Yes
Mollusk	Blue-gray taildropper	*Prophysaon coeruleum*		Candidate		Yes
Mollusk	Butter clam	*Saxidomus giganteus*				Yes
Mollusk	Native littleneck clam	*Leukoma staminea*				Yes
Mollusk	Olympia oyster	*Ostrea lurida*				Yes

Table 5.6-2. Special Status Animal Species in King County (continued)

Animal Type	Common Name	Scientific Name	Listing Status		Species of Local Importance	
			Federal	State	Current Plan	2024 Update
Mollusk	Oregon floater	*Anodonta oregonensis*			Yes	Yes
Mollusk	Pacific geoduck	*Panopea generosa*			Yes	No
Mollusk	Pacific oyster	*Crassostrea gigas*			Yes	No
Mollusk	Western floater	*Anodonta kennerlyi*			Yes	No
Mollusk	Western pearlshell mussel	*Margaritifera falcata*			Yes	Yes
Mollusk	Western ridged mussel	*Gonidea angulata*			Yes	Yes
Shellfish	Dungeness crab	*Cancer magister*			Yes	Yes
Shellfish	Pandalid shrimp	*Pandalus* species			Yes	Yes
Arthropod	Beller's ground beetle	*Agonum belleri*		Candidate		Yes
Arthropod	Hatch's click beetle	*Eanus hatchii*		Candidate		Yes
Arthropod	Johnson's hairstreak	*Mitoura johnsoni*		Candidate		Yes
Arthropod	Pacific clubtail	*Phanogomphus kurilis*		Candidate		Yes
Arthropod	Valley silverspot	*Speyeria zerene bremnerii*		Candidate		Yes
Arthropod	Western bumble bee	*Bombus occidentalis*	Under Review	Candidate		Yes

Source: King County DNRP 2023.

[a] Species with special regulations in King County Code.

[b] Not presently in King County, but former range is in the Cascade Mountains of King County.

Table 5.6-3. Special Status Plant Species in King County

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status
Tall bugbane	*Actaea elata* var. *elata*		Sensitive
Swamp sandwort	*Arenaria paludicola*	Endangered	
Triangular-lobed moonwort	*Botrychium ascendens*	Sensitive	Threatened
Western moonwort	*Botrychium hesperium*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Stalked moonwort	*Botrychium pedunculosum*	Threatened	Sensitive
Harvest brodiaea	*Brodiaea rosea* ssp. *rosea*		Sensitive
Alaska harebell	*Campanula lasiocarpa*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Few-flowered sedge	*Carex pauciflora*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Northern beaked sedge	*Carex rostrata*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Long-styled sedge	*Carex stylosa*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Clubmoss mountain-heather	*Cassiope lycopodioides*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Golden paintbrush[a]	*Castilleja levisecta*		Threatened
Golden chinquapin	*Chrysolepis chrysophylla* var. *chrysophylla*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Weak thistle	*Cirsium remotifolium* var. *remotifolium*	Sensitive	Endangered

Table 5.6-3. Special Status Plant Species in King County (continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Status
Spleenwort-leaved goldthread	*Coptis asplenifolia*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Tree clubmoss	*Dendrolycopodium dendroideum*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Spotted Joe-pye weed	*Eutrochium maculatum* var. *bruneri*		Sensitive
Kamchatka fritillary	*Fritillaria camschatcensis*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Swamp gentian	*Gentiana douglasiana*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Oregon goldenweed	*Heterotheca oregona*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Large St. Johns'-wort	*Hypericum majus*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Pacific peavine	*Lathyrus vestitus* var. *ochropetalus*		Endangered
Water lobelia	*Lobelia dortmanna*		Sensitive
Northern bog clubmoss	*Lycopodiella inundata*	Sensitive	Sensitive
One-cone clubmoss	*Lycopodium lagopus*	Sensitive	Sensitive
White meconella	*Meconella oregana*	Sensitive	Endangered
Branched meconella	*Montia diffusa*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Old field blue toadflax	*Nuttallanthus canadensis*		Sensitive
Texas blue toadflax	*Nuttallanthus texanus*		Sensitive
Brewer's cliffbrake	*Pellaea breweri*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Whitebark pine	*Pinus albicaulis*	Proposed Threatened	Sensitive
Choriso's bog-orchid	*Platanthera chorisiana*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Columbia white-topped aster	*Sericocarpus rigidus*	Sensitive	Sensitive
Flat-leaved bladderwort	*Utricularia intermedia*	Sensitive	Sensitive

Source: Washington Natural Heritage Program, 2021 Washington Vascular Plant Species of Conservation Concern, 2021. [LINK]
Notes: All plant species listed in the table above have been added to the King County Species of Local Importance list for the 2024 Update and are not currently listed in the Current Plan.

[a] Federally delisted as of August 18, 2023, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Act list. [LINK]

Appendix A

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Responses to Public Comments

FINAL EIS Appendix

This is a new appendix that has been added as part of the Final EIS. It is not shown as underlined for ease of the reader.

This appendix contains King County's responses to public comments on the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) that were received during the comment period between December 7, 2023, and January 31, 2024. The County reviewed all comments that were received and prepared the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update Final EIS (Final EIS) consistent with WAC 197-11-560, which requires the agency to consider comments on the proposal and respond in one of the following ways:

(a) Modifying alternatives.

(b) Developing and evaluating new alternatives.

(c) Supplementing, improving, or modifying the analysis.

(d) Making factual corrections.

(e) Explaining why no further agency response is warranted.

A majority of comments received during the public comment period on the Draft EIS express a policy preference regarding the 2024 Update rather than input on the Draft EIS. For those types of comments, the County may consider them as part of the 2024 Update process, but no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

	Comments	Proposed Response
1	**Commenter: "County Citizen"** SECTION 43 20.20.035 Establishes community meeting requirements for certain types of development permits, including allowing citizens to propose alternative sites for the development proposal Removes reference to "citizen" Amendments propose removing references to the term "citizen" from the development regulations are proposed to be consistent with changes made with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan that reflect that **the County serves all members of the public, regardless of citizenship status**. This is not true and totally irresponsible to spend our county tax money, generated by Citizens of the county, to be given to illegal invaders. The county is a mess and the county is concerned with giving away our tax dollars to invaders?	This comment expresses a policy preference rather than input on the Draft EIS. Although the County may consider it as part of the 2024 Update process, no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

	Comments	Proposed Response
	Then county has no duty nor a requirement to serve anyone who is not a Citizen of the County. You can not be a Citizen if you are an illegal invader. To pretend like we have some sort of responsibility to these invaders is ludicrous and laughable. Oh and how about all your special POC only programs? What about the State Constitution? SECTION 12 SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES PROHIBITED. No law shall be passed granting to any citizen, class of citizens, or corporation other than municipal, **privileges** or immunities which upon the same terms shall not **equally belong to all citizens**, or corporations. This is being totally ignored and infringed upon by the State and the County by allowing them privileges to monies not afforded to all citizens. People are getting fed up with you.	
2	**Commenter: Diane Pottinger, District Manager, North City Water District** In reviewing Appendix, A, Section I Capital Facilities, C Capital Facilities Inventories and Planning, 2 Facilities provided by other public entities. The table of public water systems on page A-7 is missing our utility, North City Water District. We had previously been known as Shoreline Water District during the County's last water system plan but changed our name effective 1/1/2014. It was approved by Ordinance 19266 was approved on 4/15/2021. We would appreciate getting it corrected in the final Comprehensive Plan.	The table of public water systems on page A-7 lists the public water systems serving unincorporated King County. Because the North City Water District serves the incorporated cities of Shoreline and Lake Forest Park, it is not included. Reference to the Shoreline Water District (now the North City Water District) was also removed from Section 4.1, Utilities and Public Services, of the Final EIS.

	Comments	Proposed Response
3	**Commenter: Peter Rimbos, Joint team of Rural Area Organizations** My name is Peter Rimbos. I am the Coordinator for the Joint Team which consists of *Enumclaw Plateau Community Association, Friends of Sammamish Valley, Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council, Green River Coalition, Green Valley/Lake Holm Association, Hollywood Hill Association, Soos Creek Area Response, Upper Bear Creek Unincorporated Area Council, and Vashon-Maury Island Community Council*. We also have three Rural Technical Consultants: Ken Konigsmark—Growth Management Focal; Mike Birdsall—Transportation Focal; and Terry Lavender— Environment/Open Space Focal. With respect to the *Draft EIS*, we support much of what is described in the ***Extensive Change Alternative*** considered, such as: *"Require cities to pay impact fees and implement traffic demand management strategies for large developments that impact unincorporated areas;" however*, we do have several concerns: (1) *Greater land conversions in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands and urban development in the Rural Area.* (2) *"… greater urban development within unincorporated rural areas. Tourism, resort, and economic development-oriented buildings … allowed to a greater degree in the Rural Area, on Natural Resource Lands, and within agricultural zones…"* (3) *"Allow additional clearing of trees and vegetation in unincorporated King County, without a permit, for habitable structures and utilities."* (4) *"Make substantive updates to the 4:1 program requirements, such as allowing for: a reduced open space ratio…noncontiguous open space…nonresidential projects…and projects not likely to be timely annexed."* (5) *"Modify and expand the TDR program, such as … allowing urban open spaces that were previously acquired using conservation futures tax funding … to become TDR sending sites, removing specific goals for reduction of development potential outside the Urban Area, … and allowing for payment into the TDR bank when TDRs are not available."* (6) *"Make substantive updates to the existing land use designations and zoning classifications … such as ... incentivizing agritourism…."* (7) *"Expand SEPA exemptions to the maximum allowed by WAC 197-11-800."* (8) Several suggested *"land use designation and zoning classification changes."*	This comment expresses a policy preference rather than input on the Draft EIS. Although the County may consider it as part of the 2024 Update process, no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

	Comments	Proposed Response
4	**Commenter: Rick Shrum** I have a comment regarding the DRAFT EIS. And actually it is a comment and a request not on what is in the plan but what is NOT in the plan. I realize and read thru the information on non-project EIS work that is underway. I understand that not everything gets included and also that specific project based items are not included either. So, a line needs to be drawn, understood. I am here to make the case that if a new use, never before allowed, in the RA-5 zone is included in the comp plan update then that "breaking of the egg" for RA-5 should be significant enough and should trigger EIS study. Specifically, heretofore RA-5 did allow some Retail Use; garden center, forest products but it did not allow Retail Food Stores. In this plan the Executive is proposing to allow for Retail Food Stores in RA-5. Retail Food stores potentially come with great amounts of latitude on hours (24 x7 ?), noise (dead drops and dumpsters), impacts to neighbors (parking, noise), etc. Here is the proposed change highlighted:	The allowance of food stores in the Rural Area is included in the Final EIS as an example policy update in both the Limited Change and Extensive Change alternatives. Section 3.4, Natural Resources, and Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, discuss the potential impacts of expanding uses within the Rural Area. Development under either alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts to surrounding properties.

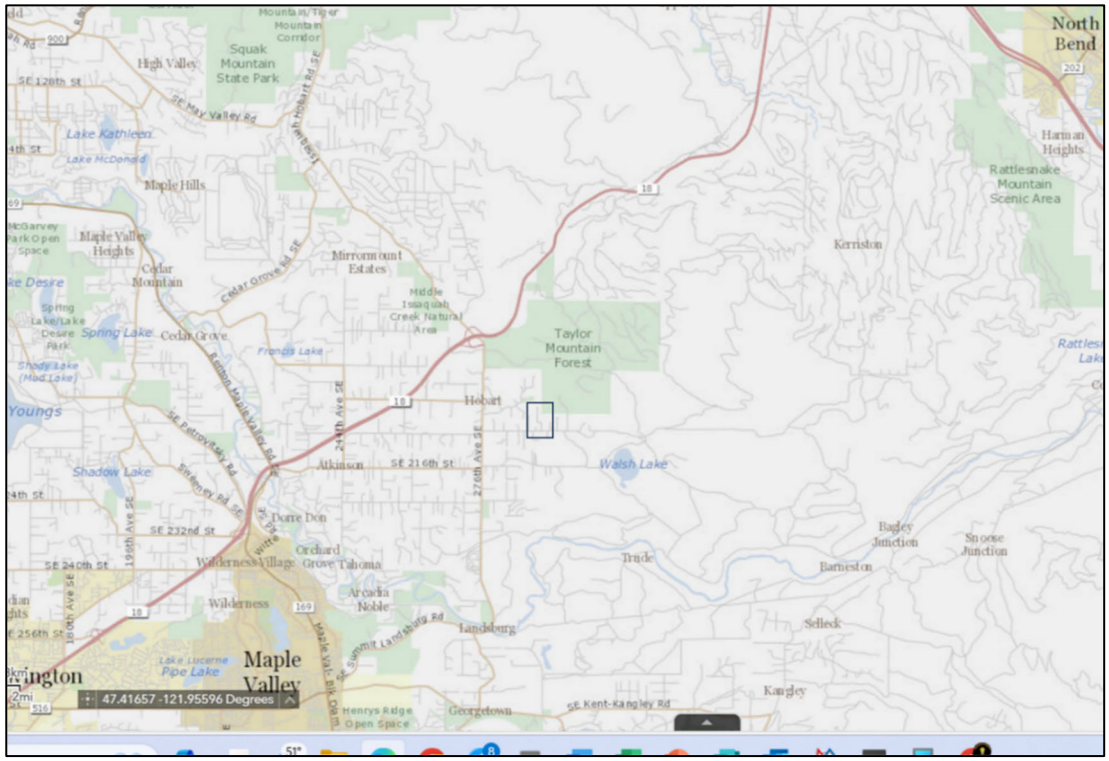
Comments	Proposed Response

4532 A. Retail land uses.

P-Permitted Use C-Conditional Use S-Special Use		RESOURCE			RURAL	RESIDENTIAL			COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL				
SIC#	SPECIFIC LAND USE	A	F	M	RA	UR	R1-8	R12-48	NB	CB	RB	O	I (((~~30~~)))
*	Building Materials and Hardware Stores		P23						P2	P	P		
*	Retail Nursery, Garden Center, and Farm Supply Stores	P1 C1			P1 C1				P31	P	P		

*	Forest Products Sales	P3 and 4	P4		P3 and 4						P		
*	Department and Variety Stores						C14a	P14	P5	P	P		
54	Food Stores				C30		C15a	P15	P31	P	P	C	P6

Yes, there are limitations placed on this new use for sure. But why? If you are going to open up a new use why be so limiting, perhaps even so far as to make this change for Just One Property in all of KC?

