

2024 King County Comprehensive Plan

Ordinance 19881, Attachment A

Adopted December 10, 2024



TRIBAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

King County is a part of a larger area that has been the traditional aboriginal territory of the Coast Salish peoples, who continue to live around the Salish Sea in what is now Washington State and the Canadian province of British Columbia. These sovereign tribal nations enrich the region through environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, and economic development. In planning for growth over the coming decades, the King County Comprehensive Plan seeks to respect and acknowledge the tribes' legacy and present-day contributions through the creation of livable, equitable, and sustainable communities for current and future generations.

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CHAPTER 1

REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING

I. About King County

King County, covering 2,130 square miles, extends from Puget Sound in the west to 8,000-foot Mt. Daniel at the Cascade crest to the east. With more than 2,320,000 people, it is the largest county in Washington State and the 12th largest in the nation. Within King County, 39 cities cover 418 square miles, or 20 percent of the county's total land area. The cities range in population size from Seattle, with more than 762,500 people, to Skykomish and Beaux Arts, with fewer than 350 each. Unincorporated King County has a population of 248,160, or 11 percent of the total population of King County.

Most of King County's residents are of working age, with the largest share of residents (17 percent) being 30 to 39 years old. Approximately 20 percent (449,242) of King County's population is 17 years old or younger. Unincorporated King County residents are older on average than King County residents. As of 2020, 54 percent of King County's population is non-Hispanic White, 20 percent Asian, seven percent Black or African American, one percent Native American, one percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and nine percent Hispanic or Latino/a/e. Unincorporated King County has proportionately more White residents and American Indian/Alaska Native residents than King County as a whole.

The Washington State Office of Financial Management projects King County's population to grow 24.6 percent, from 2,317,700 residents in 2022 to 2,887,137 in 2044. Unincorporated King County's population is projected to grow more slowly at a rate of 7.3 percent, from 248,160 residents in 2022 to 266,301 in 2044. To meet the housing needs of current and future residents, King County is required by the Growth Management Act and the Countywide Planning Policies to plan for and accommodate housing that meets the needs of moderate-, low-, very low-, and extremely low-income households, as well as emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing. The total number of new housing units needed in urban unincorporated King County by 2044 is 5,412. Additionally, 1,034 new emergency housing beds are needed by 2044 to meet temporary housing needs.

The County adopted development regulation changes with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan to create sufficient zoning capacity to accommodate these housing needs and types.

II. King County Planning Framework

Prompted by residents concerned about sprawl, King County adopted its first comprehensive land use plan in 1964. Two decades later, the 1985 comprehensive land use plan was the first to identify an urban growth boundary line to limit urban growth to areas with the infrastructure needed for facilities and services. It also established policies to protect the Rural Area, conserve the natural environment, and designate resource lands for long-term agriculture and forest production.

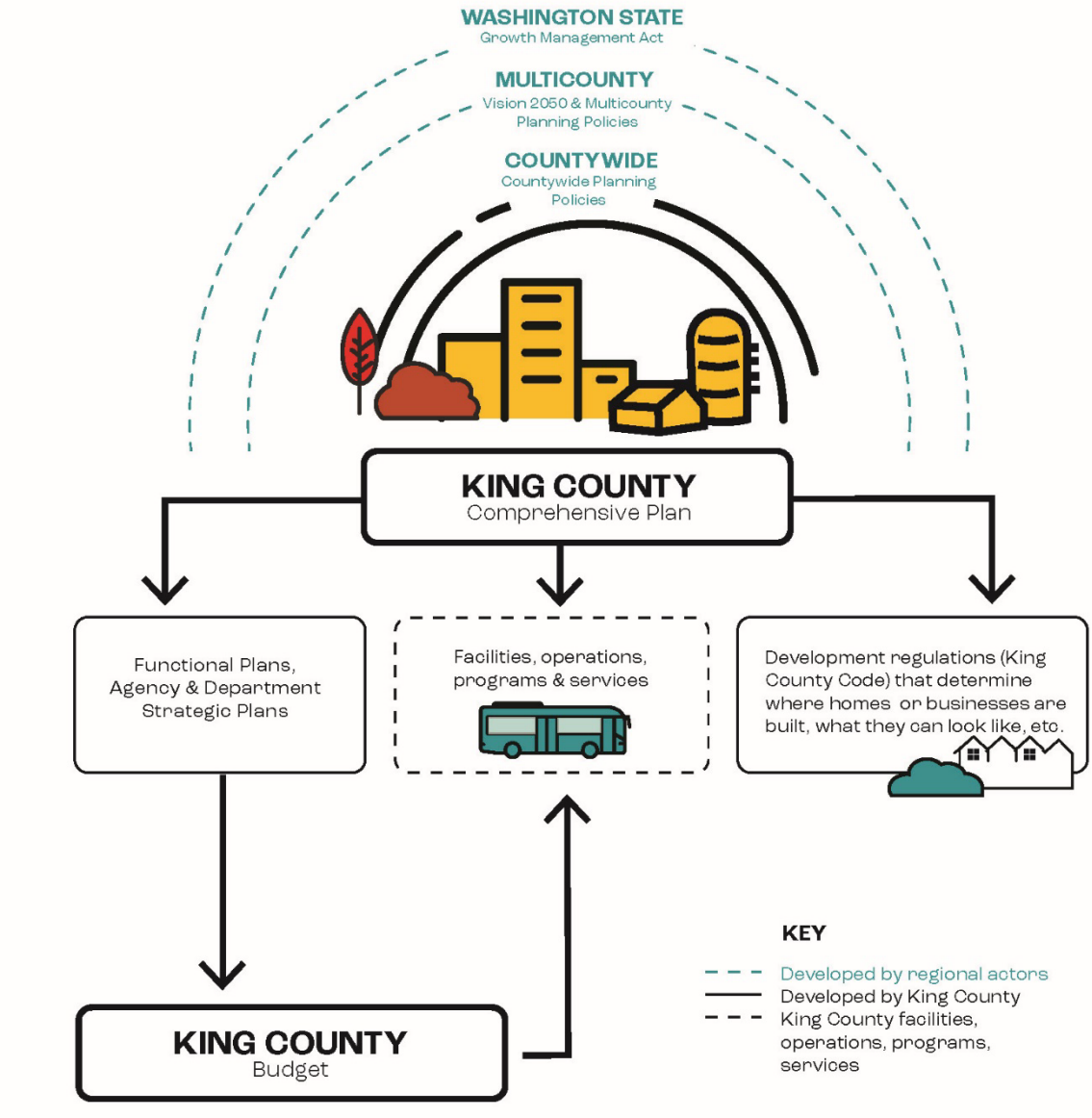
King County's first Comprehensive Plan under the Washington State Growth Management Act was adopted in 1994. The Growth Management Act directs the state's most populous and fastest-growing counties and their cities to prepare comprehensive land use plans that anticipate growth over a 20-year horizon and provide for it in a managed manner.

There is a hierarchy of growth management planning in the county with consistency between the levels. Some issues, such as the establishment of the Urban Growth Area, are best decided at the countywide level, while others, such as the amount of

commercial space needed in a neighborhood, are best determined at the subarea plan level. At a broader scale, the Growth Management Act requires the development of Multicounty Planning Policies by King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, as well as the development of Countywide Planning Policies by King County and the 39 cities and towns in King County. These policies are used for establishing a countywide framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted.

A. Planning Framework Hierarchy

The planning processes and structures discussed in this section respond to Growth Management Act, Multicounty Planning Policy, and Countywide Planning Policy requirements and goals and reflect local circumstances and priorities. This complex framework is illustrated in the following graphic.



RP-101 **King County's planning should implement the County's equity and racial and social justice principles to improve residents' access to the determinants of equity.**

B. Public Participation in Planning

At the core of King County's planning is the goal of advancing equitable outcomes that support a high quality of life for all residents. This can only be achieved by actively and equitably engaging the public to help shape County plans, including strategic, comprehensive, functional, and subarea plans, and by using these planning processes to strengthen communities and improve access to the Determinants of Equity.[1]

Previous planning processes have excluded and harmed those who are Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; immigrants; refugees; and households at or below 80 percent of area median income. King County is working to ensure that the perspectives of these historically underrepresented groups and those who have been disproportionally harmed by previous planning efforts are engaged by the County and centered throughout planning processes.

Additionally, while the Growth Management Act requires the coordination of local plans, Indian tribes have historically not been included because of their independent sovereign status and unique rights to self-governance. However, King County also recognizes that the lands addressed by the Comprehensive Plan are those that are the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples that have lived here since time immemorial. Recognizing this, King County will coordinate with Indian tribes as part of the County's planning processes and will seek opportunities to work together to advance key issues, such as environmental stewardship, treaty fishing rights, and protecting cultural heritage.

RP-102 **King County shall strive to provide a high quality of life for all of its residents by working with cities, special purpose districts, and residents to develop attractive, safe, and accessible communities at appropriate urban and rural service levels; retaining rural character and rural neighborhoods; planning for and accommodating housing affordable to all income levels; supporting economic development; promoting equity and racial and social justice; preserving and maintaining resource and open space lands; preserving the natural environment; and protecting significant cultural and historic resources.**

RP-103 **In its planning processes, including the development, update, and implementation of King County plans, the County shall use equitable engagement strategies to actively solicit public participation from a wide variety of sources, particularly from populations historically underrepresented or excluded from planning processes.**

RP-104 **King County shall coordinate with Indian tribes during its planning processes in a manner that respects their sovereign status, promotes tribal self-determination and self-governance, and honors past and present agreements.**

[1] Defined in King County Code 2.10.210.

RP-105 **King County should:**

a. **Collaborate with Indian tribes to support preservation of historically, culturally, and archeologically important places and resources;**
b. **Support partnerships with Indian tribes to promote Indian tribal cultural centers and cultural events; and**
c. **Consider Indian tribal traditional land stewardship in advancing King County climate resiliency goals.**

RP-106 **King County shall work with its rural constituencies to sustain and enhance the diversity and richness of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

C. Multicounty Planning

The Puget Sound Regional Council is a regional planning agency with specific responsibilities under federal and state law for transportation planning, economic development, and growth management. The general assembly of the Puget Sound Regional Council adopts a Regional Growth Strategy and the Multicounty Planning Policies, which are most recently reflected in VISION 2050 ("VISION"). Multicounty Planning Policies address those issues that benefit from greater consistency across jurisdictions and those that are of a regional nature.

VISION is a regional strategy to accommodate the population and job growth expected by 2050 in the four-county Puget Sound region. As an integrated, long-range vision for maintaining a healthy region, promoting economic vitality, a healthy environment, and wellbeing of people and communities, VISION provides clear direction to regional, county, and local governments on topics such as setting priorities for transportation investment, stimulating economic development, planning for open space, making local jurisdictions' centers more suitable for transit and walking, and improving transportation safety and mobility.

As part of VISION, the Regional Growth Strategy looks at how the region can distribute forecasted growth, primarily within the designated urban growth area. The strategy is a description of a preferred pattern of urbanization that has been designed to minimize environmental impacts, support economic prosperity, promote adequate and affordable housing, improve mobility, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure. The strategy provides regional guidance for counties and cities to use as they develop local population and employment growth targets and update local comprehensive plans.

RP-107 **King County's planning shall include multicounty, countywide, and subarea levels of planning. Working with planning partners, such as Indian tribes, residents, special purpose districts, and cities, the County shall strive to balance the differing needs identified across or within plans at these levels.**

D. Countywide Planning

State law requires that planning be coordinated on a countywide level, and that King County itself adopt a comprehensive plan to regulate those areas for which it has direct responsibility. The Countywide Planning Policies are required by the state Growth Management Act and provide a countywide framework to coordinate local comprehensive plans and implement VISION. King County and all cities in King County are responsible for ensuring that their respective comprehensive plans are consistent with and implement the Countywide Planning Policies.

The formal body charged with developing the Countywide Planning Policies is the Growth Management Planning Council, which is a representative body consisting of elected officials from King County, Seattle, Bellevue, the Sound Cities Association, and special purpose districts. Recommended Countywide Planning Policies are sent to King County for its review and approval and then provided to the cities for ratification.

The Countywide Planning Policies implement VISION by providing a countywide framework to plan for job growth and new development, including housing, commercial, institutional, and other nonresidential uses. The Countywide Planning Policies provide broad direction to individual jurisdictions' comprehensive plans, including the King County Comprehensive Plan. The goals of the policies include: promoting a compact and centers-focused growth pattern that uses land and infrastructure efficiently, protecting the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, providing affordable housing throughout the county, and coordinating the protection and restoration of the natural environment in King County.

RP-108 **King County shall work with the Growth Management Planning Council to adopt Countywide Planning Policies that support allocated housing and employment growth targets for cities and the county, approve designations of countywide centers, and address other countywide planning topics.**

RP-109 **King County shall not amend the Urban Growth Area prior to the Growth Management Planning Council making a recommendation on the proposed amendment to the Urban Growth Area.**

RP-110 **King County shall not forward to the Growth Management Planning Council for its recommendation any proposed amendment to the Urban Growth Area unless the proposal is:**

- **a. Included in the scoping motion for a King County Comprehensive Plan update;**
- **b Subject to an area zoning and land use study that was included in the public review draft of a proposed King County Comprehensive Plan update; or**
- **c. Subjected to the hearing examiner process for site specific map amendments as established by the King County Code.**

RP-111 **King County shall implement the Countywide Planning Policies through its Comprehensive Plan and Potential Annexation Area, pre-annexation, and other interlocal agreements with cities.**

E. Subregional Planning and Partnerships

King County engages with partners in subareas of the county in subregional planning programs and partnerships that are related to the Comprehensive Plan. These activities are guided by the policies in the Comprehensive Plan as well as the other components of the overall King County planning framework noted in this chapter.

RP-112 **King County should establish and/or participate in regional and subregional partnerships to advance the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.**

RP-113 **When large, mixed-use developments with more than 50 dwelling units are proposed in cities adjacent to the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands, King County shall, upon notification from the city, coordinate with the permitting city during the development review process to avoid and mitigate impacts on county services and facilities, water resources, and the surrounding Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

Cities in the Rural Area are incorporated areas substantially surrounded by the Rural Area and whose local governments are involved in the region's planning processes on the same basis as any other city in the County. Cities in the Rural Area have established Potential Annexation Areas to accommodate growth. The Cities in the Rural Area are Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall, Enumclaw, North Bend, Skykomish, and Snoqualmie.

Excessive growth in Cities in the Rural Area, however, may create pressure for extending urban services (for example, sewers) across the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands, increase conversion pressure on nearby Resource Lands, and adversely affect rural character.

RP-114 **King County should work with Cities in the Rural Area and coordinate through partnerships, such as the Growth Management Planning Council, to:**

- **a. Encourage the provision of affordable housing;**
- **b. Minimize the impacts of new development on the surrounding Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands;**
- **c. Avoid the conversion of rural lands into commercial uses and the creation of pressure to extend or expand urban services, infrastructure, and facilities, such as roads or sewer, across or into the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands; and**
- **d. Plan for growth consistent with long-term protection of significant historic resources and the surrounding Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

F. Comprehensive Planning

In accordance with the Growth Management Act, the Comprehensive Plan is designed to manage growth so that development is directed to urban areas and away from the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. The Growth Management Act also requires King County to designate and protect critical areas and commercially significant forestry, agriculture, and mining areas. The Growth Management Act requires a comprehensive plan to adhere to a set of goals and to include mandatory plan elements, such as land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, rural, shorelines, and transportation elements. The Comprehensive Plan provides a legal framework for managing growth and making decisions about land use in unincorporated King County.

The Comprehensive Plan guides County officials on proposals such as zoning changes and developments, proposed changes in environmental regulations, or broader policy issues. It also serves as a framework for other plans and regulations such as subarea plans and the King County Code that govern the location and density of land uses in unincorporated King County. The Comprehensive Plan provides a basis for decisions about public spending on facilities and services. Finally, it presents other agencies, such as cities and special purpose districts, with King County's position on large-scale matters such as annexation, use of resource lands, environmental protection, service provision, and others.

RP-115 **King County's planning should strengthen communities by addressing all the elements, resources, and needs that make a community whole, such as housing affordable to all income levels, economic growth and the built environment, environmental sustainability, regional and local mobility, health and human potential, and justice and safety.**

RP-116 **King County shall integrate mandated responses to the listings under the Endangered Species Act into future planning, economic development efforts, and resource management programs to achieve, where consistent with the Endangered Species Act, a balance between environmental, social, and economic goals and objectives. King County shall collaborate with others to conserve species and their habitats in order to prevent future listings under the Endangered Species Act.**

RP-117 **The Land Use Map is adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use Map shall depict the Urban Growth Area boundary; land use designations for unincorporated urban areas, the Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands; and other appropriate information. The Land Use Map shall be maintained in the King County Geographic Information System, and the Land Use Map at the end of this chapter generally represents the official map.**

RP-118 **King County shall avoid unconstitutional takings of private property in planning, programming, and operations.**

The Growth Management Act allows updates to comprehensive plans once each year. In King County, the annual update allows limited changes. The County's 10-year update, which aligns the timing with Growth Management Act periodic review and update requirements, allows substantive changes to policies and amendments to the Urban Growth Area boundary. A smaller range of substantive changes to policies and amendments to the Urban Growth Area boundary may also be considered at the midpoint of the 10-year update schedule, if authorized by motion. These provisions are detailed in Chapter 12, Implementation, Amendments, & Evaluation, and King County Code Chapter 20.18.

Prior to its review of the Comprehensive Plan, King County, together with cities, adopts the King County Urban Growth Capacity Report (previously known as the Buildable Lands Report). The report fulfills the requirements of the Growth Management Act for the County and cities to evaluate patterns of development every 10 years to determine whether there is sufficient suitable land to accommodate the projected countywide population. The Urban Growth Capacity Report is one of the methods to evaluate the achievement of Growth Management Act goals. The focus of the evaluation is on the designated urban areas of King County and growth targets for those areas as established in the Countywide Planning Policies.

Another key element of the Comprehensive Plan review and update process is the Docket request process. As required by the Growth Management Act, King County maintains an annual docket for recording comments on suggested changes to the King County Comprehensive Plan and associated development regulations from any interested person, such as permit applicants, residents, and staff of other jurisdictions or agencies. The process and requirements are detailed in King County Code Chapter 20.18. The County reviews all requests, communicates with docket submitters, makes County Executive recommendations to the County Council, and provides information on requests and recommendations to the public.

G. Subarea Planning

Subarea plans focus the policy direction of the Comprehensive Plan to a smaller geographic area. The County is currently in the process of establishing Subarea Plans through a cycle described further in Chapter 11, Subarea Planning.

H. Functional Planning

Functional plans are detailed plans for facilities and services, as well as action plans and programs for other governmental activities. Some functional plans are operational or programmatic and guide daily management decisions. Others include specific details of facility design and location. Functional plans help implement and must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Examples of functional plans include the King County Open Space Plan and King County Flood Management Plan.

RP-119 **Functional plans for facilities and services:**

- **a. Shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and subarea plans;**
- **b. Shall be consistent with service levels that are appropriate for the Urban Growth Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands;**
- **c. May provide standards for location, design, and operation of public facilities and services;**
- **d. Should specify adequate, stable, and equitable methods of pay for public facilities and services;**
- **e. May be the basis for scheduling needed facilities and services through capital improvement programs; and**
- **f. Should plan for maintenance of existing facilities.**

I. Other Planning

There are also other plans not adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, such as implementation plans and strategic plans, that King County relies on to help implement and inform the Comprehensive Plan. These plans are typically focused on a specific policy area, able to provide more detailed planning, and updated on a more frequent basis than the Comprehensive Plan. Given this, sometimes those plans are updated to be consistent with Comprehensive Plan updates, and sometimes the Comprehensive Plan is updated to help advance new initiatives and desired outcomes originating from those other planning efforts. Examples of these plans include the Strategic Climate Action Plan, the Strategic Plan for Road Services, the King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, and the King County International Airport Strategic Plan. The County also uses issue-specific studies and reports to inform and help implement Comprehensive Plan updates, such as area zoning and land use studies, outcomes of Comprehensive Plan Work Plan action items (see Chapter 12, Implementation, Amendments, & Evaluation), and responses to King County budget provisos.

J. Four-to-One Program

The King County Four-to-One Program provides an opportunity to add land to the regional open space system through the dedication of permanent natural areas. The Four-to-One Program has been recognized as an innovative land use technique under the Growth Management Act and for King County, the purpose of the program is to create a contiguous band of natural areas, running along the Urban Growth Area boundary. Since its inception in 1994, just over 360 acres have been added to the Urban Growth Area while nearly 1,300 acres of permanent natural areas have been conserved through the Four-to-One Program. Changes to the Urban Growth Area through this program are processed as land use map amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan.

RP-120 **Through the Four-to-One Program, King County shall dedicate natural areas adjacent to the original Urban Growth Area boundary, which was adopted in the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan. Through this program, Rural Area zoned land may be added to the Urban Growth Area in exchange for dedication of at least four times the size of permanent natural area.**

RP-121 **The Four-to-One Program shall not result in more than a total of 4,000 acres being added to the Urban Growth Area.**

RP-122 **Land added to the Urban Growth Area under the Four-to-One Program shall:**

a. Be limited to residential development and have a minimum density of eight dwellings per acre;
b. Locate drainage facilities and roads within the urban portion of the development; and
c. Meet affordable housing requirements.

RP-123 **King County shall evaluate Four-to-One proposals for both quality of the natural area and feasibility of urban development and annexation. The highest quality proposals shall be recommended for adoption as amendments to the Urban Growth Area.**

RP-124 **Lands preserved under the Four-to-One Program shall:**

a. Be reserved as natural areas, or for passive recreation, farming, or forestry. Trails or active recreation may be allowed if located on a small portion of the natural area and are compatible with the site's habitat values and functions;
b. Retain their Rural Area designations; and
c. Generally be configured in such a way as to connect with open space on adjacent properties.

RP-125 **Amendments to add Rural Area lands to the Urban Growth Area through the Four-to-One Program may be made as part of an annual, midpoint, or 10-year Comprehensive Plan update. If the applicant decides not to pursue urban development, the urban properties shall be restored to a Rural Area land use designation and associated zoning during the next update to the King County Comprehensive Plan.**

RP-126 **For Four-to-One proposals adjacent to an incorporated area, development proposals and/or activities shall not be allowed until the land added to the Urban Growth Area is annexed into a city. A tri-party agreement with the property owner, city, and King County shall be required to be transmitted and adopted concurrent with the Four-to-One proposal.**

III. King County Guiding Principles

The Comprehensive Plan is based on the principles of creating sustainable neighborhoods, preserving open space, farmland, and rural communities, directing development toward existing communities, addressing climate change, and providing a variety of transportation choices. These guiding principles are consistent with the Growth Management Act and guide funding decisions, creation and operation of programs and projects, and how the County interacts with local, state, and federal agencies. The impact of implementing these principles has been to:

- create higher urban densities by directing 99 percent of the growth into the urban core of the region (Urban Growth Area),
- preserve irreplaceable resource lands, parks, and critical areas,
- improve mobility by making transit service more accessible,
- sustain a vibrant economy,
- serve in the capacity of both a local and a regional government, and
- improve water quality and manage stormwater runoff.

A. Creating Sustainable Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the backbone of any community. Creating sustainable neighborhoods may mean using incentives, programs, or regulations to help create new neighborhoods and support existing neighborhoods. Encouraging mixed land use and making access to jobs, shopping, and schools easier establishes the cohesiveness of a neighborhood. Having opportunities for physical activity and providing for people, if they choose, to age in place and remain in their neighborhood as their lifestyle changes or they face changing physical capabilities establishes the stability of a neighborhood. All of these factors contribute to creating a sustainable neighborhood.

Sustainable neighborhoods are important areas where housing affordable to all income levels can and should be located. Sustainability of a neighborhood also relates to the impact the neighborhood has on the environment. Incorporation of sustainable development practices into the design, construction, and maintenance of the neighborhood can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pollution, reduce the use of natural resources, reduce energy and other maintenance costs, and enhance property values.

RP-201 **King County shall promote sustainable, healthy, thriving, and equitable neighborhoods and communities. King County shall ensure that the benefits and impacts of County actions support this vision.**

B. Preserving and Maintaining Open Space and Natural Resource Lands

The people of King County have long recognized that open space is essential to what makes this county unique. Preserving open space, including enhancing working resource lands such as farmlands and forests, continues to be a priority of the County and the cities, as reflected in the Countywide Planning Policies. It is also a cornerstone of the Growth Management Act.

The Growth Management Act requires the County and the cities in King County to form linkages between and within population centers with lands useful for recreation, trails, wildlife habitat, and connection of critical areas. To fulfill that mandate, King County operates a regional and local open space system consisting of parks, trails, natural areas, working resource lands, and flood hazard management lands. These open spaces provide multiple benefits and functions, including visual variety and relief from developed areas, protection of environmental and ecological processes, provision of wildlife habitat, promotion of mental and physical health, and creation of opportunities for outdoor recreation. However, preserving open space requires careful planning and management to ensure compatibility and long-term viability of these benefits and functions.

RP-202 **King County shall pursue opportunities to preserve and maintain remaining high-priority forest, agriculture, and other open space lands.**

C. Directing Development Toward Existing Communities

Beginning in the 1940s, a sprawling pattern of low-density development emerged in King County. This sprawl resulted in the accelerated conversion of forests and farms to subdivisions and made it increasingly expensive to provide water, schools, sewer connections, streets, and other services. In addition, zoning codes tended to separate the differing types of land uses, with jobs and stores in one location, homes in another, and schools and parks in yet another.

The separate land uses were served by a roadway system of wide streets with infrequent crosswalks, designed to accommodate cars, not people. This pattern did not support using transit, bicycling, or walking to meet daily transportation needs, leading to an overburdening of the roadway system and a loss of regional and personal mobility. Low-density patterns that emerged relied on driving alone for many trips, contributing to persistent air pollution problems and increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Reducing sprawl by focusing development into existing urban areas is one of the statutory goals of the Growth Management Act. To achieve that goal, in the 1990s, King County and the cities worked to steer growth to already developed communities (both within urban areas and, at much smaller scales, in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, in a system of central places) with existing infrastructure and services can result in (1) protecting the Rural Area, (2) conserving natural resources, and (3) providing more economical and equitable services and facilities. Work to maintain those growth patterns and limit new sprawl from happening continues today, as it is critical to supporting efficient and sustainable communities and protecting rural character, the environment, and natural resources.

RP-203 **King County shall continue to limit sprawl by focusing growth and future development in the Urban Growth Area, consistent with adopted growth targets.**

D. Providing a Variety of Transportation Choices

Transportation is critically important to King County and the surrounding region, facilitating access to jobs, education, services, recreation, and housing. King County plays a central role in the region's transportation sector, supporting a variety of travel modes involving ground, air, and marine transportation. The County has direct responsibility for (1) the unincorporated area road network, (2) public transit services and facilities throughout the county, and (3) operation of the King County International Airport.

The ability to access various transportation modes has a profound effect on quality of life for county residents and the vitality of the economy. The County's transportation system must be designed, operated, and maintained in a manner that (1) provides access to mobility options for a wide range of users, including historically underinvested populations, (2) contributes to safe communities, (3) reduces impacts on the county's natural resources and environment, and (4) fosters a vibrant community.

RP-204 **King County shall continue to promote an efficient multimodal transportation system that provides residents with a range of transportation choices that respond to community needs and reduce impacts on the natural environment.**

E. Addressing Health, Equity, Displacement, and Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice

Despite broad economic and social gains in society and this country in recent history, inequities exist and continue to persist for significant segments of the population—particularly for Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color and people living with low or no incomes—across the continuum of measures of social and economic health and wellbeing. In some cases, inequities are worsening over time. King County is not immune to these inequalities, despite its location in the relatively prosperous Puget Sound area.

On average, Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color and households at or below 80 percent of area median income have less access to quality education; are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed; are more likely to pay too much of their income for housing costs and other necessities; and are more likely to experience adverse health outcomes, such as obesity, diabetes, or asthma, that can have the effect of reducing life expectancy. These challenges affect specific communities and, in turn, the entire region, resulting in a number of adverse socioeconomic consequences, including, for example, unfilled high-skilled jobs, higher levels of homelessness, and higher health care costs.

King County Code Chapter 2.10 establishes an integrated effort that intentionally applies the "Fair and Just" principle to all work to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities. A key component of this work is the "Determinants of Equity," which are the social, economic, geographic, political, and physical environment conditions in which people in the county are born, grow, live, work, and age that lead to a just and thriving society. Access to these determinants of equity is necessary to have equity for all people regardless of race, class, gender, or language spoken. Inequities are created when structural barriers exist that prevent individuals and communities from accessing these conditions and reaching their full potential.



Credit: Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice

There is a clear relationship between the majority of the Determinants of Equity and the long-range planning role of the King County Comprehensive Plan. Land use patterns and transportation investments play key roles in making communities healthier, more connected, and more equitable. Well-planned neighborhoods have features such as connected street networks, nearby shopping, walking paths, and transit service. Access to healthy and culturally relevant food and the protection of agricultural lands affect the rate of obesity, food insecurity, and malnutrition. These amenities reduce dependence on cars, increase opportunities to be physically active, decrease the likelihood of being overweight, improve air quality, create opportunities for residents to access jobs and services, and provide a path toward a higher quality of life.

The Comprehensive Plan plays multiple roles related to land use planning – a countywide collaborative role in how growth is accommodated in the county and region, and a local land use regulatory role for how growth occurs in unincorporated areas. This dual role is important to recognize given the geographic distribution of communities that are the focus of the County's equity and racial and social justice work.

King County is committed to working to reduce inequities and address concerns of social justice by incorporating the values of the County's equity and racial and social

justice work into the daily practice of developing policies and programs, informing funding decisions and delivering services. Further, King County continues to identify and address the conditions at the root of disparities, engage communities to have a strong voice in shaping their future, and raise and sustain the visibility of equity and racial and social justice. The goal is to start by focusing on prevention and addressing the fundamental causes of the inequities to have a greater overall impact.

To achieve this, the County uses equity impact reviews as a process to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential equity impact – both positive and negative – of a proposed policy, program, or service. The equity impact review process merges empirical (quantitative) data and community engagement findings (qualitative data) to inform planning, decision-making, and implementation of actions that affect equity in King County. Quantitative data are developed and compiled through a number of efforts, disaggregated when possible, combined with qualitative data from communities, and analyzed carefully to ensure that equity impacts are rigorously and holistically considered and advanced in the design and implementation of a proposed action (plan, policy, and program development; service delivery; operations modification; capital programs and projects; etc.).

RP-205 **King County shall, when implementing and evaluating its land use policies, programs, investments, and practices, identify and proactively address issues of equity; racial, social, and environmental justice; disparate health outcomes; and displacement.**

F. Enhancing Natural Resources and the Environment

King County can influence environmental sustainability through its land use and transportation policies and plans, investments in capital projects and facilities, economic development initiatives, and day-to-day operations. To be effective, sustainability actions need to be taken at many scales: in unincorporated land use regulations, in coordination with neighboring local governments, and across county departments.

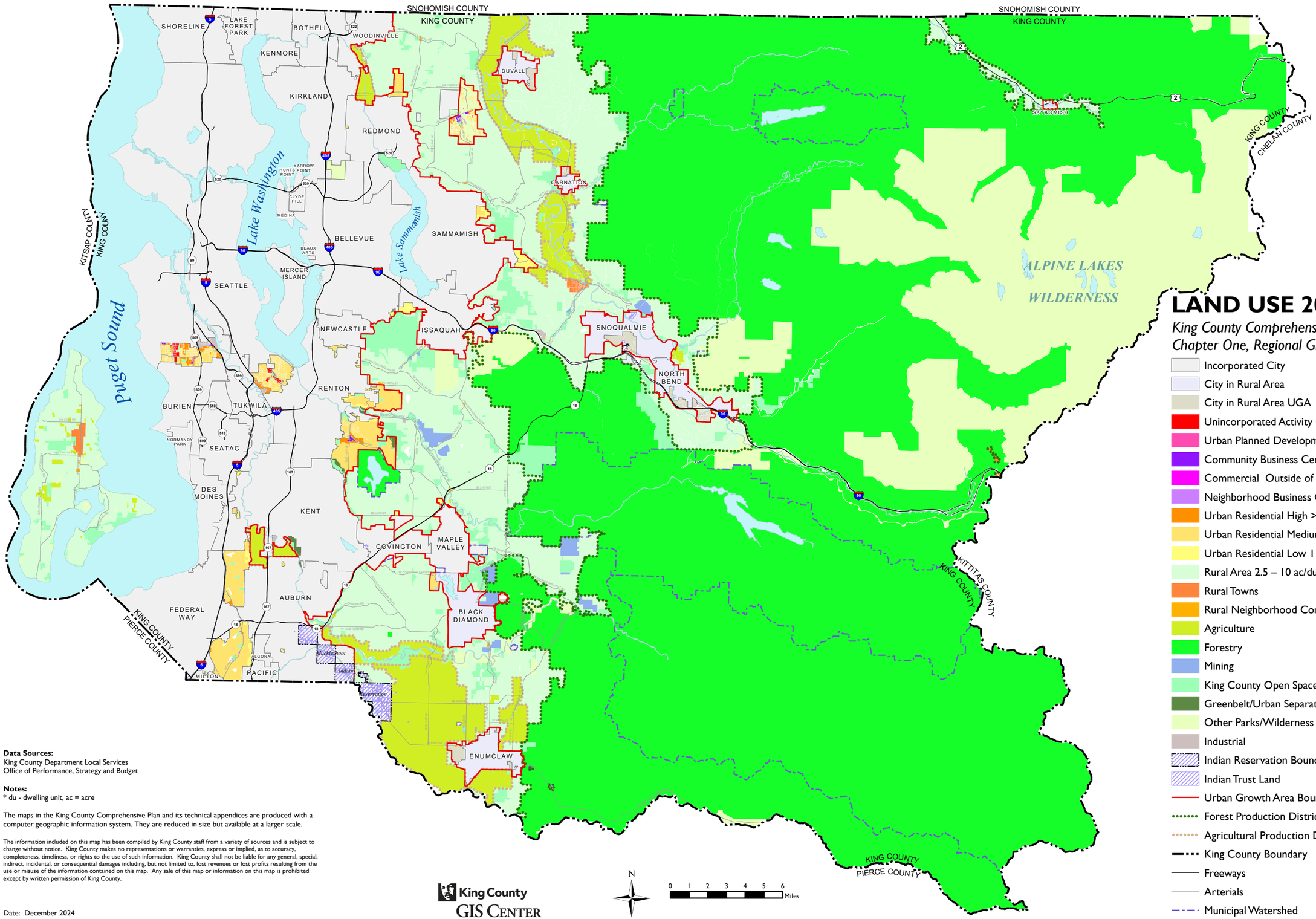
RP-206 **King County shall protect, restore, and enhance its natural resources and environment and encourage sustainable agriculture and forestry.**

G. Preparing for and Responding to Climate Change

Climate change is a paramount challenge with fundamental and far-reaching consequences, a "threat multiplier" that exacerbates inequities and intensifies natural hazards – such as flooding, landslides, wildfires, and extreme heat – that put the County's residents, economy, and environment at risk. The following principles for climate action formalize the County's commitment to lead on climate action, while also integrating and highlighting principles that guide County climate action:

- Act with urgency and intention;
- Lead with racial justice and equity;
- Respond to community needs and priorities;
- Use and develop a comprehensive and data- and science-driven approach;
- Seek systemic solutions;
- Build partnerships;
- Lead through local action;
- Prioritize health and co-benefits; and
- Be transparent and accountable.

RP-207 **King County shall reduce greenhouse gas emissions, advance climate equity, and prepare for and respond to climate change impacts.**



LAND USE 2024

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter One, Regional Growth Management Planning

- Incorporated City
- City in Rural Area
- City in Rural Area UGA
- Unincorporated Activity Center
- Urban Planned Development
- Community Business Center
- Commercial Outside of Centers
- Neighborhood Business Center
- Urban Residential High >12du/ac*
- Urban Residential Medium 4-12 du/ac*
- Urban Residential Low 1 du/ac*
- Rural Area 2.5 – 10 ac/du*
- Rural Towns
- Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Mining
- King County Open Space System
- Greenbelt/Urban Separator
- Other Parks/Wilderness
- Industrial
- Indian Reservation Boundary
- Indian Trust Land
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- Forest Production District Boundary
- Agricultural Production District Boundary
- King County Boundary
- Freeways
- Arterials
- Municipal Watershed

Data Sources:
King County Department Local Services
Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Notes:
* du - dwelling unit, ac = acre

The maps in the King County Comprehensive Plan and its technical appendices are produced with a computer geographic information system. They are reduced in size but available at a larger scale.

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is 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 this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

Date: December 2024

King County GIS Center

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CHAPTER 2

URBAN COMMUNITIES

I. The Urban Growth Area

The Growth Management Act requires the County to designate an Urban Growth Area where most growth and development forecasted for King County will be accommodated. By designating an Urban Growth Area and focusing growth within it, King County can:

- Limit sprawl;
- Improve efficiencies and reduce costs of service provision;
- Protect the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands;
- Enhance the preservation of open space; and
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Urban Growth Area for King County is designated on the official Land Use Map, which is generally depicted at the end of Chapter 1, Regional Growth Management Planning.

The Urban Growth Area includes all cities within the county, including the Urban Growth Area for Cities in the Rural Area, the cities' Potential Annexation Areas, and other land within the unincorporated part of the county characterized by urban type growth such as the Redmond Ridge, Redmond Ridge East, and Trilogy neighborhoods east of Redmond.

The Urban Growth Area is where King County plans for and accommodates housing needs for unincorporated King County, consistent with housing need allocations in the Countywide Planning Policies; policies in Comprehensive Plan Chapter 4, Housing & Human Services; and analysis in Appendix B, Housing Needs Assessment.

A critical challenge for King County is to encourage urban communities that provide a healthy, safe built environment for people from all backgrounds at all stages of life, as well as accommodate housing affordable to all income levels. Components of creating such a community include: cultivating a sense of place; responding to cultural and economic needs; supporting access to affordable and healthy food and housing; providing a broad range of amenities; and planning for a mix of land uses and greater land density to shorten distances between housing, workplaces, transit, schools, and recreation so people can choose to use active transportation to more easily access these destinations. The County can meet these goals through periodic review and updates to its development regulations and functional and long-range plans.