	Comments	Proposed Response
5	**Commenter: Brian Poggioli** (parcel 0622079093) I am an owner of 5 acres zoned as RA-5 with private well in unincorporated King County. The majority of my neighbors have shared well & smaller parcels. Can I request that my parcel be included in this new King County Comprehensive Plan to be rezoned as R-1. This will allow for both growth & preservation of the area. My well will be split amongst the 5 properties. Please advise. Thank you.  	This comment does not provide input on the Draft EIS. This is not the appropriate mechanism for requesting a rezone, and no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

Comments	Proposed Response

King County Districts and Development Conditions for parcel 0622079093

Parcel number	0622079093	Drainage Basin	Issaquah Creek
Address	20525 292ND AVE SE	Watershed	Sammamish River
Jurisdiction	King County	WRIA	Cedar-Sammamish (8)
Zipcode	98038	PLSS	SE - 6 - 22 - 7
Kroll Map page	B33	Latitude	47.41862
Thomas Guide page	688	Longitude	-121.95693

King County Electoral districts

Voting district	HOBART	Fire district	King County Fire Protection District No. 43
King County Council district	District 9, Reagan Dunn (206) 477-1009	Water district	does not apply
		Sewer district	does not apply
Congressional district	8	Water & Sewer district	does not apply
Legislative district	5	Parks & Recreation district	does not apply
School district	Tahoma #409	Hospital district	does not apply
Seattle school board district	does not apply (not in Seattle)	Rural library district	King County Rural Library District
District Court electoral district	Southeast	Tribal Lands?	No
Regional fire authority district	does not apply		

King County planning and critical areas designations*

King County zoning	RA-5	Urban Unincorporated Status	does not apply
Development conditions	None	Rural town?	No
Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation	ra	Water service planning area	Cedar River Water and Sewer District
		Transportation Concurrency Management	Pass - Lake Youngs/Hobart Travelshed
Urban Growth Area	Rural	Forest Production district?	No
Community Service Area	Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River Area	Agricultural Production district?	No
Community Planning Area	Tahoma/Raven Heights	Snoqualmie Valley watershed improvement district?	No
Coal mine hazards?	None mapped	Critical aquifer recharge area?	None mapped
Erosion hazards?	None mapped	Wetlands at this parcel?	None mapped
Landslide hazards?	None mapped	Within the Tacoma Smelter Plume?	Limited Data Estimated Arsenic Concentration in Soil
Seismic hazards?	None mapped		
100-year flood plain?	None mapped	Shoreline management designation (% of parcel)	None mapped
Sea Level Rise Risk Area	Does not apply	Wildland Urban Interface	Wildland Urban Interface

*Most of these designations apply only to unincorporated areas

	Comments	Proposed Response
6	**Commenter: Peter Rimbos, Joint team of Rural Area Organizations** **Re: Public Comment— *2024 KCCP Major Update—Draft Environmental Impact Statement*** Please accept *Comments* herein on the subject **2024 King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) Major Update (Update)—*Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)*** from the Joint Team of King County Unincorporated Rural Area organizations ***(*)***. We have participated in the **Update** since the beginning of 2022 working with KCCP Manager, Chris Jensen. We provided detailed Comments on *Scoping*, *Conceptual Proposals*, *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Scoping*, and the *Public Review Draft*. We now are completing our in-depth review of the Executive's *"Recommended Plan"* (ERP). Our Joint Team endeavors to review, consult, develop, and offer solutions on issues of interest to people who live in a wide expanse of King County's unincorporated Rural Area. Each of our organizations considers its work on the KCCP one of its most important duties and responsibilities. Indeed, our Joint Team has been through multiple successive KCCP Major Updates (including the *2020 KCCP Mid-Point Update*) with some of our member organization's work on same going back nearly 20 years to the *2004 KCCP Major Update* and others further back to the pre-Growth Management Act (GMA) days, when there were no formal KCCPs. Please note that one of our Joint Team organizations, the *Vashon-Maury Island Community Council (V-MCC)*, due to limitations in its By-Laws, is unable to complete its DEIS review at this early stage and, hence, is *not* included in the approval *"signatures"* below. Please contact us should any questions arise during the review of our Comments herein. Thank you. ***(*)*** *Joint Team: Enumclaw Plateau Community Association (EPCA), Friends of Sammamish Valley (FoSV), Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVUAC), Green River Coalition (GRC), Green Valley/Lake Holm Association (GV/LHA), Hollywood Hill Association (HHA), Soos Creek Area Response (SCAR), Upper Bear Creek Unincorporated Area Council (UBCUAC), and Vashon-Maury Island Community Council (V-MCC).*	This comment expresses a policy preference rather than input on the Draft EIS. Although the County may consider it as part of the 2024 Update process, no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

Comments	Proposed Response
Coordinated by: Peter Rimbos primbos@comcast.net Regional Coordinator, KCCP Updates, GMVUAC Coordinator, Joint Team Rural Area Team Approved by: LarKen Buchanan lmbuch@outlook.com *"Acting"* Chair, GMVUAC Michael Tanksley wmtanksley@comcast.net President, HHA Nancy Stafford nancy@go2email.net Chair, UBCUAC Andy Bennedetti andyb929@gmail.com Chair, GV/LHA Serena Glover serena@allenglover.com Executive Director, FoSV Greg Wingard gwingard@earthlink.net President, GRC Tim O'Brien obrien_timothy@hotmail.com Chair, EPCA Jeff Guddat jeffguddat@yahoo.com President, SCAR Ken Konigsmark kenkonigsmark@yahoo.com Rural Technical Consultant Growth Management Focal Mike Birdsall mike_birdsall@yahoo.com Rural Technical Consultant Transportation Focal Terry Lavender tmlavender8@gmail.com Rural Technical Consultant Environment/Open Space Focal	

Comments	Proposed Response
2024 KCCP Major Update ***Draft Environmental Impact Statement*** ***JOINT RURAL AREA TEAM COMMENTS*** ***Draft EIS*** Draft Environmental Impact Statement We understand per **WAC 197-11-442(4)** an EIS for a comprehensive plan calls for a discussion of alternatives that: *"…shall be limited to a general discussion of the impacts of alternate proposals for policies contained in such plans, for land use or shoreline designations, and for implementation measures. The lead agency is not required under SEPA to examine all conceivable policies, designations, or implementation measures but should cover a range of such topics."* With the above in mind, while we support much of what is described in the **Extensive Change Alternative** considered, such as "Require cities to pay impact fees and implement traffic demand management strategies for large developments that impact unincorporated areas," we have highlighted several concerns, as detailed in the sections below. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** p. ES-4: We have concern with the following statement in that "all unincorporated areas" includes, by definition, the Rural Area: "For example, the Extensive Change Alternative would seek to achieve the proposal objectives by expanding mandatory inclusionary housing to all unincorporated areas."	

Comments	Proposed Response
p. ES-6: We have concerns with the following as related to greater: (1) Land conversions in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands and (2) Urban development in the Rural Area: ***"Extensive Change Alternative*** *The Extensive Change Alternative includes mandatory programs and requirements to implement more substantial changes related to land use, zoning classifications, and development standards compared to the Limited Change Alternative. The County would be expected to make progress in meeting its objectives to address equity, housing, and climate change and the environment under this alternative to a greater degree than under both the No Action Alternative and Limited Change Alternative. Following are* ***examples*** *of potential impacts from the Extensive Change Alternative, whether positive or negative.* ***Natural Environment*** *In comparison to the Limited Change Alternative, the Extensive Change Alternative would help the County to a greater degree in meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and protecting water resources, farmland, critical areas, and natural habitat from development.* *However, the Extensive Change Alternative could result in a greater conversion of Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands through policies that provide expanded allowances for the development of renewable energy, resorts, or industrial uses than the other alternatives. The Extensive Change Alternative would require, rather than incentivize, active production of farmland in agricultural zones, which could result in greater localized water quality impacts within areas zoned for agriculture as compared to the Limited Change Alternative.* ***Built Environment*** *The Extensive Change Alternative includes greater allowances for density and requirements for inclusionary housing than the Limited Change Alternative. It could increase the variety of housing options and lead to development patterns within and closer to existing urban areas and those served by public transit. This would support housing for a broader range of income levels and lead to a more efficient expansion of utility and public services than compared to the Limited Change Alternative.*	

Comments	Proposed Response
Substantial increases in allowances for temporary and emergency housing would support short-term housing needs, though could necessitate an increase in social service provider staff and resources. *The Extensive Change Alternative would conserve more land as rural through the TDR Program and make more substantive updates to the Four-to-One Program requirements, including changes that are more likely to increase participation. As with the Limited Change Alternative however, the Extensive Change Alternative could alter the geographic pattern of land designated for conservation, including greater urban development within unincorporated rural areas. Tourism, resort, and economic development-oriented buildings would be allowed to a greater degree in the Rural Area, on Natural Resource Lands, and within agricultural zones, which could result in development inconsistent with the existing character of those areas."* **2. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES** Our comments on the **Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table** (pp. 2-5 thru 2-21) below only deal with the *"Extensive Change Alternative"* column. ***Equity*** (pp. 2-5 thru 2-8): **(p. 2-5):** ***"Reduce housing and business displacement and advance equity for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80% of the AMI."*** (p. 2-5): *"Expand inclusionary housing or require mandatory inclusionary housing in all unincorporated areas, including Rural Towns."*	

Comments	Proposed Response
Climate Change and the Environment (pp. 2-11 thru 2-14): (p. 2-11 to 2-12***): "Align with and advance the King County 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan to reduce GHG emissions, support sustainable and resilient communities, and prepare for climate change."*** (p. 2-12): *"Allow additional clearing of trees and vegetation in unincorporated King County, without a permit, for habitable structures and utilities."* (p. 2-13 to 2-14): ***"Increase the amount of land that is preserved for conservation."*** (p. 2-13): *"Make substantive updates to the Four-to-One program requirements, such as:* • *Using joint planning area boundaries.* • *Allowing for reduced open space ratio.* • *Allowing for noncontiguous open space.* • *Allowing urban-serving facilities in the Rural Area.* • *Allowing nonresidential projects.* • *Allowing projects not likely to be timely annexed."* (p. 2-14): *"Modify and expand the TDR program, such as providing bonus TDRs for sending sites that are in the Forest zone or are vacant marine shoreline without bulkheads, allowing TDR sending sites on Vashon-Maury Island, allowing urban open spaces that were previously acquired using conservation futures tax funding or urban separators to become TDR sending sites, removing specific goals for reduction of development potential outside the Urban Area, allowing TDRs to be used for duplex units in the Urban Area and Rural Towns, and allowing for payment into the TDR bank when TDRs are not available."* ***General*** (pp. 2-14 thru 2-21):	

Comments	Proposed Response
(p. 2-15 to 2-16): ***"Address the outcomes of the County Subarea Planning Program."*** (p. 2-16): *"Make substantive updates to the existing land use designations and zoning classifications in the Snoqualmie Valley/NE King County subarea, such as updating the allowed uses in the Fall City Business District Special District Overlay and removing some conditions to create parity with adjacent properties. For example:* . . . • *Incentivize agritourism, including options for compatible uses (education, experiences, value-add, processing, sales).* (p. 2-17 to 2-18): ***"Update transportation policies."*** We suggest that all ten items listed under the ***"Extensive Change Alternative"*** column be moved to and replace the comparable ten items under the ***"Limited Change Alternative"*** column, as these all constitute activities we would like to see implemented. (p. 2-18): ***"Improve regulations governing rural and natural resources."*** (p. 2-18): *"Expand SEPA exemptions to the maximum allowed by WAC 197-11-800."* (p. 2-18 to 2-21): ***"Implement land use designation and zoning classification changes."*** (p. 2-18): *"Allow resorts in additional areas with limited development conditions, beyond the existing permitted use."*	

Comments	Proposed Response
(p. 2-18): *"Allow for additional material processing uses in additional zones, with limited development conditions."* (p. 2-19): *"Make more extensive changes to manufacturing and regional land uses allowed in the Industrial zone and remove the prohibition outside the UGA or revise the uses that require a conditional or special use permit."* (p. 2-19): *"Make more extensive changes to development standards in anticipation of new and innovative industrial uses."* • *"Encourage rural economic development, rural economic strategies, and tourism in the rural area and on Natural Resource Lands."* • *"Encourage agrotourism in the Rural Area, especially where there is the opportunity for compatible uses, such as educational experiences, value-added processing, and sales."* • *"Modify the uses permitted in the Rural Area to implement rural economic development goals."* (p. 2-19): *"Allow mineral extraction operations with fewer development conditions."* (p. 2-20): *"…Consider how mixed-use developments, at an appropriate size and scale, could support rural economic and agritourism opportunities, the number of mixed use developments needed, and what uses would be allowed."* [This is in the *"Limited Change Alternative"* column.] (p. 2-20): *"Allow food stores in the Rural Area zone with minimal development conditions."* (p. 2-20): *"Make more extensive land use designations and zoning classification changes based on area- wide evaluation of the UGA and permitted densities, such as moving the UGA boundary and/or increasing the density and intensity of use."* (p. 2-21): *"Allow for additional industrial zoning classification in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands."*	

	Comments	Proposed Response
7	**Commenter: Five Point Capital Partners Letter** **Courtney Flora, Partner, McCullough Hill PLLC** **Re: 2024 Comprehensive Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") Comment Request to Study/Implement Multi-Family Tax Exemption ("MFTE") in North Highline** We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") for King County's 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update. We represent FivePoint Capital Management, developer of a mixed-use, 137-unit residential project located near 16th Avenue SW and SW 107th Street in the White Center neighborhood of unincorporated King County. We request that the DEIS study implementation of the Multi-Family-Tax Exemption ("MFTE") in the North Highline/White Center neighborhood. MFTE could occur with any of the three alternatives identified in the DEIS (including No Action). MFTE implementation does not require a Comprehensive Plan amendment, but given the County's focus on incentivizing affordable housing production in the 2024 Update, it is appropriate to study and pursue MFTE as part of this process. It is a critical tool to increase the County's affordable housing stock. FivePoint elected to develop a project in White Center because it is a designated Qualified Opportunity Zone. This mixed-use project replaces an existing funeral home and car storage use with a vibrant mix of commerce, retail, employment opportunities and affordable housing- it is exactly the type of project the County's land use policies envision for this neighborhood.	The implementation of a Multifamily Tax Exemption has been added to the Final EIS as an additional tool that could be used to increase affordable housing under the Extensive Change Alternative and is considered in Section 4.3, Housing.

Comments	Proposed Response
When FivePoint initiated this project, MFTE was not available in White Center due to restrictions in state statute. The lack of MFTE created concerns about the project's economic viability, which remain today. In 2021, with FivePoint's support, the state legislature adopted E2SSB 5297, which expanded the MFTE program to a greater number of cities and counties throughout Washington- to include the North Highline/White Center neighborhood. As of 2022, 55 communities in Washington have active MFTE programs. The exemptions issued in 2021 resulted in 7,759 **new** housing units, including 1,058 rent-restricted units for low-income households. Inexplicably, King County has not taken action to implement MFTE anywhere- despite repeated requests from FivePoint over the past two years. King County's failure to implement MFTE is even more inexplicable in light of the specific "Proposal Objectives" identified in the DEIS. Fourteen objectives are outlined, and the first six relate directly to affordable housing production: • Reducing housing and business displacement and advancing equity for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) • Integrating a pro-equity and anti-racist policy framework that improves outcomes for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who earn less than 80 percent of the AMI • Improving health equity outcomes in communities with the greatest and most acute needs • Aligning housing policies and regulations with the CPPs and Washington State Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220 (Chapter 254 Laws of 2021) • Improving affordable housing supply, especially for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants and/or refugees, especially those that earn less than 80 percent of the AMI • Expanding housing options at all levels of affordability. *2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update, DEIS, Executive Summary, pp. ES-1 - ES-2, December 2023.* <u>All of the objectives outlined above can be directly advanced through implementation of MFTE.</u>	

Comments	Proposed Response
In September 2021, the County published the Skyway-West Hill and North Highline Anti- displacement Strategies Report ("Strategies Report"), which documents the affordable housing crisis in these communities. In 2018, White Center's medium income was $51,898, which is significantly lower than the County median household income of $89,418. *Strategies Report,* p. 18. The Report noted that "the combination of rising housing prices, the high rate of cost burdened households, and lower than average incomes put Skyway-West Hill and North Highline residents at increased risk of displacement." Not surprisingly, the Report concluded that "the availability of affordable housing units reduces displacement." *Id.,* pg. 31. Ultimately, the Report recommended that the County "develop more publicly subsidized affordable housing, especially for households below 60 percent of AMI." *Id.,* p. 12. Unfortunately, the Strategies Report was prepared in large part before the state legislature acted to expand MFTE. Community input was solicited from October 2020 through April 2021, and the Report was released in September- just months after MFTE was authorized for implementation in North Highline. Given this timing, the Report refers to MFTE as a "possible" future option, but it was given short-shrift: > King County retained Berk Consulting, Inc., to prepare a supplemental update to the Enterprise Community Partners and BERK Consulting, Inc., Affordable Housing Incentives Analysis: North Highline Skyway-West Hill analysis, to consider current housing market conditions and the potential impact that the proposed inclusionary housing program and a possible Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) program would have on development in the Skyway-West Hill and North Highline areas. This report update concluded that the proposed incentives for the inclusionary housing program balance the cost of providing the affordable housing at this time. Contributing factors to making this program work include reducing parking requirements, increasing allowed density, and increased market rent levels. **After passage of E2SSB 5287 during the 2021 Washington State legislative session, King County could implement an MFTE program in unincorporated King County. MFTE would further increase the economic viability of development projects with inclusionary housing units.** *Strategies Report, p. 36* (emphasis added). Subsequently, the North Highline Community Service Area Subarea Plan adopted in December 2022 emphasized the "inclusionary zoning" strategies discussed in the Strategies Report, largely ignoring the fact that the County now has the power to use MFTE.	

Comments	Proposed Response
The County is evaluating three options in the DEIS: "No Action," "Limited Change," and "Extensive Change." With respect to housing displacement and affordability, the DEIS outlines a range of study options in Table 2.3-1:	

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Table 2.3-1. Alternatives Examples Table

Proposal Objectives	No Action Alternative	Limited Change Alternative	Extensive Change Alternative
Equity			
Reduce housing and business displacement and advance equity for those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, and/or refugees, especially those who also earn less than 80% of the AMI.	No changes to existing goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, or development regulations aimed at improving equity. Full implementation of existing adopted policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations.	Support public financing techniques to promote stability, prevent displacement, and promote equitable development.	Require public financing techniques that will provide an advantage for projects that promote housing stability, prevent displacement, and promote equitable development.
		Increase bonuses and development capacity for inclusionary housing where already allowed.	Expand inclusionary housing or require mandatory inclusionary housing in all unincorporated areas, including Rural Towns.
		Stabilize economic displacement of businesses by supporting small businesses and home occupations to promote community stability and create opportunities.	Prevent economic displacement of existing businesses and promote new small businesses and home occupations to promote community stability and create opportunities.
		Make minor updates to implement the 2021 Anti-Displacement Report[36] in Skyway and North Highline, such as the following: • Community preference/right to return. • Priority hire. • Tenant relocation assistance. • Community land trust. • Manufactured housing preservation. • Increased home ownership opportunities.	Adopt all strategies in the 2021 Anti-Displacement Report for all unincorporated areas.
		Study the impact of a creative economy.	Adopt strategies and incentives that encourage a creative economy.

We are asking the County to evaluate MFTE implementation in the North Highline community as part of the DEIS/2024 Update, so that it can be designated as a "Residential Target Area" under the criteria in Chapter 84.14 RCW.

	Comments	Proposed Response
	To be clear, MFTE can be implemented via ordinance, and it does not require action in the Comprehensive Plan. But it makes no sense for the County to engage in a Comprehensive Plan Update focused on affordable housing without evaluating the use of MFTE. The County is clearly committed to incentivizing affordable housing production- it should not continue to overlook MFTE as a key tool in achieving its housing goals. We appreciate the opportunity to comment. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions regarding this matter.	
8	**Commenter: Tulalip Tribes** **Todd Gray, Environmental Protection Ecologist** **Re: 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Statement** The Tulalip Tribes are federally recognized and are signatories to the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855. The Tulalip Tribes retain constitutionally protected, treaty-reserved rights to harvest, consume, and otherwise manage fish, shellfish, and other treaty reserved resources within our usual and accustomed areas. These treaty rights and resources are integral to supporting our tribal economy, and furthermore play a vital role in ensuring the health, welfare, and cultural ways of life of our tribal nation and our members. King County has long been recognized as a leader in environmental awareness and protection. The Tulalip Tribes appreciates and relies on King County's cooperation and shared commitment to conservation to uphold our treaty rights and maintain a healthy and productive natural environment. In support of these shared goals, the proposed objectives of the 2024 update include: • Aligning with and advancing the King County 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support sustainable and resilient communities, and prepare for climate change. • Integrating and implementing the County's Clean Water, Healthy Habitat goals. • Increasing the amount of land that is preserved for conservation. • Improving regulations governing rural and natural resources. The 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) examines three alternate approaches to reaching these objectives: No Action Alternative, Limited Change Alternative, and Extensive Change Alternative. In all three of these alternatives, we see opportunities to advance our shared goals, and also some ideas proposed that may not be in alignment with these goals. It is from this perspective that we offer the following comments on language found in the Alternatives Examples Tables within the Draft EIS:	The Final EIS acknowledges the potential impacts of the 2024 Update related to increased impervious surface, removal of native vegetation, impacts to critical areas, and impacts to water resources. Please see Sections 3.2, Water Resources; 3.3, Wildlife and Habitat; and 3.4, Natural Resources. As described in the Final EIS, the action alternatives include proposals for updating the Critical Areas Ordinance and strengthening protections for the preservation of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. Further, development under either action alternative would be guided by existing regulations and policies that prevent or minimize potential impacts on water resources, wildlife and habitat, and natural resources.

Comments	Proposed Response
Updating Critical Areas and Shoreline Regulations: • *Update critical areas regulations with best available science and make minor updates, such as clarifying changes, using updated terminology, and reflecting changes in state law.* With both change alternatives, we see an opportunity to close certain loopholes, and improve upon certain aspects of current King County Critical Areas protections. For example, developers often take advantage of administrative buffer reductions, buffer averaging allowances, Innovative Development Design allowances, and other techniques that result in inadequate critical areas protections. Likewise, Critical areas themselves are too often allowed to be compromised (filling wetlands, moving streams, etc.) for the convenience of development, without demonstrating a true need. Language in the current code that is often taken advantage of should be carefully considered for changes. **Encouraging Development in Rural Areas:** Several of the specific proposals outlined in the tables point to more development in rural areas. This change would result in more impervious surfaces, less native plant biomass, and increased pressure on the environment: • *Broaden or change existing allowances for more permanent and temporary farmworker housing.* • *Allow for additional types of housing and densities in low-density residential zones, with minimal development conditions.* • *Modify regulations or allow resorts in additional areas with limited development conditions, beyond the existing permitted use.* • *Allow for, or make minor changes to additional material processing uses in additional zones, with limited development conditions.* • *Remove the prohibition outside the UGA or revise the uses that require a conditional or special use permit for manufacturing and regional land use.* • *allow or encourage additional rural economic development, rural economic strategies, and tourism in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands* • *Allow food stores in the Rural Area zone with minimal development conditions.* • *Allowing for reduced open space ratio, noncontiguous open space, urban-serving facilities in the Rural Area, and nonresidential projects.*	

Comments	Proposed Response
• *Make more extensive land use designations and zoning classification changes based on areawide evaluation of the UGA and permitted densities, such as moving the UGA boundary and/or increasing the density and intensity of use.* • *Allow for additional industrial zoning classification in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands.* The Tribes do not support expansion of UGA's, relaxing development conditions in rural areas, or otherwise increasing development opportunities in these areas. Language in the above proposals needs more clarification and further examination of potential impacts to the environment. **Relaxing permit requirements:** Some proposals in the draft EIS indicate a lessening of oversight on certain activities that have the potential to negatively impact the environment: • *Allow additional clearing of trees and vegetation in unincorporated King County, without a permit, for habitable structures and utilities.* • *Allow management of beaver dams without a clearing and grading permit.* • *Allow mineral extraction operations with fewer development conditions.* Though the idea of relaxing regulations on some of these actions seems attractive, we believe some level of oversight should still be required. Notching or removal of beaver dams can cause serious environmental consequences, such as draining wetlands. Any such proposed activity should be reviewed by a qualified biologist or ecologist. Clearing of trees, if not carefully regulated, could result in rampant clearing within critical areas or their buffers, with little recourse. **Increased Agricultural Allowances:** • *Adopt different standards to promote and protect both small hobby farms and larger commercial farms.* • *Make changes to the agriculture code by updating definitions and correcting inconsistencies.* • *Encourage, incentivize or require active production of farmland in the Agriculture zones.* Agriculture, though an important aspect of the rural landscape and economy, can pose significant threats to the environment through ground and surface water extractions, increased nutrients and contaminants entering surface waters, and inadequate critical areas protections. Language in the above proposals needs more clarification and further examination of potential impacts to the environment.	

Comments	Proposed Response
Conclusion: The Tulalip Tribes appreciates the opportunity to comment on the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Our natural resources are of paramount importance to us, and we strive to maintain, restore, and protect ecological processes in our watersheds wherever possible. We believe that with all land disturbing and development activities that may be allowed adjacent to critical areas, special care must be taken to maintain or restore the natural environment, to allow these processes to continue. The Tulalip Tribes encourages King County to consider environmental implications in protecting the water system for all our relations within the ecosystem. Thank you for considering our concerns, and we look forward to continuing our shared commitment to conservation together.	

	Comments	Proposed Response
9	**Commenter: Puget Sound Energy** **Patrick Robinson, Municipal Liaison Manager, PSE** Re: King County 2024 Comprehensive Plan – Draft Environmental Impact Statement Thank you for the opportunity to comment on King County's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), issued December 7, 2023, for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update. Puget Sound Energy (PSE) appreciates the County's continued collaboration on topics pertaining to energy resource planning and policy. We would like to highlight two areas of the DEIS where potential impacts could be clarified, one on the topic of electrification and the phase out of fossil fuels and a second in the reliability and resilience of electrical service. <u>Electrification</u> The electrification of the building and transportation sectors will increase electric load in the County. Section 3.3.3.2 of the DEIS pertains to the topic of electric vehicle (EV) adoption and states that, "The construction of charging station infrastructure *may* [emphasis added] require more land development…". Similarly, under Section 4.1.3.2. Utilities, the DEIS states that the action alternatives include proposed policies "that support the use of renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind, or hydropower) and electrification of the transportation and energy sectors, which *may* [emphasis added] result in an increased demand for electricity." It is important to recognize that, as the County is reviewing impacts to the environment, the increase in electric demand due to electrification policies *will* increase demand and result in land development. Energy efficiency and conservation, including demand response technologies, will be important tools in managing electric energy consumption. However, these tools will not remove the need for additional electrical facilities in the County. Additional electrical facilities will include local generation and energy storage. It will also include new and upsized transmission and distribution lines, transformers, and substations. It is important to be clear that there is no uncertainty on the need for this equipment to serve new electrical load. This increase in demand and the subsequent development from new electrical infrastructure will need to be balanced and consistent with many of the other policies contemplated in the proposed Comprehensive Plan. Misalignment of policies will not remove the need for continued growth of the electric distribution and transmission systems, however it will impact the reliability, the resiliency, the safety, the cost of those systems, and the effectiveness of King Counties electrification and decarbonization policies. A few examples of proposed Comprehensive Plan policies are provided below to illustrate our point.	Final EIS Sections 3.3.3.2 (Wildlife and Habitat) and 4.1.3.2 (Utilities and Public Services) have been revised to state that charging station infrastructure would require more land development and that electrification of the transportation and energy sectors would increase demand for electricity. Section 4.1.3.2 was further revised to note that increased load in unincorporated King County calls for a corresponding increase in the development of electrical facilities. Regarding vegetation management, both action alternatives would expand allowances for clearing of trees and vegetation around habitable structures and utilities as part of a wildfire management strategy. See Final EIS Section 3.4, Natural Resources.

Comments	Proposed Response
T-327 states: King County supports expansion of private electric vehicle use and the necessary charging infrastructure, including opportunities to improve equitable access to the benefits of electric vehicle and geographically dispersed access to public vehicle charging. If the County's strategy for EV charging calls for an increase in the geographic distribution of access to serve rural communities, then the capacity of electric lines that provide these services will need to follow concurrently. E-211 states: King County shall develop and implement building and energy codes that reduce energy use and phase out fossil fuel use in the built environment within King County's jurisdiction. For most utilities, there exists decades of infrastructure built up to provide service. These facilities were constructed in parallel with the local population and the development pattern established by local governments. For the electrification of transportation and buildings, and specifically to transition away from fossil fuels, we are fundamentally changing the types of service provided. This means that while King County's growth projections may not be numerically as significant as many other jurisdictions are seeing, there is still a lot of work necessary to change the existing infrastructure from a system based on fossil fuels to one that is solely based on electricity. In contrast to the standard model of utility growth being driven by population growth, the phase out of fossil fuels creates a demand for utility service within existing communities. Guided by electrification policies and codes, a neighborhood with little to no growth in population will still see significant growth in electric demand. In this situation development is not driven by the chosen growth strategy but by the chosen policy framework. Section 4.1.3.2 of the DEIS states that while proposals that support the use of renewable energy and electrification of the transportation and energy sectors may result in an increased demand for electricity, any increase in electrical demand because of the action alternatives would represent a small fraction relative to the area served by Puget Sound Energy. This seems to draw the conclusion that there are therefore no impacts. The fact that we serve many of King County's neighbors does not change the fact that increased load in unincorporated King County calls for a corresponding increase in the development of electrical facilities in unincorporated King County. Further, in proposed policy E-213, King County would seek to work with other local jurisdictions to transition them from fossil fuels. This policy would drive increases in electric load throughout King County, not just in unincorporated areas, requiring the development and redevelopment of regional electric facilities like transmission lines and transmission switching stations. These are facilities that are currently sited in unincorporated King County that would need to be redeveloped.	