People are more likely to walk to their destination if the distance is less than one half mile ("walking distance") or to bicycle if the distance is less than three miles ("bicycling distance"). Incorporating high comfort pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure for all ages and abilities, especially sidewalks and bicycle paths that are separated from vehicle traffic, can increase the safety and frequency of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit trips.

U-101 **In all urban unincorporated areas, King County shall consider equity and racial and social justice in its planning, project development, and service delivery approach.**

U-102 **Development within the Urban Growth Area should create and maintain safe, healthy, and diverse communities. These communities should contain a range of affordable, healthy housing and employment opportunities, as well as school and recreational facilities, and should be designed to protect the natural environment and significant cultural resources.**

U-103 **The Urban Growth Area is considered long term and can only be amended consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies and the King County Comprehensive Plan.**

U-104 **The Urban Growth Area shown on the official Land Use Map includes enough land to provide the countywide capacity, as required by the Growth Management Act, to accommodate housing affordable to all income levels and commercial and institutional growth expected between 2019 and 2044. These lands include only those lands that meet the following criteria:**

a.1. Are characterized by urban development that can be efficiently and cost effectively served by roads, water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage, schools, and other urban governmental services within the next 20 years;

2. Do not extend beyond natural boundaries, such as watersheds, that impede provision of urban services;

3. Respect topographical features that form a natural edge, such as rivers and ridge lines;

4. Are sufficiently free of environmental constraints to be able to support urban growth without major environmental impacts, unless such areas are designated as an urban separator by interlocal agreement between jurisdictions;

5. Are not Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands; and

6. Are not within the 100-year floodplain of any river or river segment that has a mean annual flow of 1,000 or more cubic feet per second, as determined by the Washington State Department of Ecology, unless otherwise exempted under Chapter 36.70A Revised Code of Washington; or

b. Are included within the Redmond Ridge, Redmond Ridge East, and Trilogy neighborhoods.

U-105 **Parcels that are split by the Urban Growth Area boundary should be reviewed for possible redesignation to either all urban area or all Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands taking into consideration:**

a. Whether the parcel is split to recognize critical areas;

b. The parcel's geographic features;

c. Whether the parcel will be added to an adjoining city's Potential Annexation Area; and

d. The requirements of interlocal agreements, or the requirements of King County plans.

U-106 **Rural area zoned properties that are currently a park immediately adjacent to a city may be redesignated to urban when the city has committed to designate the property in perpetuity for park purposes.**

A. Urban Growth Area Targets

The Growth Management Act requires the County and cities to plan for future housing and employment growth target ranges for each jurisdiction.

Growth targets are adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies for each city and unincorporated urban area in King County. The targets are updated on timelines consistent with the state's 10-year comprehensive planning periodic update schedule to incorporate current demographic data and to align with the current Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION. Jurisdictions must then reflect the adopted targets in their local comprehensive plans.

Table 2-1, King County Jurisdiction Growth Targets 2019-2044, portrays the housing and job growth targets for each jurisdiction as adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies. Jurisdictions are categorized by the regional geographies in the Regional

Growth Strategy in VISION, which includes Metropolitan Cities, Core Cities, High-Capacity Transit Communities, Cities and Towns, Urban Unincorporated Areas, and Rural Areas.[1] These geographies reflect that different types of cities and unincorporated areas will play distinct roles in the region's future based on regional centers, access to high-capacity transit, and future planning, and are therefore utilized in the target setting process.

The table includes targets for Potential Annexation Areas with development capacity. Portions of growth targets for Potential Annexation Areas will transfer into cities at the time of annexation. Although they may be refined through future planning with affected communities and adjacent cities, these urban unincorporated targets are intended to be used as a guide for future planning of land uses and decisions on services and infrastructure.

As detailed in Appendix D1, Growth Targets and the Urban Growth Area, urban unincorporated King County has sufficient capacity to accommodate its allocated growth targets. An approximate 128-housing unit capacity deficit exists for the Black Diamond PAA housing target, despite abundant urban residential capacity in other parts of urban unincorporated King County. This shortfall owes to differences between the identified land supply and capacity in the 2021 Urban Growth Capacity Report, used to proportionately allocate urban unincorporated growth to Potential Annexation Areas, and the land supply and capacity of the land capacity analysis supporting the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan, outside of the Black Diamond PAA. The Urban Growth Capacity Report-based capacity showed a greater amount of capacity in the Black Diamond Potential Annexation Area relative to other Potential Annexation Areas, and thus the area received a larger target. With the full accounting of zoned capacity in the 2024 land capacity analysis, the proportional balance across Potential Annexation Areas shows less capacity concentrated in the Black Diamond Potential Annexation Area, and other Potential Annexation Areas with higher proportions. King County continues to work with the Growth Management Planning Council to reallocate targets within urban unincorporated King County to address this deficit, in a manner consistent with planning goals and the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy.

Table 2-1: King County Jurisdiction Growth Targets 2019-2044

Jurisdiction	Net New Units and Jobs	
	2019-2044 Housing Target	2019-2044 Jobs Target
Metropolitan Cities		
Bellevue	35,000	70,000
Seattle	112,000	169,500
Metropolitan Cities Subtotal	**147,000**	**239,500**
Core Cities		
Auburn	12,000	19,520
Bothell	5,800	9,500
Burien	7,500	4,770
Federal Way	11,260	20,460
Issaquah	3,500	7,950

[1] While growth targets are not assigned to them, the Regional Growth Strategy's Regional Geographies also recognizes Natural Resource Lands, Indian Reservation Land, and Military Installations.

Jurisdiction	Net New Units and Jobs	
	2019-2044 Housing Target	2019-2044 Jobs Target
Kent	10,200	32,000
Kirkland	13,200	26,490
Redmond	20,000	24,000
Renton	17,000	31,780
SeaTac	5,900	14,810
Tukwila	6,500	15,890
Core Cities Subtotal	**112,860**	**207,170**
High Capacity Transit Communities		
Des Moines	3,800	2,380
Federal Way PAA*	1,020	720
Kenmore	3,070	3,200
Lake Forest Park	870	550
Mercer Island	1,239	1,300
Newcastle	1,480	500
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
Shoreline	13,330	10,000
Woodinville	2,033	5,000
High Capacity Transit Communities Subtotal	**29,942**	**25,570**
Cities and Towns		
Algona	170	325
Beaux Arts	1	0
Black Diamond	2,900	680
Carnation	799	450
Clyde Hill	10	10
Covington	4,310	4,496
Duvall	890	990
Enumclaw	1,057	989
Hunts Point	1	0
Maple Valley	1,720	1,570
Medina	19	0
Milton	50	900
Normandy Park	153	35
North Bend	1,748	2,218
Pacific	135	75
Sammamish	2,100	728
Skykomish	10	0

Jurisdiction	Net New Units and Jobs	
	2019-2044 Housing Target	2019-2044 Jobs Target
Snoqualmie	1,500	4,425
Yarrow Point	10	0
Cities and Towns Subtotal	**17,583**	**17,891**
Urban Unincorporated		
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**
Urban Growth Area Total	**308,677**	**490,831**

**PAA means Potential Annexation Area*

U-107 **Most population and employment growth should locate in the contiguous Urban Growth Area in western King County. Cities in the Rural Area should accommodate growth in accordance with adopted growth targets.**

U-108 **King County shall accommodate assigned urban unincorporated area growth targets of 5,412 housing units and 3,340 jobs by 2044, and provide for housing needs for all incomes. The growth targets should be monitored and further refined over the planning period.**

U-109 **King County shall provide adequate land capacity to accommodate housing affordable to all incomes, commercial, industrial, and other nonresidential growth in the urban unincorporated area consistent with the Growth Management Act.**

B. Potential Annexation Areas

King County's annexation efforts are important given the impacts of historical patterns of annexation. Over time, higher tax revenue generating areas – retail, industrial, and commercial centers and more affluent residential neighborhoods – have incorporated or annexed first, while lower income, ethnically diverse communities remained unincorporated. Given the County's limited taxing authority, promoting annexation of these areas into cities, where a higher level of service can be provided, will foster more equitable and socially just outcomes for residents in unincorporated urban areas. To provide access to opportunity, unincorporated urban growth is prioritized in areas that are connected to the region's high-capacity transit system.

Although it is the policy of the County to support and promote annexation, its formal ability to do so is extremely limited. State laws provide the cities, county residents, and property owners with the authority to initiate the annexation process. A successful annexation initiative depends on establishing a collaborative and ongoing dialogue

between the three affected interest groups: residents, the County, and the affected city.

Much of the remaining urban unincorporated area is made up of geographically isolated islands surrounded by cities or adjacent to the Urban Growth Area boundary. Because these areas are scattered across the county, the provision of local services is costly.

The policies in this section are intended to guide the County's decision making on annexation related issues to ensure the needs of residents in the urban unincorporated area are considered, the perspective of the future annexing city is considered, and that a smooth transition from County to city government occurs.

U-110 **To meet the Growth Management Act and Countywide Planning Policies goal of becoming a regional service provider for all county residents and a local service provider in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, King County shall encourage annexation of the remaining urban unincorporated area. The County may also act as a contract service provider where mutually beneficial.**

U-111 **To help create an environment that is supportive of annexations, King County shall work with cities and with neighborhood groups, local business organizations, public service providers, and other affected parties on annexation related activities to move the remaining urban islands towards annexation by the city most appropriate to serve it. King County shall also seek changes at the state level that would facilitate annexation of urban unincorporated areas.**

U-112 **The County should seek state legislative authority to impose taxes in unincorporated urban areas consistent with the taxing authorities and rates of cities, and seek to impose rates consistent with cities to improve service delivery and infrastructure levels.**

U-113 **The Potential Annexation Areas Map adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies illustrates city designated Potential Annexation Areas. This may include contested areas (where more than one city claims a Potential Annexation Area), and those few areas that are unclaimed by any city. For contested areas, the County should attempt to help resolve the matter, or to enter into an interlocal agreement with each city for the purpose of bringing the question of annexation before voters. For unclaimed areas, King County should work with adjacent cities and service providers to develop a mutually agreeable strategy and timeframe for annexation.**

U-114 **King County shall support annexation proposals that are consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies and the Washington State Growth Management Act, when the area proposed for annexation is wholly within the annexing city's officially adopted Potential Annexation Area, and when the area is not part of a contested area.**

U-115 **King County shall not support annexation proposals that would:**

a. Result in illogical service areas;

b. Create unincorporated islands, unless the annexation is preceded by an interlocal agreement in which the city agrees to pursue annexation of the remaining island area in a timely manner;

c. Focus solely on areas that would provide a distinct economic gain for the annexing city at the exclusion of other proximate areas that should logically be included;

d. Move designated Agricultural and/or Forest Production District lands into the Urban Growth Area, except as allowed in Policies R-760, R-671, and R-762a; or

e. Apply zoning to maintain or create permanent, low density residential areas, unless such areas are part of an urban separator or are environmentally constrained, rendering higher densities inappropriate.

U-116 **King County shall favor annexation over incorporation as the preferred method of governance transition. King County shall not support incorporations when the proposed incorporation is financially infeasible.**

U-117 **King County shall work with cities to develop pre annexation or annexation interlocal agreements to address the transition of services from the County to the annexing cities. The development of such agreements should include a public outreach process to include but not be limited to residents and property owners in the Potential Annexation Areas, as well as residents and property owners in the surrounding areas. Such agreements may address a range of considerations, including but not limited to:**

a. Establishing a financing partnership between the County, city, and other service providers to address needed infrastructure;

b. Providing reciprocal notification of development proposals in Potential Annexation Areas, and opportunities to identify and/or provide mitigation associated with such development;

c. Supporting the city's desire, to the extent possible, to be the designated sewer or water service provider within the Potential Annexation Area, where this can be done without harm to the integrity of existing systems and without significantly increasing rates;

d. Assessing the feasibility and/or desirability of reverse contracting in order for the city to provide local services on the County's behalf prior to annexation, as well as the feasibility and/or desirability of the County continuing to provide some local services on a contract basis after annexation;

e. Exploring the feasibility of modifying development, concurrency, and infrastructure design standards prior to annexation, when a specific and aggressive annexation timeline is being pursued;

f. Assessing which County owned properties and facilities should be transferred to city control, and the conditions under which such transfers should take place;

g. Transitioning County employees to city employment where appropriate;

h. Ensuring that land use plans for the annexation area are consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies with respect to: planning for urban densities and efficient land use patterns; provision of urban services, affordable housing, and transportation; the protection of critical areas; and the long term protection of urban separators;

i. Continuing equivalent protection of cultural resources, and county landmarks and historic resources listed on the King County Historic Resource Inventory;

j. Maintaining existing equestrian facilities and establishing equestrian linkages; and
k. Establishing a timeline for service transitions and for the annexation.

U-118 **King County should engage in joint planning processes for the urban unincorporated areas with the area's designated annexation city. Alternatively, upon a commitment from the city to annex through an interlocal agreement, King County shall engage in joint planning processes for the urban unincorporated areas in tandem with the annexing city. Such planning may consider land use tools such as:**
a. Subarea plans or area zoning and land use studies;
b. Allowing additional commercial and high density residential development through the application of new zoning;
c. Transfers of Development Rights that add units to new development projects; and
d. Application of collaborative and innovative development approaches, such as design standards.

U-119 **Within Potential Annexation Areas of Cities in the Rural Area, residential development at a density of one home per five acres or less shall be allowed until the area annexes to the city.**

II. Growth in Centers and the Promotion of Public Health for All

Focusing growth into centers helps achieve the goals of a sustainable and equitable community. King County has a number of smaller scale centers, which includes unincorporated activity centers, community business centers, and neighborhood business centers. These are represented on the Countywide and Local Centers map at the end of this chapter.

Communities that feature a variety of land uses; access to healthy, affordable foods; higher housing density; sidewalks; bicycle infrastructure; and street connections to nearby services promote health and quality of life. Urban areas that are interesting and safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, and that provide many necessary services close to residential developments, can promote public health by increasing opportunities for physical activity during daily activities.

While creating communities that have a positive effect on public health, the County is also supporting the creation of communities that will have a positive effect on climate change. When people replace their vehicle trips with transit, walking, or biking, they are improving their health and reducing their carbon footprint at the same time. Communities that have integrated street networks, a mix of uses, and residential densities supportive of public transportation can reduce vehicle miles traveled because vehicle trips are being replaced with more walking, biking, and transit use.

U-201 **King County should support actions that promote public health; address racially and geographically disparate health outcomes; support safe and convenient daily physical activity and social connectivity; protect from exposure to harmful substances and environments; and increase access to opportunities, through actions such as:**

- **a. Concentrating growth, infrastructure, and services into the Urban Growth Area;**
- **b. Promoting the development of countywide and local centers;**
- **c. Allowing mixed use developments;**
- **d. Supporting access to healthy, affordable retail foods;**
- **e. Adding pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connections; and**
- **f. Prioritizing affordable housing in high opportunity areas.**

U-202 **New development in centers should include the following:**

- **a. Safe and attractive walkways, trails, and bicycle facilities for all ages and abilities with access to major destinations, including schools, community facilities, and commercial areas;**
- **b. Buildings close to sidewalks;**
- **c. Compact design with close grouping of compatible uses;**
- **d. Off street structured parking located to the side or rear of buildings or underground;**
- **e. Public art;**
- **f. Public spaces, such as plazas and building atriums;**
- **g. Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings, and established character;**
- **h. Aesthetic design and compatibility with adjacent uses through setbacks, building orientation, and landscaping;**
- **i. Screening of unsightly views, such as heavy machinery, outdoor storage areas, loading docks, and parking areas from adjacent uses and from arterials;**
- **j. Signs that contribute to the character of the center while minimizing glare and other adverse visual impacts on nearby residences;**
- **k. Low-impact design features; and**
- **l. Recreation space such as pocket parks.**

U-203 **Development standards for urban areas should emphasize ways to allow maximum densities and uses of urban land while not compromising the function of critical areas. Standards should be simple and measurable, so they can be implemented without lengthy review processes.**

U-204 **King County shall allow and support the development of community gardens and urban agriculture throughout residential and commercial areas.**

U-205 **King County should explore ways to encourage property owners to develop vacant and abandoned property.**

While there are many benefits of focusing growth into centers, one impact of climate change is a greater likelihood of extreme heat in urban heat islands. The term "heat island" refers to areas where air and surface temperatures are higher than the nearby Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands due to development. Heat islands form as cities replace natural land cover with pavement, buildings, and other built infrastructure. Heat islands exacerbate heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Dense urban areas with a lot of paved surfaces and limited shade can be up to 20°F hotter during extreme heat events, when compared to areas with more trees and less pavement. The higher the temperature, the higher the likelihood people will suffer from heat-related illnesses and not be able to cool themselves sufficiently. Homes without air conditioning in urban heat islands may also be more prone to overheating, further

exacerbating residents' risk of heat-related illness. The heat island effect can be reduced by requiring cool roofs, cool pavements, tree canopy, and other vegetation.

U-206 **King County shall work with cities, communities, residents, and developers to employ green infrastructure and other approaches that help reduce heat islands and the health effects of extreme heat on residents, particularly in frontline communities and historically underserved neighborhoods with less tree canopy and open space.**

The environment surrounding a school and the routes a typical student travels to school or nearby school related destinations can affect health outcomes of youths. Strategies to improve these factors include managing density of retail uses that primarily sell alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and low nutrition products; enhancing green space sites; creating safe areas to walk and bicycle to school; providing for transit and related facilities; and reducing exposure to environmental toxins and other types of unsafe environments.

U-207 **King County shall promote children's health by encouraging and supporting land uses in the environment surrounding a school and on travel routes to schools that complement and strengthen other formal programs, such as Safe Routes to School.**

A. Unincorporated Activity Centers

Unincorporated activity centers are the primary locations for commercial and industrial development in urban unincorporated King County. White Center and Skyway are the only designated unincorporated activity centers. Both meet the criteria for countywide centers designation and are designated as High-Capacity Transit Communities in VISION. King County intends to apply for countywide center designation for both communities following adoption of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan.

U-208 **Within unincorporated activity centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Urban Residential, with a density of 12 to 48 dwelling units per acre; Community Business; Neighborhood Business; Office; and Industrial.**

U-209 **Unincorporated activity centers should provide employment, housing, shopping, services, and other amenities to meet the needs of the local economy. The mix of uses may include:**

- **a. Health, human service, and public safety facilities;**
- **b. Retail stores and services;**
- **c. Professional offices;**
- **d. Business/office parks;**
- **e. Multiunit housing and mixed use developments;**
- **f. Heavy commercial and industrial uses, when there is direct freeway or rail access;**
- **g. Light manufacturing;**
- **h. Parks and open space; and**
- **i. Farmers Markets.**

U-210 **King County may designate new unincorporated activity centers or expand existing unincorporated activity centers only through a subarea planning process that should address:**

- **a. The relationship and role of the center to its surrounding uses, including adjacent cities and other nearby centers;**
- **b. Availability of supporting public services;**
- **c. The need for additional commercial and industrial development;**
- **d. The size and boundaries of the center; and**
- **e. Zoning.**

U-211 **The size, uses, and boundaries of unincorporated activity centers should:**

- **a. Be more than 40 acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of critical areas;**
- **b. Include retail space based on the amount of residential development planned for the surrounding area to provide for community and local shopping needs; and**
- **c. Limit retail space to a maximum of 60 acres and 600,000 square feet unless located on a principal or minor arterial that connects directly to a freeway and the retail space is well served by transit.**

B. Community Business Centers

Community business centers are primarily retail developments designed to serve a moderately sized nearby market area. As shown on the Countywide and Local Centers map at the end of this chapter, these centers include Fairwood, Roxhill, Glendale, and Top Hat.

U-212 **Community business centers in the urban areas should provide primarily shopping and personal services for nearby residents. Offices and mixed-use development are also encouraged. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be limited. Community business centers should include the following mix of uses:**

- **a. Retail stores and services;**
- **b. Professional offices;**
- **c. Community and human services;**
- **d. Multiunit housing as part of a mixed use development, with higher residential densities near transit; and**
- **e. Stands or small outlets that offer fresh, affordable fruit and produce and locally produced value added food products.**

U-213 **Expansion of existing or designation of new community business centers shall be allowed only through a subarea plan or area zoning and land use study.**

U-214 **Within community business centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business, Community Business, and Office.**

U-215 **The specific size and boundaries of community business centers should be:**

- **a. Between 10 acres and 40 acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of critical areas;**
- **b. Designed to provide shopping and services for a market population of 15,000 to 40,000 people;**
- **c. Located one to three miles from an unincorporated activity center or from another community business center. May be located less than two miles from a neighborhood business center when it is demonstrated the neighborhood business center will not be adversely affected; and**
- **d. Located at the intersection of two principal or minor arterials.**

C. Neighborhood Business Centers

Neighborhood business centers are shopping areas offering convenience goods and services to local residents. Neighborhood business centers are intended to be small and compatible with adjacent residential areas and often are used on the way to another destination (for example, a fuel stop before or after commuting). Sometimes they consist of only one use or business. Neighborhood business centers should be designed to promote pedestrian and bicycle access.

As shown on the Countywide and Local Centers map at the end of this chapter, King County has seven of these centers, including Avondale Corner, Beverly Park, Jovita, Lake Geneva, Martin Luther King Jr. Way between 60th Ave S and 64th Ave S, Rainier Ave S between S 114th St and S 117th St, and Spider Lake.

U-216 **Neighborhood business centers in urban areas should include primarily retail stores and offices designed to provide convenient shopping and other services for nearby residents. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be prohibited. Neighborhood business centers should include the following mix of uses:**

a. Retail stores and services;
b. Professional offices;
c. Multiunit housing as part of a mixed use development; and
d. Farmers Markets.

U-217 **Expansion of existing or the designation of new neighborhood business centers shall only be allowed through a subarea plan or area zoning and land use study.**

U-218 **Within neighborhood business centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business and Office.**

U-219 **The specific size and boundaries of neighborhood business centers should be:**

a. Ten acres or less in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of critical areas;
b. Designed to provide convenience shopping for a market population of 8,000 to 15,000 people;
c. Located within walking distance of transit corridors or transit activity centers; and
d. Located one to three miles from another neighborhood business center.

D. Commercial Development Outside of Centers

The Commercial Outside of Center Land Use designation recognizes commercial uses predating the adoption of the County's first Growth Management Act mandated Comprehensive Plan. These isolated unincorporated urban areas are located outside a designated unincorporated activity center, community business center, or neighborhood business center and serve as a transitional designation within certain potential annexation areas.

U-220 **Stand alone commercial developments legally established outside designated centers in the unincorporated urban area should be recognized with the Commercial Outside of Center designation and appropriate commercial zoning, including any identified potential zoning classification. An action to implement a potential zoning classification shall not require an area zoning and land use study, if the current Commercial Outside of Center designation is to remain unchanged. When subarea plans are prepared, these developments may be designated as centers and allowed to grow if appropriate, or may be encouraged to redevelop consistent with the residential density and design policies of the Comprehensive Plan.**

U-221 **The Commercial Outside of Center designation should be applied as a transitional designation in Potential Annexation Areas identified in a signed memorandum of understanding between a city and the County for areas with a mix of urban uses and zoning to facilitate the joint planning effort directed by the memorandum of understanding. Zoning to implement this transitional designation should recognize the mix of existing and planned uses. No zone changes to these properties to allow other nonresidential uses, or zone changes to allow expansion of existing nonresidential uses onto other properties, should occur unless or until a subarea plan or area zoning and land use study is completed in consultation with the city.**

E. Commercial Land Use

U-222 **New commercial and office development shall locate in designated unincorporated activity centers, community business centers, and neighborhood business centers, and in areas designated commercial outside of centers.**

U-223 **Business and office park developments should be located in or adjacent to an unincorporated activity center. They may serve as a transition between office and retail areas and residential areas. They should be designed to take advantage of on site or nearby structured parking and transit service.**

U-224 **New facilities and businesses that draw from throughout the region, such as large retail uses, large public assembly facilities, and higher education institutions should locate in the Urban Growth Area.**

F. Industrial Development

Maintaining a strong industrial land supply is an important factor in maintaining the county's economic base and providing family wage jobs. The following policies assure that industrial development is supported and is also compatible with adjacent land uses while providing appropriate services for employees. In addition, King County is committed to helping return contaminated sites to productive use.

U-225 **Within the Urban Growth Area, properties with existing industrial uses shall be protected.**

U-226 **The County should use tools such as special district overlays to identify existing industrial uses and address impacts for property owners and residents of surrounding neighborhoods.**

U-227 **Industrial development should have direct access from arterials or freeways. Access points should be combined and limited in number to allow smooth traffic flow on arterials. Access through residential areas should be avoided.**

U-228 **Small amounts of retail and service uses in industrial areas may be allowed for convenience to employees and users.**

U-229 **King County, in collaboration with cities and the development community, should support clean up and reclaim polluted industrial areas to expand the land available for industrial development.**

G. Mixed-Use Development

Mixed use development combines higher density residential units with retail or office uses in the same building or within an integrated development on the same lot. Quality mixed use developments can provide convenient shopping and services to both residents of the development and those who live nearby. They can help to build a sense of community, as neighboring merchants and residents get to know each other.

Mixed use developments can help meet projected housing needs, promote public health, and help provide mitigation for climate change by providing opportunities for people to walk or bicycle to retail shopping and services. It provides an opportunity to support historically underserved communities by clustering public services. If people can replace some of their driving trips with walking, biking, or transit, then vehicle miles traveled will decrease. Further, by placing shopping and services close to where people live, even if some of the trips are made by vehicle, they will be shorter than if the uses had been separated.

A food innovation district is an area of food-related activities supportive of healthy, affordable local food. Food innovation districts may encompass food retail, anchor food businesses, small food business incubation, food industry education and training, markets and food hubs, urban agriculture, food programs and partnerships with urban and rural food growers and cooperatives, and food aggregation and processing.

U-230 **King County should allow mixed-use developments in community and neighborhood business centers, unincorporated activity centers, and in areas designated commercial outside of centers.**

U-231 **Mixed use developments should be designed to:**

- **a. Integrate uses within the same building or property;**
- **b. Provide retail and office uses on the ground floor;**
- **c. Place parking within, behind, or to the side of the buildings; and**
- **d. Provide safe, accessible pedestrian connections and bicycle facilities.**

U-232 **In a mixed use development where residential and nonresidential uses are proposed in separate structures and the residential uses are proposed to be constructed prior to the nonresidential uses, permitting and development reviews should be through a process that ensures an integrated design.**

U-233 **In a mixed use development, incentives such as increases in residential density or floor area ratio should be used to encourage the inclusion of well designed and accessible public gathering spaces in the site design.**

U-234 **King County shall allow and support mixed-use food innovation districts supportive of affordable, healthy local food.**

H. Residential Land Use

The Comprehensive Plan proposes ways to develop housing densities so that urban land is used more efficiently, homes are more affordable, more housing choices are available, and densities are adequate to support effective and efficient transit services.

U-235 **New residential development in the Urban Growth Area should occur where facilities and services can be provided at the lowest public cost and in a timely fashion. The Urban Growth Area shall include zoning that provides for a variety of housing types, sizes, and affordability levels, including manufactured home parks, apartments, middle housing, townhouses, and small lot single detached residential development.**

U-236 **No new Urban Planned Developments or Fully Contained Communities shall be designated or approved in King County.**

1. Residential Densities

U-237 **King County shall seek to achieve an average zoning density of at least eight dwelling units per acre in the urban unincorporated area.**

U-238 **King County should apply minimum density requirements to all unincorporated urban residential zones of four or more dwelling units per acre, except under limited circumstances such as the:**

a. Presence of significant physical constraints such as those noted in Policy U-238, or

b. Implementation of standards applied to a property through a property specific development condition or special district overlay.

U-239 **King County should apply the urban residential, low land use designation in limited circumstances to protect floodplains, critical aquifer recharge areas, high function wetlands and unstable slopes from degradation, and the link these critical areas have to a network of open space, fish and wildlife habitat, and urban separators. The residential density for this land should be maintained at one unit per acre, and lands that are sending sites under the Transfer of Development Rights Program may transfer density at a rate of at least four units per acre.**

U-240 **King County shall explore zoning regulations and provisions that increase housing density and affordability that is compatible with the character and scale of the existing communities, with a focus on development patterns that support frequent transit and allow for a range of housing choices.**

U-241 **King County shall allow for the development of single detached residences through the splitting of a single residential lot into two residential lots.**

2. Urban Separators

The Countywide Planning Policies call for the County and cities to implement urban separators. Different from the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, these are low density areas within the Urban Growth Area that create open space corridors, provide a visual contrast to continuous development, and reinforce the unique identities of communities. Urban separators can play a significant role in preserving critical areas and in providing habitat for fish and wildlife. They also provide recreational benefits, such as parks and trails, and meet the Growth Management Act's requirement for greenbelts and open space in the Urban Growth Area. Urban Separators are designated in the Countywide Planning Policies and are shown in the Land Use Map at the end of Chapter 1, Regional Growth Management Planning.

U-242 **Urban separators should include and link parks and other lands that contain significant critical areas, provide fish and wildlife habitat or critical resource protection, contain defining physical features, or contain historic resources. The residential density for urban separators should be maintained at one unit per acre, and lands that are sending sites under the Transfer of Development Rights Program may transfer density at a rate of at least four units per acre.**

U-243 **King County should work with the cities to establish and maintain permanent urban separators within the incorporated area that link with and enhance King County's urban separator corridors.**

U-244 **Designated urban separators should be preserved through park, trail, and open space acquisitions; incentive programs such as the Transfer of Development Rights Program; the Public Benefit Rating System Program; and regulations.**

3. Increases of Zoning Density

The following policies will guide decisions on application of densities and proposed rezones.

U-245 **Requests for increases in density of unincorporated urban residential property zoned for one dwelling unit per acre shall be considered unless the property meets the criteria for low land use designation as set forth in Policy U-238.**

U-246 **King County should only support proposed zoning reclassifications to increase density within the urban unincorporated area when consistent with the Land Use Map and when the following conditions are met:**

- **a. The proposed zoning reclassification is compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood;**
- **b. Public facilities and services are adequate and consistent with adopted levels of service and meet concurrency requirements;**
- **c. The proposed zoning reclassification will cause no net loss to critical areas;**
- **d. The proposed zoning classification will not increase unmitigated displacement impacts to residents or businesses, either on or adjacent to the site;**
- **e. The proposed zoning reclassification is consistent with or contributes to achieving the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan;**
- **f. The proposed zoning reclassification is within one-quarter mile of transit corridors or transit activity centers and retail and commercial activities, and is accessible to parks and recreation opportunities; and**
- **g. An analysis has been completed that identifies all potential equity impacts and displacement risk to residents or businesses located on or adjacent to the site proposed for zoning reclassification:**
  1. **For zoning reclassifications initiated by the County Executive, the analysis shall include, at a minimum, an equity impact review.**
  2. **For zoning reclassifications not initiated by the County, a community meeting shall be held that meets the requirements of King County Code 20.20.035 prior to submittal of the application. Notice of the community meeting should be provided, at a minimum, in the top six languages other than English spoken in that community. As part of the zoning reclassification application, the applicant shall provide a summary of the feedback provided at the community meeting and a description of how that feedback was incorporated into the proposal.**

U-247 **King County, when evaluating rezone requests, shall consult with the city whose Potential Annexation Area includes the property under review; if a pre annexation agreement exists, King County shall work with the city to ensure compatibility with the city's pre annexation zoning for the area. King County shall also notify special purpose districts and local providers of urban utility services and should work with these service providers on issues raised by the proposal.**

U-248 **King County shall not support requests for residential density increases or conversion of nonresidential property to residential uses on lands located within the outer boundaries of the Federal Aviation Administration approved Noise Mitigation Boundary as identified by Seattle Tacoma International Airport and King County International Airport.**

4. Urban Residential Neighborhood Design and Infill/Redevelopment

Urban unincorporated areas should be designed so that residents enjoy them both for their unique character and for the amenities they provide. These areas, through subarea planning processes and permitting and design standards, should support development that is of the same quality as adjacent cities.

The high level of amenities and development include outdoor spaces that are usable, attractive, comfortable, and enjoyable. The design of urban streets, including features such as parking strips, street trees, alleys, and off street parking all contribute to the character of urban neighborhoods. Careful site planning can incorporate neighborhood features, contribute to aesthetic value, minimize site disturbance, conserve energy, reduce urban heat, and, in some cases, reduce development costs. Neighborhood shopping, grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables, libraries, larger parks, and schools are examples of uses that provide amenities for nearby residents.

Small retail establishments integrated into residential development such as a laundromat can provide convenient services and help residents reduce vehicle trips.