Comments	Proposed Response
One last comment on the development necessary to support electrification and a transition away from fossil fuels. An electric grid that supports the use of renewable energy like solar and wind also requires the installation of battery energy storage systems. King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan targets 100 MW of energy storage per utility serving King County by 2030 and an additional 100 MW by 2045. This is another example of required development necessary to serve increasing electric demand due to electrification and the phase out of fossil fuels. PSE is committed to providing the necessary electrical service to meet growing demand in a safe, affordable and reliable manner. We also are committed to the transition to a decarbonized and carbon neutral energy future. We raise these comments here not in opposition to any potential policies. We share this information to make sure that there is a solid understanding of the impacts that these policies will bring. It is important to approach the energy transition with a full understanding of what will be needed to achieve these goals and policies. We ask that you do not underestimate the impacts of proposed policies and action alternatives, nor the need for new electrical facilities throughout unincorporated King County, and we look forward to continued collaboration with the County to address policy and development challenges that come with the electrification and decarbonization. <u>Vegetation Management – Safety, Reliability and Resiliency</u> Local development has been referenced a few times above, and it is important to note that local development regulations will determine the speed and efficiency in which the above mentioned transition from fossil fuels will occur. Of particular importance to PSE is the continued safety, reliability and resiliency of its services. Policies that seek to block, limit or increase the cost of electric facilities (blanket tree retention or regulations that block local renewable generation and energy storage) will not mitigate the need for those facilities. We believe such policies will work against King County's stated goals and policies regarding the resiliency and reliability of electric service. The Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Community Service Area Subarea Plan specifically calls for supporting "utilities' efforts to maintain a reliable electrical grid," in policy SVNE-26.	

	Comments	Proposed Response
	PSE supports a strong focus on 'Right Tree, Right Place' policies to address tree protections. The DEIS provides example language regarding tree retention in Table 2.3-1 that states, "Adopt stringent tree retention standards … with enforcement mechanisms to prohibit most healthy tree removals." Trees in the right-of-way should not be prioritized over resilient, reliable energy transmission and distribution facilities. This is true in utility corridors as well. We believe that policies that seek to prohibit the removal of healthy trees will have a direct impact on the resiliency, reliability, safety, and the cost of electric service. Tree removal is necessary in two scenarios: the first for existing lines where there is no need to move electric facilities and trees are encroaching into and around the lines; and the second for the installation of lines in a new location, whether those are new facilities or existing lines that are required to move to meet current County development standards. Overly strict tree protection policies near rights-of- way and utility corridors will have a direct impact on electric service reliability, resiliency, safety, and cost. Thank you again for your time and attention.	
10	**Commenter: Druids Glen** **Mark Swartz, Director of Design and Entitlements, Parks Legacy** On behalf of Parks Legacy Project Druids Glen, LLC ("Parks Legacy"), I am writing to comment on the King County 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update ("Major Comp Plan Update") Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS"). Parks Legacy is the owner of Druids Glen, the championship 18-hole golf course in Southeast King County ("Druids Glen"). We have been working with the County Executive and County staff to encourage the adoption of master planned resort (MPR) policies, as authorized by the Growth Management Act. *Attachment A.* As we previously described, MPR policies allow for the long-term preservation of Druids Glen's golf course and increased recreational and tourism opportunities in Southeast King County through the development of destination hotels and outdoor recreational resort facilities. Saving Druids Glen through a master planned resort development will provide open space, recreational, economic development, tax, and housing benefits that will flow to King County. Without the adoption of MPR policies, Druids Glen is likely to be redeveloped with approximately 60-75 estate properties because the current uses are not economically viable. Such a development results in the loss of the golf course, 150+ acres of open space, and South County tourism and jobs. Parks Legacy believes this is not an outcome consistent with the County's goals.	This comment expresses a policy preference rather than input on the Draft EIS. Although the County may consider it as part of the 2024 Update process, no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

Comments	Proposed Response
Currently, the County proposes an outright prohibition of new MPRs in King County. *See* Executive's Proposal, Chapter 3 – Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands Policy 329-a. We were surprised to see the Executive's proposal, which effectively deprives the County of use of a successful Growth Management Act tool for open space conservation and recreational tourism. Clallam, Clark, Chelan, Douglas, Jefferson, Kittitas, Kitsap, San Juan, and Skagit County, among other counties, have adopted MPR policies and development regulations consistent with the Growth Management Act. Master planned resorts like Suncadia are regional tourism destinations and models of successful recreational and conservation strategies for rural economic development. <u>We are unaware of a county that has **voluntarily** prohibited itself from using the MPR mechanism.</u> Accordingly, we were surprised that the DEIS did not specifically mention – much less evaluate the potential adverse environmental impacts and mitigation measures – the Executive's proposal to prohibit the ability to use MPR as a planning tool in all unincorporated King County. Specifically, we note that the DEIS failed to evaluate proposed Policy 329-a with regards to: **<u>1. Proposal</u>**. State Environmental Policy Act ("SEPA") regulations require the County to "[d]evote sufficiently detailed analysis to each reasonable alternative to permit a comparative evaluation…" WAC 197-11-440(5)(c)(v). But the DEIS fails to mention – much less evaluate the potential adverse environmental impacts of – proposed Policy 329-a's prohibition on the potential for MPRs in the County. There is a brief mention that "[t]ourism, resort, and economic- development buildings would be allowed to a greater degree in the Rural Areas…" See DEIS, ES-6. We presume this is related to the Executive's modifications of the "destination resort" standards. However, that is insufficient to describe the sweeping effect of an outright ban on MPR for the vast areas of the County that do not qualify as a "destination resort." The County must update its EIS analysis to accurately disclose and study the broader impacts of Policy 329-a. **<u>2. Objectives</u>**. The County describes the objectives of the Major Comp Plan Update, among other goals, as: (1) implementing the Countywide Planning Policies ("CPPs"); and (2) improving regulations governing rural and natural resources. As a non-project proposal, the County is encouraged to describe the proposal in the EIS in terms of alternative means to accomplish its stated objectives. WAC 197-11-44(2).	

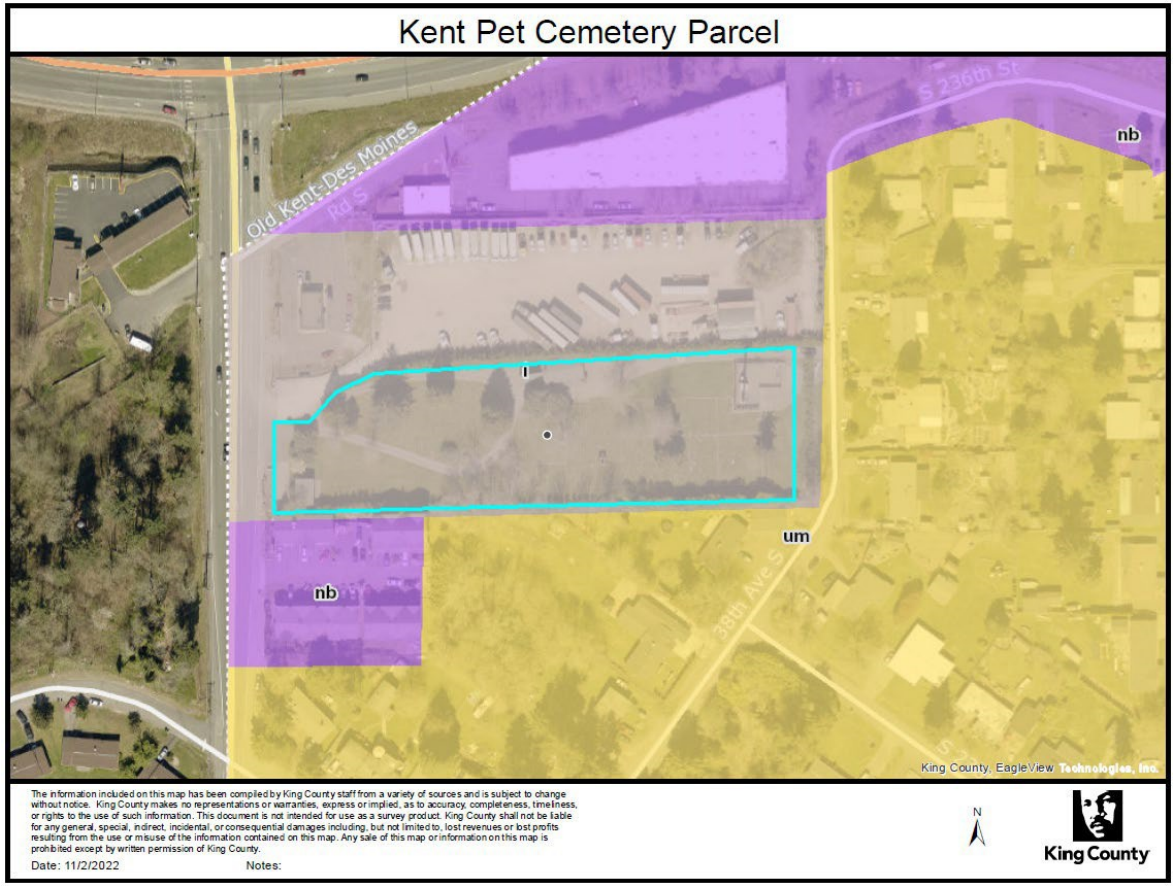
Comments	Proposed Response
The King County CPPs include, among other relevant policies, the following: **EN-21** Preserve and restore native vegetation and tree canopy, especially where it protects habitat and contributes to overall ecological function. **EN-22** Provide parks, trails, and open spaces within walking distance of urban residents. Prioritize historically underserved communities for open space improvements and investments. **EC-20** Promote the natural environment as a key economic asset and work to improve access to it as an economic driver. Work cooperatively with local businesses to protect and restore the natural environment in a manner that is equitable, efficient, predictable, and complements economic prosperity. **EC-21** Encourage private, public, and non-profit sectors to incorporate environmental stewardship and social responsibility into their practices. Encourage development of established and emerging industries, technologies and services that promote sustainability, especially those addressing climate change and resilience. The DEIS fails to evaluate how the Executive's proposed Policy 329-a may "accomplish" its stated objectives of implementing the CPPs and "improving" rural lands regulations. In fact, Parks Legacy believes the Executive's proposed Policy 329-a is directly in conflict with the adopted CPPs which emphasize preservation of vibrant native areas and parks and open space. The Druids Glen Property includes over 150+ acres of open space that may be made permanently accessible to the public with the creation of an MPR. An MPR at Druids Glen could become a regional model for sustainable recreational tourism and long-term conservation and environmental stewardship in Southeast King County. In contrast, the Executive's proposed Policy 329-a would establish a directive for the redevelopment of all 370+ acres into multi-million-dollar private estate properties. The result of the Executive's proposed Policy 329-a is to discourage the environmental stewardship of potential master planned resort opportunities with their corresponding open spaces, trails, and recreational benefits and, instead, expedite the conversion of existing, but economically challenged properties like Druids Glen to private, large estate residences. The County should include additional analysis of alternative ways to meet these CPPs, including use of the MPR as authorized by the Growth Management Act to support rural environmental tourism.	

	Comments	Proposed Response
	3. Analysis. For all the above reasons, the County's EIS must be updated to accurately disclose the scope of proposed Policy 329-a to allow informed analysis, including but not limited to analysis of the policy's potential impacts on Land Use, Housing, Parks, Open Space and Recreational, and Transportation elements, and where necessary, identify potential mitigation measures. We encourage the Council to direct staff to remove the Executive's proposed Policy 329-a and include an alternative in further environmental analysis that allows for an MPR at Druids Glen. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me with any questions. **Attachment A: Additional Materials related to Druids Glen (attached at end of document in original PDF form)[1]**	
11	**Commenter: JK Morris LLC** **Ian Morrison, Partner, McCullough Hill PLLC** On behalf of JK Morris, LLC, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") for the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update ("2024 Update") and the accompanying June 2023 Public Review Draft ("Public Review Draft") of the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan ("Plan"). As you may already know, JK Morris, LLC owns the Seattle Pet Cemetery at 23646 Military Road South ("Property") in King County ("County"). The Property has long been used as a pet cemetery and is also the site of a permitted cell tower, the revenue from which is used to help maintain the King County landmarked Property. The Public Review Draft includes a proposed amendment to the Plan's map, which would rezone the Property to the County's most restrictive urban zoning designation, R-1 ("Proposed Downzone"). This Proposed Downzone is based on a June 2023 County study titled "Kent Pet Cemetery Area Zoning and Land Use Study" ("Study"). We respectfully request that the Proposed Downzone not be incorporated into any Action Alternative included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement ("FEIS") for the 2024 Update or in the 2024 Update itself. As discussed in greater detail below, the Proposed Downzone conflicts with the language of the FEIS, the King County Code, and the Comprehensive Plan in its current and proposed versions. If adopted, the Proposed Downzone also appears to be at risk of violating Washington state case law against spot zoning.	The Final EIS includes an environmental review of the proposed map amendments, including the proposed rezone of the pet cemetery in Kent. Please see Map Amendment 7 in Appendix B, Map Amendments and Area Zoning and Land Use Studies, in the Final EIS.

[1] See Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Comments Report [LINK].

Comments	Proposed Response
The Proposed Downzone contradicts the requirements of the R-1 Zone. The current Plan and the Public Review Draft state that the County "should apply the urban residential, low land use designation in limited circumstances in unincorporated urban areas in order to protect: floodplains, critical aquifer recharge areas, high function wetlands and unstable slopes from degradation, and the link these environmental features have to a network of open space, fish and wildlife habitat and urban separators." (King County Comprehensive Plan Goal U- 120)(emphasis added). The DEIS reaffirms the R-1 zone's limited application using Goal U-120's exact language. *See* pg. 133. Instead, the DEIS notes: "The Current Plan includes a minimum density requirement for all new urban residential developments stipulating a zoned density of 4 or more homes per acre." *Id.,* pg. 125. Correspondingly, the Plan states that the County "should apply minimum density requirements to all unincorporated urban residential zones of four or more homes per acre, except under limited circumstances such as the: a. Presence of significant physical constraints such as those noted in policy U-120, or b. Implementation of standards applied to a property through a property- specific development condition, special district overlay, or subarea study." Both Plan policies indicate that R-1 zoning is only warranted in limited circumstances to preserve critical areas or through a property-specific development condition, special district overlay, or subarea study. Here, the Property does not meet any of the Code conditions required for an R-1 designation. The Study acknowledges the Property "…is relatively flat, and there (sic) no known environmental constraints on the site or in the immediate vicinity." This admission defeats the assertion that there are the "presence of significant physical constraints such as those noted in policy U-120." The Property is not subject to standards through a special district overlay or subarea study.[1] The Proposed Downzone does not seek to apply property-specific development conditions but instead seeks to impose an isolated application of general R-1 zoning standards. Therefore, the Property fails to meet the conditions required to overcome the Plan's presumption against R-1 zoning. Because the Property meets none of the conditions for an R-1 designation, the County should remove the Proposed Downzone in any documents related to the 2024 Update, including any Action Alternative incorporated into the FEIS, and not proceed with the Proposed Downzone. 1 Per KCC 20.08.175,"'Subarea studies' are separate from area zoning and land use studies defined in KCC 20.08.037."	

Comments	Proposed Response
The Proposed Downzone likely violates Washington laws against spot zoning. Under the Code, a "…zone reclassification shall be granted only if the applicant demonstrates that the proposal complies with the criteria for approval specified in K.C.C. 20.22.140 and 20.22.150 and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and applicable community and functional plans." K.C.C. 21A.44.060. The R-1 zone is appropriate primarily where environmental constraints require limited development. Here, the Property is subject to no such environmental constraints. R-1 designation is also appropriate in well-established R-1 subdivisions with sufficient public services. No properties adjacent to the Property are zoned R-1. Indeed, before it was designated Industrial, the Property was zoned Neighborhood Business, the same zoning designation as properties to the north and south. The Code does not support the Proposed Downzone. Should the County elect to proceed with the Proposed Downzone, it may give rise to challenges for spot zoning. Spot zoning is a zoning action "by which a smaller area is singled out of a larger area or district and specially zoned for a use classification totally different from and inconsistent with the classification of surrounding land, and not in accordance with the comprehensive plan." *See Achen v. Clark Cnty*., 112 Wn. App. 1034 (2002) (quotation omitted). A spot zoning is invalid if it grants a discriminatory benefit to one or a group of owners to the detriment of their neighbors or the community at large without adequate public advantage or justification. *See Vogel v. City of Richland*, 161 Wn. App. 1036 (2011) (citation omitted). "Actions are characterized as rezoning when there are specific parties requesting a classification change for a specific tract." *Cathcart-Maltby-Clearview Cmty. Council v. Snohomish Cnty.,* 96 Wn.2d 201, 212 (1981). Lastly, as the County is well aware, "neighborhood opposition alone may not be the basis of a land use decision." *Henderson v. Kittitas Cnty.,* 124 Wn. App. 747, 755 (2004) (citations omitted). Here, the record is clear that the impetus for the Proposed Downzone is a small group's opposition to the cell tower that is legally permitted on the Property. *See* Hellmann, Melissa. "Pet Cemetery Patrons Neighbors Wage Lengthy Fight Against Kent Cell Tower," Seattle Times, Aug. 2., 2021, available at: www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/pet-cemetery-patrons-neighbors-wage- lengthy-fight-against-kent-cell-tower (last accessed on Jan. 31, 2024); *see also* Crowe, Michael. "A Fight to Stop a Cell Tower in a Pet Cemetery," KOMO News, Oct. 19, 2020, available at: www.king5.com/article/news/local/a-fight-to-stop-a-cell-tower-in-a-pet-cemetery/281-42280a7f- 930d-4057-8101-1048417d32e4 (last accessed on Jan. 31, 2024); Seitz, Julie. "'Environmental Justice Scorecard' and cell tower placement." Letter to White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council, Aug. 18, 2022, available at: https://ehtrust.org/letter-to-white-house-environmental- justice-interagency-council-calls-for-addressing-cell-tower-issues/ (last accessed on Jan. 31, 2024).	

Comments	Proposed Response
The County is well aware of Ms. Seitz's advocacy against the Property's permitted cell tower use. First, despite Ms. Seitz's advocacy, the fact remains the cell tower facility was (and is) legally permitted. Second, Ms. Seitz's advocacy is not a valid legal basis for the County to adopt the Proposed Downzone of Property. None of the surrounding properties are zoned R-1. Indeed, most are zoned for commercial or industrial use, as seen in the County's own Study.  	

Comments	Proposed Response
The Study itself notes that the Proposed Rezone would attempt to “resolve” the nonconforming status of one use, the pet cemetery, by turning an existing permitted cell tower use into a nonconforming use. The Study states that the Property's current uses "are likely to continue" under the Property's current zoning. The Study also states that the Proposed Downzone is "unlikely to impact the cell tower use." Thus, the Study states that nothing about the Proposed Downzone will change the Property's use. The Study's only arguments for the Proposed Downzone are that allowing cemetery uses to be conforming "would also support the historic designation and be consistent with zoning on another cemetery in the urban unincorporated area." These are not reasons to justify the isolated designation of a property as R-1 when that property meets none of the Plan’s or Code’s requirements for a site-specific rezone. Moreover, where the impetus for the zoning change appears, in key part, to be driven by a small cohort of vocal opponents, the County is at increased risk of a spot zone challenge should it elect to proceed with the Proposed Downzone. **The Proposed Downzone contradicts the Comp Plan’s telecommunications goals.** As the Plan notes, "Telecommunication systems will need to grow to continue to support government, business, resident, education, health, service sector, and mobile communication needs." In recognition of this need, Goal F-345 of the Public Comment Draft states, "Telecommunication services ((~~are to~~)) shall be encouraged ((~~as a means~~)) to mitigate the transportation impact of development and growth, including ((~~G~~))greenhouse ((~~G~~))gas ((~~E~~))emissions." Similarly, Goal F-346 of the Public Comment Draft states, "King County should encourage((~~s the~~)) telecommunication service providers to engage in long-term planning for telecommunications construction, reconstruction, and facility upgrades, including provisions to ensure that the system’s capacity, design, and equipment will allow users to take advantage of innovative uses, services, and technology.” The Proposed Downzone, which is admitted crafted to convert the Property's legally established cell tower into a new nonconforming use, works to defeat these Comp Plan goals. The DEIS fails to mention any environmental review of proposed map amendments, including the Proposed Downzone. It also fails to incorporate or even reference any such review outside the DEIS itself. The DEIS is silent on any analysis of the Proposed Downzone or its impacts or consistency with the current and future Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.	

	Comments	Proposed Response
	For all the above reasons, we respectfully request that the Kent - Pet Cemetery Amendment be removed from the 2024 Update as you proceed forward. Alternatively, we request that the EIS be updated to allow for accurate analysis of the County's proposed map amendments, including the Proposed Downzone and their respective potential impacts on the Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, and Services, Facilities and Utilities Elements, among others, and sufficient time be provided to review and comment on the adequate environmental analysis before the County proceeds with any legislative action. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me directly with any questions.	
12	**Commenter: Washington State Department of Transportation** **Jeff Storrar, Policy Manager, WSDOT** **Subject: WSDOT Comments on the King County Comprehensive Plan and EIS** The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the King County's (county) draft Comprehensive Plan and the accompanying draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and project list. WSDOT offers the following comments in support of the county's planning efforts. **Draft EIS Alternatives** WSDOT recognizes the importance of coordinated land use and transportation strategies to effectively manage demand and provide travel options for Puget Sound residents. We are pleased to see that the county is evaluating several alternatives. We are particularly interested in the county's Alternative 2 because of its potential to limit conversation of rural land, promote a land use pattern that provides for greater housing and employment opportunities within walking distance to transit, and promote the use of the regional and local transit system. For example, supportive policies are included that call for limiting the amount of residential development in rural areas and prohibiting new Fully Contained Developments. Alternative 2 also aligns with the vision, mission, values, and goals included in WSDOT's Strategic Plan. Alignment between these plans help advance our shared goal of providing the public with a safe, sustainable and integrated multimodal transportation system that meet the travel challenges of today and the growing demands of tomorrow. We look forward to continuing our partnership as the county works towards adopting and implementing its plans.	This comment expresses a policy preference rather than input on the Draft EIS. Although the County may consider it as part of the 2024 Update process, no further response as part of the Final EIS is warranted.

Comments	Proposed Response
While Alternative 2 is an excellent starting point, WSDOT is concerned with some of its proposed policy changes. Page 44 of the draft plan suggests that Alternative 2 would include "substantive updates to the Four-to-One program requirements", including "Using joint planning area boundaries." This proposed change is inconsistent with the recommendations of the Growth Management Policy Council to use the original adopted UGAs as a baseline for proposed expansions. WSDOT provided comments throughout the GMPC's process to review the Four-to-One Program and supports the comprehensive plan incorporating the policy changes consistent with GMPC's final recommendations. **Transportation Plan and Transportation Needs** WSDOT appreciates the county's consideration of all travel modes in its project list. Promoting alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel reduces demand on the transportation system and helps the county and the state achieve our shared goals of VMT and greenhouse gas reduction. The inclusive public outreach conducted by the county to generate the bike, pedestrian and shared streets sections of the plan is also invaluable for both the county and WSDOT's Complete Streets efforts to build a complete bike and pedestrian network across county and state facilities. As projects move forward, WSDOT encourages the county to design its facilities – where appropriate—in keeping with state standards, specifically to a Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 2 or better. For more information, see the WSDOT design manual, specifically Chapters 1510 – Pedestrian Facilities, 1515 – Shared-Use Paths, and 1520 – Bicycle Facilities. In 2022, the Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5974, the Move Ahead Washington package. The bill directs WSDOT to incorporate the principles of Complete Streets in most state transportation projects. More information, including staff contacts, can be found on WSDOT's Complete Streets webpage. WSDOT encourages local agencies to use their comprehensive plans as an opportunity to conduct inclusive community outreach and identify locations where state facilities present a barrier to nonmotorized connectivity. We encourage King County to consider how these facilities might fit into its broader active transportation network on County-owned roads and trails. **Other Comments** Appendix D1 of the draft plan identifies jurisdictions with a potential inconsistency between capacity and projected growth, in both employment and housing. WSDOT appreciates the county's attention to detail in this matter. Jobs/housing balance is a key land use goal, and addressing mismatch in capability and need to accommodate growth is a key step toward achieving it.	

	Comments	Proposed Response
	WSDOT also concurs with the recommendations of the Snoqualmie Interchange Area Zoning and Land Use Study that is included in 2024 Comprehensive Plan appendices. As we communicated to the King County GMPC in 2023, we support maintaining the parcels adjacent to the new Interstate 90/Highway 18 Interchange in its current rural zoning classification, and that the UGA not be expanded in this area. Finally, whichever of the alternatives in the draft EIS the county chooses to advance, WSDOT encourages the county to re-examine the projects in the Transportation Needs Report in the context of the newly adopted alternative. The three scenarios differ substantially in how they direct population and employment growth, which are key factors in determining which transportation investments should be prioritized. **WSDOT Planning Resources** WSDOT's comprehensive planning resources for local agencies can be found on our Land Use and Transportation Guidance page. This includes a wealth of information on how WSDOT reviews local agency plans, our land use and transportation goals, best practices in building transportation efficient communities, and pertinent concurrency and SEPA guidance. WSDOT's Community Planning Portal may be particularly helpful for local jurisdictions. The portal includes data on the state transportation system often needed to complete the transportation element inventory required by the Growth Management Act. In addition to the data included in the portal, local planners can add their own data to ArcGIS Online and create custom reports. **Further Engagement & Coordination** WSDOT appreciates being included in King County's planning process. Please reach out if you would like to discuss opportunities for ongoing engagement and coordination, as well as technical assistance available during your work updating your plans. Thank you again for the opportunity to review the King County Comprehensive Plan. We look forward to our continuing productive partnership.	
13	**Commenter: Amy Taylor** This is a very nit picky small comment, but on Figure 4.1-1 of the draft EIS, page 107 - In the North Highline/White Center area, Water District 45 no longer exists. That area was absorbed into Water District 20 a few years ago after residents voted to consolidate. Probably should update this map.	Figure 4.1-1 in the Final EIS has been updated to reflect this change.

End of Comments

Final EIS Appendix B

Map Amendments and Area Zoning and Land Use Studies

FINAL EIS Appendix

This is a new appendix that has been added as part of the Final EIS. It is not shown as underlined for ease of the reader.

November 2024

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

2024 Update	2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update
A-10	Agricultural, 10-Acre Minimum Lot Area (Zoning Classification)
A-35	Agricultural, 35-Acre Minimum Lot Area (Zoning Classification)
ac	Unincorporated Activity Center (Land Use Designation)
ag	Agriculture (Land Use Designation)
CB	Community Business (Zoning Classification)
CPP	Countywide Planning Policy
-DPA	Demonstration Project Area
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
f	Forestry (Land Use Designation)
F	Forest (Zoning Classification)
gb	Greenbelt/Urban Separator (Land Use Designation)
i	Industrial (Land Use Designation)
I	Industrial (Zoning Classification)
I-90	Interstate 90
K.C.C.	King County Code
m	Mining (Land Use Designation)
M	Mineral (Zoning Classification)
NB	Neighborhood Business (Zoning Classification)
O	Office (Zoning Classification)
op	Other Parks/Wilderness (Land Use Designation)
os	King County Open Space System (Land Use Designation)
PAA	Potential Annexation Area
R-1	Urban Residential, 1 Dwelling Unit per Acre (Zoning Classification)
R-4	Urban Residential, 4 Dwelling Units per Acre (Zoning Classification)
R-6	Urban Residential, 6 Dwelling Units per Acre (Zoning Classification)
R-8	Urban Residential, 8 Dwelling Units per Acre (Zoning Classification)
R-12	Urban Residential, 12 Dwelling Units per Acre (Zoning Classification)
R-18	Urban Residential, 18 Dwelling Units per Acre (Zoning Classification)
R-24	Urban Residential, 24 Dwelling Units per Acre (Zoning Classification)

R-48	Urban Residential, 48 Dwelling Units per Acre (Zoning Classification)
ra	Rural Area (Land Use Designation)
RA-2.5	Rural Area, 1 Dwelling Unit per 2.5 Acres (Zoning Classification)
RA-5	Rural Area, 1 Dwelling Unit per 5 Acres (Zoning Classification)
RA-10	Rural Area, 1 Dwelling Unit per 10 Acres (Zoning Classification)
rn	Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center (Land Use Designation)
rt	Rural Town (Land Use Designation)
rx	Urban Growth Area for Cities in Rural Area (Land Use Designation)
P	P-Suffix
SO	Special District Overlay
UGA	Urban Growth Area
uh	Urban Residential, High (Land Use Designation)
ul	Urban Residential, Low (Land Use Designation)
um	Urban Residential, Medium (Land Use Designation)
UND	Undesignated Land
UPD	Urban Planned Development
UR	Urban Reserve (Zoning Classification)

Map Amendments and Area Zoning and Land Use Studies

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Appendix B was developed after publication of the Draft EIS. It summarizes and identifies the potential environmental impacts of land use designation and zoning classification amendments that are being proposed as Map Amendments or reviewed in Area Zoning and Land Use Studies as part of the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update (2024 Update), as well as additional potential land use and zoning map amendments and studies that are included in the Notice of Public Hearing for the 2024 Update.[1] The proposals being considered are consistent with the types of goals and policies, land use designations, zoning classifications, and development standards included in the alternatives discussed in the Final EIS. As such, the impacts of these land use and zoning changes fall within the range of impacts described in the Final EIS.

The Map Amendments are evaluated in Section 1 of this appendix, the Area Zoning and Land Use Studies are evaluated in Section 2, and the Potential Map Amendment Concepts are evaluated in Section 3. Four of the Area Zoning and Land Use Studies—Kent Pet Cemetery, Maple Valley Industrial, Sustainable Communities and Housing Projects Demonstration Project, and Green Energy Special District Overlay—are also proposed as Map Amendments and are evaluated in Section 1. For a full description of the Map Amendments and Area Zoning and Land Use Studies, please see the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan website.[2] Additional information on the Vashon-Maury Island Map Amendments is also available online.[3] Information on the additional potential land use and zoning map amendments and studies will be posted to the Comprehensive Plan website as it is available.