U-249 **King County shall encourage affordable, innovative, quality infill development and redevelopment in existing unincorporated urban areas that considers the size and scale of existing buildings and improves the overall character of existing communities. A variety of regulatory, incentive, and program strategies should be considered, including:**

- **a. Special development standards for infill sites;**
- **b. Assembly and resale of sites to providers of affordable and healthy housing;**
- **c. Greater regulatory flexibility in allowing standards to be met using innovative techniques;**
- **d. Coordination with incentive programs of cities affiliated to annex the area;**
- **e. Green building techniques that create sustainable development; and**
- **f. Joint public/private loan guarantee pools.**

U-250 **Single detached residences, accessory dwelling units, townhomes, duplexes, and houseplexes shall be allowed in all urban residential zones.**

U-251 **Urban residential neighborhood design should preserve historic structures, natural features, and neighborhood identity, while accommodating housing affordable to all income levels and providing privacy, community space, and safety and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities.**

U-252 **Site planning tools, such as clustering, shall be allowed, to accommodate preservation or utilization of unique natural features or critical areas within a development.**

U-253 **Residential developments should provide a variety of housing types and lot patterns through flexible setback requirements and mixed attached and detached housing.**

U-254 **Nonresidential uses, such as schools, religious facilities, libraries, and small scale retail and personal services, should be integrated into urban residential neighborhoods to support compact and walkable communities. These uses should be sited, designed, and scaled to be compatible with existing residential character and should provide convenient and safe walking and bicycling connections to neighboring residences.**

U-255 **King County shall support increased access to affordable, healthy foods.**

U-256 **King County should allow the creation of local improvement districts, where required to carry out important public functions that are not otherwise able to be carried out by existing local governments.**

U-257 **Multiunit and mixed-use development should provide common and private open space; variation in facades and other building design features that may include varying window treatments, building colors, and materials; and light fixtures that will give a residential scale and identity to multiunit development.**

I. Site Improvement Standards and Public Services

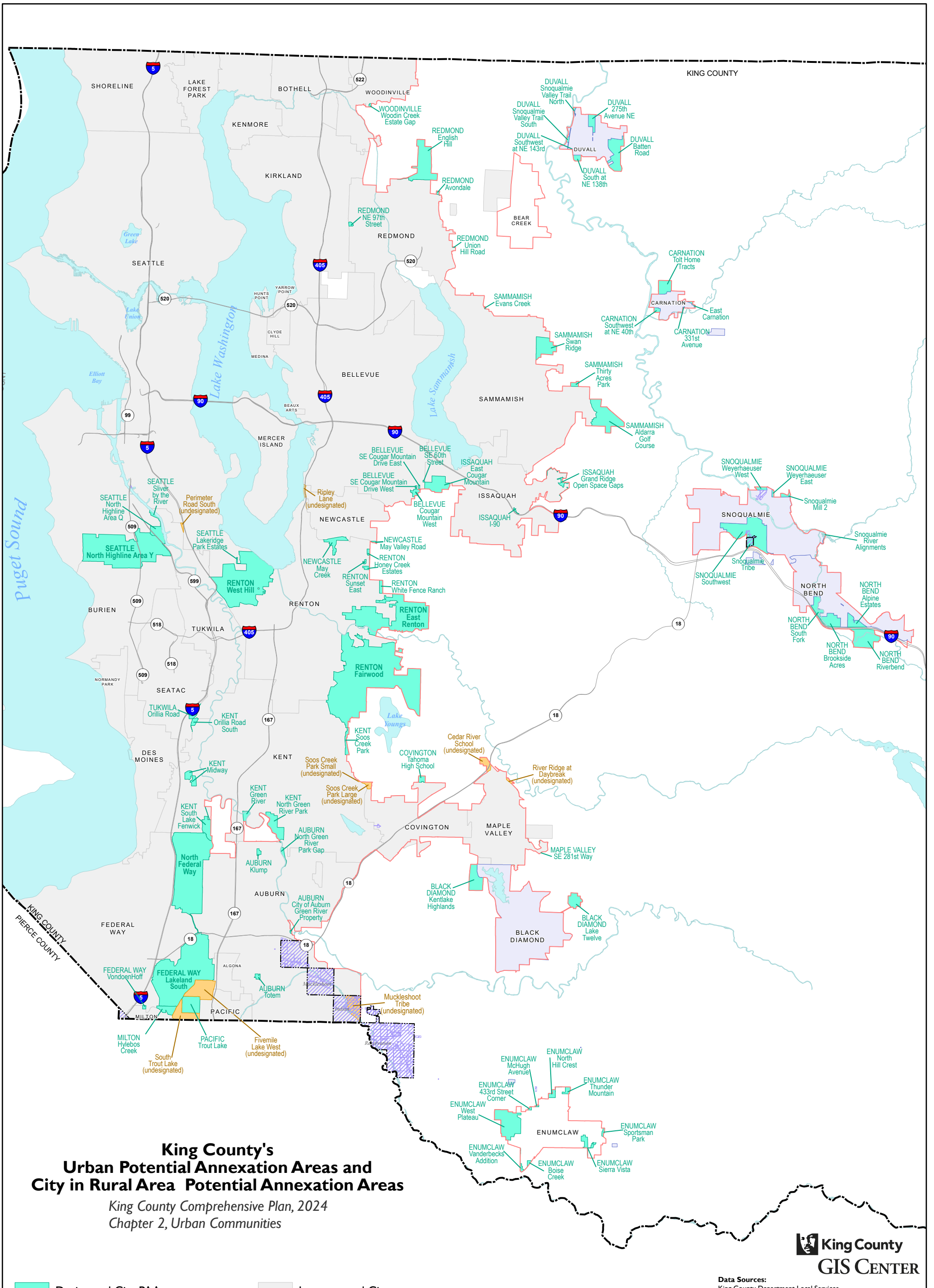
U-258 **The design and construction quality of development in unincorporated urban areas should meet or exceed the quality in the area's designated annexation city. Residential, commercial, retail, and industrial developments in the unincorporated urban area should foster community, create enjoyable outdoor areas, and balance needs of vehicle movement with pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety. Developments shall provide the following improvements, where appropriate:**

- **a. Paved streets and alleys;**
- **b. Sidewalks and internal walkways for all ages and abilities and bicycle facilities;**
- **c. Adequate parking for employees, business patrons, and residents;**
- **d. Safe access to transit centers and frequent transit corridors;**
- **e. Landscaping along or within streets, sidewalks, and parking areas to provide an attractive appearance;**
- **f. Street lighting and street trees;**
- **g. Adequate stormwater control, including curbs, gutters, and stormwater facilities;**
- **h. Public water supply;**
- **i. Public sewers;**
- **j. Controlled traffic access to arterials and intersections; and**
- **k. Where appropriate, common facilities, such as shared streets, walkways, and waste disposal and recycling, with appropriate levels of landscaping.**

U-259 **Common facilities with appropriate levels of landscaping, such as recreation space, internal walkways, roads, parking (including secure bicycle parking), and solid waste and recycling areas, should be included in multiunit developments. Common areas(such as common hallways and elevators) shall be smoke-free and vapor-product free to the extent allowed by state and local regulations to avoid exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke and emissions from electronic smoking and vaping devices.**

U-260 **New residential developments should provide recreation space, community facilities, and neighborhood circulation for pedestrian and bicyclist access to transit where they exist or are planned. Recreation space shall be on-site and based on the size of the development, except that in limited cases, fee payments for local park and outdoor recreation needs may be accepted by King County.**

U-261 **Recreation spaces located in residential developments in the Urban Area should include amenities such as children's play areas, play equipment, open grassy areas, barbecues, benches, bicycle racks, trails, and picnic tables.**



King County's
Urban Potential Annexation Areas and
City in Rural Area Potential Annexation Areas

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter 2, Urban Communities

King County
GIS Center

- Designated City PAAs
- Undesignated PAAs
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- King County Boundary
- Incorporated City
- City in Rural Area
- Indian Reservation Boundary
- Indian Trust Land

N W E S

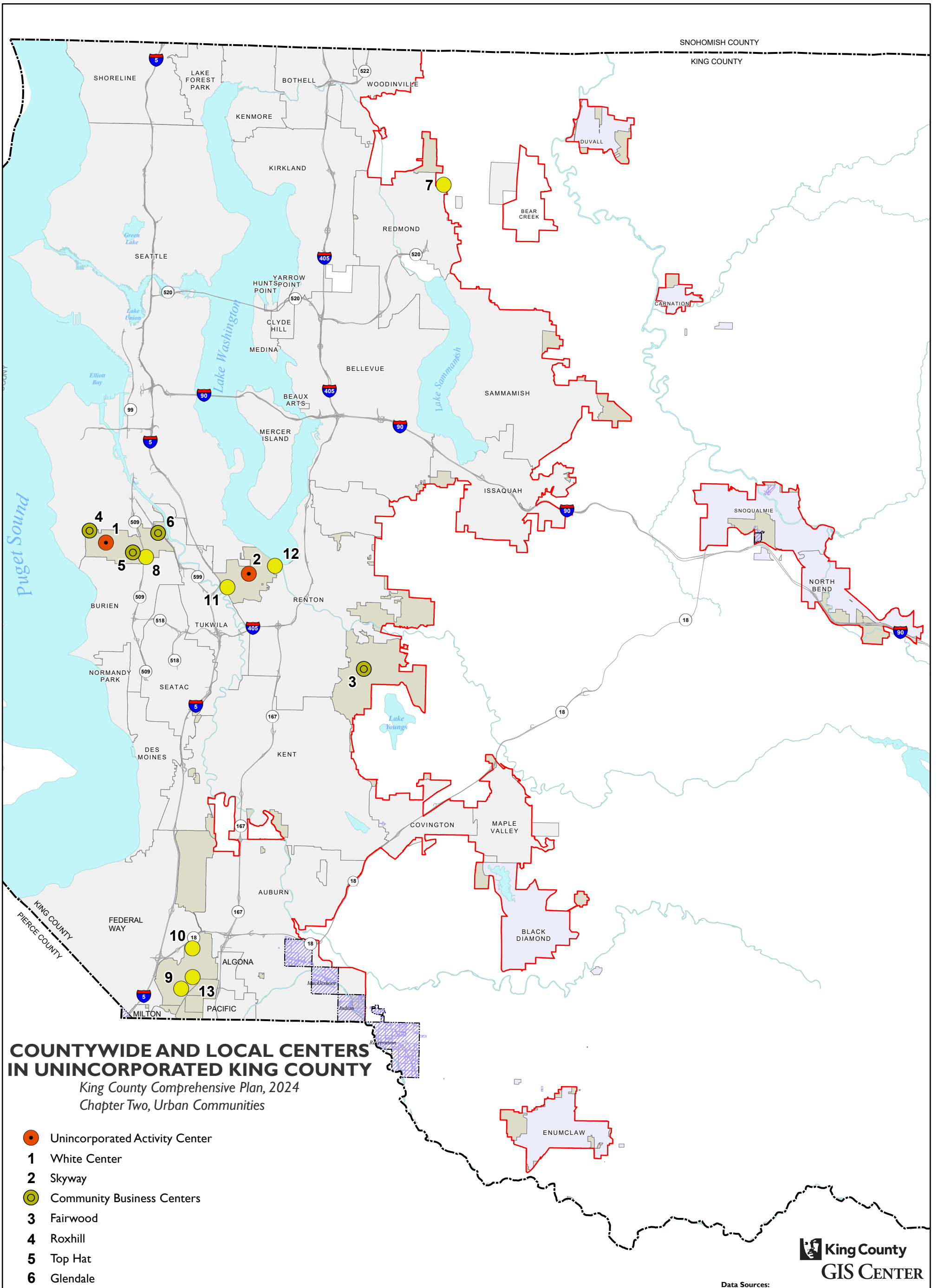
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Data Sources:
King County Department Local Services
Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Notes:
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Date: November 2024
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COUNTYWIDE AND LOCAL CENTERS IN UNINCORPORATED KING COUNTY

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter Two, Urban Communities

- Unincorporated Activity Center
- 1 White Center
- 2 Skyway
- Community Business Centers
- 3 Fairwood
- 4 Roxhill
- 5 Top Hat
- 6 Glendale
- Neighborhood Business Centers
- 7 Avondale Corner
- 8 Beverly Park
- 9 Jovita
- 10 Lake Geneva
- 11 Martin Luther King Jr. Way/60th Ave.-64th Ave. S
- 12 Rainier Ave. S/S. 114th St.-S. 117th St.
- 13 Spider Lake

- Incorporated City
- Potential Annexation Areas
- City in Rural Area
- Indian Reservation Boundary
- Indian Trust Land
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- King County Boundary
- Freeways

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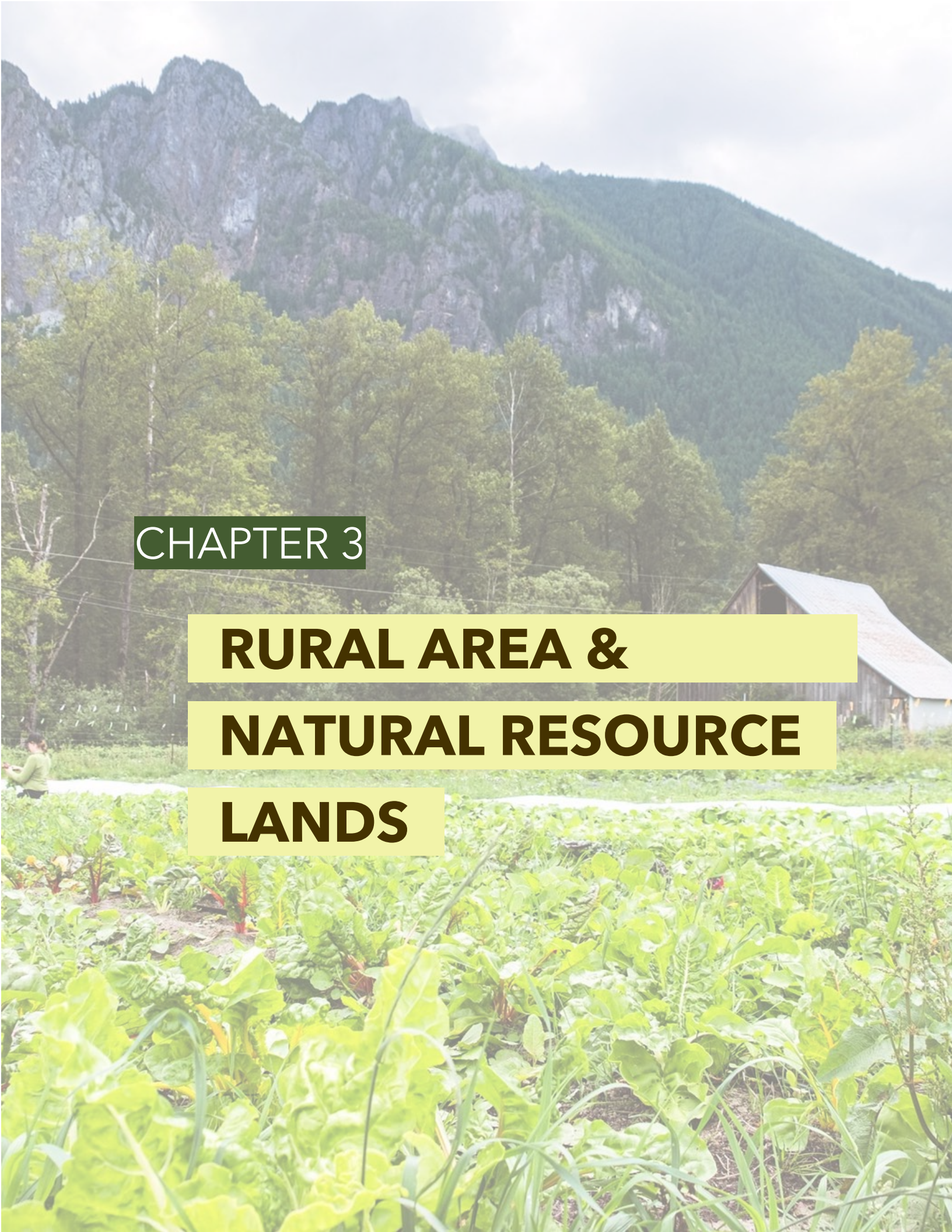
King County GIS Center

Data Sources:
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Date: November 2024



CHAPTER 3

RURAL AREA & NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS

I. Introduction

The "Rural Area History and Character," "Rural Area Geography," "Rural Densities and Development," and "Rural Commercial Centers" sections of this chapter satisfy the Growth Management Act's mandatory rural element by designating Rural Area lands to limit development and prevent sprawl, by permitting land uses that are supportive of and compatible with the rural character established in the King County Countywide Planning Policies, and by providing for a variety of rural densities. These sections also satisfy the mandatory land use element by indicating the population densities that are appropriate for the Rural Area. The policies in these sections also encourage natural resource-based industries and uses in the Rural Area as required by the Growth Management Act.

The "Natural Resource Lands" section of this chapter satisfies the Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.170 requirement to designate Natural Resource Lands; and the Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.080 optional conservation element by conserving Natural Resource Lands.

Preserving rural King County plays a key role in ensuring a continuing variety of landscapes, maintaining the diverse communities that often portray the county's rural history and character, and supporting the evolving rural economic opportunities for the county and its residents. The rural landscape is characterized by extensive forests and farm lands, free-flowing rivers and streams that provide high-quality habitat for fish and wildlife, and a mixture of housing types along with small commercial enterprises and business hubs. The Rural Area and rural-based economies contribute to the range of choices and enhance the quality of life for all county residents. King County is committed to sustaining rural economic clusters and rural character.

Traditional rural economic activities have evolved over the decades as residents have responded to changing markets and the expansion of urban areas. Large-scale, commercial forestry and mining have been and continue to be the traditional land uses in the eastern half of King County. Farming continues in the prime soils found in the river valleys and on the Enumclaw Plateau. Although certain historically prevalent types of agriculture such as hops farming have disappeared, and the number of dairy farms has declined, today’s farmers are exploring new crops, value-added products, and creative direct marketing. County residents raise livestock, such as poultry, cattle, sheep, hogs, and goats. Equestrian activities, including breeding, training, boarding, and recreation, have become a more significant part of the rural economy. The types of businesses now locating in the Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers and those being developed as home-based businesses have also responded to these changes in the county, and in the commercial marketplace.

Conserving the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands in King County is integral to providing diversity in lifestyle choices; sustaining farming and forestry economies; protecting environmental quality and wildlife habitat; providing recreation opportunities; and maintaining a link to the county’s resource-based heritage.

Throughout this chapter and elsewhere the Comprehensive Plan, references are made to the "Rural Area" and to "Natural Resource Lands." This terminology aligns with two of the three geographies delineated in the Growth Management Act: the Urban Growth Area, the Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands.

- The "Rural Area" (capitalized) is a geography that includes the Rural Area (ra) land use designation and Rural Area (RA) zoning classifications. The Rural Area geography also includes other zoning classifications and land use designations on properties that are also located outside of the Urban Growth Area and Natural Resource Lands, such as Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers.
- If only the Rural Area land use designation (ra) or Rural Area zoning (RA) are meant, the words "land use designation" or "zone" (or equivalent term) will be included, respectively.
- "Natural Resource Lands" (capitalized) are a separate geography from the Rural Area and include lands of long-term commercial significance that are required to be designated and protected under the Growth Management Act, such as Agricultural Production Districts, Forest Production Districts, and Mineral lands.
- There are also other, non-designated resource lands (lower-case) that are not of long-term commercial significance that occur in the Rural Area geography.
- The term "rural" (lower-case), such as in "rural character" or "rural history," can apply to both the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands geographies.

Refer to the Glossary for more information about how these terms are used in the Comprehensive Plan.

Conserving the unique characteristics of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands will help King County retain its rural character and its agricultural, forestry, and mining heritage.

King County's Rural Area, including communities such as the Hobart Plateau, Vashon-Maury Island, the Snoqualmie Valley, and the Enumclaw Plateau, is characterized by low-density residential development, farms, ranches, forests, watersheds crucial for both fisheries and flood hazard management, mining areas, historic sites and buildings, archaeological sites, and regionally important recreation areas. These rural uses complement and support the more extensive resource uses in the Natural Resource Lands. The location of the Rural Area between the Urban Growth Area and the Natural Resource Lands helps to protect commercial agriculture and timber from incompatible uses.

Designation and conservation of the Rural Area supports and sustains rural communities and rural character as valued parts of King County's diversity. It also provides choices in living environments; maintains a link to King County's heritage; allows farming and forestry to continue; and helps protect environmental quality and critical areas, such as groundwater recharge areas and watersheds crucial for both fisheries and flood hazard management. Rural King County also acts to enhance urban areas by providing nearby open spaces and parks for a variety of recreation and tourism opportunities, as well as educational opportunities to explore current and historical agricultural and forestry practices.

The growing, harvesting, extraction, processing, and use of products from Natural Resource Lands play an important role in King County's economy by providing jobs and products for local use and export. Agricultural and forest lands also provide scenic views, links to King County's cultural heritage, and environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat, improvements in air and water quality, food security, a climate-resilient ecosystem, and carbon sequestration. In large measure, King County's quality of life is dependent upon the thoughtful planning and sound management of these lands to ensure their long-term conservation and productive use.

II. Rural History and Character

A. Rural History and Communities

King County's rural history and character is found in its rural communities, in the preservation of the county's historic, cultural, ecological, and archaeological sites, and in its rich and varied forestry, agricultural, and mining heritage. Development of railroads played a significant role in the historical growth and development of the county that is still seen in tourism opportunities in the Cities in the Rural Area such as Skykomish and Snoqualmie. Historic barns and farmhouses are found throughout the agricultural areas of the county. A few commercial-scale sawmills influenced the development of communities, such as in Preston, which was active from 1896 to 1990 and is now preserved as part of Preston Mill Park.

R-101 **King County shall continue to preserve and sustain its rural history, character, and communities through programs and partnerships that support, preserve, and sustain its historic, cultural, ecological, agricultural, forestry, and mining heritage through collaboration with Indian tribes, local and regional preservation and heritage programs, community groups, rural residents, and business owners including forest and farm owners, Cities in the Rural Area, and other interested parties.**

B. Rural Character

King County is committed to protecting rural character and recognizes that each of its rural communities has distinct and unique characteristics. These communities vary depending on settlement and economic history, geography, and distance from the urbanizing areas of the region. For example, residents of Vashon-Maury Island, accessible mainly by ferry, enjoy an island lifestyle with marine recreational activities. Residents of the hilly gorge region around Black Diamond enjoy numerous recreational opportunities. There are small communities throughout rural King County, such as Hobart and Cumberland, each with its own unique history and lifestyle. Other communities with rich rural heritages, such as Old Maple Valley, are in transition as development of land in and adjacent to the areas is occurring. In the Snoqualmie Valley, farming is still the mainstay, while further east, the Town of Skykomish has a significant railroad and forestry history.

Population growth in Puget Sound communities affects rural character everywhere in the region. With regional growth both the rural economy and the rural population are changing, as are the expectations of some rural residents for County services. Some residents are more accustomed to independent lifestyles focused around resource uses such as farming or forestry. Other residents and visitors can be surprised by the sights, sounds, and smells associated with rural living; and can be accustomed to higher levels of service and facilities than are traditionally provided in the Rural Area. One of the challenges facing the County is to provide for a diversity of lifestyle choices while providing public services at rural levels.

III. Rural Area Geography

A. Designation of the Rural Area Geography

The Rural Area in King County represents the multi-use nature of rural lands, including working farms and forests, livestock uses, home-based businesses, and housing. The sustainability and enhancement of these areas and their underlying economic health is

critical to the range of lifestyle choices available in King County. It is a fundamental objective of the King County Comprehensive Plan to maintain the character of its designated Rural Area. The Growth Management Act specifies that the rural element of comprehensive plans include measures that apply to rural development and protect the rural character of the area (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.070). The Growth Management Act defines rural character as it relates to land use and development patterns (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.030). Rural development can consist of a variety of uses that are consistent with the preservation of rural character and the requirements of the rural element. In order to implement the Growth Management Act, it is necessary to define the development patterns that are considered rural, historical, or traditional and do not encourage urban growth or create pressure for urban facilities and service.

The criteria set forth in this section were used to draw the boundaries of the Rural Area designated by this plan.

R-201 **King County's land use regulations and development standards shall protect and enhance the following attributes associated with rural character and the Rural Area:**

- **a. The natural environment, particularly as evidenced by the health of wildlife and fisheries (especially salmon and trout), aquifers used for potable water, surface water bodies including Puget Sound and natural drainage systems and their riparian areas;**
- **b. Commercial and noncommercial farming, forestry, fisheries, mining, home occupations, and home industries;**
- **c. Historic resources, historical character, and continuity important to local communities, as well as archaeological and cultural sites important to Indian tribes;**
- **d. Community small-town atmosphere, safety, and locally owned small businesses;**
- **e. Economically and fiscally healthy Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers with clearly defined identities compatible with adjacent rural, agricultural, forestry, and mining uses;**
- **f. Regionally significant parks, trails, and open space for all King County residents;**
- **g. A variety of low-density housing choices compatible with adjacent farming, forestry, and mining, and not needing urban facilities and services;**
- **h. Traditional rural land uses of a size and scale that blend with historical rural development; and**
- **i. Rural uses that do not primarily serve the urban area.**

R-202 **The Rural Area geography shown on the Land Use Map shall include areas that are rural in character and that:**

a. Have opportunities for significant commercial or noncommercial farming and forestry (large-scale farms and forest lands are designated as Natural Resource Lands);
b. Help buffer nearby Natural Resource Lands from conflicting urban uses;
c. Are contiguous to other lands in the Rural Area, Natural Resource Lands, or areas largely comprised of critical areas;
d. Have major physical barriers to providing urban services at reasonable cost, or that will help foster more logical boundaries for urban public services and infrastructure;
e. Are not needed for the foreseeable future that is well beyond the 20-year forecast period to provide capacity for population or employment growth;
f. Have outstanding scenic, historic, environmental, resource, or aesthetic values that can best be protected by a rural designation; or
g. Have significant critical areas that make the area generally unsuitable for intensive urban development.

The Rural Area geography is generally located east of the Urban Growth Area, with the exception of the entirety of Vashon-Maury Island. Within the Rural Area, three land use categories are primarily applied:

- Rural Area (encompassing the Rural Area-2.5, Rural Area-5, Rural Area-10, and Rural Area-20 zones), allowing a range of low-density residential developments, forestry, farming, livestock uses, recreation, and a range of traditional rural uses;
- Rural Towns, recognizing historical settlement patterns and allowing commercial uses to serve rural residents; and
- Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers, allowing small-scale convenience services for nearby rural residents.

R-203 **The Rural Area geography is considered to be permanent and shall not be redesignated to be in the Urban Growth Area except when consistent with the Growth Management Act (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130), the Countywide Planning Policies, and the Comprehensive Plan.**

B. Forestry and Agriculture in the Rural Area Geography

Although most of King County's agriculture and timber lands are within designated Agricultural and Forest Production Districts, there is a significant land base for agriculture and forestry in the Rural Area. King County has mapped agricultural use and identified rural forest areas where forestry will be enhanced and protected. Efforts to conserve forest and farm uses are important and include training, technical assistance, and incentive programs such as the Transfer of Development Rights Program.

R-204 **Farming and forestry are vital to the preservation of rural King County and should be encouraged throughout the Rural Area. King County should encourage rural resource-based uses, with appropriate site management that protects habitat resources. King County's regulation of agriculture and forestry in the Rural Area should be consistent with these guiding principles:**

- **a. Homeowner covenants for new subdivisions and short subdivisions in the Rural Area should not restrict farming and forestry;**
- **b. Development regulations for resource-based activities should be tailored to support the resource use and its level of impact;**
- **c. Agricultural and silvicultural management practices should not be construed as public nuisances when carried on in compliance with applicable regulations, even though they may impact nearby residences; and**
- **d. County environmental standards for forestry and agriculture should protect environmental quality, especially in relation to water and fisheries resources, while encouraging forestry and farming.**

R-205 **Uses related to and appropriate for the Rural Area include those relating to agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, and fisheries, such as the raising of livestock, growing of crops, creation of value-added products, and sale of agricultural products; small-scale home occupations and home industries; and recreational and small-scale tourism uses that rely on a rural location.**

1. Forestry

Throughout the Rural Area, King County encourages small -scale forestry and land stewardship through a variety of landowner-focused and community-based programs. These programs provide technical assistance and information to promote forest stewardship that:

a. Improves forest health and climate resiliency, reduces wildfire risk, controls stormwater runoff, and improves wildlife habitat; and

b. Controls noxious and invasive weeds, through methods such as integrated pest management and protection of pollinators.

The County encourages forest stewardship planning and active forest management as a means of reducing conversion of forestland to other uses, improving forest health and climate resiliency, increasing rural economic prosperity, increasing potential to sequester and store carbon, and reducing risks from wildfire. Hundreds of landowners have written forest stewardship plans and have enrolled in current use taxation programs, which demonstrates a commitment to private forest management.

The small size of most rural forest properties presents an obstacle to implementation of private forest stewardship plans. Because the volume of timber harvested at any one time is usually small, it is difficult for landowners to find forestry services or log buyers. Many contractors do not consider small sites to be forestland with potential management opportunities, and they have not developed the tools and skills to work with small sites. There is untapped potential for work to be done by the private sector on small private forestlands. Outreach to forestry consultants and labor contractors concerning the potential small lot forest market is needed. Continuing forestry technical assistance and cost share to landowners, who otherwise are unlikely to pursue management activities, will encourage active forest stewardship and rural economic development.

King County continues to explore ways to facilitate the harvest, utilization, and marketing of wood products grown in the Rural Area.

R-206 **King County shall prioritize conservation of forest land and forestry throughout the Rural Area. Landowner property tax incentives, technical assistance, permit assistance, regulatory actions, and community-based education shall be used throughout the Rural Area to sustain the forest land base and forestry activities. King County should ensure that its regulations, permitting processes, and incentive programs facilitate and encourage active forest management and implementation of forest stewardship plans.**

King County continues to evaluate additional ways to conserve rural forest lands and encourage forestry. For example, King County's Land Conservation Initiative is a regional collaboration between King County, cities, businesspeople, farmers, environmental partners, and others to conserve the last, most important natural lands and urban green spaces in King County between 2016 and 2050. It calls for a series of accelerated actions to address rapidly shrinking open spaces and climbing land prices, which is estimated to save $15 billion over what it would take under the previous land conservation trajectory and will protect many of these lands before they are lost. The initiative has identified approximately 20,000 acres of forestland that are high priorities for conservation, either through easement or fee title acquisition, or through one of the current use taxation programs. King County will work in partnership with other jurisdictions and community partners to match high priority sites with funding sources for permanent conservation.

King County owns and manages approximately 30,000 acres of forestland. Of this, 4,300 acres (14 percent) are designated as working forests. In support of the goals outlined in the Strategic Climate Action Plan, the County is accelerating development and implementation of forest stewardship plans for County-owned forestland to improve forest health, enhance climate resilience, reduce wildfire risk, and increase potential to sequester carbon. The County has also conserved more than 142,000 acres of forested properties by purchasing development rights and over 230,000 acres of privately owned forestland through the current use taxation programs.

Although economic incentive programs and technical assistance are available to all property owners of forestland in the Rural Area, special efforts to maintain forest cover and the practice of sustainable forestry are warranted where there are opportunities to sustain large, contiguous blocks of rural forest adjacent to or in close proximity of the Forest Production District. The Agricultural and Forest Lands map identifies such areas as Rural Forest Focus Areas and notes the locations and boundaries of each focus area.

R-207 **King County shall designate Rural Forest Focus Areas where special efforts are necessary and feasible to maintain forest cover and the practice of sustainable forestry. King County shall continue to target funding, when available, economic incentive programs, regulatory actions, fee and easement acquisition strategies, and technical assistance to the Rural Forest Focus Areas. Strategies specific to each Rural Forest Focus Area should be developed, employing the combination of incentive and technical assistance programs best suited to each focus area.**

R-208 **King County should maintain Rural Forest Focus Areas in parcels of 20 acres or more, to retain large, contiguous blocks of rural forest. Regulations and/or incentives should seek to achieve a maximum density of one home per 20 acres.**

2. Farming

The King County Local Food Initiative is a strategy that aims to build a stronger farm-to-plate pipeline by setting targets and connecting local farms to consumers, increase access to healthy and affordable foods in underinvested areas, support farmers and

protect farmland, and create a sustainable food system that is more resilient to the effects of climate change. King County has a long history of conserving and sustaining farmland both within and outside of Agricultural Production Districts and continues to adapt strategies in expanding the County's local food economy to ensure job growth, economic viability, and climate resiliency for King County food businesses and farms. Although most active farmland in King County is found within Agricultural Production Districts, approximately 40 percent of the County's farmland is located in the Rural Area.

R-209 **King County should develop incentives to encourage agricultural activities on prime farmlands located outside the Agricultural Production District. These incentives could include tax credits, expedited permit review, reduced permit fees, permit exemptions for activities complying with best management practices such as regenerative agriculture, assistance with agricultural waste management, or similar programs.**

R-210 **King County shall support the raising and management of livestock and the production of related value-added products. The management of livestock and the lands and structures supporting the raising of livestock should be consistent with industry best management practices.**

IV. Rural Densities and Development

A. Rural Growth Forecast

The Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands are restricted from accommodating large amounts of growth, but low-density residential development and other traditional rural uses are allowed.

Rural growth is projected as a part of King County's countywide population projection and growth target allocation process. While the Rural Area is not assigned a growth target, the Regional Growth Strategy shares are used to project growth in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. Approximately 4,200 additional housing units during the period 2019 to 2044 are assumed in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.

Between 2010 and 2020, the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands grew by about 500 housing units to a total of approximately 49,000 and a population of about 128,000. At the current rate of growth, the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands will continue to have undeveloped lots through the 20-year planning period.

Prior to the implementation of the Growth Management Act in 1994, approximately 12 percent of new residential units were permitted in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands in King County. By 2010, that growth was reduced to approximately two percent, and since 2020, it was approximately one percent. King County continues to employ a variety of strategies to reduce growth in these areas, such as: directing 99 percent of new growth to urban areas, consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy; utilizing the Transfer of Development Rights program, Farmland Preservation Program, and Land Conservation Initiative to purchase development rights and permanently reduce development capacity on over 150,000 acres of rural lands and Natural Resource Lands; and preventing the extension of urban services to and through the Rural Area.

R-301 **King County shall use all appropriate tools at its disposal to limit growth in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, such as land use designations, development regulations, level of service standards, and incentives, to:**

- **a. Retain a low growth rate;**
- **b. Comply with the State Growth Management Act;**
- **c. Prevent sprawl, the conversion of rural land, and the overburdening of rural services;**
- **d. Reduce the need for capital expenditures for rural roads;**
- **e. Maintain rural character;**
- **f. Protect the environment; and**
- **g. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

R-302 **King County should support opportunities for rural affordable housing, such as through affordable housing regulatory incentives where appropriate, accessory dwelling units, and middle housing, when the housing:**

- **a. Would not, when taken in total with other development in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands, exceed one percent of new growth in King County;**
- **c. Is sized, scaled, and designed to protect rural character; and**
- **d. Would be able to be served by existing levels of service.**

B. Residential Densities

The low-density residential living choices available in the Rural Area provide an important part of the variety of housing options for King County residents. The residential land use policies in this section, together with their implementing regulations, strike a balance between making rural housing available to those who desire a rural way of life and keeping densities and the number of housing units low enough so they can be supported by a rural level of public facilities and services, be compatible with nearby farming and forestry, and prevent or significantly reduce adverse impacts of development on the natural environment.

R-303 **Residential development in the Rural Area should only occur:**

- **a. In Rural Towns at a variety of densities and housing types as services and infrastructure allow, compatible with protection of historic resources and community character;**
- **b. In rural neighborhood commercial centers at low or middle densities that support housing co-located with commercial development, to provide workforce housing, compatible with rural character and service levels; and**
- **c. Outside Rural Towns and rural neighborhood commercial centers at low densities compatible with traditional rural character and uses; farming, forestry, and mining; and rural service levels.**

Residential densities are a key determinant and contributor to the character of the Rural Area. Although the Rural Area has a wide variety of uses and densities, the range of uses and densities defined here are necessarily narrower and less intense than that found in the Urban Growth Area. Residential density may be the single most important factor in protecting or destroying rural character that can be influenced by government policies and regulations.

Low overall densities in the Rural Area are achieved through very large minimum lot sizes or limited clustering at the same average densities when facilities and services permit. The Rural Area cannot be a significant source of affordable housing for King County residents, but it will contain diverse housing opportunities, and higher densities are offered in Cities in the Rural Area and Rural Towns (as services and infrastructure permit).

R-304 **Rural Area zoned properties shall have low residential densities that:**

- **a. Can be sustained by minimal infrastructure improvements, such as septic systems and rural roads;**
- **b. Cause minimal environmental degradation and impacts to significant historic resources; and**
- **c. Will not cumulatively create the future necessity or expectation of urban levels of services.**

R-305 **Individual zone reclassifications are discouraged and should not be allowed in the Rural Area unless the applicant demonstrates compliance with the applicable criteria in Policies R-305 – R-308.**

Very low residential densities adjacent to Natural Resource Lands are essential to minimize land use conflicts. In addition, a significant part of the Rural Area land base is still used for farming or forestry uses. Therefore, suitability of lands for continuing resource uses and proximity to Natural Resource Lands are important considerations in applying the lower rural densities.

R-306 **A residential density of one home per 10 acres or 20 acres shall be achieved through regulatory and incentive programs on lands in the Rural Area that are managed, preserved, or prioritized for forestry or farming respectively, and lands that are found to qualify for a Rural Forest Focus Area designation in accordance with Policy R-207.**

R-307 **A residential density of one home per 10 acres shall be applied in the Rural Area where:**

- **a. The lands are adjacent to or within one-quarter mile of Natural Resource Lands;**
- **b. The lands contain moderate or significant critical areas; or**
- **c. A residential density of one home per five acres would harm or diminish the surrounding area, burden infrastructure, increase development pressure, or be inconsistent with the development patterns promoted by the Comprehensive Plan.**

R-308 **A residential density of one home per five acres shall be applied in the Rural Area where:**

- **a. The lands are more than one-quarter mile away from Natural Resource Lands;**
- **b. The lands are physically suitable for development with minimal critical areas; and**
- **c. This residential density would not harm or diminish the surrounding area, burden infrastructure, increase development pressure, or be inconsistent with the development patterns promoted by the Comprehensive Plan.**

R-309 **The RA-2.5 zone has generally been applied to properties in the Rural Area with an existing pattern of lots below five acres in size that were created prior to the adoption of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan. These smaller lots may still be developed individually or combined, provided that applicable standards for sewage disposal, environmental protection, water supply, roads, and rural fire protection can be met. A subdivision at a density of one home per 2.5 acres shall only be allowed through the Transfer of Development Rights from property in the designated Rural Forest Focus Areas. The site receiving the density must be approved as a Transfer of Development Rights receiving site in accordance with the King County Code. Properties on Vashon-Maury Island shall not be eligible as receiving sites.**

R-310 **Accessory dwelling units in structures detached from the primary dwelling shall be counted as a separate dwelling unit for the purpose of lot calculations under the zoning in place at the time of a proposed subdivision.**

R-311 **King County density-based affordable housing programs shall not be available for development in the Rural Area zones.**

C. Character and Development Standards

The aesthetic qualities and character of the Rural Area depend on a combination of factors, including low densities; a high ratio of undeveloped or undisturbed soil and natural or crop vegetation to development (impervious surfaces), such as roads and structures; historic buildings and landscapes; and minimal development standards, public facilities, and services beyond those needed for environmental protection and basic public health and safety.

R-312 **New subdivisions in the Rural Area should strive to maintain the size and scale of traditional development patterns and rural character.**

R-313 **New subdivisions in the Rural Area should be designed and developed to maximize conservation of existing forest cover and native vegetation, and to minimize impervious surfaces within individual lots and in the subdivision as a whole. King County should continue to evaluate whether existing subdivision standards and new subdivisions in the Rural Area minimize impacts on the natural environment, resource uses, and other adjacent land uses.**

R-314 **Site design standards for new subdivisions in the Rural Area should include: minimization of impervious surfaces; maximizing retention of native soil and vegetation; supporting green stormwater infrastructure; site layout and landscaping that minimizes wildfire risk; limitations on entrance signage; preservation of natural contours, existing meadows, and opportunities for keeping of horses; and other standards to limit features typical of urban or suburban development.**

R-315 **Rural residential development adjacent to Agricultural and Forest Production Districts shall be sited to minimize interference with activities related to resource uses. Residences next to the Forest Production District shall be built with greater setbacks from the Forest Production District boundaries for safety and to reduce nuisance complaints.**

R-316 In the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, King County shall provide assistance through development of customized stewardship plans for individual properties, to help property owners understand their properties' characteristics and the potential impacts of their actions, and to make sustainable land management choices that protect natural resources.

R-317 **To maintain traditional rural development patterns and ensure continued opportunities for resource activities in the Rural Area, large lot development is preferred in the Rural Area. Clustering of lots is only allowed when:**

- **a. The development provides equal or greater protection of the natural environment, natural resource lands, historic resources, or archaeological sites;**
- **b. Clusters are limited in size to be compatible with surrounding large lots or nearby agricultural and forestry uses;**
- **c. The clustered development is offset with a permanent open space or resource land tract preserved for forestry or agriculture, as designated by the owner at time of subdivision or short subdivision, or a permanent open space tract. Under no circumstances shall the tract be reserved for future development; and**
- **d. The development can be served by rural facilities and service levels (such as on-site sewage disposal and fire protection).**

R-318 **When a resource or open space tract is created as part of a plat, the County should require a stewardship plan to ensure appropriate management of the tract.**

R-319 **King County shall continue to support the rural development standards that have been established to protect the natural environment by addressing seasonal clearing limits, impervious surface limits, and resource-based practices. Stormwater management practices should be implemented that emphasize preservation of natural drainage systems and protection of water quality and natural hydrology of surface waters and groundwater. Rural development standards should also, where feasible, incorporate and encourage low impact design principles for managing stormwater on-site by minimizing impervious surfaces, preserving on-site hydrology, retaining native vegetation and forest cover, capturing and reusing rainwater, controlling pollution at the source, and protecting groundwater. King County shall take care that requirements for on-site stormwater management complement requirements for on-site wastewater management.**

Planning for and features of the built environment are important in providing healthy, safe places for people regardless of whether the setting is rural or urban. The built environment refers to various physical features, such as buildings, parks, and roadways, and their spatial arrangement in neighborhoods and communities. These features influence public health through the range of choices provided for engaging in various activities. For example, well-designed roads can enhance the safety and walkability of neighborhoods, while having a park or other gathering place to come together with family, friends, or community members can strengthen social and mental health and increase community cohesiveness. People with access to places to play are twice as likely to reach recommended levels of physical activity than those who have little or no access.

Many locations in King County's Cities in the Rural Area and Rural Towns function as important hubs for their respective communities because they provide shops and services. Parks, schools, or other public services within walking distance of these community hubs cannot always be safely or conveniently reached without a car. Opportunities for daily physical activity can be increased by establishing safe walking and bicycling connections to and within these rural hubs.

In addition to physical activity, another major determinant of health is what people eat. Everything from quality and location of food retail outlets and restaurants to food cost to school food choices influence the food choices of rural residents. There are people in every community for whom hunger is a daily issue. Land use planning can play a role in

providing and improving access to healthy foods. Garden plots located in neighborhoods, parks, vacant lots, surplus public rights-of-way, and public utility lands in various communities can be used as places to grow fruits and vegetables, build community, and address hunger. Similar locations in the Rural Area of King County should be explored for this purpose.