Note that the specific proposed land use designations, zoning classifications, and development conditions described in the Map Amendments, Area Zoning and Land Use Studies, and Potential Map Amendment Concepts are subject to change, such as the acreages, numbers of parcels affected, and specific development condition language. Consequently, the numbers of parcels affected are presented in approximate terms for the purpose of this analysis. However, potential changes or adjustments to the Map Amendments, , Area Zoning and Land Use Studies, and Potential Map Amendment Concepts are currently anticipated to be consistent with the 2024 Update, and would therefore have similar impacts to those specifically evaluated in this appendix. Modified or new Map Amendments that are not consistent may require additional environmental review.

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[1] King County, Metropolitan King County Council Notice of Public Hearing, 2024 Comprehensive Plan, Proposed Ordinances 2023-0438 and 2023-0440, October 2024. [LINK]

[2] King County, 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan website, 2024. [LINK]

[3] Vashon Rural Town Affordable Housing Special District Overlay Final Evaluation, December 2023. [LINK]; Vashon-Maury Island P-Suffix Conditions Report, December 2023. [LINK]

1. MAP AMENDMENTS

This section describes the potential land use and zoning map amendments being considered with the 2024 Update and associated impacts.

1.1 Map Amendment 1: Maple Valley – Urban Growth Area Boundary and Industrial Amendment

This proposal would amend the Urban Growth Area (UGA) to coincide with a portion of the northern city limits of Maple Valley, change the Comprehensive Plan land use designation of approximately three parcels from "i" (Industrial) to "ra" (Rural Area), rezone the parcels from I (Industrial) to RA-5 (Rural Area, 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres), and repeal a P-Suffix development condition from those parcels.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would reduce the size of the UGA along the northern boundary of Maple Valley by changing the UGA boundary, land use designations, and zoning classifications to incorporate approximately three parcels into the Rural Area. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in the Final EIS and would align with County policies to focus growth within the Urban Area, as described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.2 Map Amendment 2: Skyway-West Hill – Cannabis Retail Terminology

This proposal would amend the P-Suffix WH-P11 terminology on approximately 80 parcels in the Skyway West Hill Planning Area to "cannabis" from the previous "marijuana" to align with recent changes to state law.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would not affect the intent of P-Suffix WH-P11 and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.[4]

[4] Proposals resulting in "no substantive changes respecting use or modification of the environment" are categorically exempt from threshold determination and EIS requirements under the State Environmental Policy Act (Washington Administrative Code 197-11-800(19)(b)).

1.3 Map Amendment 3: Skyway-West Hill – Unincorporated Activity Center Amendment

This proposal would amend the land use designation for approximately one parcel adjacent to Skyway Park from "uh" (Urban Residential, High) to "ac" (Unincorporated Activity Center) to align with other similar changes in Attachment D to Ordinance 19555, which inadvertently omitted this parcel.[5] There would be no change to the current R-24 zoning classification (Urban Residential, 24 dwelling units per acre).

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would not change the current R-24 zoning classification of the parcel and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.4 Map Amendment 4: North-Highline – Cannabis Retail Terminology and Height Limit

This proposal would add the zoning classification of P-Suffix NH-P02 to approximately 20 parcels in the North Highline subarea that were inadvertently omitted from the initial adoption of P-Suffix NH-P02 in Attachment D to Ordinance 19555. The proposal would also amend the terminology of P-Suffix NH-P02 to "cannabis" from the previous "marijuana" to align with recent changes to state law for approximately 320 parcels in the North Highline subarea. This proposal would also amend P-Suffix NH-P04 for approximately 30 parcels to remove design standards that are included in the North Highline Design Standards in King County Code (K.C.C.) Chapter 21A.60 and to modify the requirement for the size of tenant spaces on the ground floor of a building during initial construction.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The addition of P-Suffix NH-P02 would not directly cause significant changes to the parcels but would limit future use of the parcel to non-cannabis related businesses or other uses. This proposal is largely technical in nature because the previous Attachment D to Ordinance 19555 was intended to include these parcels and this proposal would align these parcels with similarly zoned ones in the area.

The terminology revision from "marijuana" to "cannabis" for P-Suffix NH-P02 is a technical change and would have no substantive effect on the environment.

The modification of NH-P04 would remove duplicative requirements to previously adopted North Highline Design Standards.

These potential impacts to the North Highline subarea would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, of the Final EIS related to the height, bulk, and scale of development. The proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

[5] King County, Ordinance 19555, Enacted December 22, 2022. [LINK]

1.5 Map Amendment 5: Low-Impact Development and Built Green Demonstration Project Area

This proposal would remove the "Low Impact Development and Built Green Demonstration Project" overlay (-DPA) from approximately 770 parcels in the North Highline subarea (primarily) and on Vashon-Maury Island to reflect the expiration of the authority adopted as part of K.C.C. 21A.55.060.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The -DPA overlay designation was intended to provide support for low-impact development and green building through the modification of development codes and project review processes. The removal of the -DPA overlay would return parcels to their original zoning classifications and would revert all development codes and project review processes to those determined by the K.C.C. for their specific zoning classifications. This proposal is a technical change that would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.6 Map Amendment 6: Sustainable Communities and Housing Projects Demonstration Project Area

This proposal would add the -DPA overlay to approximately one parcel in the North Highline subarea previously zoned as R-18 (Urban Residential, 18 dwelling units per acre), amending it to R-18-DPA, and to approximately 15 parcels in the Skyway/West Hill Planning Area previously designated as R-8 (Urban Residential, 8 dwelling units per acre) to R-8-DPA. This proposal would also remove the -DPA overlay from approximately one parcel in the East Federal Way area

Summary of Potential Impacts

The addition of the -DPA would align the zoning classifications of the parcels with K.C.C. 21A.55.101, which is intended to provide additional affordable housing and encourage the development of sustainable communities with features such as bike, pedestrian, and transit connections; a mix of housing types; and the use of recyclable materials. The addition of the -DPA is a technical change that would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

The removal of the -DPA from approximately one parcel in East Federal Way would prevent future development on that parcel from taking advantage of the modifications or waivers from development standards allowed under K.C.C. 21A.55.101 for building affordable housing. However, impacts from the removal of the -DPA are anticipated to be minor because any potential future development would be subject to the standards in the current residential zoning and would align with the zoning of the surrounding area. The impacts from this proposal would fall within the range of impacts for changing zoning classifications described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.7 Map Amendment 7: Kent – Pet Cemetery Amendment

This proposal would amend the land use designation and zoning classification for approximately one parcel in the Kent Potential Annex Area (PAA). The land use designation for the parcel would be

amended from “i” to “ul” (Urban Residential, Low). The zoning classification for this parcel would be amended from I to R-1 (Urban Residential, 1 dwelling unit per acre) and would remove P-Suffix GR-P03, which limits the allowed uses to long-term storage of recreation vehicles. This proposal would also repeal P-Suffix GR-P03 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would allow the current use of the property to conform with the allowed uses in the K.C.C. for this zone, support the historic designation of the property, and be consistent with zoning on other cemeteries in the urban unincorporated area. These changes are not anticipated to affect the continued use of an existing cell tower on the site. Impacts from this proposal would fall within the range of impacts for changing land use designations and zoning classifications described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, in the King County Comprehensive Plan Final EIS. The proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.8 Map Amendment 8: Countywide – King County Open Space System Expansion

This proposal would reflect the parcels currently in the King County Open Space System by changing the land use designations of certain parcels, described below, to "os" (King County Open Space System) and the zoning classification to a lower allowed density on some parcels in unincorporated King County. Land use designations and zoning classifications would be revised as follows:

- Approximately one parcel would change land use designation from “ac” to “os.”
- Approximately 90 parcels would change from “ag” (Agriculture) to “os.”
- Approximately 30 parcels would change from “f” (Forestry) to “os.”
- Approximately 10 parcels would change from “gb” (Greenbelt/Urban Separator) to “os.”
- Approximately one parcel would change from “i” to “os.”
- Approximately three parcels would change from “m” (Mining) to “os.”
- Approximately 560 parcels would change from “ra” to “os.”
- Approximately two parcels would change from “rn” (Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center) to “os.”
- Approximately four parcels would change from “rx” (UGA for Cities in Rural Area) to “os.”
- Approximately three parcels would change from “uh” to “os.”
- Approximately two parcels would change from “ul” to “os.”
- Approximately 15 parcels would change from “um” (Urban Residential, Medium) to “os.”
- Approximately one parcel would change from “UND" (Undesignated) to “os.”
- Approximately four parcels would change from “ra” to “op” (Other Parks and Wilderness).
- Approximately five parcels would have their zoning classifications amended from RA-5 to RA-10 (Rural Area, 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres).

In addition, this proposal would repeal the P-Suffix SV-P35 development condition from the King County Zoning Atlas, which requires lot clustering on a portion of the affected parcels and that the remainder of the parcels be dedicated for permanent open space.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would change the land use designation of parcels recently acquired by King County for inclusion in the King County Open Space System. This designation would be consistent with the long-term intended use of these properties for environmental protection, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation. The proposed change to the land use designation is a technical change that would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

The changes to the zoning classification and repeal of the P-Suffix SV-P35 development condition would limit future development on the affected parcels. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.9 Map Amendment 9: Vashon-Maury Island – Land Use Redesignations, Zoning Reclassification, and Development Condition Amendments and Repeals

This proposal would revise the land use designations on approximately three parcels on Vashon-Maury Island. Approximately one parcel would be changed from “ra” to “os”, and approximately two parcels would be changed from “rt” (Rural Town) to “os.”

This proposal would also make a number of changes to the zoning classifications and development conditions in Vashon Rural Town as follows:

- Removes Vashon Rural Town Affordable Housing Special District Overlay SO-270 from all parcels where it applies in Vashon Rural Town.
- Amends the zoning classification on approximately one parcel on SW 174th Street in the vicinity of Vashon Highway SW from CB (Community Business) to R-12 (Urban Residential, 12 dwelling units per acre) while retaining P-Suffix VS-P28. Removes VS-P19, a setback requirement on the parcel. Setbacks in K.C.C. Title 21A for residential development would still apply on the parcel.
- Amends the zoning classification on approximately 12 parcels on the western edge of Vashon Rural Town in the vicinity of SW Bank Road to remove potential R-12 zoning.
- Amends P-Suffix VS-P26 that applies to parcels in Vashon Rural Town on Vashon Highway SW north of SW 174th Street.
- Amends the zoning classification on a portion of a parcel on Vashon Highway SW in the vicinity of SW 184th Way from R-1 to R-4 (Urban Residential, 4 dwelling units per acre) to remove split zoning on the parcel. Removes VS-P25 that regulates rights-of-way that can be used to access the parcels on 103rd Avenue SW north of SW 188th Street from this parcel.
- Amends P-Suffix VS-P28 that applies to parcels in Vashon Town Core.
- Removes P-Suffix VS-P28 from approximately one rural-designated parcel north of SW 174th Street and west of Vashon Highway SW.

- Converts P-Suffix VS-P29 to a Special District Overlay to regulate permitted uses on CB-zoned parcels in Vashon Rural Town.
- Adds SO-320 (as proposed in Section 246 of Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440) development conditions to CB-zoned parcels on Vashon Highway SW north of SW 192nd Street and on Vashon Highway SW south of SW Cove Road.
- Converts P-Suffix VS-P30 to a Special District Overlay to regulate permitted uses on I-zoned parcels on Vashon-Maury Island.
- Adds VS-P30 (becoming SO-330 as proposed in Section 247 of Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440) development conditions to I-zoned parcels on Vashon Highway SW north of SW 204th Street that were not previously included in P-Suffix VS-P30.
- Removes VS-P01, which limits maximum densities to 12 dwelling units per acre from parcels north of SW 171st Street and east of Vashon Highway SW.
- Removes VS-P08, which limits the development of the parcel to no more than 85 dwelling units, from a parcel on Vashon Highway SW and SW 169th Street.
- Removes VS-P10, establishing a right-of-way on a parcel.
- Removes VS-P11, which limits the uses that are allowed on the affected I-zoned parcels, on Vashon Highway SW north of SW 204th Street.
- Removes VS-P13, which limits density to a maximum of 12 dwelling units per acre, from a parcel on Vashon Highway SW north of SW 188th Street. VS-P29 (becoming SO-320, as proposed in Section 246 of Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440) applies to the parcel.
- Removes VS-P14, which limits density to 6 dwelling units per acre, with requirements prohibiting parking and outside storage in the road setback, from a parcel on SW 174th Street in the vicinity of Vashon Highway SW.
- Removes VS-P15 from a parcel on SW Bank Road in the vicinity of Vashon Highway SW.
- Removes VS-P16, which limits development on the parcel on 100th Avenue SW south of SW 178th Street to a single use, which is consistent with the current business use. The parcel is zoned CB, and development conditions in VS-P29 (becoming SO-320, as proposed in Section 246 of Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440) also regulate how the parcel and adjacent CB-zoned parcels can be developed.
- Removes VS-P17, which limits development to office and manufacturing uses and ancillary, accessory, or appurtenant uses from a parcel on 103rd Avenue SW south of SW 178th Street. Right-of-way improvements are also included in VS-P17. The change would align with current zoning and applicable conditions in VS-P30 (becoming SO-330 as proposed in Section 247 of Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440).
- Removes VS-P23, which restricts use of buildings and sets provisions for parking location from a parcel on Vashon Highway SW north of SW 192nd Street.
- Removes VS-P25, which regulates rights-of-way that can be used to access the parcels on 103rd Avenue SW north of SW 188th Street.
- Removes VS-P31, which limits development to housing for low-income householders on a parcel on SW Gorsuch Road and 95th Lane SW.

- Repeals a number of P-Suffix development conditions from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is intended to align parcels, land use designations, and zoning classifications with the current K.C.C., regulations, and existing conditions of affected parcels in and adjacent to Vashon Rural Town. Amendments to P-Suffix development conditions could result in increased development density, additional affordable housing units, and changes to the height and bulk of buildings. These impacts would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.3, Housing, of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

Other changes to zoning classifications and changes to P-Suffix development conditions would align parcels with their current zoning or on-the-ground conditions and would not result in any significant, adverse impacts.