R-320 **Connectivity for active transportation uses should be encouraged in Rural Towns and larger Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers, where consistent with rural character, to promote physical activity and to improve public health.**

R-321 **King County should explore ways of creating and supporting community gardens, farmers markets, produce stands, and other similar community-based food growing projects to provide and improve access to healthy, affordable food for all rural residents.**

R-322 **King County shall promote children's health by encouraging and supporting land uses in the environment surrounding a school and on travel routes to schools that complement and strengthen other formal programs, such as Safe Routes to School, at a size and scale appropriate to the Rural Area.**

D. Rural Nonresidential Uses

Although low-density residential development, farming, and forestry are the primary uses in the Rural Area, some compatible nonresidential uses are appropriate and contribute to rural character. Compatible uses might include small, neighborhood religious facilities, feed and grain stores, produce stands, value-added products, forest product sales, and home occupations such as woodcrafters, small day care facilities, or veterinary services. In addition, it may be necessary to locate some public facilities in the Rural Area, such as utility installations that serve rural homes. Any allowed nonresidential uses should be designed to blend with rural residential development and resource uses.

R-323 **Nonresidential uses in the Rural Area shall be consistent with the other applicable policies in this chapter and limited to those that:**

- **a. Provide convenient local products and services for nearby residents;**
- **b. Require location in a Rural Area;**
- **c. Support the economic vitality of natural resource-based industries;**
- **d. Provide adaptive reuse of significant historic resources;**
- **e. Provide recreational or tourism opportunities that are compatible with the surrounding Rural Area;**
- **f. Provide or support infrastructure for nearby residents; or**
- **g. In Rural Towns and on industrial-zoned properties, involve commercial or manufacturing-related development.**

R-324 **Nonresidential uses in the Rural Area shall be sited, sized, and landscaped to complement rural character, prevent impacts to the environment, and function with rural services, including on-site wastewater disposal.**

R-325 **Golf facilities may be allowed as a conditional use in the RA-2.5 and RA-5 zones and when located outside of Rural Forest Focus Areas.**

R-326 **Daycare facilities in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands shall primarily serve residents of the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands.**

In 2011, a School Siting Task Force was convened at the request of the Growth Management Planning Council to examine the issue of siting schools in the Rural Area,

including whether they may be served by sewers. The Task Force examined undeveloped rural properties owned by school districts and made recommendations as to their use or disposition. In its final report, the Task Force recommended that all future school siting be consistent with the policies in *VISION 2040*. Placing schools in cities in the Rural Area, or in Rural Towns, reduces transportation and environmental impacts, protects rural character, and allows schools to be served with urban-level utilities and fire protection and used efficiently for other community activities. Some of the properties listed in R-328 have already been developed or otherwise no longer apply; however, they are retained here for transparency and guidance for review of future redevelopment proposals.

R-327 **Except as provided in Policy R-328:**

- **a. New schools and institutions primarily serving rural residents shall be located in cities and Rural Towns;**
- **b. New schools, institutions, and other community facilities primarily serving urban residents shall be located within the Urban Growth Area; and**
- **c. New community facilities and services that primarily serve rural residents shall be located in cities and Rural Towns, except when dependent on a rural location and at a size and scale that supports rural character.**

R-328 **Consistent with the recommendations of the School Siting Task Force, included as Appendix F, in the Rural Area:**

- **a. Except as otherwise provided in subsections d. and e. of this policy, an existing elementary, middle, or junior high school may be modified or expanded but shall not be converted to a high school;**
- **b. An existing high school may be modified or expanded or converted to an elementary, middle, or junior high school;**
- **c. Snoqualmie Valley 1: parcel number 1823099046, as shown on the King County Department of Assessments map as of March 31, 2012, may develop as a new school;**
- **d. Lake Washington 4: parcel numbers 0825069008 and 0825069056, as shown on the King County Department of Assessments map as of March 31, 2012, may develop as a new school and convert an existing school on the site to a high school use;**
- **e. Tahoma 1: parcel number 2622069047, as shown on the King County Department of Assessments map as of March 31, 2012, may develop as a new school and convert an existing school on the site to a high school use only if no feasible alternative site can be located within the Urban Growth Area;**
- **f. Lake Washington 2: parcel numbers 3326069010 and 3326069009, as shown on the King County Department of Assessments map as of March 31, 2012, may develop as a new school only if no feasible alternative site can be located within the Urban Growth Area, in which case it may be incorporated into the Urban Growth Area; and**
- **g. Enumclaw A and D: the rural portions of parcel numbers 2321069064, 2321069063, and 2321069062, as shown on the King County Department of Assessments map as of March 31, 2012, may develop as ballfields or recreational playfields only, for a school located on the urban portions of the parcels.**

R-329 **Small airfields beyond those already established in the Rural Area should not be allowed, due to their cumulative impacts on air traffic and nearby uses.**

R-330 **Library services for the Rural Area should be provided by bookmobiles, or by libraries in Rural Towns or Cities in the Rural Area, or may be allowed as an accessory use to a park or in a historic building in the Rural Area.**

R-331 **Master planned resorts as defined in Chapter 36.70A Revised Code of Washington shall not be allowed in unincorporated King County.**

R-332 **Renewable energy technologies may be sited in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, as appropriate. Development standards should ensure that the siting, scale, and design of these facilities respect and support rural character.**

To focus growth within the Urban Growth Area, financial resources must be prioritized to develop and maintain sufficient urban infrastructure and services in the Urban Growth Area to accommodate that growth. Further, the presence of a high level of public infrastructure and services has been demonstrated to create pressure for new growth. To use financial resources efficiently and reduce growth pressure in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, King County will not provide an urban level of infrastructure and services to the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. Chapter 8, Transportation, and Chapter 9, Services, Facilities, & Utilities, clarify King County's priorities for transportation and other facility improvements in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. The policies below set forth King County's general approach to providing services and setting facility standards for the Rural Area and provide guidance for siting those facilities that require Rural Area locations.

R-333 **King County shall work with cities and other agencies providing services to the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands to adopt standards for those partners' facilities and services in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. Those standards shall:**

- **a. Protect public health and safety and the environment;**
- **b. Be financially supportable at appropriate densities;**
- **c. Provide services at an appropriate size and scale; and**
- **d. Not require a substantial investment in public infrastructure, require an urban level of infrastructure, or encourage urban development.**

R-334 **Public spending priorities for facilities and services within the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands should be as follows:**

- **a. First, to maintain existing facilities and services that protect public health and safety;**
- **b. Second, to upgrade facilities and services when needed to correct level of service deficiencies without unnecessarily creating additional capacity for new growth; and**
- **c. Third, to support sustainable economic development that is sized and scaled at levels appropriate for the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands and does not promote urbanization.**

R-335 **In the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, standards and plans for utility service should be consistent with long-term, low-density development and resource industries. Utility facilities that serve the Urban Growth Area but must be located in the Rural Area or on Natural Resource Lands (for example, a pipeline from a municipal watershed) should be designed and scaled to serve primarily the Urban Growth Area. Sewers needed to serve the previously established Redmond Ridge, Redmond Ridge East, and Trilogy neighborhoods, Cities in the Rural Area, Rural Towns, or new or existing schools pursuant to Policies R-328 and F-453 shall be tightlined and have access restrictions precluding service to other lands in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

There are existing industrial-zoned areas in the Rural Area containing multiple industrial uses on several sites in the following locations:

- Within the southwest portion of Vashon Rural Town;
- The Preston Industrial Area;
- Along State Route 169;
- Between Covington and Auburn; and
- East of Enumclaw along State Route 410.

R-336 **The creation of new Industrial zoned lands in the Rural Area shall be limited to those that have long been used for industrial purposes, that do not have potential for conversion to residential use due to a historic designation, and that may be accessed directly from State Route 169.**

R-337 **Rural Public Infrastructure Maintenance Facilities, and agriculture and forestry product processing should be allowed in the Rural Area. Other new industrial developments in the Rural Area shall be allowed only on existing Industrial-zoned properties in Rural Towns and the Preston Industrial Area.**

R-338 **Development regulations for new industrial development in the Rural Area shall require the following:**

a. Greater setbacks, and reduced building height, floor/lot ratios, and maximum impervious surface percentage standards in comparison to standards for urban industrial development;
b. Maximum protection of critical areas, especially with regards to salmonid habitat and water quality;
c. Building and landscape design that respects the aesthetic qualities and character of the Rural Area, and provides substantial buffering from the adjoining uses and scenic vistas;
d. Building design that is compatible with a rural setting, signs that are not internally illuminated, and site and building lighting that is held to the minimum necessary for safety;
e. Prohibition of heavier industrial uses, new industrial uses producing substantial waste byproducts or wastewater discharge, or new paper, chemical and allied products manufacturing uses allowed in the urban industrial zone; and
f. Industrial uses requiring substantial investments in infrastructure (such as water, sewers or transportation facilities), or facilities that generate substantial volumes of heavy gross weight truck trips, shall be sized to avoid the need for public funding of infrastructure needed to support the use.

There are also existing, isolated industrial sites in the Rural Area that are recognized, but are not appropriate for new industrial uses. Further expansion of these isolated industrial uses is not encouraged, and therefore they are not zoned Industrial.

R-339 **Existing industrial uses in the Rural Area outside of Rural Towns without Industrial zoning currently shall be zoned Rural Area but may continue if they qualify as legal conforming and/or nonconforming uses.**

V. Rural Commercial Centers

The Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers and Rural Towns contribute to the vitality of the rural economy. Rural Towns provide variety in development patterns and housing choices and provide employment opportunities, retail shopping, and other services to nearby residents and contain a significant portion of King County's historic architecture and are the primary locations for nonresidential uses in the Rural Area. The Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers and Rural Towns provide limited, local convenience shopping, restaurants, and services to meet the daily needs of rural residents.

A. Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center Designation

The Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center land use designation is used to recognize existing small pockets of commercial development, or in some cases, historic communities 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.

The locations of existing nodes of lands designated as Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers are:

Bear Creek/Sammamish:	Cottage Lake and Redmond-Fall City Road/236th NE
Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain:	Issaquah-Hobart Road/Cedar Grove Road SE, SE Renton-Issaquah Road and 164th Avenue SE, and SE 128th Street/164th Avenue SE
Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River:	Renton-Maple Valley Road SE/State Route 18, Ravensdale, Hobart, Kangley, and Kanasket
Snoqualmie Valley/ Northeast King County:	Preston, Timberlane Village, and Baring
Southeast King County:	Enumclaw-Black Diamond Road SE/SE Green Valley Road, Cumberland, Krain's Corner, Newaukem, and 228th Ave SE/State Route 164
Vashon-Maury Island:	Burton, Dockton, Tahlequah, Portage, Heights Dock, Jack's Corner, Valley Center, Vashon Service Center, Vashon Heights, and Maury Island Service Center

R-401 **The uses allowed on lands with the Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center land use designation shall be limited to:**

a. Small-scale businesses that provide convenience shopping and services for surrounding Rural Area and Natural Resource Land residents, such as retail, community and human services, and personal services; and

b. Workforce housing, when part of a mixed-use development that is appropriately sized and scaled to be compatible with rural character.

R-402 **No new Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers are needed to serve the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. Expansion of the boundaries of the existing Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers shall only be designated through a subarea plan or area zoning and land use study.**

R-403 **King County commercial development standards for Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center lands should facilitate economic reuse of existing structures, minimize increases in impervious surfaces, and encourage retention of historic character and scale. Urban-level parking, landscaping, and street improvement standards are not appropriate for Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers except when needed to address the safety of the public.**

R-404 **King County should allow the use of existing structures and parcels to accommodate Farmers Markets on Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center lands.**

B. Rural Towns

Rural Towns are unincorporated towns governed directly by King County. The purposes of the Rural Town designation are to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in the Rural Area; 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. The Rural Towns designated by the Comprehensive Plan are Fall City, Snoqualmie Pass, and Vashon.

Each of these three Rural Towns has unique features and needs, and therefore different standards may be appropriate for each, while meeting the purposes described above. For instance, Snoqualmie Pass is adjacent to a significant seasonal recreation area that draws thousands of visitors during the winter months. Fall City, on the other hand, is adjacent to prime agricultural land and can provide housing opportunities for seasonal agricultural workers. Vashon, accessible mainly by ferry and limited in terms of water supply, has natural constraints upon the type and intensity of development that can occur.

Although Rural Towns may develop at densities similar to those in the Urban Growth Area, Rural Towns are considered part of the Rural Area for purposes of the Growth Management Act, do not provide significant growth capacity, and are not subject to the growth targets adopted for the Urban Growth Area.

R-405 **Rural Towns shall serve as activity centers for the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, may be served by a range of utilities and services, and may include several or all of the following land uses, if supported by necessary utilities and other services and if scaled and designed to protect rural character:**

- **a. Retail, commercial, and industrial uses to serve the surrounding Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands population;**
- **b. Residential development, including single detached residences on small lots, as well as multiunit housing and mixed-use developments;**
- **c. Other retail, commercial, and industrial uses, such as resource industries, tourism, commercial recreation, and light industry; and**
- **d. Public facilities and services such as community services, parks, religious facilities, schools, and fire stations.**

R-406 **King County designates Fall City, Snoqualmie Pass, and Vashon as unincorporated Rural Towns. These historical settlements in unincorporated King County should provide services and a range of housing choices for Rural Area residents. The boundaries of the designated Rural Towns are shown on the Land Use Map. Adjustments to these boundaries shall only occur through a subarea plan or area zoning and land use study, and shall not allow significant increases in development potential or environmental impacts. No new Rural Towns are needed to serve the Rural Area.**

R-407 **Commercial and industrial development that provides employment, shopping, and community and human services that strengthen the fiscal and economic health of rural communities should locate in Rural Towns if utilities and other services permit. Parking, landscaping, and street improvement should be scaled and designed to protect rural character. Sidewalks and other pedestrian safety measures should be provided to serve Rural Towns.**

R-408 **Roads in Rural Towns should, to the extent practical, allowed by law, and consistent with rural character, incorporate complete streets infrastructure, to enhance walkability and accommodate multimodal transportation, including active transportation users.**

R-409 **Rural Towns may contain higher-density housing than allowed in the surrounding Rural Area, and should provide affordable and resource-worker housing.**

R-410 **Sewers may be allowed in Rural Towns if necessary to solve existing water quality and public health problems that cannot be addressed by other methods, provided that any extension of sewer mains from urban areas to serve a Rural Town shall be tightlined systems designed to not serve any intervening lands. All alternatives shall be exhausted before sewers may be allowed. Rural Towns shall not be enlarged to facilitate provision of sewers.**

R-411 **Rural Towns should be compact, promoting active transportation while allowing vehicle access to most commercial and industrial uses. New development should be designed to strengthen the desirable characteristics and the historic character of the town, be supported by necessary public facilities and services, and be compatible with historic resources and nearby Rural Area or Natural Resource Land uses. New industrial uses should locate where they do not disrupt pedestrian or bicycle traffic in established retail areas of town or conflict with residential uses.**

VI. Transfer of Development Rights Program

The Growth Management Act encourages the use of innovative techniques for land use management. King County has a long tradition of using such techniques, including programs promoting transfers of development rights, to achieve its land management goals. Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands face ongoing development pressure, yet the County must simultaneously plan for and allow future residential growth. This tension makes it incumbent on the County to strengthen its transfer of development rights efforts. For this reason, King County seeks to increase the number of development rights transfers via its Transfer of Development Rights Program to reduce and redirect rural development potential into urban areas.

To that end, King County promotes the transfer of development rights from land with conservation values whose protection creates public benefit ("sending sites"), to land better able to accommodate growth ("receiving sites"). The Transfer of Development Rights Program is a voluntary program that allows sending site landowners to achieve an economic return on their property while maintaining it in forestry, farming, habitat, or open space in perpetuity. It also increases housing opportunities in Urban Area receiving sites where urban services and infrastructure can accommodate additional growth.

Sending site landowners choose to sever the right to develop their land from the land itself and sell their development rights to the King County Transfer of Development Rights Bank, or directly to receiving site landowners who are allowed to build additional development capacity above the base density, but at or below the allowed maximum density under current zoning, with the purchase of Transferable Development Rights.

In so doing, the Transfer of Development Rights Program: (1) benefits Rural Area and Natural Resource Land property owners by providing them financial compensation to not develop their land, (2) directs future Rural Area and Natural Resource Land development growth into urban areas, saving the County the cost of providing services to rural development, supporting County and regional growth management objectives, and yielding climate change benefits, and (3) permanently conserves land through private market transactions. Transfer of Development Rights can also be used to permanently protect open space and natural resources in urban portions of the County while still focusing growth into other urban areas.

R-501 **King County shall continue to operate an effective Transfer of Development Rights Program to:**

- **a. Permanently conserve private lands with countywide public benefit;**
- **b. Encourage higher densities in urban areas;**
- **c. Reduce residential development potential and maintain low density in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, and on low-density urban lands along the Urban Growth Area boundary;**
- **d. Incentivize establishment of regional open space, as well as local open space in urban areas;**
- **e. Protect natural resources while preserving housing potential and incentivizing development in locations best suited for growth**
- **f. Steer development growth inside the Urban Growth Area in ways that promote quality urban neighborhoods where residents want to work and live; and**
- **g. Contribute to climate change benefits.**

R-502 **To promote transfers of development rights, King County shall:**

- **a. Facilitate transfers from private property owners with sending sites to property owners with receiving sites;**
- **b. Operate the King County Transfer of Development Rights Bank to facilitate the Transfer of Development Rights market, maintain supply to the extent feasible, and bridge the time gap between willing sellers and buyers of Transferrable Development Rights through buying, holding, and selling Transferable Development Rights;**
- **c. Work with cities to develop interlocal agreements that encourage transfers of development rights into cities;**
- **d. Work with cities regarding annexation areas where Transferrable Development Rights are likely to be used;**
- **e. Work with communities and seek funding and other means to provide public amenities to enhance the livability of incorporated area neighborhoods accepting increased densities through the Transfer of Development Rights Program;**
- **f. Provide amenities to urban unincorporated Transferrable Development Right receiving areas to improve the livability of the receiving area; the type, timing, and location of amenities provided to urban unincorporated Transferrable Development Right receiving areas should be informed by a public engagement process including members of the affected receiving area and the city affiliated with annexation;**
- **g. Work with the Washington State Department of Commerce, Puget Sound Regional Council, and King County cities to implement Washington State Regional Transfer of Development Rights legislation; and**
- **h. Explore new opportunities to increase Transfer of Development Right demand, prioritizing new receiving sites or Transfer of Development Right use within urban areas.**

R-503 **Sending sites shall provide permanent land protection to create a significant public benefit. Priority sending sites shall include, but not be limited to:**

- **a. Lands in Rural Forest Focus Areas;**
- **b. Lands adjacent to the Urban Growth Area boundary;**
- **c. Lands contributing to the protection of endangered and threatened species;**
- **d. Lands that are suitable for inclusion in and provide important links to the regional open space system;**
- **e. Agricultural and Forest Production District lands;**
- **f. Intact shorelines of Puget Sound;**
- **g. Lands in the RA zone with conservation values related to farming, forestry, carbon sequestration, or open space; or**
- **h. Lands contributing to urban open space or strengthening protection of flood hazard areas or other critical areas in any area.**

R-504 **King County shall work with cities, especially those designated as Urban Centers, in collaborative efforts that result in transfers of development rights from the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

R-505 **King County should prioritize Transferable Development Rights uses for residential density in urban areas. King County may also allow Transferrable Development Rights:**

- **a. In limited instances for development in the Rural Area, except for Vashon-Maury Island; and**
- **b. To provide incentives to developers for uses other than additional residential density.**

VII. Equestrian Activities

King County recognizes the contributions of equestrian livestock husbandry, training, competition, and recreation activities to the overall rural quality of life and economic base in King County. Today's equestrian uses include raising and training a variety of horse breeds and riding arenas.

R-601 **King County should continue to support and sustain equestrian activities and ensure that regulations support those activities compatible with the area in which they are located. The County should encourage subdivision layouts that preserve opportunities for livestock and equestrian activities.**

R-602 **King County should support equestrian use trails throughout the Rural Area and in the Agricultural and Forest Production Districts, as appropriate, by:**

- **a. Working with local communities to identify and protect multiple-use trails and key linkages that support equestrian travel;**
- **b. Maintaining equestrian links, including multiple-use trails, where appropriate;**
- **c. Ensuring parking areas serving multiple-use trails are designed and constructed, whenever possible to handle parking for horse trailers; and**
- **d. Constructing and maintaining equestrian trails under County ownership or management consistent with King County Backcountry Trail or Regional Trail Standards whenever possible.**

R-603 **Soft-surface multiple-use trails in corridors not associated with a road are the preferred option for equestrian travel for safety reasons and to avoid conflicts with residential activities associated with the road. Existing off-road trails should be preserved during site development, with relocation as appropriate to accommodate development while maintaining trail connections. Where appropriate, capital improvement programs for transportation or park facilities shall also enable the use of new facilities by equestrians. Construction standards for soft-surface multiple-use trails shall be consistent with current trail construction and maintenance practices as promulgated by the U.S. Forest Service.**

R-604 **The King County Road Design and Construction Standards shall ensure adequate space to accommodate safe equestrian travel within road rights-of-way.**

R-605 **King County's land use regulations should protect rural equestrian community trails by supporting preservation of equestrian trail links in the Rural Area and within the Agricultural and Forest Production District. Representatives of the equestrian community should be given the opportunity to review and monitor regulatory and policy actions by King County, such as Rural Area development regulations, that have the potential to affect equestrian trails.**

R-606 **King County should encourage property owners in the Agricultural and Forest Production Districts to voluntarily allow continued equestrian access to existing trails or alternative access if the existing trail impedes future use of their property.**

R-607 **Equestrian trails should be a category in the County's Public Benefit Rating System, so that a landowner who provides trail access may qualify for a tax reduction under the program.**

R-608 **County departments negotiating trades or sales of County-owned land shall determine whether any historically established trails exist on the property, and, when economically feasible, ensure that those trails are retained or replaced and are not lost as a condition of the trade or sale. Trails that provide key linkages, for either multi-use or equestrian trails, shall be considered to have strategic value to the county's trail network and shall be retained or replaced whenever possible.**

VIII. Natural Resource Lands

A. Resource Conservation

This section contains King County's strategy for conservation of valuable resource lands and for encouraging their productive and sustainable management. The strategy consists of policies to guide planning, incentives, education, and regulation. Although this section focuses on the Natural Resource Lands of long-term commercial significance, many of the policies are applicable to farm, forest, and mineral lands in the Rural Area as well.

King County's Natural Resource Lands are the lands with long-term commercial significance for farming, forestry, and mineral extraction. Businesses that rely on resource lands provide jobs and products, such as food, wood, and gravel. Conservation and responsible stewardship of working farm and forest lands also produces multiple environmental benefits, such as:

- Stream and salmon protection;
- Clean air and water;
- Wildlife habitat;
- Landslide hazard reduction;
- Flood risk reduction;
- Groundwater recharge and protection; and
- Carbon sequestration and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

For mineral extraction, responsible stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and site remediation can help to mitigate many of the impacts while providing local sources of materials such as sand and gravel.

King County has taken major steps to conserve farmland and forestland to support commercial agriculture and forestry, while also allowing for regulated extraction of minerals. Natural Resource Lands and the industries they support are conserved by encouraging development to occur primarily in the Urban Growth Area as directed by the Growth Management Act. Under this Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resource Lands, including designated Agricultural Production Districts, the Forest Production District, and sites of long-term commercial significance for mineral resource uses, will have minimal new residential and commercial development. New development that does occur will be designed to be compatible with active resource-based uses.

Forest, agriculture, and mineral resource lands are not King County's only natural resources. Many other resource-based industries, such as the recreational and commercial fisheries industries, are influenced by King County's land use and planning policies. Policies for the protection and enhancement of fisheries, as well as air, water, vegetation, wildlife, and other natural resources, can be found in Chapter 5, Environment.

R-701 **The Rural Forest Commission shall advise the King County Executive and Council on the development and implementation of strategies, programs, policies, and regulations that benefit forestry, that encourage the retention of the forest land base in King County, and that support rural forest landowners. King County shall continue to support the Rural Forest Commission with staff and other resources.**

R-702 **The Agriculture Commission shall advise the King County Executive and Council on programs, policies, regulations, and land use issues that affect commercial agriculture, encourage retention of farmland, support farmland access for traditionally underinvested communities, and contribute to a strong local food system. King County shall continue to support the Agriculture Commission with staff and other resources.**

King County designates agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance as Agricultural Production Districts and forest lands of long-term commercial significance as the Forest Production District, as shown on the Agricultural and Forest Lands Map in this chapter. These designations and accompanying planning efforts establish minimum lot sizes and uses for these districts and their surrounding areas. These land use regulations are consistent with the requirements of the Growth Management Act to plan for adjacent and nearby land uses compatible with long-term commercial farming and forestry.

The Growth Management Act also requires designation of mineral resource lands that are primarily devoted to the extraction of minerals or that have known or potential long-term commercial significance for the extraction of minerals. Minerals include, but are not limited to, gravel, sand, and valuable metallic substances. Coal is not considered a mineral resource in King County. Such lands are shown as designated Mineral Resource Sites on the Mineral Resources Map in this chapter.

R-703 **Farm lands, forest lands, and mineral resources shall be conserved for productive use through the use of designated Agricultural and Forest Production Districts and designated Mineral Resource Sites where the principal land uses shall be commercial resource management activities.**

R-704 **King County shall promote and support commercially viable and environmentally sustainable forestry, agriculture, and other resource-based industries as a part of a diverse and regional economy.**

R-705 **King County shall support mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance and promote policies, environmental reviews, and management practices that minimize conflicts with neighboring land uses and mitigate environmental impacts.**

R-706 **Land uses, utilities, and transportation facilities within and adjacent to designated Agricultural and Forest Production Districts and designated Mineral Resource Sites shall be sited and designed to ensure compatibility with resource management.**

R-707 **King County should encourage infrastructure and services that support Natural Resource Land management and resource-based businesses. These should be sited close to designated Agricultural and Forest Production Districts and designated Mineral Resource Sites when potential adverse impacts and incompatibilities can effectively be mitigated.**

R-708 **King County should expand access to property tax incentive programs to encourage landowners to continue and expand farming and forestry and to help ensure retention of the resource land base. These programs should be publicized and marketed to ensure equitable access to program benefits.**

R-709 **King County should develop and employ effective means to inform affected property owners about nearby resource management activities. This may include, but not be limited to:**

a. Notice on title, and notification on recorded subdivisions, short subdivision maps, and issued development permits for properties within five hundred feet of designated agriculture, forestry, and mineral resource lands;
b. Signage; and
c. Community meetings and other public notification tools.

Successful Natural Resource Land conservation requires a regional perspective and intergovernmental cooperation. Although the Natural Resource Lands are located in unincorporated King County, they benefit nearby cities and can be affected by activities in those cities. Furthermore, some resource lands in King County are owned or managed by Indian tribes or city, county, state, and federal agencies. As the population in the Puget Sound area continues to grow, the protection of Natural Resource Lands and the continued success of commercial agriculture and forestry is a regional challenge.

R-710 **King County shall work cooperatively with Indian tribes, cities, other public agencies, private utilities, resource managers, landowners, and residents to conserve Natural Resource Lands for long-term productivity and environmental protection in a consistent and predictable manner.**

R-711 **Designated Forest and Agricultural Production District lands shall not be annexed by cities, except as allowed in Policies R-760, R-761. and R-762.**

R-712 **King County should establish written agreements with Indian tribes, agencies, and other affected parties whose close coordination and collaboration are essential to effective implementation of resource management programs. Such agreements should serve to establish consensus and commitment to achieving specific resource management goals and to define the specific roles and responsibilities of each agency.**

R-713 **King County should work with other jurisdictions, agencies, and agriculture and forestry interest groups to help maintain and enhance commercial agriculture and forestry production by addressing challenges common across the region.**

R-714 **King County should encourage resource-based industries to use practices that:**

a. Protect the long-term integrity of the built environment, adjacent land uses, and cultural resources;
b. Maintain the long-term productivity of the resource base; and
c. Result in maintenance of ecosystem health and habitat.

R-715 **Habitat protection requirements should not fall disproportionately on land maintained in agriculture or forestry, and the costs of such protection shall not be disproportionately placed on the owners of such land.**

R-716 **King County shall be a leader in resource management by demonstrating environmentally sound agriculture and forestry on County-owned land.**

R-717 **King County shall include resource education through its signs on trail systems that are linked with working farms, forests, and mines.**

B. Forestry

1. Protecting Forest Lands

The purpose of the Forest Production District is to 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. Recent studies indicate that total forest cover within the Forest Production District has remained stable in recent decades, but has declined marginally in the Rural Area, and declined significantly in the Urban Growth Area and cities. Taken as a whole, forest cover in King County has declined slightly, with 98.9 percent of the area supporting forest cover in 1992 still forested in 2016.

Sixty percent of the land area in King County is within the designated Forest Production District. The Forest Production District comprises 1,300 square miles (825,000 acres) of forestland in east King County. Most of this land is held in large blocks of contiguous ownership. About 70 percent of the Forest Production District is in public ownership, including parts of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, wilderness areas, state and county parks, Washington State Department of Natural Resources lands, and watersheds for the cities of Seattle and Tacoma. The Forest Production District includes approximately 186,000 acres in private ownership, most of which is commercial forestland.

Commercial timber harvest remains a significant economic activity in King County. At the same time, forest management strategies have become more diverse and may include objectives for forest health, biodiversity, and fish and wildlife habitat, instead of timber production alone. Likewise, economic activity related to recreation, traditional cultural practices, and aesthetics may be included in commercial forestry activities.

R-718 **The Forest Production District shall remain in large blocks of contiguous forest lands where the primary land use is commercial forestry. Other resource uses, such as mineral extraction and agriculture, should be allowed within the Forest Production District when managed to be compatible with forestry.**

R-719 **The Forest Production District is a long-term designation. Lands may be removed from the Forest Production District only through a subarea plan or area zoning and land use study, and only to recognize areas with historical retail commercial uses.**

The supply of forest products from public and private forestland is important to the regional viability of the forestry industry. Recent federal, state, and county policies have placed emphasis on projects that enhance forest ecosystems, improve water quality, recover endangered species, improve opportunities for recreation, and enhance climate resiliency, all of which may alter the types and volumes of timber product.

R-720 **King County recognizes the many values provided by the public forestland in the county, and encourages continued responsible forest management on these lands. King County should collaborate with other public land managers in planning for the restoration, conservation, use, and management of forest resources on public lands for multiple public values such as sustainable supply of timber, carbon storage and sequestration, and other ecosystem benefits.**

R-721 **King County is committed to maintaining working forestland in the Forest Production District, and shall continue to collaborate with public and private forest managers and other partners to promote and encourage long-term forest productivity, reduce uses and activities that conflict with resource uses, and recognize forestland values.**

R-722 **To reduce conflicts with resource uses and wildfire risks, a forest management plan shall be required as a condition of development for any residential uses in the Forest Production District. Accessory dwelling units shall not be allowed in the Forest Production District.**

R-723 **Structures within the Forest Production District should be sited to maintain the productivity of the district. Site plan requirements should limit impervious surface, provide for fire control, protect domestic water supply, and prevent conflicts with forest management.**

R-724 **King County should conserve working forests and should encourage continued private forestry through the acquisition or transfer of development rights in the Forest Production District. Land acquisition proposals that would remove lands from forest management should be evaluated to ensure that the long-term commercial significance of the Forest Production District is not compromised.**

R-725 **King County should promote and support production, harvest, utilization, and marketing of wood products grown in the county's Rural Area and forest areas. King County should ensure that regulations applying to the Rural Area and Forest Production District do not discourage the establishment of sawmills and other wood product businesses and services.**

R-726 **In consultation with Indian tribes and other affected agencies and landowners, King County should support land trades that result in consolidated forest ownership and work with forest managers to identify and develop other incentives for continued forestry.**

R-727 **King County opposes the establishment or expansion of special purpose taxing districts and local improvement districts in the Forest Production District, and shall not grant new or expanded franchises for utilities in the Forest Production District, unless demonstrated that they directly benefit forestry or are necessary for transmission of power or water.**

Forest lands have tremendous recreational and aesthetic value. Access to resource lands must be carefully managed, however, to prevent conflict with natural resource goals. For example, open gate policies allowing public access may be incompatible with fish and wildlife protection goals and sometimes may interfere with forestry operations by risking such activities as garbage dumping, vandalism, and timber theft.

R-728 **Public and private forest owners are encouraged to provide for recreational, educational, and cultural uses, when compatible with forest protection.**

Developments such as conference centers, ski areas, and associated hotels allow more people to enjoy the aesthetic benefits of forest lands. Such facilities are acceptable if their operation and use are resource dependent and restricted adequately to minimize conflict with resource lands. Major development of this type can adversely affect the Forest Production District because it reduces the forest land base and conflicts with other resource management goals.

R-729 **New or expansion of existing destination resorts and similar uses in the Forest Production District may be allowed if compatible with long-term forestry, the interests of Indian tribes, and other resource management goals.**

2. Promoting Forest Management

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources regulates forestry through the Forest Practices Act. If the forest practice is associated with a conversion from forestry to another use on the property, such as development, the County has jurisdiction, and the County's development regulations must be followed.

R-730 **King County should continue to work with all affected parties and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to improve the clarity of jurisdictional responsibilities for proposed timber harvests and associated enforcement of forest practice regulations, and to ensure that landowners comply with County regulations when they are converting portions of a site to a non-forest use.**

R-731 **King County should ensure that regulations applying to forest practices do not discourage forest management on properties in long-term forestry use, consistent with the Forest Practices Act. The County should work to simplify its regulatory processes related to forest management.**

R-732 **King County promotes forest management that achieves long-term forest health; protection of watersheds, critical areas and habitat to support fish and wildlife populations; protection of threatened and endangered species; management of stormwater runoff and associated pollutants; conservation and economic viability of working forests; wildfire risk reduction; recreation; carbon storage and sequestration; and adaptation to climate change.**

R-733 **King County shall encourage the development of private/public partnerships that provide incentives for landowners to practice innovative, fish-friendly forestry and that can help ensure retention of the forest resource land base in perpetuity.**

R-734 **King County encourages the use of recycled, organic-based soil amendments, such as biosolids, and fertilizers in forest ecosystems, which can help reduce erosion and sedimentation into streams, increase water-holding capacity of soils, stimulate the growth of trees and other vegetation, capture carbon, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat. King County shall work with the general public, private and public forestland owners, and scientists to encourage the safe, selective, and appropriate use of these materials for ecosystem enhancement and restoration.**

3. Wildfire Risk Reduction

King County's extensive forest lands provide a wide range of economic and ecological benefits. Under the right conditions, however, these same forests are also vulnerable to

wildfire and post-wildfire debris flows and floods, creating potentially significant risks for communities in the wildland-urban interface.

Climate change is increasing the potential for wildfire in western Washington. Warmer seasonal temperatures and drier summers create conditions more favorable for wildfire for longer periods of time. Climate change may also lead to changes in insect and pathogens that can leave forests more vulnerable to drought and fire. The potential for large, fast-moving fires is greatest when these conditions coincide with strong east wind events. The potential for fast-moving debris flows and floods is high after a wildfire has occurred, reducing soil infiltration, and increasing risks for more overland surface water flow during a rainfall event. Population growth and development in areas within and in proximity to forested areas (the wildland-urban interface) are also important factors increasing the potential for wildfire in western Washington, as well as the human and economic costs of wildfire.

Promoting Forest Resilience

Forests with a diversity of tree species (conifer, deciduous, mixed-species) and development stages (young, mid-age, mature/old-growth) are more resilient to disturbances such as wildfire and have greater capacity to maintain and recover ecological functions following disturbance. Forests with species and structural diversity also provide important ecosystem and community benefits such as habitat for fish and wildlife, improved air and water quality, carbon sequestration, recreation opportunities, and cultural resources. Proactive steps that support forest diversity include retaining larger trees that are more fire resistant, managing forests to promote a broad range of native tree species, planting trees sourced from a wider range of seed zones, managing density, and reducing invasive species.

R-735 **King County shall consider climate change impacts and take steps to improve forest health and wildfire resilience on County-owned forest lands.**

Reducing Risk in the Wildland-Urban Interface

Wildland-urban interface areas include Vashon-Maury Island and areas of east King County, such as in the Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain, Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County, and Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River Community Service Areas.

Proactive steps that can benefit wildfire risk reduction in the wildland-urban interface include outreach and technical assistance to forest landowners and residents on best management practices for reducing wildfire risk; developing wildfire preparedness, response, and recovery plans; controlling for invasive species that can act as an accelerant for fire; evacuation planning; and building strong partnerships that support effective planning and response. Vegetation management around homes and critical infrastructure is also an important tool for reducing risk and should be pursued in ways that avoid impacts to critical areas.

R-736 **King County shall take steps to plan for and reduce wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface in unincorporated King County including wildfire risk assessment and planning, amending codes to align with best practices for wildfire risk reduction, and public education.**

R-737 **King County shall encourage wildfire preparedness, including wildfire risk assessment and planning, in cities and towns located in the wildland-urban interface in King County.**

R-738 **King County shall make residents aware of the dangers of forest fires and encourage them to take steps to make their properties less vulnerable.**

R-739 **King County wildfire risk reduction activities shall prioritize the needs of residents whose ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire impacts may be limited by income, health, mobility, or other disparities.**

R-740 **King County should adopt regulations that do not require permits for vegetation management in areas outside of critical areas and their buffers if implementing approved best management practices for wildfire risk reduction or as included within an approved forest stewardship plan that includes wildfire best management practices.**

Regional Collaboration on Wildfire Risk Reduction

Wildfire risk reduction benefits from ongoing opportunities to leverage resources and partnerships that support action around shared priorities and promote learning between organizations and subject matter experts. Partners includes local planners, first responders, natural resource managers, emergency management officials, and researchers.

Collaboration with small forest landowners and residents is also important. King County works in partnership with King Conservation District and Washington State University Extension Forestry to provide technical assistance to small forest landowners and residents related to wildfire mitigation. This includes providing education and technical training about forest management, working with forest landowners to develop and implement forest stewardship plans that account for climate change and wildfire risk, increasing access to cost-share programs that incentivize forest management, and hosting neighborhood-based workshops focused on identifying and acting on wildfire risks and community wildfire planning.

R-741 **King County shall collaborate with key partners, such as Indian tribes, the University of Washington, Washington State University including Extension, state and federal agencies, cities, first responders, and landowners, on activities that improve forest resilience and reduce wildfire risks, including the following:**

- **a. Monitoring and evaluating impacts of climate change on forests and wildfire potential in King County;**
- **b. Promoting species and structural diversity within and across forest stands in King County;**
- **c. Providing educational and technical assistance for small forest landowners;**
- **d. Leveraging partnerships to increase funding for landowner incentive cost-share programs;**
- **e. Expanding and enhancing opportunities for building public awareness and promoting shared learning about wildfire preparedness and risk reduction in King County;**
- **f. Reducing landslide and flooding risks resulting from wildfire damage and associated impacts;**
- **g. Supporting the recovery of natural systems and communities affected by wildfire; and**
- **h. Encouraging research on and development of fire suppression methods that have less negative impact on the environment.**

C. Agriculture

Land suitable for farming is an irreplaceable natural resource. Agricultural lands and farming provide many benefits to the residents of King County, including a connection to its cultural heritage, fresh local foods, and a diverse economy. In 2017, farmers in King County produced over $135 million in agricultural sales. Farmlands are an intrinsic component of the varied open space landscape of the region. Farmland provides scenic vistas and low-density separation between rural communities. Many farms in the

county include an educational experience through U-Pick operations, harvest tours, and demonstrations of agricultural practices. Agricultural lands also provide environmental benefits, including the temporary storage and conveyance of floodwaters, habitat for birds and other wildlife, large areas without impervious surfaces, and opportunities for providing riparian vegetation along rivers and streams. Farming and growing food is also an essential source of fresh food for communities across the county that supports resilience, healthy eating, and cultural identity.

This section focuses on the County's efforts to maintain and enhance commercial agriculture for the value of local produce, dairy products, specialty horticultural and energy crops, keeping livestock, and for scenic and historic values. To meet the Growth Management Act requirement to maintain and enhance agriculture, a variety of methods and programs continue to be necessary.

The Local Food Initiative includes strategies and actions to increase land in food production and support the development of new farmers. Success will require protection of existing farmland, keeping it farmed, addressing problems that impair farming, and enhancing programs that provide technical assistance to farmers and expand markets for local farm products. To support these goals, the County should also pursue feasible opportunities to return formerly farmed land into production. In advancing this initiative, King County encourages best management practices and sustainable farming activities and prioritizes farming operations that have minimal adverse impacts on the environment.

1. Protecting Agricultural Lands

The Farmland Preservation Program purchases development rights to keep farmland open and available through covenants that restrict development and limit the uses of the property to agriculture and open space. The covenants remain with the land in perpetuity, so the land is protected regardless of ownership. Under the Farmland Preservation Program, the County holds the development rights in trust while the land remains in private ownership. By law, the County cannot sell or remove its interest in Farmland Preservation Program lands, with the exception of conveying public road or utility easements. To date, the Farmland Preservation Program and Transfer of Development Rights Program have succeeded in preserving more than 16,000 acres of farmland.

R-742 **King County shall continue to implement the objectives of the Farmland Preservation Program. Protection of property purchased under the Farmland Preservation Program shall be a high priority when balancing conflicting interests such as locating transportation, active recreation, utility facilities, or other uses that could have an adverse impact on farm operations.**

R-743 **King County should develop a long-term strategy for financing protection of sufficient farmland to significantly expand and retain food production, including improving the farmability of protected farmland, and ensuring that the easements are well managed for the long term.**

R-744 **Properties on which King County owns a Farmland Preservation Program easement, or that the County leases for agricultural purposes, should be limited to predominantly agricultural activities and agricultural support services.**

Agriculture is most productive in agricultural communities where neighbors support agriculture, where parcels are large enough for commercial agriculture and where labor, supplies, and markets for farm products are available. King County's farm soils and most profitable farms are usually found in contiguous blocks with few nonagricultural uses.

The Agricultural Production Districts, shown on the Agriculture and Forest Lands Map in this chapter, present the least number of land use conflicts for agriculture, contain agricultural support services, and provide the best environment for farming in King County. The five Agricultural Production Districts are Sammamish Valley, Snoqualmie Valley, Lower Green River Valley, Upper Green River Valley, and Enumclaw Plateau. Most of the farmlands preserved under the Farmland Preservation Program are found in these Agricultural Production Districts.

R-745 **Agricultural Production Districts shall be blocks of contiguous farmlands where agriculture is supported through the protection of agricultural soils and related support services and activities. King County should use roads and natural features as appropriate boundaries for Agricultural Production Districts to reduce the possibility of conflicts with adjacent land uses.**

R-746 **King County should continue to seek funding and purchase additional development rights to farmland in the Agricultural Production Districts.**

R-747 **All parcels within the boundaries of an Agricultural Production District shall be zoned Agricultural, either A-10 or A-35. In order for parcels to remain large enough for commercial agriculture, a maximum residential density of one home per 35 acres shall be applied where the predominant lot size of agricultural-zoned parcels in the surrounding area is 35 acres or larger, and a maximum residential density of one home per 10 acres shall be applied where the predominant lot size of agricultural-zoned parcels in the surrounding area is smaller than 35 acres.**

R-748 **Agriculture shall remain the predominant land use in any Agricultural Production District. Permanent new construction within districts shall be sited to prevent conflicts with commercial farming or other agricultural uses, and nonagricultural uses shall be limited. New development shall not disrupt agriculture operations and shall have a scale compatible with an active farming district.**

R-749 **On-site housing for farm employees shall be allowed where this can be accomplished without unnecessarily removing land from agricultural use or conflicting with other public interests. King County should address the regulatory constraints that make it difficult for farmers to offer housing for farm employees.**

Fish, Farm, Flood

The river valleys in King County are important natural resource areas for agriculture, salmon habitat, and natural floodplain processes. In compliance with the Growth Management Act, portions of several of these valleys were designated as Agricultural Production Districts to protect land for long-term commercial agricultural uses, including the highest quality soils for food production, and to limit conversion of the land uses to those that would be incompatible with viable, long-term, commercial agriculture. Many areas of farmland within Agricultural Production Districts are: located on a geologically active landscapes; below upland creeks and streams; on or adjacent to an alluvial fan; and/or within floodplains, floodways, or other low-lying areas. Because of this, the ability to manage drainage and infrastructure to support farming is an important aspect of retaining farmable land and supporting continued agricultural uses within the Agricultural Production Districts. Management in these areas requires consideration of not only current, but future impacts to agricultural use, geological processes, and stream function and values essential to fish passage and spawning.

The same geography covered by Agricultural Production Districts also provides salmon habitat restoration opportunities of importance to King County, Indian tribes, and other regional partners. Some of both the highest-quality and most-degraded salmon habitat in King County is in and adjacent to rivers and streams flowing through the Agricultural Production Districts. King County continues to work diligently to restore habitat and advance recovery of depleted salmon stocks, and strives to protect and enhance fish stocks, ecological functions and aquatic habitat in all county waterbodies and floodplain areas, including in floodplains, rivers, streams, and wetlands in Agricultural Production Districts. Furthermore, King County continues to work toward recovery of all salmonid species given the nexus of salmonid populations and honoring and sustaining the rights held by Indian tribes as sovereign trustees for fish, wildlife, and other aquatic resources, and by the State of Washington.

Some of King County's Agricultural Production Districts have vast areas of designated and mapped floodways and 100-year floodplains. King County is committed to restoring floodplain processes and mitigating flood risks to ensure human health and protect public safety, reducing the risk of property damage, maintaining critical infrastructure supporting residents and businesses, restoring salmon habitat, and reducing public and private economic impacts of flood events. As climate change results in more-frequent and more-damaging floods, agriculture businesses and homes will need increased support for home and agricultural building elevations. Maintaining land use rules that prevent conversions of agricultural land to other uses other than habitat restoration or flood protection will have a co-benefit of limiting new development that may be at increased risk of damage from floods and alluvial fan hazards.

King County supports ongoing viability of agriculture, restoration, and enhancement of salmon habitat, and actions to reduce flood risks and enhance ecological functions of floodplains, all of which combine to create a resilient landscape in the face of climate change and pressures of population growth. However, because current or proposed land uses supporting one goal may affect advancement of other goals, decision-making about the size and location of habitat and floodplain restoration and agricultural infrastructure projects can be challenging. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan update added Policy R-753 that directed the County to develop an approach to improving and balancing the interests of agricultural production, ecological function and habitat quality for salmon, and flood risk reduction and floodplain restoration within each of the Agricultural Production Districts. In response, the County and partners piloted a planning effort focused on the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District by convening the Snoqualmie Valley Fish, Farm, and Flood Advisory Committee with the goal of understanding context and improving balance in King County's work to advance multiple objectives. As a result of the ongoing efforts of the Snoqualmie farm, fish, flood process, the County has begun to operationalize recommendations, including recommendations for a revised administrative process for reviewing proposed County project and programmatic actions in locations where agriculture, fish habitat, and floodplains intersect.

The revised administrative review process will occur in a watershed context by considering information from a variety of sources, including the following four task forces convened based on recommendations of the Snoqualmie fish, farm, flood effort:

- Buffers Task Force and Buffers Implementation Task Force, created to evaluate use of King County funds to implement voluntary, science-based, variable-width riparian plantings.
- Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District Strategic Plan Task Force, created to consider strategies to improve the long-term productivity of farmland, bring more acres into production, especially food production, and increase opportunities for farmers to develop the necessary infrastructure to

support or increase their farm businesses in the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District.

- Regulatory Task Force, created to evaluate and recommend improvements to regulations to promote a viable agricultural economy and maintain and enhance habitat protection and healthy ecosystems.

While these task forces were developed with a specific focus on the Snoqualmie Agricultural Production District, the lessons learned have helped to inform principles that guide how the County strives toward achieving multiple benefits through projects and programmatic action implemented in other Agricultural Production Districts and all areas of unincorporated King County where agriculture, salmon habitat, and floodplains converge.

Using recommendations from the Snoqualmie Valley Fish, Farm, and Flood Advisory Committee, King County has revised the process for reviewing projects in a watershed context, which is described in revised Policy R-753. This process will apply to habitat and flood projects sponsored by the Water and Land Resources Division in all Agricultural Production Districts. Revised Policy R-753 outlines the minimum required elements of an administrative review process for habitat and floodplain restoration capital projects and programs sponsored by the King County water and land resources division where fish, farm, and flood interests intersect.

Policies in this section also reflect the importance of facilitating County-sponsored infrastructure (such as home elevations, barn elevations, and farm pads) and drainage improvement projects (including Agricultural Drainage Improvement Program or "ADAP" projects; Integrated Drainage Program projects, such as culverts, flap gates, and pumps; and projects on non-ADAP-eligible waterway projects) on privately owned farmland to support continued long-term commercial agricultural uses within Agricultural Production Districts, and the review process may also be conducted for projects sponsored by entities other than the Water and Land Resources Division.

The Snoqualmie Valley Fish, Farm, and Flood Advisory Committee process and associated planning work has been instrumental in King County and partners learning how to balance needs of agriculture, salmon recovery, and floodplain management in a collaborative manner considering watershed context in ways that are directly applicable to other Agricultural Production Districts. As a result, the original goal – of implementing targeted planning efforts in all Agricultural Production Districts – is no longer necessary. However, King County will continue to support the Snoqualmie Valley Fish, Farm, and Flood Advisory Committee until the level of progress envisioned at the formation of the committee is substantially complete, and King County will consider supporting similar collaborative efforts in other geographies when residents and partners request a localized planning effort, where appropriate.

R-750 **King County, through implementation of projects and programs, shall ensure sufficient land within Agricultural Production Districts remains available to support long-term viability of commercial agriculture and that its programmatic and project actions support the maintenance or improvement of drainage and other agricultural support infrastructure. To the maximum extent feasible, King County should tailor measures to protect threatened or endangered species to support continued operation of working farms within the Agricultural Production Districts and should strive for outcomes consistent with goals King County may establish for optimal area of productive agricultural lands within the Agricultural Production Districts.**

R-751 **King County shall complete a collaborative process to:**

- **a. Determine minimum acreage targets for agricultural lands and for floodplain and riparian habitat project area in the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District, including consideration of climate change; and**
- **b. Develop a tracking system for the amount of agricultural land used.**

R-752 **Aquatic habitat projects, floodplain restoration projects, and mitigation reserves program projects shall not reduce the ability to farm in the Agricultural Production District. Therefore, such projects are allowed only when supported by owners of the land where the proposed project is to be sited. Criteria to be considered:**

- **a. For a project proposed to be sited on lands that are unsuitable for direct agricultural production purposes, such as portions of property that have not historically been farmed due to soil conditions or frequent flooding, and which cannot be returned to productivity by drainage maintenance, or**
- **b. For a project proposed to be sited on lands suitable for direct agricultural production:**
  - **(1) there are no unsuitable lands available that meet the technical or locational needs of the proposed project, and**
  - **(2) the project is included in, or consistent with, an approved Water Resources Inventory Area Salmon Recovery Plan, Farm Management Plan, Flood Management Plan or other similar watershed scale plan; or the project would not reduce the baseline agricultural productivity within the Agricultural Production District.**

R-753 **King County shall administer a collaborative review process considering watershed context for County-sponsored habitat or floodplain restoration projects that may result in reducing the amount of land available for farming, and for County-sponsored agricultural drainage improvement projects or other County-sponsored land-based agriculture infrastructure projects that may affect habitat or floodplain function, in Agricultural Production Districts. The review process shall be administered by the Water and Land Resources Division and strive for balance in outcomes that achieve co-equal goals of maintaining and improving suitability of land for agricultural productivity, increasing habitat quality, and restoring floodplains and ecological function. The review process should:**

- **a. Occur early in the planning process for projects, and at regular intervals for ongoing programs;**
- **b. Consider guidance from relevant plans relating to agriculture, salmon recovery, and floodplain management;**
- **c. Consider efforts for advancing multiple resource interests;**
- **d. Track on-the-ground changes in land cover relative to acreage targets for farmland and habitat restoration areas, focused on impacts to agricultural lands and fish populations;**
- **e. Consider input and recommendations resulting from engagement and input from external partners and subject matter experts; and**
- **f. Identify and address barriers to efficient implementation of the process.**

The review process may also be offered for projects and programs sponsored by King County agencies aside from the Water and Land Resources Division and/or for projects and programs sponsored by external entities.

R-754 **The County shall, to the maximum extent feasible, continue to support the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District fish, farm, flood effort.**

R-755 **The County shall continue to document and consider the lessons learned from the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District fish, farm, flood effort to guide and refine the collaborative planning and review processes in a watershed context for projects and programs in other geographies, with the co-equal goals of balancing farm, fish, and flood interests where farms, fish habitat, and floodplains overlap, as well as strategies for avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating losses of farmable land, floodplain functions, and habitat functions. The County should support planning efforts similar to the Snoqualmie Valley Fish, Farm, and Flood Advisory Committee in other geographies if and when the County and partners choose to pursue such efforts or if acute tensions among various interests arise in a particular Agricultural Production District or other area of the county.**

Each of the Agricultural Production Districts and some Farmland Preservation Program lands outside of Agricultural Production Districts share boundaries with cities. The challenges to agriculture from urban development include alterations to hydrology that result in flooded fields, increased traffic that interferes with farm vehicles on roads, increased lighting at night, complaints from urban neighbors about farm operations, and high land prices. The benefits of being located near urban areas include access to urban markets and consumers and increased recognition and appreciation of locally produced goods.

R-756 **King County commits to preserve Agricultural Production District parcels in or near the Urban Growth Area because of their high production capabilities, their proximity to markets, and their value as open space. King County should work with cities adjacent to or near Agricultural Production Districts to minimize the operational and environmental impacts of urban development and public facilities and infrastructure on farming and farmland, and to promote activities, such as Farmers Markets and agriculture processing businesses, that benefit both the cities and the farms by improving access to locally grown agricultural products.**

R-757 **The Lower Green River Agricultural Production District is a regionally designated resource that shall remain in unincorporated King County except as allowed in Policies R-760, R-761, and R-762. The Lower Green River Agricultural Production District functions as an urban separator between the cities of Kent and Auburn. King County may contract with other jurisdictions to provide some local services to this area as appropriate.**

R-758 **Active recreation facilities should not be located within Agricultural Production Districts. When new parks, natural areas, or trails are planned for areas within or adjacent to Agricultural Production Districts, King County should work with farmers to minimize impacts to farmland and agricultural operations.**

R-759 **Public services and utilities provided by King County and other entities within and adjacent to Agricultural Production Districts shall be designed to support agriculture and minimize significant adverse impacts on agriculture and to maintain total farmland acreage and the area's historic agricultural character:**

- **a. Water lines, sewer lines, and other public facilities should avoid crossing Agricultural Production Districts. Installation should be timed to minimize negative impacts on seasonal agricultural practices;**
- **b. Road projects planned for the Agricultural Production Districts, including additional roads or the widening of roads, should be limited to those that are needed for safety or infrastructure preservation and that benefit agricultural uses. Arterials should be routed around the Agricultural Production Districts. Roads that cross Agricultural Production Districts should be aligned, designed, signed, and maintained to minimize negative impacts on agriculture, and to support farm traffic;**
- **c. In cases when King County concludes that regional public infrastructure projects cannot be located outside of, and must intrude into, Agricultural Production Districts, the County shall ensure that the infrastructure be built and located to minimize disruption of agricultural activity, and shall establish agreements with the relevant jurisdictions or agencies; and**
- **d. If infrastructure projects reduce total acreage in the Agricultural Production District, mitigation shall follow the criteria established in Policy R-761.**

R-760 **King County may allow lands to be removed from the Agricultural Production Districts only when it can be demonstrated that:**

- **a. 1. Removal of the land will not diminish the productivity of prime agricultural soils or the effectiveness of farming within the local Agricultural Production District boundaries; and**
  - **2. The land is determined to be no longer suitable for agricultural purposes; or**
- **b. The land is needed for public services or utilities as described in Policy R-759.**

R-761 **King County may only approve the removal of land from the Agricultural Production District if it is, concurrently with or in advance of removal of the land from the Agricultural Production District, mitigated through the replacement of agricultural land abutting the same Agricultural Production District that is, at a minimum, comparable in size, soil quality, and agricultural value. As alternative mitigation, the County may approve a combination of acquisition and restoration totaling three acres for every one acre removed as follows:**

- **a. A minimum of one acre shall be added into another Agricultural Production District for every acre removed; and**
- **b. Up to two acres of unfarmed land in the same Agricultural Production District from which land is removed shall be restored for every acre removed.**

R-762 **Replacement land required under Policy R-761 may be acquired and added to the Agricultural Production District in advance of removal as follows:**

- **a. The mitigation is for a public agency or utility project consistent with Policy R-759;**
- **b. Property proposed to be added to the Agricultural Production District is approved by the Department of Natural Resources and Parks to ensure compliance with Policy R-761;**
- **c. The subsequent map amendment to remove the Agricultural Production District land identifies the previously added land being used for mitigation; and**
- **d. The Department of Natural Resources and Parks tracks the acreage of advance additions of replacement land and subsequent removals to ensure that the requirements of Policy R-761 are met.**

2. Sustaining Agriculture and Farming

Farmers, especially new and beginning, have limited resources to access land and financing to begin production. Furthermore, all King County farmers, regardless of size and years of farming, have a great need for information on marketing and production strategies required to operate their farming businesses. The Local Food Initiative provides this information and assistance by coordinating economic development efforts by different County agencies and partner organizations that serve farmers.

R-763 **King County shall work with Washington State University Extension and other technical service providers for their research and education programs that assist small-scale commercial farmers.**

R-764 **King County shall work with other jurisdictions and nonprofits to expand markets for farm products by supporting programs that promote local food and connect buyers with producers.**

R-765 **King County should work with other jurisdictions, farm advocacy groups, and others to support farmer training and other programs that help new farmers get started, gain access to farmland, and develop successful marketing methods.**

R-766 **King County should work with other jurisdictions to continue to provide support to Farmers Markets.**

R-767 **King County should develop and encourage the use of incentives for food production on prime farmland. These incentives could include tax credits, expedited permit review, reduced permit fees, permit exemptions for activities complying with best management practices, or similar programs.**

R-768 **The County should continue to work with community-based organizations that can assist farmers who are Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color, immigrants, refugees, and other communities that have traditionally experienced issues in gaining access to farmland.**

R-769 **To help make more farmland accessible to beginning, low-income, historically underinvested, and socially disadvantaged farmers, King County should expand its leasing of agricultural land to farmers and community organizations where appropriate and should encourage private farmland owners to lease unused land to farmers.**

R-770 **King County should expand representation of low-income, historically underinvested, and socially disadvantaged farmers and community organizations within King County agricultural processes, such as the Agriculture Commission, advisory committees, task forces, and hiring.**

R-771 **Agricultural processing, packing, and direct sales are considered agricultural activities and should be allowed at a size and scale appropriate to the zone in which they are operating. King County should work with local and state health departments to develop regulations supporting these activities and with local nonprofits and academic institutions to educate farmers about safe food processing practices and compliance.**

R-772 **King County supports the processing and packaging of farm products from crops and livestock, and shall continue to work with farmers, ranchers, cities, neighboring counties, and other interested parties to address infrastructure and regulatory needs that promote sales to consumers, institutions, restaurants, and retail enterprises.**

R-773 **King County supports innovative technologies to process waste from dairy and other livestock to reduce nutrients and to create other products such as energy and compost in areas that have Agriculture and Rural Area land use designations.**

R-774 **King County should develop incentives that support local food production and processing to increase food security; provide a healthy, affordable local food supply; and reduce energy use.**

Agricultural practices modify the natural environment to produce food or fiber or maintain livestock for human use. Ideally, practices that maintain the productivity of the lands also protect environmental quality, respect natural processes such as flooding and channel migration, and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. Farmers, technical advisors, floodplain managers, and environmental regulators must work together to understand the relationships between production practices, environmental protection, public safety, and profitability. Best management practices are designed to prevent erosion, maintain flood conveyance and flood storage, retain riparian vegetation, avoid stream bank collapse, properly dispose of animal wastes, safely use and dispose of pesticides, prevent excessive stormwater runoff, capture and reuse methane gas, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and retain access to local food.

R-775 **King County shall provide incentives, educational programs, and other methods to encourage agricultural practices and technological improvements that maintain water quality, protect public health, protect fish and wildlife habitat, protect historic resources, maintain flood conveyance and storage, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, control noxious weeds, prevent erosion of valuable agricultural soils, and increase soil water holding capacity while maintaining the functions needed for agricultural production.**

To maintain and operate their farms, farmers need assistance in maintaining farm viability in the face of increasing urbanization, soil degradation, increased flooding and water scarcity caused by climate change, and the increased impacts of upslope development. The maintenance of drainage and irrigation systems is essential for commercial agriculture to succeed in the county.

R-776 **King County shall work with federal, state, local, and private agencies to improve the availability and efficiency of water for agriculture through use of tools such as: expanding the availability of recycled water to farms; offering incentives for irrigation efficiency; and supporting mechanisms for water rights banking and trading that will give farmers greater certainty for water rights while protecting instream flows. King County shall encourage the maintenance and preservation of agriculture water rights for agriculture purposes. Assessments of future surface and groundwater availability for agriculture should consider projected impacts of climate change.**

R-777 **King County shall continue to support drainage improvements through its Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program and actively seek new ways to make drainage projects less expensive and easier to implement and to improve drainage systems across property lines.**

R-778 **King County should continue to collaborate with the Washington State University Extension, the University of Washington, and King Conservation District to:**

a. Develop information on and analyze the current and future impacts of climate change on agriculture in King County;
b. Develop mitigation, resiliency, and adaptation strategies that are appropriate for King County's soils and farm economy, such as soil management, use of commercial compost, water storage, irrigation, alternative crops, integrated pest management, and nutrient management; and
c. Share the information and strategies with farmers through technical assistance programs and farm planning.

R-779 **Farmers leasing King County properties, or conducting work on properties on which King County owns a Farmland Preservation Program easement should use agricultural best management practices, integrated pest management, and other sustainable farming methods.**

R-780 **King County should provide incentives for soil management practices that reduce greenhouse emissions through its agricultural best management practices cost-sharing program.**

R-781 **King County should work with federal, state, and local jurisdictions to reduce flood impacts to agricultural operations. The County shall continue to investigate the needs of agriculture before, during, and after flood events, to determine if and how losses can be reduced, and shall use this information in designing its floodplain policies and regulations.**

The high cost of agricultural land continues to be a barrier for many farmers wishing to locate their farm businesses within King County. The steady rise in agricultural land values continues to hamper the ability of many potential and current farmers to enter or expand their operations.

R-782 **In addition to enhancing the Farmland Preservation Program, the County should develop more innovative solutions and incentives to keep agricultural land affordable and profitable for active farming.**

3. Agriculture and the Food System

King County has a year-round growing season, a strong farming tradition and local farming expertise, and proximity to major markets for local foods and food products. Many of the policies in the previous section are aimed at helping to overcome obstacles to successful farming in King County. With that direction and a focus on production of

food, farmlands in King County could be even more instrumental in strengthening the food system for the benefit of all King County residents.

Agricultural lands, farming practices and activities, and farmers are part of the local and regional food system. In addition to the growing of food, the food system includes processing, distribution, food availability, and disposal. As more people move to this region, King County recognizes the importance of planning for the regional food system to be more sustainable and resilient.

R-783 **King County should work with farmers and ranchers to better understand the constraints to increased food production in the county and develop programs that reduce barriers and create incentives to growing food crops and raising food-producing livestock.**

R-784 **King County shall prioritize its programs to help build and support a sustainable, reliable, equitable, and resilient local food system. King County shall strive to strengthen the local food system, increase accessibly to the local food supply, and strive to make access to the local food system culturally appropriate by:**

a. Expanding leadership and ownership of food production opportunities to low-income, historically underinvested, and socially disadvantaged farmers;

b. Making locally grown, healthy, and culturally relevant foods available to and reflective of King County communities and low-income, historically underinvested, and socially disadvantaged farmers; and

c. Supporting low-income, historically underinvested, and socially disadvantaged populations in efforts to improve equitable food access and food production goals, including alternative pathways for farmland access that meet their community's needs.

R-785 **King County should consider adopting procurement policies that would encourage purchases of locally grown fresh foods.**

R-786 **King County should strengthen a sustainable and climate-resilient local food system and reduce the distance that food must travel from farm to table by promoting and supporting local food production and local processing.**

R-787 **King County should continue food waste programs for single detached residences, multiunit residences, businesses, and institutions, aimed at reducing generation, promoting donation, and encouraging curbside collection for anaerobic digestion and composting.**

R-788 **King County should support and collaborate with food incentive program providers, with food providers, producers, and distributers, and with community-based organizations to further develop and expand programs that increase access to affordable foods and the use of food assistance benefits at farmers markets and farm stands.**

D. Mineral Resources

King County contains many valuable mineral resources, including deposits of sand, rock, gravel, silica, clay, and metallic ores. Mineral extraction and processing is an important part of King County's economy, currently providing hundreds of jobs and producing materials used locally, regionally, and nationally.

The County must assure that land uses adjacent to mineral resource lands do not interfere with the continued use of mineral resource lands in their accustomed manner and in accordance with best management practices.

The Mineral Resources Map identifies three different types of Mineral Resource Sites – designated Mineral Resource Sites, Potential Surface Mineral Resources, and Nonconforming Mineral Resource Sites and Existing Mineral Resource Sites in the Forest Production District. The sites were identified in the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan or in subsequent updates. Before the Mineral Resources Map is a table that contains information on each Mineral Resource Site parcel.

In addition to the designated Mineral Resources Sites, the Forest Production District and Forest (F) zone preserves the opportunity for mineral extraction. Mineral extraction is a permitted or conditional use in the F zone. Because forestry does not preclude future mineral extraction, King County considers the Forest Production District part of its strategy to conserve mineral resources.

The Mineral Resources Map also shows Potential Surface Mineral Resource Sites. These are sites where King County may allow some future surface mining to occur or where the owner or operator indicates an interest in future mineral extraction. Identification of Potential Surface Mineral Resources Sites satisfies the Growth Management Act requirements to not knowingly preclude opportunities for future mineral extraction and to inform nearby property owners of the potential for future mineral extraction use of these areas to prevent or minimize conflicts.

The Mineral Resources Map also shows Nonconforming Mineral Resources Sites. These are sites on which some mining operations predated King County zoning regulations without appropriate zoning or other land use approval. Mining for these sites has not been authorized through a land use designation or zoning classification. These sites are shown for informational purposes only. Mining can occur on an identified site only if mining has been approved as a nonconforming use by the Department of Local Services – Permitting Division, and mining activities have received all other necessary permit approvals. Because the sites have not undergone formal review to be designated on the Land Use Map or zoned for mining, the sites do not have long-term commercial significance. However, they can continue to serve mineral supply needs.

R-789 **King County shall identify existing and potential mineral extraction sites on the Mineral Resources Map to conserve mineral resources, promote compatibility with nearby land uses, protect environmental quality, maintain and enhance mineral resource industries, and serve to notify property owners of the potential for mineral extraction activities. The County shall identify sites consistent with Washington State Department of Natural Resources mineral resource mapping and in accordance with the mineral resource lands evaluation and designation criteria established in Chapter 36.70A Revised Code of Washington and applicable sections in Washington Administrative Code.**

R-790 **King County shall designate as Mining on the Land Use Map those sites that had Potential Mineral (M) zoning prior to the date of adoption of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and those sites that had Mineral zoning as of the date of the adoption of the 2000 King County Comprehensive Plan update.**

A Mining designation on the Land Use Map shall not create a presumption that Mineral zoning will be approved for sites with Potential Mineral zoning. Potential Mineral zoning shall not be applied to additional sites.

R-791 **King County may designate additional sites on the Land Use Map as Mining only following a site-specific rezone to Mineral zoning. Upon approval of a rezone to Mineral zoning, the Land Use Map shall be amended to designate the site as Mining during the next Comprehensive Plan update. King County should approve applications for site-specific rezones to Mineral zoning and applications for permits that would authorize mineral extraction and processing only following site-specific environmental study and early and continuous public notice and comment opportunities, when:**

- **a. The proposed site contains rock, sand, gravel, or other mineral resources;**
- **b. The proposed site is large enough to confine or mitigate all operational impacts;**
- **c. The proposal will allow operation with limited conflicts with adjacent land uses when mitigating measures are applied;**
- **d. The proposal has been evaluated under the State Environmental Policy Act so that the County may approve, condition, or deny applications consistent with the County's substantive State Environmental Policy Act authority, and to mitigate significant adverse environmental impacts; and**
- **e. Roads or rail facilities serving or proposed to serve the site can safely and adequately handle transport of products and are in close proximity to the site.**

R-792 **King County should remove the Mining land use designation on the Land Use Map and associated Potential Mineral zone or Mineral zoning for any sites that have been denied a rezone to Mineral.**

If a grading or other permit necessary for the extraction of mineral resources is denied on a designated Mineral Resource Site, the County shall evaluate whether such mineral resource designation is appropriate. The re-evaluation process may occur as part of the annual update and information produced during the permit review process shall be used to evaluate the appropriateness of changing the existing designation. If the County determines that the site should not be designated as mineral resource land of long-term commercial significance as defined in the Growth Management Act, the County shall evaluate whether the site should remain on the Mineral Resource Map, and whether the land use designation and zoning classification should be changed, with consideration for compatibility with the surrounding properties.

R-793 **King County may amend the Mineral Resources Map to identify additional Potential Surface Mineral Resource Sites as part of the 10-year or midpoint update.**

R-794 **The preferred adjacent land uses to sites designated as Mining on the Land Use Map are mineral extraction, industrial, open space, or forestry uses. Sites for newly proposed Mineral zones shall not be adjacent to or within Agricultural Production Districts. Agricultural lands and operations should be protected from significant impacts associated with nearby mineral extraction operations.**

R-795 **Mineral extraction activities are allowed within the Forest Production District, consistent with Policy R-718. However, a conditional use permit shall be required for mineral extraction activities in the Forest zone located within one-quarter mile of established residences or for proposals seeking to use local access streets where abutting lots are developed for residential use.**

R-796 **To comprehensively assess the environmental impacts associated with a zoning change, conditional use, or operating approval for a mineral extraction proposal, the range of environmental impacts, including short-term and long-term effects arising or existing over the lifetime of the proposal, shall be assessed at the earliest possible stage. This should include the potential for phasing of future proposals for structures and operations related to mineral extraction, such as asphalt and concrete batch plants.**

R-797 **King County should prevent or minimize conflicts with mineral extraction when planning land uses adjacent to designated Mineral Resource Sites and Potential Surface Mineral Resource Sites. Subarea plans or area zoning and land use studies may indicate areas where Mining is an inappropriate land use designation. Designated Mineral Resource Sites and Potential Surface Mineral Resource Sites and Nonconforming Mineral Resource Sites should be shown on the Mineral Resources Map to notify nearby property owners and residents of existing and prospective mineral extraction activities.**

R-798 **The periodic review process for mineral extraction and processing operations shall include sufficient public notice and comment opportunities. The purpose of the periodic review process is to provide opportunities for public review and comment on the mineral resource facility's fulfillment of state and County regulations and implementation of industry-standard best management practices, and for King County to modify, add or remove conditions to address new circumstances and/or unanticipated project-generated impacts. The periodic review process is not intended to re-examine the appropriateness of the mineral resource use, or to consider expansion of operations beyond the scope of existing permitted operations since that review would be accomplished through the County's permitting process. The periodic review is intended to be a part of King County's ongoing enforcement and inspections of mineral resource sites, and not to be a part of the County's permitting process.**

R-799 **Conditions and mitigations for significant adverse environmental impacts associated with mineral extraction or mining operations and their associated structures or facilities should be required, especially in the following areas:**

- **a. Air quality, including greenhouse gas and other emissions from minerals extracted for energy production and from transportation of materials to and from the site during operation and reclamation;**
- **b. Critical areas, such as surface and groundwater quality and quantity, wetlands, fisheries and wildlife habitats, and aquatic habitats;**
- **c. Noise levels;**
- **d. Vibration;**
- **e. Light and glare;**
- **f. Vehicular access and safety;**
- **g. Land and shoreline uses;**
- **h. Transportation impacts, including traffic and safety;**
- **i. Visual impacts;**
- **j. Cultural and historic features and resources;**
- **k. Site security; and**
- **l. Others unique to specific sites and proposals.**

R-800 **Where mineral extraction or mining are subject to state or federal regulations, King County should work with the state and federal governments to ensure that proposals are reviewed with consideration of local land use and environmental requirements, regional impacts from transport, and assessment of climate change impacts from end use of minerals and mined materials.**

R-801 **King County should work with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to ensure that mining areas are reclaimed in a timely and appropriate manner. Reclamation of mineral extraction or mining sites in the Forest Production District should return the land to forestry. Where mineral extraction is completed in phases, reclamation also should be completed in phases as the resource is depleted. When reclamation of mineral extraction sites located outside of the Forest Production District is completed, the site should be considered for redesignation to a land use designation and zoning classification compatible with the surrounding properties.**

R-802 **King County shall encourage the removal of existing stockpiles of previously mined material to promote and achieve reclamation of land to its highest and best use.**

R-803 **King County shall prohibit the establishment of new coal mines and the expansion of existing coal mines.**

Table 3-1. Mineral Resources Property Information for the Mineral Resources Map

DESIGNATED MINERAL RESOURCE SITES				
Map # Section-	**Section-Township-Range**	**Site Name and/or Owner/Operator**	**Material***	**Total Site Acreage (approx.)**
1	25-21-06	Cadman S & G/Flintston S&G	SG	75
2	11-20-07 21-20-07	Plum Creek Timber Company	SG	476
3	21-22-03	Ideal Cement Co/King County	SG	39
5	27-22-07	Kangley Pit/Meridian Aggregates Co. (398 acres) and Stoneway Concrete Gravel Pit/Gary Merlino Construction	SG	608
6	28-23-06	Cedar Grove Pit/Queen City Farms	SG	315
7	33-23-06	Lake Francis Pit/Plumb Creek Timber Co	SG	143
8	33-23-06	Cedar grove Pit /ANMARCO	SG	35
9	20-23-06	Cedar Mountain Pit/ Rivera & Green	SG	57
10	20-22-06	Black River Quarry	SG	374
12	08-28-07 17-26-07	Cherry Pit/Thompson	SG	13
13	19-24-08 20-24-08	Snoqualmie/Weyerhaeuser Co. and S. Parsons et. al.	SG	665
15	06-23-06	Squak Mountain Quarry/M. Palmer	RS	16
16	22-24-07	Raging River/Cadman	RS	20
17	33-20-07	Highway 410 Quarry/J. Laramie	RS	34
18	28-26-11 27-26-11	Meridian Aggregates	R	38
20	01-21-06 36-22-06	Reserve Silica Corporation Plum Creek Timber Co. and Silica Sand Mine	S	
23	32-24-06	State of Washington	CL	
25	32-24-06	Interpace Harris Mine/ R.Thompson and Eltra. Corp.	SG	

DESIGNATED MINERAL RESOURCE SITES				
Map # Section -	**Section-Township-Range**	**Site Name and/or Owner/Operator**	**Material***	**Total Site Acreage (approx.)**
26	35-22-06	Meridian Minerals Co.	SG	
27	29-23-06	Pinnacle Exploration	SG	
28	29-23-06 32-23-06	ANMARCO and G. Newell	SG	
29	29-23-06	Plum Creek Timber Co	SG	
30	27-24-06	Issaquah/King Co.	SG	
31	05-23-06	King County	SG	
32	33-23-06	Lake Francis Plum Creek Timber Co	SG	
96	30-21-07	Franklin Pit/Morris	SG	158

POTENTIAL SURFACE MINERAL RESOURCE SITES			
Map # Section-	**Section-Township-Range**	**Site Name and/or Owner/Operator**	**Total Site Acreage (approx.)**
35	35-22-05	T. Scarsella	11
36	07-25-06	Cadman/King Co.	24
37	33-23-06	Merlino Property/ANMARCO	32
39	20-23-06	Rivera and Green	21
40	22-26-06	T. Alberg	40
41	31-26-07	T. Alberg	160
42	08-26-07 17-26-07	R. and A. Thompson	11
43	32-23-09	R. and A. Thompson	145
44	11-21-05	B & M Investments	174
45	25-22-02	Doane Family Ltd.	60
46	08-25-06	W. Nelson	86
47	18-21-07	Palmer Coking Coal	79
48	30-21-07	Palmer Coking Coal	275
50	36-21-06	Palmer Coking Coal	116
51	06-23-06	Palmers	39
52	12-23-05	R. and R. Schroeder and Pacific Company Constructors	30
53	02-20-06	State of Washington	36
54	03-91-33	Weyerhaeuser Co.	36
74		Weyerhaeuser Co	3655
75		Weyerhaeuser Co., United States, U.S. Corps of Engineers	4214
76		Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Co.	1765
77		Weyerhaeuser Co. and State of Washington	705
78		Weyerhaeuser Co., Riley, Everett, Hamerly	1926
79		E. Seliger, Weyerhaeuser Co,	1167
80		Weyerhaeuser Co.	113
81		Metro	599
82		Cadman Black Diamond/Weyerhaeuser Co.	434
83		Weyerhaeuser Co.	925
55	02-20-07 12-20-07	Weyerhaeuser Co., State of Washington, Metro	634
56	10-20-07	Weyerhaeuser Co.	80
57	15-26-07	State of Washington	320
58	16-21-05	State of Washington	38
59	17-23-07	State of Washington	640

POTENTIAL SURFACE MINERAL RESOURCE SITES			
Map # Section-	**Section-Township-Range**	**Site Name and/or Owner/Operator**	**Total Site Acreage (approx.)**
	18-23-07 19-23-07 20-23-07		
60	26-21-06	M & K Company	18
61	27-24-06	State of Washington	40
62	30-20-08	Weyerhaeuser Co.	141
63	30-21-07	State of Washington and Palmer Coking Coal	60
64	30-21-08	State of Washington	168
65	34-24-06	State of Washington	32
66	35-24-06	State of Washington	20
67	36-20-06	State of Washington	79
68	36-20-06	State of Washington	40
69	36-21-06	State of Washington	152
70	36-21-07	State of Washington	640
71	36-23-06	State of Washington	115
72	04-21-07	Weyerhaeuser Co.	173
73	03-25-09 04-25-09 05-25-09 10-25-09 33-25-09 34-26-09	Weyerhaeuser Co.	3079
84	28-20-07 32-20-07 33-20-07	Weyerhaeuser Co.	669
85	04-19-07 05-19-07 32-20-07	Weyerhaeuser Co.	1572
86	34-25-07	L.A. Welcome	24
87	36-21-05	Sparling/King Co.	41
88	21-24-07	Raging River/King Co.	40
89	32-22-07	Lake Retreat/King Co	82
90	35-22-02	Sprowls/King Co.	40
91			
92	23-26-07	Swan Quarry/King Co.	76
93	31-23-07	Route 18 Fill Project/Plumb Creek Timber Co.	40

LEGAL NONCONFORMING MINERAL RESOURCE SITES AND EXISTING MINERAL RESOURCE SITES IN THE FOREST PRODUCTION DISTRICT				
Map # Section -	**Section-Township-Range**	**Site Name and/or Owner/Operator**	**Material***	**Total Site Acreage (approx.)**
21	01-19-07	Hardie/Weyerhaeuser	S	625
94	29-20-07	Jensen Sand & Gravel/Jensen	SG	13
95	29-20-07	Corliss/Weyerhaeuser	SG	60
103	34-22-06	Summit/King County	SG	176
104	13-20-06	Enumclaw Quarry/Pierotti	RS	14
110	31-21-07	Hyde Pit/Palmer Coking Coal Co	SG	20
113	19-23-09 20-23-09 29-23-09	Cadman North Bend/Weyerhaeuser	SG	300
114	33-20-07	White River/Weyerhaeuser	RS	175

SG	Sand & Gravel
RS	Rock & Stone
R	Rock
ShCl	Shale & Clay
Cl	Clay
S	Silica

AGRICULTURE AND FOREST LANDS 2024

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter Three, Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands

Data Sources:
U.S. Forest Service, King County Departments of Assessments, Natural Resources and Parks, and Local Services, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Notes:
The maps in the King County Comprehensive Plan and its technical appendices are produced with a computer geographic information system. They are reduced in size but available at a larger scale.