1.10 Map Amendment 10: Vashon-Maury Island – Fire Station Development Condition

This proposal would amend the P-Suffix VS-P03 development condition for a parcel located on SW Burton Road on Vashon-Maury Island, revising the language from “Use of this site is limited to a fire station” to “Use of this site is limited to a fire facility” to be consistent with the terminology used in K.C.C. Chapter 21A.08.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This is a technical change intended to align the language of P-Suffix VS-P03 with the K.C.C. and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.11 Map Amendment 11: Vashon-Maury Island – Guest Inn/Restaurant Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P04 development condition from approximately two parcels and would repeal P-Suffix VS-P04 from the King County Zoning Atlas. This P-Suffix limits the parcels on Vashon Highway SW, south of SW Burton Drive, to a guest inn or restaurant.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This amendment would result in permitted businesses on the affected parcels to be governed by the underlying Neighborhood Business (NB) zoning conditions in alignment with other NB-zoned sites in the Burton Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center. This may result in different future use of the affected parcels from the current limitation of restaurant or guest inn. Impacts from this proposal would fall within the range of impacts for changing zoning classifications described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.12 Map Amendment 12: Vashon-Maury Island – Food Processing Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P05 development condition from approximately two parcels and would repeal P-Suffix VS-P05 from the King County Zoning Atlas. P-Suffix VS-P04 limits the parcels on Wax Orchard Road SW, north of SW 232nd Street to food processing.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would expand the permitted uses on these parcels to allow agricultural support services when associated with permitted agricultural activities instead of being limited to food processing. This would align with the underlying Rural Area zoning classification for the affected parcels and thus would not have any significant adverse impacts; any potential future use of the parcels would be limited to those described in the current zoning and would align with the zoning of the surrounding area. The impacts from this proposal would fall within the range of impacts for changing zoning classifications described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.13 Map Amendment 13: Vashon-Maury Island – Neighborhood Business Site Design Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P06 development condition from a parcel located on Vashon Highway SW and SW Gorsuch Road on Vashon-Maury Island. It would also repeal P-Suffix VS-P06 from the King County Zoning Atlas. P-Suffix VS-P06 requires landscaping in setbacks, prohibits new driveways or additional parking, requires that the façade be retained on specific parts of the building, and limits building expansion.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal may result in future development of the parcel that would have a differing visual impact than previous development. The parcel would be governed by development regulations in K.C.C. Title 21A, and the impacts of this change would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.14 Map Amendment 14: Vashon-Maury Island – Community Use Terminology Development Condition

This proposal would amend the terminology for the P-Suffix VS-P07 development condition for approximately four parcels on Vashon Highway SW and SW 210th Street on Vashon-Maury Island. It would remove the names of specific businesses and agencies in P-Suffix VS-207 and align the P-Suffix with terms used in K.C.C. Chapter 21A.08.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change to align the language of the P-suffix with the K.C.C. and would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.15 Map Amendment 15: Vashon-Maury Island – Rural Area Site Design Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P09 development condition from approximately five parcels located on SW 256th Street and 75th Avenue SW on Vashon-Maury Island. P-Suffix VS-P09 states that, at the time that a building permit application is submitted, the affected parcels would be one contiguous parcel and only one barn would be allowed. This proposal would also repeal P-Suffix VS-P09 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would align the zoning classification with existing conditions on the parcels and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.16 Map Amendment 16: Vashon-Maury Island – Density Restriction Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P12 development condition from approximately two parcels located on SW Bank Road in the vicinity of Vashon Highway SW on Vashon-Maury Island. P-Suffix VS-P12 limits the density on the affected parcels to a maximum of 12 dwelling units per acre unless the property is developed as a housing project for seniors with low incomes. Removing this P-Suffix would align with current development present on the affected parcels. This proposal would also repeal P-Suffix VS-P12 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would align the zoning classification with existing conditions on the parcels and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.17 Map Amendment 17: Vashon-Maury Island – Use Restrictions and Development Requirements Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P18 development condition from a parcel located on SW Bank Road and 107th Ave SW on Vashon-Maury Island. P-Suffix VS-P18 limits development on the parcel to a residential development or a medical clinic and includes additional development requirements. This parcel has been developed in accordance with the limits imposed by this P-Suffix. This proposal would also repeal P-Suffix VS-P18 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal reflects the fact that the parcel has been developed consistent with the use restrictions and other development conditions in P-Suffix VS-P18. Future development would be in accordance with the current land use designation and zoning classification of the parcel, which could allow for more intensive uses but is not anticipated to have substantive adverse effects on the environment. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new significant adverse impacts.

1.18 Map Amendment 18: Vashon-Maury Island – Development Requirements Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P20 development condition from approximately four parcels located on Vashon Highway SW and SW 188th Street on Vashon-Maury Island. P-Suffix VS-P20 requires access to the parcel from SW 188th Street and includes requirements for landscaping on the parcel. It would also repeal P-Suffix VS-P20 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is consistent with and reflects the current K.C.C. authority over the parcels. There may be some future visual impacts related to the removal of landscaping requirements. However, because the parcel is currently developed, these impacts would potentially occur only with future redevelopment. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, of the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.19 Map Amendment 19: Vashon-Maury Island – Access and Use Restrictions Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P21 development condition from a parcel located on Vashon Highway SW and SW 188th Street on Vashon-Maury Island. P-Suffix VS-P21 restricts access to the parcel to SW 188th Street and limits the use on the parcel. This proposal would also repeal P-Suffix VS-P21 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would align with the parcel's listing in the King County Historic Resource Inventory. While this change would have the potential to allow additional access or redevelopment of the parcel to a new, permitted use, the provisions for reviewing and allowing changes to historic structures would limit the potential impacts to the parcel and effects to the environment. Any impacts that would occur would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.5, Historic and Cultural Resources, in the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.20 Map Amendment 20: Vashon-Maury Island – Access and Density Limits Development Condition

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix VS-P22 development condition from a parcel located on Vashon Highway SW and SW 188th Street on Vashon-Maury Island. P-Suffix VS-P22 restricts access to the parcel to a single driveway from Vashon Highway SW and limits the parcel to a maximum of 14 dwelling units. This proposal would also repeal P-Suffix VS-P22 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would align with the current road standards set forth in the K.C.C. provisions for access and conforms to the allowed densities for the R-4 zone in which the parcel is located. This proposal would allow the potential for new or additional driveways and would allow future redevelopment of the parcel to include up to 25 housing units at the allowed density of 4 units per acre. Because the parcel is currently developed, there would be no immediate impacts from this change, and any future impacts would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, in the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.21 Map Amendment 21: Federal Way – Urban Planned Development P-Suffix Removal

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix FW-P12 development condition from a parcel located on S 304th Street and 51st Avenue S. This P-Suffix was implemented in 1997 and limited development of the parcel so that it could only occur through an Urban Planned Development (UPD) and was limited to 90 units. This would return the parcel to its previous R-6 zoning classification (Urban Residential, 6 dwelling units per acre) and remove the old UPD conditions. This proposal would also repeal P-Suffix FW-P12 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would align the zoning classification with existing conditions on the parcels and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.22 Map Amendment 22: Skyway-West Hill – Development Limitations

This proposal would add the P-Suffix WH-P10 development condition to approximately one parcel in the Skyway-West Hill area and would amend the language of P-Suffix WH-P10 for approximately seven parcels to make technical changes to the terminology for manufactured home communities and removes the requirement for a minimum density on the affected parcels.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would remove the minimum density requirement from parcels that are zoned R-24 and R-48 (Urban Residential, 48 dwelling units per acre). There would be limited impacts as a result of this change; any future development or redevelopment of the parcels would not be limited to the minimum density requirements listed above but would still be limited to the maximum density requirements set forth in the zoning classifications. Because the parcels are currently developed, there would be no immediate impact from this change, and any future impacts would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, in the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.23 Map Amendment 23: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Fall City Business District

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix SV-P27 development condition, which requires landscaping as part of park development, from a parcel and the P-Suffix SV-P28 development condition, which prohibits overnight parking or storage of trucks on the parcel, from another parcel, both of which are in the Fall City Business District. These P-Suffix development conditions would also be repealed from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would align the zoning classification with existing conditions on the parcels and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.24 Map Amendment 24: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Fall City Residential Dimensional Standards

The proposal would add a new SO-xxx development condition to approximately 580 parcels in the residentially zoned area of the Fall City Rural Town in accordance with Section 249 of Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440. This would apply a Special District Overlay to this area, which would impose dimensional standards for lot size, development setbacks, impervious surface coverage, and building height to maintain the residential zone's historic character and predominant development pattern.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The impacts of this proposal would be limited because the purpose of the Special District Overlay is to ensure that new development is consistent with the historic character and predominant development pattern of the existing residential development within the Fall City Rural Town. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.3, Housing, in the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.25 Map Amendment 25: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Fall City Industrial

This proposal would amend the P-Suffix SV-P26 development condition a parcel in the industrially zoned area of the Fall City Rural Town. This amendment would revise the language of P-Suffix SV-P26 to acknowledge the long-standing legal use of the industrial property while maintaining development conditions that ensure the parcel's compatibility with the adjacent residential and nearby commercial areas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would not affect the intent of P-Suffix SV-P26 and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.26 Map Amendment 26: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Preston Industrial Development Conditions

This proposal would apply to multiple parcels in the Preston Industrial Area and is intended to consolidate and update multiple P-Suffix development conditions as follows:

- Remove P-Suffixes SV-P13 and SV-P15 from approximately 10 parcels each, and repeal P-Suffixes SV-P13 and SV-P15 from the King County Zoning Atlas.
- Remove P-Suffix SV-P19 from two parcels and amend its language on approximately 20 parcels across the Preston Industrial Area to incorporate applicable landscaping, open space, and utility provisions from the removed P-Suffixes while also updating and simplifying the terminology.
- Amend the zoning from I to RA-10 on a portion of one parcel northwest of the Preston Industrial area that has been acquired by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks for inclusion in the King County Open Space System.
- Amending the zoning classification from NB to RA-2.5 (Rural Area, 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres) on a portion of one parcel.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The removal and revision of P-Suffixes in this proposal are technical in nature. Language from the removed P-Suffixes—SV-P13 and SV-P15—would be incorporated into P-Suffix SV-P19 and applied to parcels that previously had P-Suffixes SV-P13 and SV-P15. Any development or redevelopment of the parcels would be in accordance with the revised language set forth in P-Suffix SV-P19. The removal and revision of P-Suffix development conditions under this proposal would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

Impacts would be limited on the portion of the parcel that is being updated from I to RA-10 because the County acquired the parcel for the purposes of incorporating it into the King County Open Space System, which would limit the development of the parcel. Similarly, there would be no impact to the linear parcel being changed from NB to RA-2.5 because it is already developed as the Preston Snoqualmie Trail. The impacts of the proposed zoning changes would fall within the range of impacts described in

Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation, in the Final EIS. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.27 Map Amendment 27: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Preston Mill Development Conditions

This proposal would apply to approximately seven parcels on or adjacent to the former Preston Mill site in northeast King County and would include both land use designation and zoning classification changes. One parcel would have its land use designation changed from "rn" to "f" to align with its current zoning classification; five parcels would have the P-Suffix SV-P12 development condition, which limits commercial use, removed; and three parcels would have the P-Suffix SV-P17 and SV-P21 development conditions, which were intended to guide the development of the former Preston Mill site, removed. This amendment would also change the zoning from NB to F (Forest) on a portion of a parcel acquired by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks and incorporated into the King County Open Space System. This change would also repeal P-Suffixes SV-P12, SV-P17, and SV-P21 from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The proposal is intended to remove overlapping developmental conditions on or adjacent to the former Preston Mill site and align land use designations with existing underlying zoning classifications. It would have little to no impact since there would not be a change in developmental conditions on the affected parcels. The revision from NB to F on a portion of one parcel within the King County Open Space System would also have limited impacts, since this change would preserve the parcel from future development. The impacts from this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation, and would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.28 Map Amendment 28: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Raging River Quarry Open Space and P-Suffix Development Condition

This proposal would apply multiple changes to approximately one parcel owned by King County located in the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea. The land use designation would be changed from "m" to "os", the zoning classification would be changed from M (Mineral) to RA-10, and P-Suffix SV-P31, which concerns development and operation of a quarry, would be removed from the parcel. In addition, the language for the P-Suffix SV-P31 development condition on the parcel to the north would be revised for consistency with current codes.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The proposed change to the land use designation is a technical change that would reflect the parcel's status as part of King County's Open Space System. It would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

The zoning classification changes on the affected parcel could result in different allowed uses and standards for future development on the parcel, which would likely be less impactful than the current zoning. The impacts from this proposal would be consistent with the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation, and would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

The language revision for P-Suffix SV-P31 is a technical change to align the development condition with the current K.C.C. and would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.29 Map Amendment 29: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Grand Ridge Development Conditions

This proposal would affect a number of parcels in the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea, revising both land use designations and zoning classifications. Approximately 30 parcels would have their land use designations revised from "ra" to "os", and approximately one parcel owned by the City of Issaquah would be revised from "ra" to "op". Additionally, this proposal would remove P-Suffix development conditions ES-P02, ES-P09, and ES-P12 from several parcels. These P-Suffix development conditions implemented policies of the former East Sammamish Community Plan by specifying that the area retain its rural designation and new subdivisions require clustering (ES-P02), specifying development requirements to be followed for subdivisions and short subdivisions (ES-P09), and specifying that any development application submitted after January 9, 1995, be processed consistent with the Urban Planned Development Agreement that controlled the now-constructed Grand Ridge Development (ES-P12).

- Approximately 580 parcels would have P-Suffixes ES-P02 and ES-P09 removed.
- Approximately 10 parcels would have P-Suffix ES-P02 removed.
- Approximately 20 parcels would have P-Suffixes ES-P02, ES-P09, and ES-P12 removed.
- Approximately two Parcels would have P-Suffixes ES-P02 and ES-P12 removed.

These P-Suffixes would also be repealed from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The proposed land use designation changes to “os” and “op” are technical changes that would reflect the long-term intended use of the properties for open space, recreational, and environmental benefits. They would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

The removal of the P-Suffix development conditions would be a technical change that would apply to already-developed parcels and open space tracts that cannot be redeveloped and would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.30 Map Amendment 30: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Snoqualmie Mill Development Condition

This proposal would revise land use designations and zoning classifications for approximately 10 parcels near the former Snoqualmie Mill site in northeast King County. Approximately one parcel would have its land use designation revised from "ra" to "os" to reflect that King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks acquired it. Approximately 10 parcels would have the P-Suffix SV-P18 development condition removed, which established development standards for continued industrial/commercial use of the historic Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Mill Site. One full parcel and a portion of an additional parcel would have its zoning classifications revised from I to UR (Urban Reserve), a portion of a parcel would have its zoning classification revised from I to RA-5, and a portion of a parcel would be revised from I to M. P-Suffix SV-P18 would also be repealed from the Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The land use designation change from “ra” to “os” is a technical change that would reflect the long-term intended use of the property for open space, recreational, and environmental benefits. It would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment

The zoning classification changes, including the removal of P-Suffix SV-P18, reflect current conditions of parcels within the historic Weyerhaeuser Snoqualmie Mill Site and within the Snoqualmie UGA. The parcel that is being revised from I to UR is located within the Urban Growth Area adjacent to the City of Snoqualmie, and all future development would need to comply with the underlying UR zoning classification. The zoning changes from I to RA-5 and from I to M affect very small portions of those respective parcels and are meant to align those portions with the zoning classifications of adjacent parcels. The impacts from this proposal would be consistent with the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.31 Map Amendment 31: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Snoqualmie Pass Landscape Buffering and Alternative Housing Demonstration Project Area

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix EK-P03 development condition from approximately 10 parcels to be replaced by a new P-Suffix development condition, SV-PXX, which would require a 100-foot landscape buffer only on CB-zoned parcels south of Interstate 90 (I-90). P-Suffix EK-P03 would then be repealed from the King County Zoning Atlas.