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Date: October 2023
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King County GIS Center

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October 2023

- Forest Production District
- Agricultural Production District
- Rural Forest Focus Areas
- Incorporated City
- Potential Annexation Areas
- City in Rural Area
- Indian Reservation Boundary
- Indian Trust Land
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- Alpine Lakes Wilderness
- King County Boundary
- Freeways
- Municipal Watershed

MINERAL RESOURCES 2024

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter Three, Rural Areas
and Natural Resource Lands

Data Sources:
US Forest Service, King County Departments of Assessments, and Local Services, and Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Notes:
* Sites with Mineral Zoning.

** Sites identified by the landowner or operator prior to Nov. 18, 1994 and sites that as of Nov. 18, 1994 had pending rezone applications for Quarrying/Mining (now Mineral) zoning or had potential Quarrying/Mining (now Mineral) zoning.

*** Sites on which mining operations pre-date King County zoning regulations, but without zoning or other land use approvals.

The maps in the King County Comprehensive Plan and its technical appendices are produced with a computer geographic information system. They are reduced in size but available at a larger scale.

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Date: October 2024

King County GIS Center

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October 2024

- 1-20, 23-32, 96 Designated Mineral Resource Sites*
- 35-93 Potential Surface Resource Mineral Sites**
- 21, 94-95, 103-114 Nonconforming Mineral Resource Sites and Existing Mineral Resource Sites in the FPD***
- Incorporated City
- Potential Annexation Areas
- City in Rural Area
- Indian Reservation Boundary
- Indian Trust Land
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- Forest Production District Boundary
- King County Boundary
- Freeways



CHAPTER 4

HOUSING & HUMAN SERVICES

I. Housing

The ability of the private and public sector to develop housing is affected by a wide range of market forces. However, local government actions, such as land use policies, development regulations, funding, regional collaboration, community engagement, and infrastructure financing significantly impact the capacity to increase housing supply for all incomes, including affordable housing.

The policies in the housing section set a framework for individual and collective action and accountability to meet regional housing needs and local housing unit growth allocations. The policies seek to increase the supply and diversity of housing, expand housing choice, improve housing stability, reduce displacement, promote equity in housing outcomes, strengthen partnerships to meet housing goals, improve housing tools and processes, and foster a more sustainable and healthier built environment.

A. Housing Needs in King County

The Growth Management Act requires all jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate the housing needs of residents at every income level. The King County Countywide Planning Policies establish allocations of housing need for each jurisdiction for all income levels, as well as emergency housing, emergency shelters, and permanent supportive housing. Table 1 shows the housing need for urban unincorporated King County, reflected as new units in service, by income levels, including, permanent supportive housing, and emergency housing. The total number of new housing units needed in urban unincorporated King County by 2044 is 5,412. Additionally, 1,034 new emergency housing beds are needed by 2044 to meet temporary housing needs.

Table 4-1: Projected Housing Needs by Income Level in Unincorporated King County

Income Level	% Median Income	Net New Units Needed, 2019-2044
Extremely low	0-30% Permanent Supportive Housing	608
	0-30% Other (non-Permanent Supportive Housing)	1,157
Very low	>30-50%	571
Low	>50-80%	292
Moderate	>80-100%	366
	>100-120%	415
Above Moderate	>120%	2,003
All Income Levels		**5,412**

Temporary Housing Needs	Net New Beds Needed, 2019-2044
Emergency Housing/Shelter	1,034

Appendix B, Housing Needs Assessment, contains summary data and analysis regarding housing needs in King County. The findings demonstrate a substantial need for extremely low-, very low-, and low-income rental housing and low to moderately priced homes for ownership. In addition, there is a significant need for more permanent supportive housing, shelters, and tiny homes.

The findings also show that approximately 25,500 households in unincorporated King County are cost burdened. When a household spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing, they are considered cost burdened. Severe cost burden means more than 50 percent of a household's income goes toward housing costs. In unincorporated King County, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color households are more likely to be cost burdened and severely cost burdened than White households. Senior renters (depending on the program, the age threshold for a senior could be 55, 62, or 65 years and over) with lower incomes and LGBTQIA+ households are disproportionately cost burdened. Renter-occupied households are almost twice as likely to be cost burdened than owner-occupied households. Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color and Latino/a/e households, as well as many immigrant and refugee households, are disproportionately represented both among households earning less than 80 percent of area median income as well as among cost burdened households, in part due to the legacy of structural racism and discrimination in housing and land use policies and practices. Households earning at or below 30 percent are disproportionately impacted by housing cost burden than higher income households.

Housing disparities by race, ethnicity, income, disability status, and age also exist in homeownership. For example, in unincorporated King County, 88 percent of White households, compared to 43 percent of Black and 49 percent of Hispanic or Latino/a/e households, own their own home.

The policies in the housing section seek to reduce disparities in housing by ensuring there is adequate capacity for housing; addressing affordable housing funding, preservation, and assistance programs administered by King County; utilizing the County's regulatory role to help ensure that there is adequate safe and healthy housing in the unincorporated areas; and strengthening housing partnerships and regional collaboration to meet the housing needs of all county residents at all income levels.

H-101 **King County shall ensure that there is sufficient zoned capacity in the unincorporated urban area to accommodate King County's housing need allocations and provide a variety of affordable, sustainable housing types, including higher-density single detached residences, middle housing, manufactured home communities, accessory dwelling units, and mixed-use developments.**

H-102 **King County shall plan for a wide range of housing types and reduce barriers to the preservation, improvement, and development of affordable housing, at an appropriate size and scale, that:**

- **a. Provides housing choices affordable to people of all income levels, particularly in areas with existing or planned high capacity and frequent transit service;**
- **b. Provides housing choices and supportive services to households at or below 30 percent of area median income;**
- **c. Meets the needs of and advances equitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; persons with special housing needs; veterans, military servicemembers, and their respective families; individuals and families experiencing homelessness; immigrants; refugees; LGBTQIA+ persons; women; families with children; and survivors of domestic violence and other kinds of gender-based violence, human trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation; and**
- **d. Supports the goals of housing and human services-related plans, including the Crisis Care Centers Levy Implementation Plan, Best Starts for Kids Implementation Plan, Initial Health through Housing Implementation Plan 2022-2028, Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy Implementation Plan, and Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund Plan, or successor plans.**

B. Housing Partnerships and Regional Collaboration

Just as housing needs rarely recognize jurisdictional boundaries, housing issues will not likely be solved by King County alone. For these reasons, it is important that King County's housing policies support a regional approach and collaboration among agencies to meet housing goals. In addition, nonprofits or housing authorities often provide the most affordable housing, while private sector developers create most housing units. Without collaboration, King County, the cities in King County, and the region will likely fail to meet housing goals and needs. All the partners mentioned in this chapter are vital in helping King County achieve its housing goals.

King County has a role to play in promoting regional collaboration and public-private partnerships to address the full range of housing needs in King County and the Puget Sound region. In 2017, King County convened the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force to understand the affordable housing challenges and to meet people most affected by the lack of affordable units in the county. The Task Force's 2018 Final Report and Recommendations, which included a Five-Year Action Plan, were adopted as County policy by Motion 15372. The overarching goal of the Five-Year Action Plan is to "strive to eliminate cost burden for households earning 80 percent Area Median Income and below, with a priority for serving households at or below 50 percent Area Median Income."

In 2019, the King County Growth Management Planning Council created the Affordable Housing Committee as a regional advisory body to recommend actions and assess progress toward the Five-Year Action Plan. The Affordable Housing Committee, comprised of representatives of King County, the City of Seattle, the Sound Cities Association, housing authorities, and others with expertise in affordable housing, including preventing displacement, functions as a point of coordination and accountability for affordable housing efforts across King County. King County provides staff support, data, and policy analysis, and other resources for the Committee.

The 2021 Countywide Planning Policy update assigned additional responsibilities to the Affordable Housing Committee, including reviewing all jurisdictions' draft periodic

comprehensive plan updates for alignment with the King County Countywide Planning Policies Housing Chapter goals and policies prior to plan adoption; providing a hub to share best practices for increasing affordable housing supply; and monitor progress towards planning for and accommodating housing needs, and making recommendations to the Growth Management Planning Council on potential actions a jurisdiction could take to address shortfalls in meeting housing needs. King County will lead the data collection and reporting process with cities.

The Countywide Planning Policies also require regional collaboration in meeting countywide housing growth targets and affordable housing needs and developing programs to provide affordable housing. The following policies require King County to collaborate with multiple partners, including cities, regional and subregional organizations such as the Puget Sound Regional Council and Growth Management Planning Council, interlocal groups such as ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) and SKHHP (South King Housing and Homelessness Partners), nonprofit organizations, private sector developers, community-based organizations, and community members.

The Committee aided in the development of the 2021 Countywide Planning Policies, including recommending amendments to regional goals, metrics, and land use policies. The 2021 Countywide Planning Policy update assigned additional responsibilities to the Affordable Housing Committee, including: review of all King County jurisdictions' draft periodic comprehensive plan updates for alignment with the King County Countywide Planning Policies Housing Chapter goals and policies prior to plan adoption; provide a hub to share best practices for increasing affordable housing supply; monitor progress towards planning for and accommodating housing needs; and recommend to the Growth Management Planning Council on potential actions a jurisdiction could take to address shortfalls in meeting housing needs. King County will lead the data collection and reporting process with cities.

H-103 **King County shall work with regional bodies, including the Puget Sound Regional Council and the Growth Management Planning Council, or their successors, and the private and nonprofit sectors to support development of an adequate supply of housing commensurate with job growth within the county. To attain this goal, King County shall work with such regional partners to:**

- **a. Support job and household growth targets, housing needs for people of all incomes, and policies established in the Countywide Planning Policies; and**
- **b. Work with cities to ensure additional actions are taken throughout the county to accommodate and promote residential development when job growth causes great demand for housing and severe shortages in the availability of housing for new workers in the county.**

H-104 **King County shall collaborate with the Puget Sound Regional Council and subregional organizations to advance equitable development and the implementation and monitoring of countywide affordable housing goals, policies, and programs.**

H-105 **King County shall participate in regional efforts to:**

- **a. Conduct a housing-focused review of and provide comments on a jurisdiction's draft periodic comprehensive plan update for alignment with the King County Countywide Planning Policies Housing Chapter goals; and**
- **b. Report and monitor progress towards meeting countywide and jurisdictional housing growth targets and housing needs and eliminating disparities in access to housing and neighborhood choice.**

H-106 **King County shall provide through the Growth Management Planning Council, or designee, the necessary, ongoing information to jurisdictions on their progress toward planning for and accommodating their housing needs using public-facing tools.**

H-107 **King County shall equitably engage cities, community members, community-based organizations, the private sector, people with lived experience of housing instability, and housing representatives to identify and implement solutions to further housing stability, access, and choice, and affordability goals established in the Countywide Planning Policies.**

H-108 **King County shall engage historically underrepresented populations in the implementation and monitoring of countywide affordable housing goals, policies, and programs.**

C. Funding for Affordable Housing

Housing provided by private development accounts for most new units in the county. However, the private market alone cannot provide affordable housing for all residents. As reported in the Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix B), nearly one-third of households in King County (31.5 percent) and unincorporated King County (28.5 percent) are cost burdened, and Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color households are disproportionately cost burdened. More deeply affordable units are needed in King County to reduce racially disparate housing outcomes and meet King County's housing goals.

As of 2023, the development and preservation of affordable housing has become increasingly and prohibitively expensive. In 2023 dollars, the cost of an affordable unit is estimated to be $475,404 per unit. The Housing Funding Gap Analysis section of the Housing Needs Assessment identifies a funding gap of approximately $450 million to meet the housing needs of unincorporated King County households at or below 80 percent of area median income through 2044. The Countywide Planning Policies call for prioritizing housing affordable to households with less than or equal to 30 percent of area median income. Addressing the needs of the lowest-income households will cause a chain reaction, freeing up more moderately priced housing units that are more affordable for households at higher income thresholds.

Meeting the County's housing needs and goals will require significant incentives, subsidies, and funding, as the private market cannot produce enough affordable housing without public intervention. King County will continue to pursue new funding sources to fund affordable housing development and operations. The policies in this section call for identifying existing and developing new funding sources, as well as establishing funding priorities.

H-109 **King County shall prioritize funding in its affordable housing programs and projects that:**

- **a. Provide low-barrier housing designed to meet the needs of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness;**
- **b. Provide accessible housing to persons with behavioral health, cognitive, physical, or developmental disabilities;**
- **c. Provide permanent supportive housing for households at or below 30 percent of area median income;**
- **d. Create homeownership opportunities for households at or below 80 percent of area median income to build generational wealth and promote housing stability;**
- **e. Create rental housing for households at or below 30 percent of area median income and for households at or below 80 percent of area median income to meet a range of housing needs;**
- **f. Are located near high-capacity or frequent transit to increase residents' access to job opportunities and services;**
- **g. Are in areas with communities at risk of displacement;**
- **h. Reflect an equitable distribution of funding;**
- **i. Are community-driven projects; or**
- **j. Reduce the time and cost of achieving the County's affordable housing goals, which may include leveraging additional public and private loans.**

H-110 **King County shall work with community members, cities, the private sector, and service providers to establish new, countywide funding sources for affordable housing development, acquisition, rehabilitation, preservation, and operating costs, focused on households at or below 30 percent of area median income.**

H-111 **King County shall work with other jurisdictions, housing developers, and service providers throughout the state to urge federal and state governments to expand both capital and operating funding for housing at or below 120 percent of area median income, including for persons with special housing needs.**

H-112 **King County shall prioritize the use of surplus County-owned property for affordable housing for households at or below 80 percent area median income, especially in the urban growth area where it could aid a jurisdiction in meeting its housing targets, and for crisis care centers and community development.**

H-113 **King County should develop new partnerships with public and private lending institutions to find solutions that reduce homeownership costs for residents.**

H-114 **King County should pursue creative methods within existing programs, funding sources, and state enabling legislation for property tax relief to provide direct assistance to builders and leverage funds for the construction of affordable housing.**

H-115 **King County should support the efforts of nonprofit developers, housing agencies, and community-based organizations through technical assistance and funding for capacity-building and pre-development work.**

H-116 **King County shall encourage developers and owners of publicly funded housing units to be active community members and to market vacant units to the local area in addition to conducting general marketing outreach.**

H-117 **King County shall administer standards for publicly funded housing that:**

a. **Increases the ability of persons with physical disabilities to have physical access to housing and mobility within housing regardless of their residency status;**
b. **Allows household members to age in place through the inclusion of universal design principles that make housing units more accessible and usable by all persons;**
c. **Supports the ability of persons with special housing needs to find housing opportunities that allow them to live as independently as possible in the housing and community of their choice; and**
d. **Increases the ability of people to have access to smoke-free housing, while not creating barriers to housing.**

D. Housing Supply and Housing for those with the Greatest Needs

To meet the County's goal of an equitable future for all, more housing of different types and price levels is needed in locations with access to jobs, transit, and services. The policies in this section encourage more multiunit and mixed-income housing choices near transit, developing middle housing to provide greater housing choice and increased affordability, and reducing the costs to build housing.

H-118 **King County should encourage a mix of housing types, sizes, tenure, and affordability levels to meet the needs of people who work in and desire to live in King County, especially near countywide and local centers.**

H-119 **King County should encourage the development of housing suitable for families with children, larger households, and multigenerational living that is affordable for households with a broad range of incomes.**

H-120 **King County should pursue strategies and regulations that increase affordable housing and sustainable housing. These developments should utilize smaller-scale units and higher density housing that shares common spaces, open spaces, and community facilities to increase the housing supply affordable to all incomes.**

H-121 **King County should provide opportunities within unincorporated urban areas and in Rural Towns with sewer service for the development, rehabilitation, and preservation of rental residential buildings with shared facilities and higher density ownership housing.**

H-122 **King County should support the efforts of nonprofit developers, housing agencies, and community-based organizations to preserve or develop the supply of housing for households at or below 30 percent of area median income.**

H-123 **King County shall prioritize community-driven development of permanently affordable homeownership and rental projects led by community-based organizations and community land trusts to increase supply and improve housing stability.**

H-124 **King County should work with the state and other partners to remove barriers to providing farmworker housing and explore innovative approaches to meeting farmworker housing needs.**

H-125 **King County should work with local employers to promote the development of affordable workforce housing opportunities located near employment sites.**

H-126 **King County should encourage the development and preservation of affordable family-sized and family-friendly housing to increase the supply of housing suitable and affordable for families with children, recognizing that family housing requires greater subsidies due to larger household size, the need for play areas for children, and separation of parking and access roads from play areas.**

1. Expand Housing Options and Increased Affordability Near Transit

The policies in this subsection strengthen the linkage of affordable housing to jobs and public transportation through transit-oriented development and the preservation and development of affordable housing near transit stations and along transit corridors Strengthening linkages between housing and public transportation is beneficial to the community, economy, and environment. As housing density increases to meet the needs of the current and growing population, supportive infrastructure and services, such as public transit, needs to be utilized and adapted. The Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031 directs King County to strengthen this connection and support equitable transit-oriented communities. As the population of the Puget Sound region grows, King County is expected to remain the major employment center of the region. As job growth occurs, the workers for these jobs must be accommodated with adequate opportunities for housing and access to public transportation options.

H-127 **King County shall support affordable and mixed-income housing development in transit-oriented locations that is compatible with surrounding uses by:**

- **a. Providing information and a process for accessing potential development sites in transit-oriented locations where King County has ownership or access to potential sites; and**
- **b. Promoting land use patterns that connect housing with active transportation choices.**

H-128 **King County shall support transit-oriented development near high-capacity or frequent transit that preserves and expands affordable, sustainable, and mixed-income housing opportunities by:**

- **a. Enabling development of affordable housing on suitable Metro-owned property;**
- **b. Using Metro's authority and influence as a transit provider; and**
- **c. Engaging with funding partners, transit partners, jurisdictions, private for-profit and nonprofit development entities, communities at risk of displacement, and other transit-oriented development partners.**

H-129 **King County shall work with partners to mitigate and prevent displacement of households earning up to 120 percent of area median income, including from transit oriented-locations, and shall strive to align affordable housing investments and transit investments to increase the quality of life of historically underinvested communities.**

2. Housing Tools and Processes

With the projected population growth and increased number of family and senior households with limited income, combined with the short supply of affordable housing available today, new development must include affordable housing and a variety of housing types to meet the housing need and reduce racial disparities in housing outcomes.

Meeting King County's housing needs means adopting appropriate land use regulations to require and incentivize the development, rehabilitation, and preservation

of a variety of affordable housing, such as higher-density single detached homes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, apartments, manufactured housing, cottage housing, accessory dwelling units, and mixed-use developments. In addition, a clear and consistently applied set of land use tools and processes will increase King County's housing supply. Shorter and more consistent permit processing can save applicants time and money, which means housing projects can be completed sooner and at less cost. Streamlined processes can also improve community involvement because it is easier to understand a project's review process.

H-130 **King County shall continue to improve development standards, planning tools, and policies to allow higher densities and flexibility of housing types in all urban residential zones to increase housing supply, types, tenure, choice, access, and stability in a manner that also enriches the area's urban form and character.**

H-131 **King County shall provide opportunities for attached and detached accessory dwelling units and middle housing in urban residential areas to increase housing supply affordable to all incomes.**

H-132 **King County shall incentivize the development of new housing models that are healthy and affordable by providing opportunities within unincorporated urban areas and near commercial areas. King County shall allow innovative housing projects to move forward, including affordable housing demonstration projects, community-driven development projects, affordable owner-built housing, land trusts and cooperative ownership structures for rental and ownership housing, co-housing, and other innovative developments.**

H-133 **King County shall adopt appropriate land use regulations to require and incentivize development, rehabilitation, and preservation of sustainable housing affordable to households earning up to 120 percent of area median income. King County shall regularly monitor the effectiveness of creating affordable housing units as part of King County's participation in regular monitoring of housing measures with the Growth Management Planning Council.**

H-134 **King County shall ensure that mandatory and incentivized affordable housing units created through its land use policies and regulations are high quality, safe, and integrated on-site with market rate housing.**

H-135 **King County shall seek to minimize the time necessary to process permits for developments that will include affordable housing. King County shall expedite plan and permitting reviews for affordable housing projects in coordination with mandatory, incentive, or subsidy programs, including tax abatements, exemptions, and credits.**

H-136 **King County shall, to the maximum extent allowed by law, exempt payment of impact fees in unincorporated areas for developments that will include affordable rental or ownership housing.**

H-137 **King County shall encourage regional land use and investment strategies to stimulate mixed-income developments to economically integrate neighborhoods, increase housing and transportation choices throughout King County, and improve housing stability for people of all incomes.**

H-138 **King County shall support integrated multi-generational communities through increased housing options, incentives, and zoning flexibility.**

H-139 **King County shall encourage the development of single detached residences through the splitting of a single residential lot into two residential lots.**

H-140 **King County shall continue to seek opportunities to fund anti-displacement tools and programs.**

E. Expanded Housing and Neighborhood Choice for All Residents

Equitable access to housing plays a critical role in promoting social justice and reducing racial disparities in King County. King County supports policies that promote equitable access to housing for all and repair racially disparate housing outcomes. This includes policies that address housing discrimination, protect renters, promote homeownership, expand access to affordable housing, and encourage equitable development. King County partners with community organizations and other partners to work towards meeting the needs of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities; and those with special housing needs; veterans, military servicemembers, and their respective families; persons experiencing homelessness; people with disabilities; immigrants; refugees; LGBTQIA+ persons; families with children; and survivors of domestic violence, gender-based violence, human trafficking, and commercial exploitation.

The Racially Disparate Impact Analysis section of the Housing Needs Assessment details the local history of racially exclusive and discriminatory land use and housing in unincorporated King County. Historically, private property owners, lending institutions, and federal, state, and local governments implemented strategies to restrict access to housing, land, and neighborhoods to people based on their race, nation of origin, and sometimes religion. These strategies perpetuated racial segregation and wealth inequities throughout the country and in King County. Some of these policies and practices known to have been enforced or practiced in unincorporated King County include Indigenous land dispossession, the Alien Land Law, Japanese internment and incarceration, racially restrictive covenants, and discriminatory lending practices that led to disproportionate access to homeownership (redlining). While some explicitly discriminatory laws have been overturned, their legacy and effects have remained, preventing Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities from sharing the recent prosperity of King County and the Puget Sound region. The policies in this section seek to identify and remediate inequitable policies, processes, or regulations and remove barriers to equity and inclusion for these communities.

1. Equitable Housing Access

H-141 **King County shall actively promote and affirmatively further fair housing in unincorporated King County through its housing programs, and shall participate in efforts with its partners to further fair housing, housing and neighborhood choice, and provide access to opportunity for communities that bear the burdens of systemic underinvestment and lack of access and opportunity.**

H-142 **King County shall prohibit restrictive covenants or other land use, permitting, or property conditions that limit the ability of persons from protected classes (as defined in the King County Fair Housing Ordinance in King County Code Chapter 12.20) to live in residences of their choice.**

H-143 **King County shall flexibly apply its zoning, rules, policies, practices, and services in its funding, incentive, or mandatory affordable housing programs to afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling or to create new affordable housing opportunities for persons with disabilities.**

H-144 **King County should work with housing industry representatives to identify and remove barriers (such as real estate marketing, finance, or insurance practices) that restrict housing choices and opportunities for households at or below 50 percent of area median income and persons with special housing needs.**

H-145 **King County shall permit group living situations, including those where residents receive supportive services, such as counseling, foster care, or medical supervision, within a single detached residence, houseplex, or apartment.**

H-146 **King County shall encourage the use of universal design in the development of affordable housing and market-rate housing to create units that are accessible to seniors.**

2. Repairing Harm and Promoting Equitable Outcomes in Communities Most Impacted by Racially Exclusive Land Use and Housing Practices

H-147 **King County shall take intentional actions that repair harms to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color households from past and current racially exclusive and discriminatory land use and housing practices that result in racially disparate outcomes, such as development patterns, disparate homeownership rates, affordable housing divestment in lower-income communities, and infrastructure availability, such as through:**

- **a. Creating opportunities for development of middle housing;**
- **b. Investing in rental assistance and eviction prevention programs;**
- **c. Implementing a community preference program to prevent displacement;**
- **d. Investing in equitable development projects to support community-driven priorities;**
- **e. Preserving manufactured home communities and affordable housing to prevent displacement;**
- **f. Expanding homeownership programs to increase wealth building;**
- **g. Supporting programs that mitigate and prevent displacement of households at or below 120 percent of area median income; and**
- **h. Supporting efforts by Washington State to fund down payment and closing costs assistance.**

H-148 **King County shall promote equitable outcomes in communities most impacted by racially exclusive and discriminatory land use and housing practices, such as in North Highline and Skyway-West Hill, by supporting equitable access to resources, in partnership with impacted communities, such as through surplus properties, affordable housing financing, and capacity building for community-based organizations.**

H-149 **King County shall support actions that increase and preserve access to affordable rental and ownership housing in communities at risk of displacement and advance housing stability for populations who experience systemic racism or discrimination.**

H-150 **King County shall engage underrepresented populations to advance community-driven development.**

H-151 **King County shall support development of new affordable housing units that promote culturally relevant and multi-generational housing options, through strategies such as prioritized funding, technical assistance, and flexible development regulations.**

H-152 **King County shall support equitable development projects and investments in areas most directly impacted by structural racism and discrimination, in communities at a higher risk of displacement, that have low access to economic and health opportunities, or that are home to significant populations of communities experiencing disparities in life outcomes, through:**

a. Advancing home ownership opportunities as a means to economic mobility and opportunity for residents;
b. Preventing displacement;
c. Building upon and protecting local cultural assets that anchor communities;
d. Supporting organizational capacity building;
e. Promoting transportation mobility and connectivity; and
f. Enabling equitable access for all communities.

H-153 **King County shall take actions to prevent and mitigate displacement by supporting cultural institutions and community hubs and implementing programs that help people with a connection to the local community remain in or return to their community of choice.**

H-154 **King County shall support policies and programs that minimize risks of displacement, such as:**

a. Community preference and right to return policies;
b. Property tax exemption programs;
c. Priority hire programs;
d. Mandatory and voluntary inclusionary housing programs;
e. Tenant relocation assistance policies;
f. Down payment assistance programs;
g. Affordable rental housing policies;
h. Community land trusts;
i. Manufactured housing community preservation policies; and
j. Redevelopment assistance programs.

H-155 **King County shall, as part of King County's participation in regular monitoring of housing measures with the Growth Management Planning Council, monitor progress toward the elimination of racial and other disparities in housing and neighborhood choices, identify factors that the County has control over that cause disparities, and remediate these factors.**

H-156 **King County shall raise awareness of existing Property Tax Exemption programs offered by the Assessor's Office for eligible homeowners.**

F. Housing Stability

The rising cost of housing threatens people's ability to remain in their communities. The housing market has experienced great highs and lows that have benefitted some, creating and exacerbating hardship and inequalities for others. There are substantial disparities in housing access between White and Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color households, underscoring the ongoing effects of systemic racism in housing. Housing stability creates a foundational structure for individuals and families that , contributes to every person's well-being and improvements to health, economic, and educational outcomes for communities. VISION, the Countywide Planning Policies, and

the Regional Affordable Housing Task Force's Five Year Action Plan prioritize housing stability strategies.

These policies in this section support housing stability through the preservation of existing affordable units, increasing access to homeownership, assisting those with special housing needs to remain in their homes, and supporting tenant protections and eviction prevention programs. King County raises local resources for housing stability programs from the Best Starts for Kids Levy, the Crisis Cares Centers Levy, and the Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy.

1. Preservation of Existing Units

H-157 **King County shall work with partners to support the preservation of:**
- **a. Affordable rental housing opportunities for households earning up to 80 percent of area median income; and**
- **b. Affordable ownership housing opportunities for households earning up to 120 percent of area median income.**

H-158 **King County should prioritize preservation in communities at risk of displacement or areas that may experience redevelopment due to proximity to high-capacity or frequent transit.**

H-159 **King County shall explore incentives and subsidy programs to preserve affordable housing threatened by market forces and expiring federal subsidies. Relocation assistance and replacement housing should be funded when displacement is unavoidable.**

H-160 **King County should assist owners of rental properties serving households between 50 to 120 percent of area median income to acquire affordable financing for building health and safety improvements in exchange for long-term agreements to maintain affordable rents.**

H-161 **King County should coordinate preservation of existing affordable housing with city and County historic preservation programs and incentives and should promote preservation and restoration of significant historic features in the rehabilitation of existing buildings and sites for housing.**

H-162 **King County shall support the preservation, and improve the quality and livability, of manufactured home communities to prevent displacement.**

2. Increase Access to Homeownership

H-163 **King County shall provide financial assistance for housing rehabilitation to homeowners at or below 80 percent of area median income, including owners of manufactured homes residing in manufactured home communities or on their own land through individual or cooperative ownership.**

H-164 **King County should work with local lenders and nonprofit organizations providing homeownership assistance to expand assistance for eligible income-qualified homebuyers, including homebuyer education and counseling, mortgage default and foreclosure counseling, culturally relevant low-cost financing and assistance with down payments and closing costs, and alternative ownership housing models such as land trusts and co-housing.**

H-165 **King County should advocate for revisions to state law that facilitate and support tools, such as condominium reforms, for advancing more homeownership opportunities.**

3. Tenant Protections, Eviction Prevention, and Homelessness

H-166 **King County shall support and implement programs and policies that increase housing stability and help to prevent and reduce homelessness, such as permanent supportive housing, emergency rental assistance, short-term rental assistance, diversion assistance, eviction prevention, mortgage default and foreclosure counseling, and improvements to emergency services referral networks, including coordinating with service providers contracting with King County and with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority to develop and implement an efficient, coordinated intake system for families and individuals experiencing homelessness.**

H-167 **King County should support federal and state legislation that prohibits rental property owners from:**

- **a. Contracting with companies that coordinate rental housing prices and housing supply information; and**
- **b. Coordinating price, supply, and other rental housing information with other rental property owners.**

H-168 **King County should encourage development of permanent supportive and other affordable housing through redevelopment of nonresidential buildings in locations suitable for housing to create housing stability for households at or below 80 percent of area median income and in ways that preserve significant historic features where appropriate.**

H-169 **King County shall support:**

- **a. Rental assistance, eviction prevention, and other programs that provide tenants with the resources and information to successfully navigate landlord-tenant disputes; and**
- **b. Legislation that increases tenants' access to safe, affordable, healthy, and stable housing.**

H-170 **King County shall pursue code changes that provide housing stability for tenants, including rent stabilization, and protect investment for the rental property owner.**

H-171 **King County shall work with jurisdictions and housing providers locally and across the state to urge state and federal governments to expand funding for direct assistance services, such as rental assistance and eviction prevention resources, diversion assistance, and emergency housing services.**

H-172 **King County should work with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority and other housing partners and cities to oppose and repeal policies, regulations, and actions that result in the criminalization of homelessness and homeless encampments.**

H-173 **King County should collaborate with the City of Seattle, the King County Regional Homelessness Authority, other cities, and housing partners in efforts to prevent and end homelessness and focus those efforts on providing permanent housing with supportive services, expanding safe temporary shelter, and securing necessary resources to implement these efforts.**

G. Health Equity

Healthy housing protects all residents from exposure to harmful substances and environments, provides opportunities for safe and convenient daily physical activity, reduces the risk of injury, and ensures access to healthy food and social connectivity. Housing characteristics, including location, surrounding conditions, size, indoor air quality, ambient pollution exposure, and amenity availability, significantly affect household residents' physical and mental health. Household conditions in the built environment, where people spend the most time, have a pronounced effect on health outcomes, especially for children and youth experiencing their sensitive years of physical, emotional, and mental development. An unaffordable housing market, historical racially restrictive covenants, and other patterns of systemic disinvestment have resulted in significant disparities in housing-related health outcomes. In King County, asthma, mental health challenges, and elevated blood lead levels are more prevalent in households of greater social vulnerability.

Chemicals representing the "worst in class" substances prevalent in the building industry that pose serious risks to human health and the environment are identified as red list chemicals. Red list chemicals serve many different functions in many building products. However, the use of these chemicals can cause harm to health and the environment. Hazards include cancer, reproductive toxicity, acute or chronic organ toxicity, endocrine disruption, ozone depletion, and others. Although prevalent, red list chemicals are not necessary in most instances. Safer chemical alternatives, product designs, and building designs are possible.

H-174 **King County should incorporate the principles of healthy housing and communities into programs, plans, and policy initiatives on affordable housing and community development in unincorporated areas.**

H-175 **King County should promote the incorporation of non-toxic and red list-free materials in the construction of affordable housing through use of the Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard, to improve the social determinants of health for residents.**

H-176 **King County should support the development, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable, healthy, and sustainable housing that protects residents from exposure to harmful substances and environments, such as lead; reduces the risk of injury; is well-maintained; and is adaptable to all ages and abilities. King County should work on a regional level with jurisdictions to explore tools to ensure healthy housing is provided throughout the region to improve housing stability of residents.**

H-177 **King County shall strive to apply principles that lead to thriving healthy communities in all neighborhoods of the county. King County shall support:**

- **a. Access to safe and convenient opportunities to be physically active, including access to walking, bicycling, recreation, and transit infrastructure;**
- **b. Access to healthy, affordable foods and the elimination of food deserts;**
- **c. Protection from exposure to harmful environmental agents, such as lead and infectious disease;**
- **d. Access to transportation infrastructure designed to prevent pedestrian, bicyclist, and motor vehicle-related injuries;**
- **e. Neighborhoods free from violence and fear of violence;**
- **f. Protection from involuntary exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke and under-age access to tobacco products;**
- **g. Protection from disproportionate retail and promotion of products known to cause poor health outcomes, such as tobacco and cannabis, in areas where residents have higher social vulnerability and risk factors;**
- **h. Community amenities and design that maximizes opportunities for social connectivity and stress reduction; and**
- **i. A range of health services, including timely emergency response and culturally relevant preventive medical, behavioral, and dental care within their community.**

1. Asthma Prevention

Approximately six percent of children and nearly nine percent of adults in King County have been diagnosed with asthma. The demographic group in which this chronic disease is most common is American Indians/Alaska Natives, with a prevalence of over 26 percent. Housing is perhaps the most critical social determinant in asthma health disparities. Water intrusion, which can stem from plumbing leaks, roof leaks, and unventilated or damp basements, may lead to mold development and attract pests. Cracks, holes in the walls, and water leaks are associated with cockroach allergen. Research has shown that household repairs to address these conditions reduce asthma symptoms and hospitalizations and improve quality of life.