In addition, the “Alternative Housing Demonstration Project” -DPA overlay established in K.C.C. 21A.55.125 would be applied to the affected parcels. The Alternative Housing Demonstration Project Area encourages private market development of housing options that are affordable to different segments of the county’s population, such as seasonal workers employed at the ski area and supporting recreational and tourism amenities. The Alternative Housing Demonstration Project is amended as part of the amendments to the K.C.C. in the 2024 Update.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The addition of P-Suffix SV-PXX is intended to preserve the quality of landscape views within the Mountains to Sound Greenway adjacent to I-90 by increasing the width of required buffer to 100 feet for development on CB-zoned parcels with buildings greater than 25 feet high. However, future development on those parcels would have less area in which to develop. The -DPA overly could encourage new housing options, higher densities, and more intensive housing development on the affected parcels, which may increase the population in the area. The impacts of this proposal fall within the range of impacts discussed in Final EIS Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 4.3, Housing, and would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.32 Map Amendment 32: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Other Parks and Wilderness Changes

This change would amend the land use designation from “ra” to “op” on approximately 20 parcels owned by various non-King County public agencies. This designation is intended to indicate their long-term use as part of a contiguous and functional open space system that includes recreation, natural areas, working resource lands, and trail and wildlife habitat corridors.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that would not change the current zoning classification of the parcels and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.33 Map Amendment 33: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Rural Forest Demonstration Project

This proposal would remove the “Rural Forest Demonstration Project” -DPA established in K.C.C. 21A.55.050 from approximately 50 parcels. This change reflects the expiration of the demonstration project and its current proposed repeal from the K.C.C.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that aligns the current zoning classification of the parcels with the K.C.C. and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.34 Map Amendment 34: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Rural Clustering Development Conditions

This proposal would remove the P-Suffix SV-P23 development condition from approximately six parcels east of North Bend and the P-Suffix SV-P36 development condition from approximately one full parcel and portions of approximately two parcels west of North Bend. Both P-Suffixes require clustering of residential developments from multiple parcels. Both P-Suffix SV-P23 and SV-P36 would be repealed from the King County Zoning Atlas.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The removal of P-Suffixes SV-P23 and SV-P36 from the affected parcels would remove the requirements for the clustering of residential development on those parcels, though clustered residential development would still be allowed. Future residential development may be more dispersed across these parcels than current development conditions allow but would be in alignment with the RA-10 and RA-5 zoning classifications and is not anticipated to have substantive adverse effects on the environment.

1.35 Map Amendment 35: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Land Use and Zoning Alignment

This proposal would align the land use designations and zoning classifications of a number of parcels in the unincorporated land of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Community Service Area as follows:

- Revise the land use designation on approximately one parcel from "ag" to "ra".
- Revise the land use designation on approximately one parcel from "m" to "ag."
- Revise the land use designation of approximately one parcel and portions of three additional parcels from “ra” to “ag."
- Revise the land use designation of approximately three parcels and portions of six additional parcels from “ra” to “f".
- Revise the land use designation of approximately 120 parcels from “rn" to “ra.”
- Revise the zoning classification of approximately 10 parcels from F to RA-5.
- Revise the zoning classification of portions of approximately four parcels from A-35, Potential M (Agricultural, 35-acre minimum lot area, Potential Mineral) to A-35.
- Revise the zoning classification of approximately two parcels from F, Potential M to F.
- Revise the zoning classification of portions of approximately two parcels from RA-10 to A-35.
- Revise the zoning classification of a portion of approximately one parcel from A-10 (Agricultural, 10-acre minimum lot area) to RA-10.
- Revise the zoning classification of a portion of approximately one parcel from F to RA-10.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The proposed changes to the land use designations and zoning classifications are intended to reflect the existing conditions on the affected and adjacent parcels. The proposed changes to zoning classifications are anticipated to result in future development that is consistent with the existing development on the affected parcels, though the reclassification from F to RA-10 on the portion of one parcel has the potential to allow future residential development that does not exist currently. The impacts from this proposal would be consistent with the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 3.4, Natural Resources. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.36 Map Amendment 36: Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County – Removal of Development Conditions from Previously Annexed Areas

This proposal repeals the following P-Suffix development conditions from the King County Zoning Atlas:

- P-Suffix SV-P25
- P-Suffix SV-P30
- P-Suffix SV-P32
- P-Suffix SV-P33
- P-Suffix SV-P34
- P-Suffix SV-P37
- P-Suffix ES-P21

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal is a technical change that repeals P-Suffix development conditions that no longer apply on any parcels in unincorporated King County and therefore would not result in any substantive changes respecting the use or modification of the environment.

1.37 Map Amendment 37: Cedar Hills - Green Energy Special District Overlay

This proposal applies Green Energy Special District Overlay SO-340 (proposed in Section 248 of Proposed Ordinance 2023-0440) to approximately five parcels in the Cedar Hills area, which are currently zoned M or a combination of M and RA-5.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would reduce regulatory requirements and expand allowances for green energy projects, such as non-hydroelectric generation facilities, anaerobic digesters, and energy resource recovery facilities on the affected parcels. While some of these facilities are currently allowed on M- and RA-zoned land, this proposal could result in more intensive development of green energy facilities than is currently allowed under the current zoning classifications. The impacts from this proposal would be consistent with the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, and Section 3.4, Natural Resources. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.38 Map Amendment X: Vashon-Maury Island – Regenerative Development Demonstration Project Area

This proposal would apply a new Regenerative Development Demonstration Project Area -DPA overlay to approximately four parcels within Vashon Rural Town to determine whether innovative permit processing, site development, and building construction techniques can facilitate development that

results in significant community and environmental benefits. This proposal would allow for an expedited development review process and for development on the affected parcels to modify or waive development standards for such things as stormwater management, roads and parking, landscaping, building dimensions, and design. However, certain criteria would have to be met concerning the percentage of affordable housing units and the development would have to demonstrate that it would be of higher quality, optimize use of the site, enhance the experience of pedestrians and sense of place and community above what the development could achieve without the waivers or modifications.

This proposal is listed in the Notice of Public Hearing. Additional information will be posted on the County's Comprehensive Plan website as it is available.

Summary of Potential Impacts

The proposed -DPA would allow modification or waiver of certain design and development standards on the affected properties, which could result in construction of residential and commercial uses at a greater height, bulk, and scale than could occur under existing zoning; it could also allow uses that are not currently allowed in the applicable zones. Impacts from this proposal would fall within the range of impacts for allowing new uses and changing design standards described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, in the King County Comprehensive Plan Final EIS. The proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

1.39 Map Amendment X: Northeast Sammamish Industrial Parcels

This proposal would modify the ES-P05 P-Suffix development condition for approximately two parcels north of Sammamish to allow for the current trucking and construction uses on the site, as well as equipment, parking, maintenance, and storage. P-Suffix ES-P05 currently limits the property to pipeline utility and/or school bus base uses, both of which are permitted uses in the industrial zone. The proposal would add the current uses of the site to those allowed under the P-suffix but restrict future development to those facilities on-site as of January 1, 2024. The current facilities would not be able to be further intensified or expanded in size, though upgrades that do not expand their size would be allowed.

This proposal is listed in the Notice of Public Hearing. Additional information will be posted on the County's Comprehensive Plan website as it is available.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would align the ES-P05 P-Suffix development conditions with the current use of the affected parcels, which are currently being used for a utility use and a trucking and excavation business. While this proposal would not allow more uses than already exist on site, it would allow more uses than are allowed under the current P-Suffix development conditions. Impacts from this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, in the King County Comprehensive Plan Final EIS. The proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

2. AREA ZONING AND LAND USE STUDIES

This section discusses area zoning and land use studies that review the land use designations and zoning classifications for a specified set of properties. These studies considered specific potential changes to land use or zoning — or both — and analyzed such requests based on surrounding land use designations and zoning classifications, current infrastructure and potential future needs, and consistency with the King County Comprehensive Plan, countywide planning policies (CPPs), and the Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A Revised Code of Washington.

2.1 Black Diamond Fire Station

This study evaluated changes to the land use designation and zoning classification for the Black Diamond Fire Station (parcel 0421069092) to allow sewer service by either adding the area to the Urban Growth Area (UGA) or allowing sewer service for public safety facilities that are outside the UGA boundary. As this property does not meet the criteria specified under the Growth Management Act for allowing sewer connections to the Rural Area, only the addition of the property to the UGA is evaluated here.

Summary of Potential Impacts

If the potential land use designation and zoning classification changes were enacted, it would modify current policies that regulate the conversion of rural areas to urban lands to allow addition of this property to the UGA. Those changes could result longer-term impacts to parcels outside of the Black Diamond Fire Station parcel and could result in a greater number of conversions of rural lands to urban beyond what was previously anticipated in the King County Comprehensive Plan. The nature of impacts that could occur as a result of these changes are discussed in Section 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics, in the Final EIS.

2.2 Carnation Urban Growth Area Exchange

This study evaluated the protection of parcels 2125079009 and 2125079002 and the surrounding area from urban development by removing the parcels from the current Urban Growth Area (UGA) in exchange for adding other parcels to the UGA.

Summary of Potential Impacts

If the listed parcels were removed from the UGA while adding new rural parcels to maintain the overall size of the UGA, the CCPs would need to be amended to allow UGA exchanges because the subject properties do not currently meet the criteria under CPP DP-17 for converting compensatory rural land to urban. This could have future impacts on the potential for other exchanges. The exchange would result in no net change to the size of the UGA but would change the location of the boundary. The nature of impacts that could occur as a result are discussed in sections 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics and 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation in the Final EIS.

2.3 Snoqualmie Interchange

This study included a review and recommendation of the appropriate land use and zoning for the properties adjacent to the Snoqualmie Interchange and area north of I-90 impacted by the new I-90/State Route 18 Interchange, including:

1. Including the area inside the UGA.
2. Amending the zoning for properties within the study area.
3. Locating affordable housing and/or behavioral health support services and/or facilities in this area.
4. Requiring conservation mitigation for any newly allowed development.
5. Recognizing and protecting the forested visual character of the Mountains to Sound National Scenic byway on I-90.
6. Ensuring potential trail connections for regional trails and adherence to current King County policies.

Summary of Potential Impacts

If the study area were included in the UGA and current rural designations were amended to urban designations (which would also require amendment to the CPPs), it would allow future development over a greater extent and at a greater density than is currently allowed in the area. Similarly, the allowance of affordable housing and behavioral health support services in the study area would increase the extent and density of development in the study area. Depending on the extent of development allowed, it would result in a conversion of rural lands to other uses, a loss of rural character, and a reduction in open space and natural areas. Further, intensification of development in the study area above what is currently allowed would have adverse visual impacts on the Mountain to Sound viewshed from I-90 by disrupting the natural scenic character of the corridor. The nature of impacts that could occur as a result are discussed in sections 3.3, Wildlife and Habitat; 3.4, Natural Resources; 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics; and 4.4, Parks, Open Space, and Recreation in the Final EIS.

3. POTENTIAL MAP AMENDMENT CONCEPTS

3.1 Map Amendment X: North Highline – Residential Density Increases

This proposal would amend existing land use designations and zoning classifications in North Highline subarea to increase the allowed residential density for approximately 1,800 parcels. Properties currently zoned as R-6 and R-8 would be zoned as R-12 or R-18. One area would be modified from R-18 to R-48.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would increase the allowed density for the affected parcels, which include large portions of medium density residential neighborhoods within the west, south, and east portions of the North Highline subarea. This change would align the zoning classifications of the affected parcels with that of the surrounding properties, which are generally zoned at higher densities, ranging from R-12 to R-48. The additional residential development that the higher density would allow would likely result in an increased demand for utility and public services and lead to greater traffic congestion. However, North Highline is within an intensely populated, developed urban area, and the impacts from the allowed increased density would fall within the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.1, Utilities and Public Services; 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics; 4.3, Housing; and 4.6, Transportation. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

3.2 Map Amendment X: Vashon Rural Town – Residential Density Increases

This proposal would amend existing land use designations and zoning classifications in Vashon Rural Town to increase the allowed residential density on approximately 75 parcels. Properties within Vashon Rural Town currently zoned as R-1 would be rezoned to R-4, including those properties along Vashon Highway SW.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would increase the allowed density of residential development on the affected parcels, the majority of which are sparsely developed or undeveloped. The increase in allowed density from R-1 to R-4 could result in a modest increase in residential development in the area, which could impact wildlife and vegetation on undeveloped parcels, increase demand for utility services, and potentially result in greater traffic congestion and demand for public services. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 3.2, Water Resources; 3.3, Wildlife and Habitat; 4.1, Utilities and Public Services; 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics; 4.3, Housing; and 4.6, Transportation. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

3.3 Map Amendment X: Vashon Rural Town – Industrial Parcel Zoning Reclassification

This proposal would amend the land use designation and zoning classification on approximately one parcel in Vashon Rural Town from I to CB. The proposal would also revise the P-Suffix development condition to remove those conditions related to industrial development and add the CB-related conditions that apply to the parcel to the north, with additional revisions to allow additional height and/or density on the affected parcel. These changes could also be made to surrounding parcels.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would change the implementing zoning classification and development conditions on the affected parcel, which could result in more intense development at a greater height, bulk, or scale than is allowed under its current zoning. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Final EIS Section 4.1, Land Use and Aesthetics. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.

3.4 Map Amendment X: Vashon Rural Town – Zoning Reclassification for Additional Housing

This proposal would amend land use designations and zoning classifications, including SO and P-Suffix development conditions, on approximately four parcels in Vashon Rural Town to allow for additional housing to be constructed as follows:

- Modify the SO and/or P-suffix on approximately one CB zoned parcel to allow additional height and/or density.
- Rezone a portion of one parcel from R-4 to CB and add the CB-related P-Suffix development conditions that apply to the parcel to the south; modify the SO and/or P-Suffix in the CB to allow additional height and/or density and remove P-Suffix VS-P26 that requires step-backs for additional height.
- Rezone approximately two parcels (and potentially those to the west of the parcels) from R-4 to CB and add the CB-related P-Suffix development conditions that apply to the CB parcels to the west of those parcels; modify the SO and/or P-Suffix in the CB to allow additional height and/or density.

Summary of Potential Impacts

This proposal would increase the allowed density of residential development on the affected parcels, which could result in a modest increase in residents and demand for public utilities and potentially result in greater traffic congestion and demand for public services. In addition, the proposal could result in more intense development on these parcels at a greater height, bulk, or scale than allowed under their current zoning classifications. The impacts of this proposal would fall within the range of impacts described in Final EIS sections 4.1, Utilities and Public Services; 4.2, Land Use and Aesthetics; 4.3, Housing; and 4.6, Transportation. This proposal would not introduce any new, significant adverse impacts.