H-178 **King County shall support and encourage smoke free policies in multiunit housing and affordable housing, where appropriate.**

H-179 **Public Health - Seattle & King County should reduce the prevalence and harm of asthma by conducting population studies, providing technical support to policy advocates, and training and deploying a Community Health Worker program.**

2. Safe Firearm Storage

Crime and perceived safety vary by geographic area in King County and is an equity and racial and social justice concern. Safe communities promote resiliency and can act as a protective factor preventing violence and other crime. In particular, gun violence, including suicide, is a public health and public safety issue. Unsafe firearm storage can result in the gun finding its way into the hands of someone planning to use it for suicide, homicide, or assault. For the most recent three years for which King County data are available (2016, 2018, and 2020), 27 percent of firearm owners with children and 44 percent of firearm owners without children kept their firearms stored unlocked. Evidence has shown that safely storing firearms – unloaded and locked – is a protective factor in preventing youth suicide. Safe storage can also limit theft and the expansion of the illegal gun market. Education of firearm owners about safe firearm storage is a key public health strategy, as is making safe firearm storage an easy choice.

H-180 **King County should work to address the public health and public safety crisis of gun violence by collecting epidemiological and other data; engaging with cities, local neighborhoods, and other partners; and making information available that promotes safe firearm storage and fosters community safety.**

H-181 **King County shall work with jurisdictions, the private sector, state and federal governments, other funders of public housing, other public agencies, and the nonprofit sector to support public and private housing that allows for the opportunity to encourage permanent safe firearm storage locations that make safe storage an easy choice and foster safety from injury and violence, through exploring housing and community designs that are shown to increase connectivity and reduce violence.**

3. Eliminating Lead Exposure

Although exposures to lead have generally decreased due to regulatory interventions, lead poisoning remains a significant, but preventable, environmental justice problem. The most vulnerable populations are children under six years of age. Lead-based paint is the largest source of lead exposure nationwide and in King County. The greatest lead-based paint risk is in housing built before 1978. The 2017-2021 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample indicates that among King County children under age six, 46 percent live in homes built before 1978. The preferred method for eliminating exposure from lead-based paint would be to remove it from all housing; however, it is impracticable to require this of all property owners. King County assists developers, homeowners, and tenants to become aware of the lead-based paint risks, its impacts on health, and the tools and requirements needed to reduce exposures, including the use of lead-safe work practices.

King County has regulatory or programmatic reach to address many housing-related health challenges. Most new affordable housing is developed under Washington State Evergreen Sustainable Development Standards, and substantial renovation of existing housing may require upgrades to the current building code. Indoor air quality is being improved in the limited number of homes that receive equipment and/or technical assistance from Public Health – Seattle & King County and partner programs.

The policies in this subsection are intended to work upstream of programmatic responses to help avoid and mitigate exposures and harms. They point to harm-reduction countermeasures in housing development characteristics, operations and maintenance stages, and housing demolition practices.

H-182 **King County shall implement strategies to eliminate exposure to lead where children, youth, and families live, learn, and play, including:**

- **a. Advocating for countywide efforts to screen all children (at 12 months and 24 months) for exposure to lead poisoning and monitoring of this data;**
- **b. Working to ensure all renovation, repair, and painting work that disturbs painted surfaces in pre-1978 dwellings be performed in compliance with the requirements of the Washington Department of Commerce to reduce exposure to lead-contaminated dusts; and**
- **c. Working to ensure strategies are used that minimize or eliminate the spread of lead dust during the demolition of pre-1978 residential and commercial buildings, including community education and notification.**

II. Health and Human Services

King County has a regional role in health and human services, working with many partners, such as the federal, state, and other local governments, service providers, nonprofit organizations, foundations, faith communities, businesses, schools, and the criminal legal system, to help those most in need. King County's investments in human services are guided by policies in this section and the Best Starts for Kids Levy; Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund; Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy; Crisis Cares Centers Levy; Initial Health through Housing Implementation Plan 2022-2028, or successor plans; Strategic Climate Action Plan; and the King County Board of Health Planning for Healthy Communities Guidelines and Recommendations. King County places a strong emphasis on stabilizing people and diverting them from jails, emergency rooms, and crisis services by providing residents with appropriate treatment and services. The County also provides upstream prevention services for the health of children and youth to reduce the need for acute care and crisis interventions later in life.

King County's overreliance on the criminal legal system and emergency medical responses to health and human service needs has proven fiscally unsustainable, ineffective at creating lasting change, and frequently harmful to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color residents. Acknowledging these unacceptable costs, King County and other partners have expanded alternative approaches to prevent unnecessary engagement with law enforcement and the criminal legal system, including jail diversion programs and increased coordination with health and human services programs.

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority was created to coordinate funding, contracting, service delivery, and performance measurement for the regional homelessness crisis response system. After King County and the City of Seattle signed the Interlocal Agreement to establish the Regional Homelessness Authority in 2020, and with support from the Sound Cities Association, the transition of homelessness crisis response to the Regional Homelessness Authority began. The County continues to separately fund and manage investments in capital housing development and other permanent housing purposes.

A. Health and Human Service Provision

H-201 **King County shall promote effectiveness, accountability, equity, and racial and social justice in its health and human service actions and investments by:**

- **a. Providing information to the community on its health, human services, and behavioral health system planning and evaluation activities, funding processes and criteria, and on the results of its investments in a transparent, accountable, and culturally and audience-appropriate manner;**
- **b. Upholding federal, state, and local laws against discrimination;**
- **c. Promoting culturally relevant and equitable service delivery;**
- **d. Working to end disparities in social, health, and economic status among communities and people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds;**
- **e. Working with local service providers to provide behavioral health services to individuals in need, including equitable prevention, crisis diversion, mental health, substance use disorder, and co-occurring disorder treatment services to youth, young adults, and seniors. The County shall assume primary responsibility for coordinating the provision of countywide behavioral health services (including crisis services, mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, co-occurring disorder treatment, and housing support services), working in partnership with the state, cities, managed care organizations, and local service providers;**
- **f. Supporting service approaches that promote recovery and resilience and support individuals and families to achieve their full potential to live meaningful and productive lives in the community;**
- **g. Fostering integration of systems of care through increased information sharing and collaborative efforts across agencies and programs for the purpose of improved service delivery, coordination, and shared outcomes; and**
- **h. Working with its partners to assess and respond to changing human service and behavioral health needs and use data, research, innovation, analysis, and evidence-based practices to drive its investments.**

H-202 **King County shall retain responsibility for implementation of mandated, through law or policy, countywide specialty systems for: behavioral health, including crisis services, mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, co-occurring disorder treatment, and housing support services; physical, emotional, and cognitive health; public health; veterans, military servicemembers, and their respective families; seniors; children, families, and youth; vulnerable adults; and people with developmental disabilities.**

H-203 **In coordination with local jurisdictions, funding partners, and community partners, King County shall develop and sustain coordinated regional health and human services and behavioral health systems to provide services, support, safety, and opportunity to those most in need. In carrying out its role in such systems, King County shall:**

- **a. Work with other jurisdictions and organizations to implement a regional health and human services and behavioral health system and strengthen financing, access, and overall effectiveness of services;**
- **b. Collaborate with other funders to ensure coordination in how funds are used, and continue to explore improvements to system design, contracting, and data collection and analysis; and**
- **c. Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of this policy framework periodically and revise if needed.**

H-204 **King County shall partner with regional bodies, such as the King County Regional Homelessness Authority, that lead other human service and prevention-oriented systems, including those that address homelessness, the needs of seniors, domestic violence, gender-based violence, crisis diversion and re-entry, early intervention and prevention, youth and family services, and climate-related emergencies, such as severe weather response, for people experiencing homelessness.**

H-205 **King County shall prioritize human service programs and services that help people in need become more stable and healthy, and that prevent or reduce the need for costly emergency medical services, crisis services, and involvement with the criminal legal system. King County shall focus resources and efforts on effective intervention and prevention that improve individual and community quality of life and enhance equity and racial and social justice. King County shall preserve the resources necessary to collaborate as a partner in regional human service systems. These focus areas include the following priority investment areas, which are consistent with other regional plans and initiatives:**

- **a. Job readiness, support for job development in business innovation districts;**
- **b. Affordable housing;**
- **c. Community and economic development activities;**
- **d. Strategies to create a homelessness response system that centers people with lived experience to focus on responding to needs and eliminating inequities to end homelessness for all;**
- **e. Behavioral health services (including crisis services, mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, co-occurring disorder treatment, and housing support services); and**
- **f. Strategies and programs to build the life, academic, and employment skills for young people to reach their full potential as they transition from childhood to adulthood.**

B. Locating and Designing Health and Human Services Facilities

It is critical to consider the role of the built environment in healing and how health and care services are provided. The built environment has the potential to transform the quality of life that people experience when they are in care. Thoughtful people- and patient-centered design has the potential to build on individual or community resiliency, mitigate prior trauma, prevent further harm, and promote healing, especially when developed in consultation with those who use the facility.

Consideration of the physical environment, both inside and outside of facilities, can support trauma-informed care by health service providers. Such design incorporates elements that support physical, psychological, and emotional safety, such as access to nature, clear wayfinding, wider hallways, open and well-lit stairways, clear sightlines, noise mitigation, flexible lighting, calming paint colors, exterior fences, reflecting and honoring culture, and warm and welcoming open spaces and communal areas.

The design elements of facilities are only one component of how a facility can contribute to an individual's health and well-being. Where a facility is located and its accessibility to the clientele it is intended to serve is another important aspect of systems planning.

H-206 **King County shall support and implement health-related policies and programs that address the social determinants of health and the built environment by partnering with healthcare services, community-based organizations, foundations, other regional agencies, boards, commissions, and elected officials to improve public health.**

H-207 **King County shall support significant increases in the role and influence of residents living in communities that have disproportionately lower health outcomes by intentionally engaging those who are affected by health and human services policy development, planning, and service delivery in authentic and meaningful ways.**

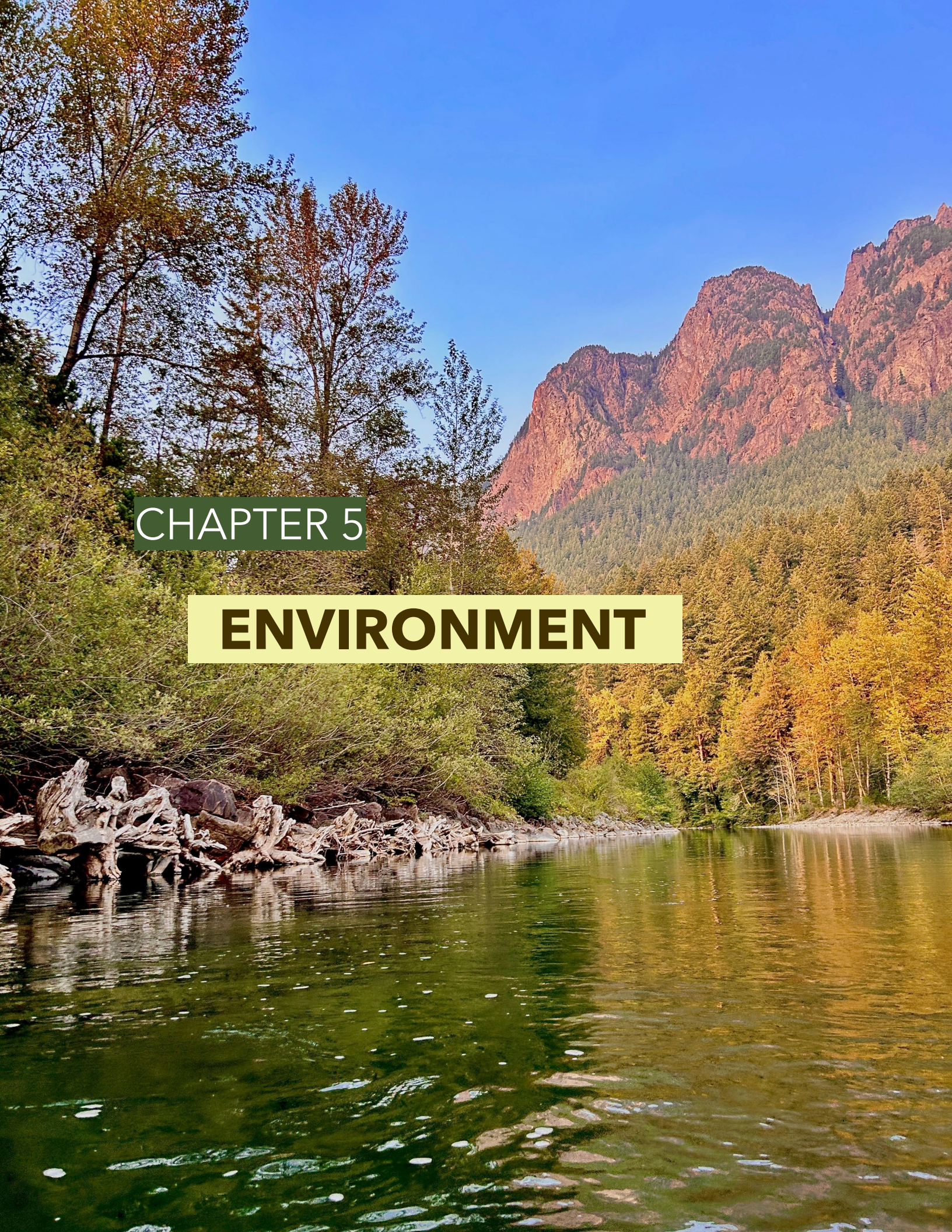
H-208 **King County shall, to the extent possible, promote the location of health and human services facilities in areas that balance the County's shared interests in service delivery that is more accessible, effective, and efficient. The equity and racial and social justice opportunities and impacts of possible locations shall be taken into account. Locations should be easily accessible to anticipated clientele via various transportation methods including public transit and make the best use of existing facilities consistent with the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan.**

H-209 **King County should consider, and work to minimize, the impacts on current clients when a health and human services facility is being relocated, which may include impacts related to accessibility, transportation options, and services available at the relocated facility.**

H-210 **People-centered design elements that include principles of patient-centered, recovery-oriented, and trauma-informed care should be considered and incorporated in County-owned or funded regional health and human services facilities, behavioral health facilities, emergency housing, transitional and permanent supportive housing, and affordable housing.**

H-211 **King County shall support and incentivize the provision of childcare at convenient locations, such as near transit and employment centers, to improve access and opportunity for families with children.**

H-212 **King County shall support and incentivize culturally relevant childcare programming for new and existing licensed early learning and childcare facilities to increase affordability for families across all income levels, especially those located in childcare access deserts or which serve families who experience additional barriers to accessing childcare.**



CHAPTER 5

ENVIRONMENT

The environment in King County includes a rich and valuable array of natural resources ranging from marine and freshwater environments to the highly urbanized area, lower-density rural area, highly productive farm and forest land, and to nearly pristine landscapes in the foothills of the Cascades. The policies in this chapter protect that environment, ensure its effective management, and support its restoration where needed. King County residents depend on sound policies not only to protect public health and safety, but also to preserve quality of life for future generations. King County is committed to pursuing partnerships, cost effective strategies, and best management practices to optimize the long term protection and restoration of the environment within available resources. These policies guide King County's environmental development regulations as well as incentives, education, and stewardship programs in unincorporated King County.

The Growth Management Act requires that each city and county in Washington State identify, designate, and protect critical areas found in their local environment. Critical areas, as defined by the Growth Management Act, include wetlands, areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologic hazard areas. Achieving development goals must be integrated with protecting critical area functions and values.

All parts of the county – from densely developed urban areas, to farm and forest land, to the Rural Area – have a role to play and a common interest in environmental protection. Responsibility for environmental protection cannot fall on one geographic area or community alone.

For the urban area, environmental protection occurs through various means, including investing in wastewater treatment and stormwater improvements, protecting greenbelts and other remnants of native habitats, adding new public open space – especially in historically underinvested communities, and concentrating development in densely developed areas. For the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, it means protecting aquifers used for drinking water, using development practices that infiltrate stormwater, and protecting water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. On farmlands, forestlands, and lands in the Rural Area, stewardship and technical assistance provide opportunities for supporting long-term resource use while protecting the environment.

Climate change is already having severe and wide-ranging impacts on public health, safety, and welfare; the economy; and the environment. Climate change in the Pacific Northwest is projected to continue to bring more severe weather events including extreme heat events, wildfires, storms, and droughts; decreased water supply for people and fish; and changes in habitat and species distribution.

Salmon recovery continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing the Puget Sound Region, despite significant investment in habitat protection and restoration over more than twenty years since the listing of Chinook salmon and bull trout as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. There has been unprecedented cooperation between Indian tribes, local governments, residents, conservation districts, nonprofit groups, and federal and state fisheries managers to develop watershed-based Water Resource Inventory Area plans for salmon conservation. These plans form the basis for the federal recovery plan for Chinook salmon. Watershed partners are continuing to work together to implement and monitor these plans through Water Resource Inventory Area Forums. Southern Resident orca, which are dependent on Chinook salmon as a food source, were listed as endangered in 2005.

Individual species protections under the Endangered Species Act continue to play an important role. At the same time, both nationally and internationally, many governments are initiating multi-species approaches aimed at conserving biodiversity.

Biodiversity refers not only to plants and animals but also to their habitats and the interactions among species and habitats.

Protection of biodiversity in all its forms and across all landscapes is critical to continued prosperity and quality of life in King County. In fisheries, forestry, and agriculture, the value of biodiversity to sustaining long-term productivity has been demonstrated in region after region. The protection and restoration of biodiversity and of a full range of supporting habitats is important to King County. King County incorporates these considerations in its operations and practices, ranging from its utility functions (such as wastewater, solid waste, and stormwater management) to its regulatory and general government practices.

Untreated stormwater runoff remains the largest source of pollution to Puget Sound. Stormwater management requirements and practices continue to evolve, with greater emphasis on low impact development and green stormwater infrastructure that can mimic the natural functions of soil and forest cover in slowing and filtering stormwater runoff by infiltrating or dispersing stormwater on-site, or by capturing and reusing it. The County continues to develop, apply, and update evidence-based tools to identify and prioritize actions to achieve the best outcomes for reducing pollution to Puget Sound.

Monitoring and performance measurement help local governments to target limited resources on existing and emerging environmental problems, determine whether actions are having their intended effect, promote accountability, and adapt approaches to environmental management.

I. General Policy Guidance

The tools King County uses to protect the environment – incentives, regulations, changes in County operations, planning, capital projects, land acquisition, education, stewardship, and monitoring – need to be integrated. For example, the regulatory buffers placed around wetlands need to consider changing conditions in the watershed around the wetland, including natural hydrological processes. These conditions are influenced by land use, stormwater runoff management, clearing and grading requirements, and protection of forest cover and open space. Incentives, education, and technical assistance programs also must work hand-in-hand so that landowners can access a seamless set of programs that work together to accomplish environmental protection and restoration.

As part of the 10-year Comprehensive Plan update process, King County updates its critical areas, stormwater runoff management, and clearing and grading regulations consistent with Growth Management Act requirements to include best available science, ensure no net loss of the functions and values of critical areas, and demonstrate "special consideration" given to conservation and protection of anadromous fish species. These regulations are functionally interrelated, with the standards for protection of wetlands, aquatic areas, and wildlife areas also working in tandem with standards for stormwater management, water quality, and clearing and grading, as well as programs for land conservation.

The County offers a variety of incentives for landowners to promote environmental stewardship and restoration and enhancement of ecosystems. These include tax incentive programs through which landowners can receive reduced property taxes in exchange for commitments to protect open space and natural resources, market-based programs for permanent land protection and regulatory flexibility (such as the Transfer of Development Rights program and fee-in-lieu compensatory mitigation program), and free or low -cost technical assistance.

King County uses existing and updated subarea and functional plans and Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plans to guide programs, regulations, and incentives to protect and restore environmental quality. The County has initiated the Land Conservation Initiative, which calls for a series of accelerated actions to close gaps in equitable access to open space and to protect King County's last, most important natural lands and urban green spaces before increasing land prices and development pressure foreclose opportunities for conservation. The Land Conservation Initiative is a regional collaboration between King County, cities, businesses, farmers, environmental partners, and other key partners to achieve conservation results more quickly and cost-effectively.

E-101 **Environmental quality and important ecological functions shall be protected and hazards to health and property shall be minimized through development reviews and implementation of land use and environmental plans and programs.**

E-102 **In addition to its regulatory authority, King County should use incentives to protect and restore the natural environment. Incentives should be monitored and periodically reviewed to determine their effectiveness at protecting and restoring natural resources.**

E-103 **King County should take a regional role in promoting and supporting environmental stewardship through direct education, coordinating of educational efforts, and establishing partnerships with other entities that share similar environmental concerns and stewardship opportunities.**

E-104 **King County shall consider environmental justice and climate equity impacts and disparities in its planning, projects, and services to assess and mitigate unintended impacts on frontline communities and to ensure solutions that enhance conditions for people and the environment.**

E-105 **The protection of lands where development would pose hazards to health and safety, property, important ecological functions, or environmental quality shall be achieved through acquisition, enhancement, incentive programs, and appropriate regulations. The following critical areas and their buffers are particularly susceptible and shall be protected in King County:**

a. Critical aquifer recharge areas;
b. Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas;
c. Frequently flooded areas, regulated as flood hazard areas;
d. Geologically hazardous areas; and
e. Wetlands.

E-106 **King County should take precautionary action informed by best available science where there is risk of damage to the environment. Precautionary action should be coupled with monitoring and adaptive management.**

King County coordinates many programs internally as well as with other agencies and governments. The cooperative development and implementation of watershed-based salmon recovery plans over the last decade has brought together local governments, federal and state agencies, residents, and interest groups. Continued collaboration at the watershed level is critical for successful implementation of these habitat focused plans. Indian tribes with treaty-reserved fishing rights and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife co-manage harvest and hatchery actions. Working closely with these co-managers is essential to ensure that watershed-based salmon recovery strategies effectively integrate habitat, harvest, and hatchery actions.

King County works closely with federal and state agencies, cities, and other counties to try to integrate and streamline compliance with federal mandates, including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act. In doing so, multiple benefits can be achieved. For example, in some cases mandated monitoring for Clean Water Act compliance can provide useful information to support salmon conservation efforts.

King County also participates in the Puget Sound Partnership, which works to coordinate and significantly strengthen the federal, state, local, and private efforts undertaken to date to protect and restore the health of Puget Sound and its watersheds.

E-107 **Development of environmental regulations, restoration and mitigation projects, and incentive and stewardship programs should be coordinated with Indian tribes, local jurisdictions, federal and state agencies, special interest groups, and residents when conserving and restoring the natural environment consistent with Urban Growth Area, Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands goals.**

E-108 **King County's land use and park planning and regulatory and operational functions related to environmental protection, public safety, and equity should be closely coordinated across departments and with other applicable agencies and organizations to achieve an ecosystem-based approach.**

E-109 **King County should promote the efficient provision of utilities and public services by exempting minor activities from critical areas regulations if the agency develops a best management practices plan that:**

- **a. Is based on best available science;**
- **b. Accounts for no net loss of ecological functions; and**
- **c. Ensures projects that may affect habitats of endangered, threatened, sensitive, or candidate species, or species of local importance, are carried out in a manner that protects the resource and mitigates adverse impacts.**

The State Environmental Policy Act requires King County to consider the environmental impacts of proposed actions. Over the years, King County has adopted development regulations that address many of the impacts that are likely to occur as a result of development. In many cases, King County's regulations adequately address environmental impacts and development proposals do not require additional mitigation under the State Environmental Policy Act. However, there may be certain development proposals or unusual circumstances not contemplated by the development regulations that require further mitigation under the State Environmental Policy Act. This principle is articulated in King County Code Chapter 20.44. The presence of a species listed by the federal government as endangered or threatened is an example of such an unusual circumstance.

E-110 **King County may exercise its substantive authority under the State Environmental Policy Act to condition or deny proposed actions to mitigate associated individual or cumulative impacts such as significant habitat modification or degradation that impairs breeding, feeding, spawning, rearing, migrating, sheltering, or other essential behavior patterns for endangered, threatened, sensitive, or candidate species, or species and habitats of local importance.**

II. Climate Change

Climate change is one of the paramount environmental and economic challenges for this generation. Human-caused sources of greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane, are causing unprecedented and severe changes in global and local climate systems. This is the consensus view of the world's leading scientists, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

King County faces significant environmental and economic challenges stemming from climate change, including stressed and rapidly changing ecosystems, costly impacts on public and private property, and increasing public health risks related to wildfire smoke, extreme heat waves, and changes in infectious diseases. The impacts of a changing climate will be experienced differently by King County residents, influenced by factors such as income, age, health, and location. These changes can act as a threat multiplier that creates complex challenges, particularly for frontline communities affected by historical and current inequities who have limited resources to adapt.

Effective and equitable climate action requires a significant commitment on the part of King County to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prepare for climate change impacts, and build sustainable and resilient frontline communities.

King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan, updated every five years and approved by the King County Council, is King County's comprehensive legislative and policy plan for equitable climate action. The Strategic Climate Action Plan outlines King County's priorities and commitments for climate action, integrating climate change and climate equity into all areas of County operations and in the County's work with cities, partners, communities, and residents. A subset of the policies and commitments from the Strategic Climate Action Plan are also reflected in this section of the Comprehensive Plan.

E-201 **The County's Strategic Climate Action Plan should guide the planning, development, and implementation of greenhouse gas reduction goals and actions, equitable and community-driven climate solutions, and policies and actions that reduce climate change vulnerabilities and increase climate resilience.**

Major sources of greenhouse gas emissions from King County government operations are associated with combustion of diesel and gasoline for transit buses and fleet vehicles, methane from landfills, electricity usage, fossil fuel usage in buildings and for wastewater treatment, and emissions from the production, use, and disposal of government-purchased goods and services.

At the countywide community scale, the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions are fossil fuel use for building energy and transportation, followed to a lesser extent by land use, refrigerants, waste, and wastewater. In King County, overall greenhouse gas emissions increased by 11 percent from 2007 to 2019; however, per capita emissions declined by seven percent during the same time period. The most substantial drivers for an increase in emissions were population growth, higher greenhouse gas emissions from electricity, and increased aviation emissions. The largest contributors to decreasing emissions have been increased efficiency of passenger vehicles (decreased emissions per mile) and more efficient electricity use by households and commercial entities. Additional significant emissions are associated with consumption in King County, but these sources do not necessarily occur within its geographic borders. These emissions are created through the production, transport, sale, use, and disposal of purchased goods and services.

King County is committed to innovation, leadership, and investment in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, prioritizing climate equity, and preparing for the impacts of climate change. Consideration of climate change impacts and opportunities to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions are deeply embedded throughout the work plans and capital investments of County departments and lines of business.

The following subsections include climate-related policies, which are consistent with key Strategic Climate Action Plan goals, strategies, and priority actions.

A. Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

King County is reducing operational sources of greenhouse gas emissions through efforts such as:

- Increasing the efficiency of County vehicle fleets and minimizing their greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reducing energy use in County facilities, making investments to reduce building fossil fuel use, and producing more renewable energy;
- Building, maintaining, and operating County facilities consistent with the highest green building and sustainable building practices;
- Minimizing operational resource use, maximizing reuse and recycling, and choosing products and services with low environmental and greenhouse gas impacts; and
- Managing and restoring County-owned parks, natural lands, and farmlands to maximize biological carbon storage and increase climate resilience.

King County is also supporting emissions reductions at the broader countywide scale through efforts such as:

- Reducing passenger car trips and vehicle emissions by sustaining and increasing transit services, focusing development into urban areas and centers, supporting equitable pricing of vehicle usage, and supporting clean fuels and electric vehicles;
- Reducing energy and fossil fuel use in the built environment and increasing the use of clean energy supplies and technologies by partnering to develop efficiency programs and supporting converting oil, natural gas, and propane-heated homes to clean sources;
- Reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions associated with new construction, additions, retrofits, and remodels in all buildings in King County by working with partners to advance state green building code amendments, updating building codes in unincorporated King County, and improving commercial energy code;
- Achieving a circular economy, whereby waste is minimized though prevention, reuse, recycling, and materials staying in use longer, by spurring and supporting new recycled markets, implementing a regional organics plan, prioritizing food waste reduction strategies, and making recycling improvements at County-owned transfer stations; and
- Protecting high-value forests and farmlands, expanding the total area of forest cover and actively farmed lands, and restoring health, vitality, and resilience of forest and farmlands by implementing the Land Conservation Initiative and Rural Forest Carbon Program, and ensuring that strategies to reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration are included in farm and forest stewardship plans.

King County is committed to actions and solutions that reduce emissions and prevent and repair harms to frontline communities. To learn more about how the County is

committed to advancing climate equity, see additional details in the "Advancing Climate Equity" subsection of this section. Many actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions result in additional benefits, such as saving energy and fuel costs, improving health, and minimizing other types of air and water pollution. For example, walkable, transit-oriented communities have been shown to have significantly below average per capita greenhouse gas emissions while at the same time saving residents money, supporting healthier lifestyles, and creating stronger communities.

In some cases, County actions are direct sources of greenhouse gas emissions but, when considered at a broader scale, have a net emissions reduction benefit. For example, the greenhouse gas emissions avoided by providing public transit service – from decreased driving, providing traffic congestion relief, and supporting walkable, efficient land use – are three times greater than direct emissions from operating public transit service itself. As this example shows, there are sometimes complex considerations that need to be taken into account in making decisions about greenhouse gas emissions reduction strategies.

1. Government Operations

E-202 **King County shall reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its operations and actions, including but not limited to, those associated with construction and management of County-owned facilities, infrastructure development, transportation, and environmental protection programs, to achieve the emissions reductions targets set in Policy E-203 and to work towards the carbon neutral goal in Policy F-416.**

E-203 **King County shall reduce total greenhouse gas emissions from government operations, compared to a 2007 baseline, by at least 50 percent by 2025 and 80 percent by 2030.**

E-204 **King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks, including the Wastewater Treatment Division, Solid Waste Division, Parks and Recreation Division, and Water and Land Resources Division, shall achieve, at a minimum, net carbon neutrality on an annual basis.**

E-205 **King County's Wastewater Treatment Division and Solid Waste Division shall each independently achieve carbon-neutral operations by 2025.**

E-206 **King County shall continue to implement an operational "social cost of carbon." The social cost of carbon should be used in life-cycle assessments and decision making related to County operations, including for purchase of vehicles, buses, and fuels, for facility construction and resource efficiency projects, and for related technology investments. King County should also consider using the social cost of carbon to inform broader County planning and decision making.**

E-207 **King County shall continue to evaluate its own maintenance and operations practices, including procurement, for opportunities to reduce its own emissions or emissions produced in the manufacturing of products.**

2. Countywide

King County and the 39 King County cities have shared, countywide greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. These targets are adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies. The formal adoption of a shared, community-scale greenhouse gas emissions target by local governments provides a strong foundation and guidepost for community-scale efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The shared targets are

near- and long-term, ambitious and achievable, and consistent with what climate science says needs to be done to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

E-208 **King County shall, independently and in collaboration with cities and other partners, adopt and implement policies and programs to achieve a target of reducing countywide sources of greenhouse gas emissions, compared to a 2007 baseline, by 50 percent by 2030, 75 percent by 2040, and 95 percent by 2050, with net-zero emissions through carbon sequestration and other strategies by that year. King County shall evaluate and update these targets over time in consideration of the latest international climate science and statewide targets aiming to limit the most severe impacts of climate change and keep global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius.**

Renewable energy technology, such as solar power, has the potential for replacing a significant share of King County's energy portfolio. Renewable energy technologies that have the benefit of zero or very low levels of greenhouse gas emissions should be encouraged. Renewable energy production can consider other potential benefits and uses of available resources, such as avoiding waste-to-renewable-energy efforts that disincentivize waste reduction or more beneficial societal uses. The renewable energy technology industry is evolving, and no single technology is guaranteed to fit all the county's alternative energy needs. King County should provide flexibility in its policies and regulations to adapt to the changing circumstances.

E-209 **King County should ensure that its land use policies, development and building regulations, technical assistance programs, and incentive programs support and encourage the use of viable renewable energy, energy efficiency, and fossil fuel reduction and transition technologies that produce zero or minimal greenhouse gas emissions, while considering equity and racial and social justice siting impacts.**

E-210 **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.**

E-211 **King County shall support:**

a. Stronger Washington State building and energy codes and policies that reduce energy use, reduce the embodied carbon of materials, phase out fossil fuel use, and support deployment of electric vehicles and clean energy; and

b. Increased state resources for local code development and implementation.

E-212 **King County should work with other local building officials and staff, as well as community partners and the building industry, to effectively implement building and energy codes that reduce energy use and the embodied carbon of materials and phase out fossil-fuel use.**

E-213 **King County should plan to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions associated with new residential and commercial buildings built in King County 2031.**

E-214 **King County shall develop and implement countywide community-scale built environment programs and policies that:**

- **a. Reduce energy use, increase the use of renewable energy, and phase out the use of fossil fuels, such as: energy loan, residential efficiency retrofits; and fossil fuel reduction and transition incentives and programs; and**
- **b. Prioritize access and affordability of solutions for frontline communities, especially for households at or below 80 percent of area median income, renter households, and households headed by people aged 55 years and older.**

3. Assessment

King County has completed periodic inventories and assessments of greenhouse gas emissions associated with government operations, as well as emissions associated with all resident and business activity in the county, since 2000. These assessments have provided valuable data to inform actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to monitor progress toward meeting emissions reduction targets.

E-215 **King County shall:**

- **a. Assess and publicly report on countywide greenhouse gas emissions associated with resident, business, and local government buildings, vehicles, and solid waste at least every two years;**
- **b. Update its comprehensive greenhouse gas emissions inventory that quantifies all direct local sources of greenhouse gas emissions and emissions associated with local consumption at least every five years; and**
- **c. Develop city-specific emissions inventories and data, in partnership with cities.**

E-216 **King County shall assess and publicly report on the net and total energy and greenhouse gas impacts of County operations and services at least every five years, using best practice accounting standards.**

B. Advancing Climate Equity

King County recognizes that climate change can have disproportionate impacts on frontline communities due to existing and historical racial, social, environmental, and economic inequities. These inequities create barriers to frontline community participation in decision-making processes. Climate equity ensures just distribution of climate protection efforts and alleviates the unequal burdens created by climate change through an equitable division of accountability, benefits, and opportunities. Addressing climate change and social inequities simultaneously requires bold action to prioritize equity, to develop solutions that benefit people and stabilize climate impacts in partnership with frontline communities, and to address climate change as a threat multiplier to other social issues, including systemic racism.

As King County transitions away from an extractive fossil fuel-based economy toward a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable one, it is critical that the County's solutions benefit frontline communities and avoid leaving people behind. This approach requires addressing the root causes of climate vulnerability, which often overlap and compound impacts. By intentionally investing in and partnering with frontline communities, the County can center and integrate community-driven climate solutions. The County is addressing climate equity by working with frontline communities to:

- Plan for and invest in long-term partnerships that build capacity in frontline communities; Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color populations; and among youth;
- Build the knowledge base of community leaders and community-based organizations regarding climate change impacts on frontline communities;

- Invest in and support green jobs pathways that advance sustainability and living-wage career opportunities for frontline communities;
- Invest in frontline communities' ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency events and climate-related health impacts;
- Invest in strengthening local, culturally relevant food systems and food security for populations at risk of food insecurity;
- Support, align, and elevate actions and strategies advancing affordable and climate-resilient housing in frontline communities, including anti-displacement strategies;
- Support and invest in reducing energy burden, and increase access to and resources for transitioning to sustainable and energy efficient systems; and
- Prioritize community-driven mobility development and climate-resilient transit infrastructure.

E-217 **King County shall prioritize and support ongoing partnerships with frontline communities in co-development and implementation of County climate planning, policies, and programs.**

E-218 **King County shall invest in and enable culturally contextualized and linguistically appropriate climate change education that builds frontline communities' capacity to engage on climate change impacts and solutions.**

E-219 **King County shall invest in climate solutions that result in equitable outcomes that benefit frontline communities by:**

a. Centering and funding access and pathways to living wage green jobs and careers for frontline communities, including youth and Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color populations, and identifying and promoting other environmentally beneficial jobs that create living wage career pathways into high demand fields;

b. Providing frontline communities with resources and support to respond to extreme weather events and public health emergencies through culturally relevant strategies and avenues;

c. Supporting a just food economy that increases affordability and access to healthy foods;

d. Addressing housing insecurities intensified by climate change through programs and resources expanding frontline community access to climate-resilient housing and anti-displacement strategies; and

e. Expanding public transportation mobility access and climate-resilient infrastructure for frontline communities in greatest need of public transit.

E-220 **King County shall prioritize an affordable transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy for frontline communities, and should expand the availability to those communities of utility assistance and measures for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and fossil fuel reduction and transition.**

C. Preparing for Climate Change Impacts

Climate change impacts are here and now. Average annual air temperature is increasing, heavy rain events are getting heavier, the region is experiencing a long-term decline in snow and ice in the Cascades and Olympic mountains, sea level is rising, and ocean chemistry is changing in ways that are harmful to local marine species like shellfish and salmon. These changes can have significant consequences. More than 30 deaths in King County were attributable to a record-setting June 2021 heat wave that saw temperatures reach 108 degrees Fahrenheit or higher in the County. While

greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, impacts are projected through the end of the century or longer, even if global and local greenhouse gas emissions are drastically cut. To ensure that County residents are prepared for and able to effectively adapt to climate change impacts, the County is integrating climate change preparedness into:

- Operations and maintenance of infrastructure, programs, and natural resources;
- Provision of public services;
- Policies and regulation; and
- Partnerships with other local governments, community groups and businesses.

1. Overarching Climate Change Preparedness Goals

E-221 **King County shall take actions that equitably reduce climate change vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of King County residents, communities, natural systems, and the built environment by:**

a. Integrating and accounting for climate impacts in policies, plans, practices, and procedures, and implementing climate-resilient decisions;
b. Investing in and using data and other technical information to inform climate preparedness work at King County;
c. Prioritizing health and equity in climate preparedness actions and activities;
d. Strengthening collaborations and partnerships to address countywide climate impacts and increase regional resilience; and
e. Investing in public outreach, engagement, and technical assistance related to climate preparedness.

2. Integrating Climate Preparedness

More transformative changes may be needed to achieve climate-resilient outcomes. Evaluating the effectiveness of actions over time and implementing evidence-based decisions that reduce climate impacts and increase resilience is necessary.

E-222 **King County shall plan and prepare for the likely impacts of climate change on County-owned facilities, infrastructure, and natural resources, and shall develop and, as feasible, implement strategies to incorporate climate change response into the design and operations of its facilities, infrastructure, and natural resources.**

E-223 **King County shall develop and implement regulations that help mitigate and build resilience to the anticipated impacts of climate change, based on best available information. Such impacts could include sea level rise; changes in rainfall patterns and flood volumes and frequencies; changes in average and extreme temperatures and weather; impacts to slope stability, including increasing and more intense landslides and alluvial fan hazards; and impacts to forests, including increased wildfires, droughts, disease, and insect attacks. Methods could include mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, establishing sea level rise regulations, managing existing and limiting new development in floodplains and riparian areas, and/or strengthening forests' ability to withstand impacts.**

E-224 **King County shall integrate estimates of the magnitude and timing of climate change impacts into capital project planning, siting, design, and construction and implement infrastructure operation and maintenance programs that consider full life-cycle costs and climate change impacts in asset management.**

E-225 **King County shall integrate observed and projected climate change impacts, including severe weather, extreme heat, extreme cold, flooding, drought, wildfire, and landslides, into emergency management planning and programs.**

E-226 **King County shall consider projected impacts of climate change on habitat for salmon and other wildlife when developing long-range conservation plans and prioritizing habitat protection and restoration actions.**

E-227 **To foster resilience to climate change in ecosystems and species, King County should prioritize efforts such as: the restoration of floodplains to improve the resilience of major rivers to changing flow regimes and temperatures; the protection and restoration of riparian vegetation and mature and old growth forests to reduce warming in cold water systems, of wetlands to reduce drought and flooding, and of connections between different habitats to maintain current seasonal migration; and facilitate migration opportunities for species whose ranges shift in latitude and altitude.**

3. Building Technical Capacity

King County is committed to using best available science and technical information to inform its climate preparedness work. This includes drawing on existing climate change research and technical studies conducted by other agencies and organizations, as well as directly funding and/or conducting new studies and technical assessments. This also includes building internal staff capacity and expertise to apply current data and science to preparedness activities.

E-228 **King County shall collaborate with the scientific community, including scientists at the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group or successor groups, and with state and federal agencies and other jurisdictions, when needed, to monitor, assess, and publicly share information about the impacts of climate change in King County, including development of detailed, science-based estimates of the magnitude and timing of impacts on air temperatures and heat waves, rainfall patterns and severe weather, forest health and wildfire, public health, flooding, landslides and debris flows, channel migration, sea level rise, biodiversity (including fish and wildlife), and ocean acidification.**

E-229 **King County shall assess the best available sea level rise projections prior to each 10-year update and shall update relevant risk assessments and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, where appropriate.**

E-230 **King County shall periodically review and evaluate climate change impacts on natural resources that its resource programs are designed to protect, such as open space, forests, fisheries, productive farmland, and water resources, to assess and improve the efficacy of existing strategies and commitments.**

4. Prioritizing Health and Equity

E-231 **King County shall use equity impact reviews to help prioritize investments in making infrastructure, natural resources, and communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change.**

E-232 **Through land use and transportation actions, King County should work to reduce climate change health inequities related to the exposure of vulnerable populations to poor air quality and extreme weather events.**

E-233 **King County shall develop and incorporate into outreach efforts public health messages related to the health implications of climate change, particularly in urban communities, and the benefits of actions that can reduce climate impacts on health.**

E-234 **King County should explore creation of culturally welcoming climate resilience hubs in new and existing multipurpose facilities throughout unincorporated King County to equitably enhance community resilience while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving local quality of life. King County should also partner through the King County-cities Climate Collaboration to explore opportunities to partner on climate resilience hubs throughout all King County.**

5. Outreach, Engagement, and Education

E-235 **King County shall implement and support equitable outreach, engagement, and technical assistance related to reducing climate risks. This should include, but not be limited to, providing information on climate change impacts in King County, local efforts to address climate change, and actions that individuals and communities can take to reduce climate risks.**

D. Collaboration with Others

King County recognizes that climate change is worldwide in its scope, with far-reaching consequences to the environment and to quality of life. While the County's actions are important contributions, the global nature of climate change requires cooperation across local, regional, state, and international boundaries. King County can play important roles in collaborating with others through community outreach, education, advocacy, monitoring, and information sharing with other governments and universities.

E-236 **King County shall participate in and support appropriate local, regional, and national efforts and organizations focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, advancing climate equity, and preparing for climate change impacts.**

E-237 **King County shall support comprehensive federal, regional, and state science-based limits and a market-based price on carbon pollution and other greenhouse gas emissions. A portion of revenue from these policies should support local greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts, such as funding for transit service, energy efficiency and fossil fuel reduction projects, and forest protection and restoration initiatives; efforts that advance climate equity and frontline community investments; and climate preparedness and resilience efforts.**

E-238 **King County shall support renewable energy standards for electricity production and vehicle efficiency performance standards.**

E-239 **King County shall advocate for federal, regional, and state initiatives and grant and loan programs that support local investments in projects and programs, such as community solar, fossil fuel reduction, energy efficiency retrofits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, climate equity, and preparedness strategies for climate change impacts.**

E-240 **King County shall collaborate with cities, residents, and other partners to prepare for and adapt to the effects of climate change on the environment, natural resources, human health, public safety, infrastructure, and the economy.**

E-241 **King County shall share information on climate change impacts and collaborate on approaches to improving infrastructure resilience, disaster preparedness, and public engagement with cities and other partners to more efficiently and effectively engage King County residents.**

E-242 **King County shall work with relevant industry sector partners to support efforts that reduce energy and fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to promote locally recognized high growth sectors such as green manufacturing, construction, transportation, and professional services in King County and the Puget Sound. The County shall also work with community groups, consumers, and the retail sector to promote the consumption and adoption of products and services supporting reduced energy use and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.**

III. Animals, Plants, and Habitat

A. Conserving King County's Biodiversity

It is King County's goal to conserve fish and wildlife resources in the county and to maintain countywide biodiversity. This goal may be achieved through implementation of several broad policy directions that form an integrated vision for the future. Each of the pieces is necessary for the whole to be successful. The policy objectives are to: (1) initiate multi-species, biodiversity management approaches, (2) integrate biodiversity conservation goals and climate change planning into new and existing developments and habitat restoration programs, (3) identify and protect fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, (4) connect the fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and other important conservation areas and protected lands through a habitat network system, (5) include working farmland and forestland within the larger conservation landscape, and (6) provide education and incentive opportunities to engage residents. Conservation of biodiversity is necessary if benefits including important ecosystem services such as clean water, natural flood control, agricultural and timber production, climate change adaptation, and pollination currently enjoyed and relied upon by residents of the county are to be available for future generations.

Because of its size, topography, and geology, the diversity of landscapes and habitats in King County is dramatic. From the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound, alpine areas to lowland bogs, King County possesses an astonishing array of habitats and species. Approximately 220 species of breeding and non-breeding birds are usually seen on an annual basis in King County. Based on an analysis by the State of Washington, 69 species of mammals, 12 species of amphibians, and 8 species of reptiles are thought to be breeding in the county. About 50 species of native fish (and 20 species of introduced fish) are found in the freshwater streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes of King County. In the county's marine environment, over 200 species of fish, some 500 species of invertebrate animals, and eight species of marine mammals can be found. A total of 1,249 (383 introduced) species of vascular plants have been identified in the county. The diversity of geography combined with King County's history of land use has shaped the biodiversity of the past and present and will continue affecting it into the future.

King County defines biodiversity as the variety of living organisms considered at all levels, from genetic diversity through species, to higher taxonomic levels, including the variety of habitats, ecosystems, and landscapes in which the species are found. Biodiversity is the full range of life in all its forms, including the habitats in which species live, the ways species interact with each other and their environment, and the natural processes (such as flooding) that support those interactions.

The biggest threats to biodiversity in King County visible today are climate change and habitat loss and fragmentation from development.

E-301 **King County shall strive to conserve the native diversity of species and habitats in the county.**

E-302 **In the Urban Growth Area, King County shall strive to maintain a quality environment that includes fish and wildlife habitats that support the greatest diversity of native species consistent with Growth Management Act-mandated population density objectives.**

E-303 **Outside the Urban Growth Area, the County should strive to maintain, protect, and recover ecological processes, native landscapes, ecosystems, and habitats that can support viable populations of native species. This should be accomplished through coordinated conservation planning and collaborative implementation.**

E-304 **King County should develop a biodiversity conservation framework and conservation strategy to achieve the goals of maintaining and recovering native biodiversity. King County should collaborate with other governments and private and nonprofit organizations on the creation and implementation of this strategy.**

Climate change brings added stresses for many native species and ecosystems, including changes in distribution and availability of food, cover, and breeding habitat. Changes in temperature can alter productivity and growth rates or cause direct mortality, particularly for salmon, and trigger invasions of nonnative species. The range and seasonal presence of some species will shift, and the timing of when some species are in certain habitats won't match the availability of their food sources. Some species will go extinct locally, and new species will move into the area. Finally, changing lake and ocean temperatures may have devastating impacts on the base of food web.

The effects of climate change are being observed and understood in the county and will increase over time. In the face of climate change, biodiversity conservation may be of critical importance for buffering the effects of rising temperatures on regional ecosystems, damping the rates of ecological change, and reducing the potential for sudden, extreme changes in the environment.

E-305 **King County should evaluate a range of projected future climate scenarios based on best available science to help ensure that biodiversity conservation efforts are able to meet their objectives in a changing climate.**

Ecosystems and habitats suitable for particular species communities are the result of various geologic, hydrologic, climatic, and biologic processes. Where habitat-forming processes are intact, ecosystems and their inhabitants are more likely to persist in the face of environmental variation and disturbances made worse by climate change, including disease, invasive species, wildfire, flooding, and drought.

E-306 **King County's efforts to restore and maintain biodiversity should place priority on protecting and restoring ecological processes that create and sustain habitats and species diversity and support climate change resilience.**

E-307 **King County should map habitat connectivity corridors and biodiversity areas to protect fish and wildlife populations in a changing climate. Areas identified by this analysis should be prioritized by King County, and in collaboration with Indian tribes, the state, cities, and other landowners, for land conservation and restoration actions and programs.**

Natural resource protection occurs within an ecological context. Environmental management should consider not only the immediate site but also the spatial and temporal context that surrounds it. In terms of spatial context, different activities will require consideration of different scales–from small sub-basins of a few square miles to watersheds and ecosystems that contain many hundreds or thousands of square miles. For example, watershed boundaries are useful ways to define ecological planning units for resource protection of aquatic systems whereas large-scale vegetation communities may be more useful for terrestrial systems.

In terms of temporal contexts, habitat conditions and populations can fluctuate over long time periods. It may take decades to see the results of habitat restoration projects and other environmental management actions on populations, and in the interim climate change and possibly major events such as flooding will also impact the trajectory of restoration actions.

There is no single scale appropriate for all planning and management of conservation activities. Management within the context of a landscape helps to ensure the actions in one area will not be undone or rendered unsustainable by conditions in the surrounding watershed or ecoregion. Conservation efforts designed to protect only one species could have an unintended, detrimental effect on others. Ecological communities consist of multiple species often that interact in the same geographical area.

E-308 **King County's conservation efforts should be integrated across multiple landscape scales, species, and ecological communities.**

E-309 **Distribution, spatial structure, and diversity of native wildlife and plant populations should be taken into account when planning restoration activities, acquiring land, and designing, planning, and managing parks.**

E-310 **King County should carry out conservation planning efforts in close collaboration with Indian tribes, local governments, state and federal governments, landowners, community groups, and other conservation planning partners.**

"Structural diversity" is the range of different physical landscapes within a habitat. What this means varies depending on the ecosystem. For example, in a forest, structural diversity means the combination of tree species, tree height classes, and legacy components (snags, logs); the more of each of these there are, the greater the forest structural diversity. Structural diversity of a river or stream means the degree of sinuosity (meaning curviness of the river and more is better) combined with both native riparian habitat and natural in-stream structure, which includes downed wood, various-sized substrate, and a combination of pools, riffles, and glides. "Landscape diversity" means the size, shape, and connectivity of different ecosystems across a large area; a mosaic of heterogeneous land cover types and vegetation types; assemblages of different ecosystems.

E-311 **King County should conserve areas where conditions support dynamic ecological processes that sustain important ecosystem and habitat functions and values, and promote structural and landscape diversity.**

Rare or sensitive ecosystems, habitats and species are at a greater risk of extinction than those that are widespread and abundant and therefore should be a high priority for conservation. Endemic species are those that are native to a particular geographic area and found nowhere else. If the habitat where endemic species live is damaged or lost, the species would cease to exist. Keystone species are those that have a disproportionately large effect on their natural environment relative to their abundance and are central to the survival of a multitude of other species. Keystone species may have habitat-regulating functions, as is the case with sea stars, or they may have habitat-forming functions, as is the case with North American beavers.

E-312 **King County should assess different land types, habitats, and resources for:**
- **a. Their relative scarcity and sensitivity;**
- **b. Their role in supporting endangered, threatened, sensitive, or candidate species, or species of local importance; and**
- **c. The degree to which habitat alterations would reduce these populations.**

E-313 **King County should give special consideration to protection of rare, endemic, and keystone species when identifying and prioritizing land areas for protection through acquisition, conservation easements, and incentive programs.**

E-314 **King County should incorporate climate change projections into new species protection plans and shall revise older species protection plans when feasible or when conducting 10-year updates to incorporate projected impacts from climate change.**

B. Habitat

1. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

Fish and wildlife habitat conservation, according to the state's definition, means land management for maintaining populations of species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution so that the habitat available is sufficient to support viable populations over the long term and isolated subpopulations are not created. This definition does not mean that all individuals of all species at all times must be maintained, but it does mean not degrading or reducing populations or habitats so that they are no longer viable over the long term. Additionally, it should be recognized that geographic distributions will shift with climate change.

Federal laws have been enacted over the past century to protect a wide range of species. In addition to the Endangered Species Act, other federal laws include the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Individuals of Endangered Species Act -listed species, marine mammals, and migratory birds in King County are protected under the provisions of these laws.

To build a robust approach to biodiversity conservation, especially in view of a changing climate, individual species and habitat protections must be integrated with a landscape-scale approach to fostering and protecting resilient and diverse ecosystems. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas occur on both publicly and privately owned lands. Designating these areas is an important part of land use planning for appropriate development densities, the Urban Growth Area boundary, open space corridors, incentive-based land conservation and stewardship programs, and acquisition planning. The policies in this section are intended to fulfill federal and state requirements for protection of specific species and habitats while implementing landscape-based approaches to conserve native biodiversity in the long term. Protection measures designed to help maintain populations of certain species may necessarily include

protecting the habitat where those species have a primary association with the protected area such as spawning or breeding, and also for rearing young, resting, roosting, feeding, foraging, and migrating.

Effective conservation and resource management of aquatic and terrestrial systems requires coordinated planning among departments with authority over development regulations and guidelines, wastewater treatment, stormwater management, flood hazard management, groundwater protection, transportation planning and road building, water quality, natural resource management, agriculture, and fish and wildlife conservation. Effective conservation planning must include the interests of private landowners as well.

Coordinated planning and management can improve understanding of cumulative effects on terrestrial and aquatic systems, and can allow for a systems-based approach to avoiding or mitigating for adverse effects and improving habitat functions and value over time.

E-315 **Terrestrial and aquatic habitats should be conserved and enhanced to protect and improve conditions for fish and wildlife.**

E-316 **King County shall designate and protect the following areas as Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas:**

- **a. Areas with which federal- or state-listed endangered, threatened, candidate, or sensitive species have a primary association;**
- **b. Habitats of Local Importance and habitats for Species of Local Importance, including Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas;**
- **c. Wildlife habitat networks designated by the County;**
- **d. Aquatic Areas**
- **e. Commercial and recreational shellfish areas;**
- **f. Kelp and eelgrass beds;**
- **g. Herring, smelt, and sand lance spawning areas;**
- **h. Riparian areas; and**
- **i. State aquatic reserves.**

2. Habitat and Development

A key element in local wildlife conservation is the integration of wildlife and habitats into developments of all types. Wildlife protection does not have to be at odds with many types of development. Urban multiunit projects, industrial developments, new school facilities and rural open space projects all provide opportunities to enhance wildlife habitat quality and connectivity. Residential developers and businesses have been able to use wildlife in marketing strategies to attract more potential homeowners, renters, and employees.

Techniques such as minimizing clearing during site preparation, using native plant species in required buffers, landscaping, using bridges rather than culverts to cross streams, wildlife-specific crossings, and innovative site design can be used to promote wildlife presence and connectivity and minimize conflicts with wildlife. Other plan elements, such as open space, road system design, and housing density also have related impacts on the remaining wildlife values that must be considered.

Benefits to wildlife are enhanced when native vegetation is retained or when screening and landscaping is composed of native vegetation.

E-317 **King County may increase the size of riparian areas, buffers, and critical area setbacks to protect adjacent wetland, aquatic area, and riparian habitat, native vegetated areas that connect wetlands complexes, and species of local importance and their habitats. Whenever possible, density transfers, clustering, buffer averaging, and other mechanisms should be utilized in order to protect and/or enhance ecological functions.**

Historical, current, and projected information on habitat conditions, including climate, and species distribution can inform ecologists and decision-makers about environmental management decisions. However, decision-makers do not always have access to complete information.

E-318 **King County should use a mixture of information on historical, current, and projected future conditions to provide context for managing public hazards and protecting and restoring habitat.**

E-319 **Development, erosion control projects, and critical area mitigation and restoration should incorporate native plant communities, both through the preservation of existing plants and addition of new native plants. The introduction of nonnative and invasive species should be avoided.**

E-320 **King County shall steward public lands well and shall integrate fish and wildlife habitat considerations into capital improvement projects whenever feasible. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas should be protected and, where possible, enhanced as part of capital improvement projects.**

3. Habitat Connectivity

Protecting and enhancing habitat connectivity is a critical action for maintaining ecosystem integrity and resilience, particularly in the face of climate change. However, funding for such evaluations is extremely limited. Protection of isolated blocks of habitat is critical but not enough to adequately protect wildlife in King County. Critical wildlife habitats and refuges also need to be connected across the landscape through a system of habitat corridors, or networks.

The King County Wildlife Habitat Network was designed to help reduce the effects of fragmentation by linking diverse habitats through the developed and developing landscape. The network is intended to facilitate animal dispersal by connecting isolated critical areas, segments, open space, and wooded areas on adjacent properties. The corridors tend to follow riparian areas and streams across the lowlands and the upland plateau to the east and southeast of Lake Washington into the foothills. The Wildlife Habitat Network is mapped on the "Wildlife Network and Public Ownership Map."

How wide the corridors within the network should be is related to requirements of target wildlife species, length of network segment and other important characteristics within the network. Wider corridors will be required for larger species if the distance between refuges is great or if multiple uses, such as public access and trails, are desired. Because it may not be possible to protect wide corridors in the Urban Growth Area, it may not be possible to accommodate larger wildlife species in all areas. Networks will address some of the problems of habitat fragmentation for smaller species within the Urban Growth Area.

Open spaces set aside during subdivision of land should be located to make connections with larger off-site systems. This approach will also benefit other open space goals.

E-321 **Habitat networks for threatened, endangered and Species of Local Importance shall be designated and mapped. Fish and wildlife habitat areas and habitat networks for other priority species should be identified, designated, and mapped using ecoregion and resource data. Mapping should be coordinated with state and federal ecosystem mapping efforts as appropriate.**

E-322 **King County should work with Indian tribes, adjacent jurisdictions, state and federal governments, and landowners to identify and protect habitat networks at jurisdictional and property boundaries during development of land use and environmental plans.**

4. Conservation Incentives and Education

King County offers landowner technical assistance for protection of fish and wildlife habitat through programs including Forest Stewardship, Noxious Weed Control, and assistance for native plant restoration and landscaping. Other organizations, including King Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Washington State University Extension, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program offer support to landowners to enhance fish and wildlife habitat. Landowners can also receive property tax reductions through the King County Public Benefit Rating System in exchange for protecting and improving habitat.

E-323 **King County should promote voluntary wildlife habitat enhancement projects by private individuals and businesses through educational, active stewardship, and incentive programs.**

E-324 **King County should partner with community associations, realtors, community groups, and other agencies to conduct targeted outreach to potential and new property owners about fish and wildlife habitat education and forestry education and incentive programs, particularly in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands in the county.**

E-325 **Through a coordinated approach of incentives and acquisitions, King County should prioritize, enhance, and protect a variety of ecosystems, including urban open space uplands, riparian areas, floodplains, and aquatic systems with the highest conservation value and those supporting equitable access to quality open space.**

C. Animals and Plants

1. Federal and State Listed Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive Species

Over the last twenty years, several species connected to King County's streams and rivers have become listed under the Endangered Species Act. Threatened species include Chinook salmon, bull trout, and steelhead, and Southern Resident orca are listed as endangered. The listing of Chinook salmon and Southern Resident orca are related to one another, as Southern Resident orca rely heavily on Chinook as a primary food source. The listings trigger requirements for consultations with the National Marine Fisheries Service on any activity requiring a federal permit, relying on federal funds, or being sponsored by a federal agency.

The National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have also issued rules describing regulations deemed necessary to conserve Puget Sound Chinook and steelhead, as well as other threatened West Coast salmonids.

Final Endangered Species Act Recovery Plans have been developed for Puget Sound Chinook (2007), bull trout (2015), and Puget Sound steelhead (2019). A final Recovery

Plan for orca was published in 2008. These plans describe recovery goals for the species, specific measures to address the factors that are limiting the health of the species, and timeframes and cost estimates for recovery measures. Conservation actions identified in Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plans for King County watersheds are now being implemented subject to available funding and are anticipated to contribute significantly to the achievement of recovery goals for these species and their eventual removal from the Endangered Species list.

Many of the County's plans, programs, and development regulations assist in the County's effort to conserve and recover Endangered Species Act listed species. These include the code provisions governing zoning, critical areas, clearing and grading, landscaping, and the shoreline master program. County documents guiding operations and regulations include the Surface Water Design Manual, the Flood Management Plan, and Regional Wastewater Services Plan. Finally, the County's reliance on best management practices for vegetation management; use of insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides; pest management; and management of agricultural and forest lands also plays a crucial role in protecting Endangered Species Act listed species.

E-326 **King County shall monitor and evaluate programs and regulations to determine their effectiveness in contributing to Endangered Species Act listed species conservation and recovery, and shall update and enhance programs and plans as necessary. King County should amend regulations, plans, and best management practices to enhance their effectiveness in protecting and restoring habitat, using a variety of resources, including best available science as defined in Chapter 365-195 Washington Administrative Code.**

The importance of designating seasonal ranges and habitat elements where federal- and state-listed endangered, threatened, and sensitive species have a primary association is that these areas, if altered, may reduce the likelihood that the species will survive over the long term. The state recommends that King County and other local jurisdictions identify and classify these areas.

E-327 **Habitats for species that have been identified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive by the state or federal government shall not be degraded or reduced in size and shall be preserved and protected.**

2. Species and Habitats of Local Importance

Federal and state listings of species as endangered or threatened often encompass relatively large geographic areas. More localized declines of species within King County may not be captured by state and federal listings. For example, local monitoring data indicate the extinction of the Lake Sammamish Kokanee Early run, possible extinction or significant decline of the Lake Washington Kokanee Middle run, and a significant decline in the Lake Sammamish Kokanee Late run.

Conservation of local native kokanee salmon and its watershed habitat is important to the quality of life and natural heritage of the region's residents. The County maintains strong collaborative relationships with the Snoqualmie Tribe, the Muckleshoot Tribe, watershed cities, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Parks, Trout Unlimited, Long Live the Kings, and additional governmental and non-governmental organizations, schools, watershed residents, and other key contributors. Together these partners work to: improve kokanee salmon habitat, including Lake Sammamish, tributary streams, and contributing watershed areas; conduct research; educate local residents and businesses; and support an artificial propagation program at the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery and the Long Live the Kings hatcheries to increase the viability of the kokanee population.

King County defines Species of Local Importance as those species that are of local concern primarily because of their population status or their sensitivity to habitat manipulation. The County takes into consideration native species named as priority species by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; anadromous salmonids; aquatic species whose populations are particularly vulnerable to changes in water quality and quantity; species whose habitat or mobility is limited (local populations of species that are immobile or have very limited habitat); and species that can be directly impacted by King County (for example, where road projects or other infrastructure development can impact habitat; where the County may acquire, protect, or restore certain habitat types). 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 implementation and development. Habitats for Species of Local Importance are designated as a type of Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area and are covered by policies and regulations designed to protect those areas. However, individual animals or plants may also be at risk of injury from development or during construction or other changes to the landscape and may require additional measures to protect them from injury. For example, freshwater mussels may be protected from an instream project by relocating individual animals so they are not injured or killed during construction. Or, a rare individual plant may require the protection of an area of land because the plant cannot be relocated.

E-328 **King County designates the following to be Species of Local Importance:**

- **a. Salmonids and other anadromous or freshwater fish – Kokanee salmon, Sockeye/red salmon, Chum salmon, Coho/silver salmon, Pink salmon, Chinook salmon, Coastal resident/searun cutthroat trout, Rainbow trout, steelhead trout, bull trout, Pygmy whitefish, Dolly Varden, Western river lamprey, Pacific lamprey, and Olympic mudminnow;**
- **b. Native Freshwater Mussels – Western pearlshell mussel, Oregon floater, and western ridge mussel;**
- **c. Shellfish – Dungeness crab, Pandalid shrimp, Butter clam, Littleneck clam, and Olympia oyster;**
- **d. Marine Fish – White sturgeon; Pacific herring; Longfin smelt; Surfsmelt; Lingcod, Pacific cod; Pacific sand lance; Yelloweye, Brown, Copper, Bocaccio, Canary, and Quillback Rockfish; English sole; and Southern rock sole;**
- **e. Birds – Marbled Murrelet; Western grebe, Caspian Tern, Pigeon Guillemot, Pelagic Cormorant, American bittern, Great blue heron, Common Loon, Western High Arctic Brant, Harlequin duck, Bufflehead, Wood duck, Hooded merganser, Barrow's goldeneye, Common goldeneye, Cinnamon teal, Tundra swan, Trumpeter swan, Surf scoter, White-winged scoter, Black scoter, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Goshawk, Osprey, Spotted owl, Western screech-owl, Sooty grouse, Pacific coast band-tailed pigeon, Belted kingfisher, Olive-sided flycatcher, Western meadowlark, Cassin's finch, Oregon Vesper Sparrow, Red-eyed Vireo, Purple Martin, Vaux's Swift, Purple finch, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-backed Woodpecker, American three-toed woodpecker, Hairy woodpecker, Pileated woodpecker, and the following bird concentrations:**
  - **i. Waterfowl Concentrations (Anatidae excluding Canada Geese in urban areas); and**
  - **ii. Western Washington nonbreeding concentrations of plovers (Charadriidae), sandpipers;**

f. Mammals – American marten, Wolverine, Fisher, Gray wolf, Cascade red fox, Douglas squirrel, Northern flying squirrel, Townsend's chipmunk, Hoary marmot, Roosevelt elk, mountain goat, Pika, Townsend's big-eared bat, roosting concentrations of Big-brown bat, Pallid bats, and Myotis bats, Killer whale (Orca), Gray whale, Dall's and Harbor porpoise, Harbor seal, Stellar sea lions, and concentrations of California sea lions;
g. Amphibians – Red-legged frog, Larch Mountain salamander, Oregon spotted frog, and Western toad;
h. Reptiles – Western fence lizard and Northwestern pond turtle;
i. Rare Plants –Tall bugbane, Triangular-lobed moonwort, Western moonwort, Stalked moonwort, Harvest brodiaea Alaska harebell, Few-flowered sedge, Long-styled sedge, Clubmoss mountain-heather, Golden paintbrush, Weak thistle, Spleenwort-leaved goldthread, Tree clubmoss, Spotted Joe-pye weed, Kamchatka fritillary, Swamp gentian, Oregon goldenweed, Large St. Johns'-wort, Pacific peavine, Water lobelia, Northern bog clubmoss, One-cone clubmoss, White meconella, Branched montia, Old field blue toadflax, Brewer's cliffbrake, Whitebark pine, Choriso's bog-orchid, Columbia white-topped aster, and Flat-leaved bladderwort; and
j. Other invertebrates – Blue gray taildropper, Hatch's click beetle, Beller's ground beetle, Pacific clubtail, Western bumblebee, Johnson's hairstreak, and Valley silverspot.

E-329 King County shall protect Species of Local Importance through measures such as regulations, incentives, capital projects, or purchase, as appropriate.

Caves, cliffs, and talus (a sloping mass of rocky fragments at the base of a cliff) occupy a very small percent of the total land area, yet they are disproportionately important as wildlife habitats. The same is true for sphagnum-dominated peat bogs, Oregon white oak woodlands, herbaceous balds, Westside prairie, old growth forest, and snag -rich areas, which have all declined as a result of development. Each of these habitats concentrates and supports a unique plant and animal community. Plant associations adjacent to caves, cliff, and talus are important because they help stabilize light and wind patterns, and as with snag -rich areas, they provide perches for raptors. Caves, cliffs, talus, Oregon white oak woodlands, herbaceous balds, Westside prairie, and sphagnum-dominated peat bogs are fragile environments that can be easily destroyed, but cannot be easily restored.

E-330 King County shall designate the following to be Habitats of Local Importance:
a. Caves;
b. Cliffs;
c. Herbaceous balds;
d. Old growth forest;
e. Oregon white oak woodlands;
f. Snag-rich areas;
g. Sphagnum-dominated peat bogs;
h. Talus; and
i. Westside prairie.

The federal and state governments also designate "candidate" species. In the context of the Endangered Species Act, candidate means any species being considered for listing as an endangered or a threatened species but not yet the subject of a proposed rule. Lists of federal candidate species are updated annually. Review of these lists and the supporting assessments can provide valuable information about threats to species found within King County and can help the County to be proactive in preparing for potential future listings.

E-331 **King County should review federal and state candidate listings for information about candidate species that are under consideration for listing as an endangered or threatened species and found in King County. King County shall protect habitat for candidate species, as listed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife or a federal agency. Information regarding candidate species should be used to inform King County's long-term wildlife conservation and planning efforts.**

E-332 **King County shall review fish and wildlife surveys and assessments with local application to King County and consider additional habitat protections where warranted. Habitat protection should be accomplished through incentives, cooperative planning, education, habitat acquisition, habitat restoration, or other appropriate actions based on best available science.**

E-333 **King County should regularly review the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's list of Priority Species and other scientific information on species of local importance, and evaluate whether any species should be added to or deleted from the lists in Policies E-328 and E-330. Any additions or deletions may be made through the annual update.**

E-334 **Development proposals shall be assessed for the presence of King County Species of Local Importance. A comprehensive assessment should follow a standard procedure or guidelines and shall occur one time during the development review process.**

3. Salmon

Salmon are particularly important because of their significance to Indian tribes, local and regional character, salt and freshwater ecosystems, and recreational and commercial fisheries. A growing number of salmon stocks within King County and other areas of Puget Sound are in a serious state of decline. Three salmonid species present within King County have been listed under the Endangered Species Act, several others have significant potential for listing, and the salmon-dependent orca has been listed as endangered.

The protection and restoration of river and stream channels, riparian areas, lakes, wetlands, headwaters and watersheds, and marine nearshore habitats that provide or impact spawning and rearing habitat, food resources, and fish passage is essential to the conservation of native fish populations. Intermittent streams also can be critical to native fish populations.

Hatcheries and other artificial propagation facilities that are properly managed to protect the abundance, productivity, genetic diversity, and spatial distribution of native salmon may contribute in the near term to both maintaining sustainable salmon stocks and harvest opportunities while habitat protection and restoration measures for salmon are implemented.

E-335 **King County should conserve and restore salmonid habitats by ensuring that land use and facility plans (transportation, water, sewer, electricity, gas) include riparian and stream habitat conservation measures developed by the County, Indian tribes, cities, service providers, and state and federal agencies. Project review of development proposals within basins that contain hatcheries and other artificial propagation facilities that are managed to protect the abundance, productivity, genetic diversity, and spatial distribution of native salmon and provide harvest opportunities should consider significant adverse impacts to those facilities.**

The protection and recovery of salmonid species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act and encompassed by Indian tribal treaty rights are and will continue to be a significant priority for King County. The listing of a species under the Endangered Species Act and decline of Indian tribal treaty right protected species are cause for great concern, because wild Pacific salmon have great environmental, cultural, economic, nutritional, recreational, and symbolic importance to local communities, in particular Indian tribal communities, in the entire Puget Sound region.

It is King County's goal to ensure the recovery and maintenance of salmon populations to sustainable and harvestable levels, and to accrue the ecological, cultural, economic, and local food supply benefits that will be provided by healthy salmon stocks. King County pursues salmon conservation strategies that sustain the region's vibrant economy. Successful restoration and maintenance of healthy salmon populations requires time, money, and effort, and collaboration with Indian tribal, federal, state, and local governments, as well as businesses, environmental groups, and residents.

In accordance with new statutory requirements, the Department of Ecology has established a Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee in all five Watershed Resource Inventory Areas located either entirely or partially within King County. King County is participating in the Ecology process of developing a flow restoration strategy for each of the Watershed Resource Inventory Areas to mitigate the consumptive use of new permit-exempt wells drilled in the next 20 years. As of 2024, Ecology has adopted streamflow restoration plans for Water Resource Inventory Area 9 (the Green/Duwamish Watershed), and Water Resource Inventory Area 10 (the White/Puyallup Watershed). The streamflow restoration committees for Water Resource Inventory Area 7 (the Snohomish/Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed), Water Resource Inventory Area 8 (Cedar/Sammamish Watershed), and Water Resource Inventory Area 15 (Kitsap) did not reach agreement by all members to complete their planning process. Ecology has completed these plans and forwarded them to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for technical review after which they may amend and adopt the plans. Ecology will initiate rulemaking within six months of plan adoption.

Local governments in the Puget Sound region, in cooperation with Indian tribal governments, the state, and other partners, have developed long-term salmon habitat conservation strategies at the Watershed Resource Inventory Area level. The boundaries of Water Resource Inventory Areas are defined under state regulations, and generally adhere to the watershed boundaries of major river or lake systems.

King County participated as an affected jurisdiction in the development Water Resource Inventory Area plans for Water Resource Inventory Area 8 (Cedar/Sammamish Watershed), Water Resource Inventory Area 9 (the Green/Duwamish Watershed), Water Resource Inventory Area 7 (the Snohomish/Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed), about half of which is in King County, and Water Resource Inventory Area 10 (the White/Puyallup Watershed), a small percentage of which is in King County. Additionally, King County has acted as a service provider at the direction of multi-jurisdictional forums for the development and implementation of the salmon

recovery plans for Water Resource Inventory Areas 8 and 9, and for the King County portion of Water Resource Inventory Area 7.

E-336 **King County shall continue to participate in the Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plan implementation efforts and in other regional efforts to recover salmon and the ecosystems they depend on, such as the Puget Sound Partnership. King County's participation in planning and implementation efforts shall be guided by the following principles:**

- **a. Focus on federally listed salmonid species and declining stocks protected under Indian tribal treaty rights first, then take an ecosystem approach to habitat management and seek to address management needs for other species over time;**
- **b. Concurrently work on early actions and long-term projects and programs that will lead to improvements to, and information on, habitat conditions in King County that can enable the recovery of endangered or threatened salmonids, while maintaining the economic vitality and strength of the region;**
- **c. Address both King County's growth management needs and habitat conservation needs;**
- **d. Use best available science as defined in Chapter 365-195 Washington Administrative Code;**
- **e. Improve water quality, water quantity, and channel characteristics; and**
- **f. Develop, implement, and evaluate actions within a watershed-based program of data collection and analysis that documents the level of effectiveness of specific actions and provides information for adaptation of salmon conservation and recovery strategies.**

E-337 **King County should coordinate with Indian tribes, local jurisdictions, universities, federal and state agencies, special interest groups, special districts, businesses, and residents to implement, monitor, and update Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plans for all areas of King County.**

E-338 **King County should use the recommendations of approved Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plans and other watershed planning efforts to inform establishment of Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, updates to development regulations, establishment of incentive programs, and operations and capital planning for its floodplain management, fish passage, surface water management, transportation, wastewater treatment, parks, and open space programs.**

E-339 **King County should seek to support Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plan goals of maintaining intact natural landscapes through:**

- **a. Promoting Current Use Taxation and other incentives;**
- **b. Promoting stewardship programs including development and implementation of Forest Plans and Farm Plans; and**
- **c. Acquiring property or conservation easements in areas of high ecological importance with unique or otherwise significant habitat values.**

E-340 **King County may use its authority under the Growth Management Act, including its authority to designate and protect critical areas, such as fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, to preserve and protect key habitat for listed salmonid species by developing and implementing development regulations and nonregulatory programs.**

Local governments primarily have authority and influence over land use actions affecting habitat. However, protecting and restoring habitat is just one piece of the salmon recovery puzzle. Management of fish harvest, hatchery, hydropower, and water storage actions is also critical, and actions need to be coordinated with entities having authority in these areas.

E-341 **King County should continue to take actions that ensure its habitat restoration and protection actions are implemented as part of a watershed-based salmon conservation strategy that integrates habitat actions with actions taken by harvest and hatchery managers. Harvest and hatchery managers specifically include Indian tribes, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Appropriate venues for this coordination include watershed plan implementation groups and other local or regional salmon management entities that rely on actions by habitat, harvest, and hatchery managers to achieve specific goals and objectives.**

In planning for climate change, it will be increasingly important to provide for habitat connectivity not only across jurisdictional boundaries, but also across a range of environmental gradients. Habitat connectivity is anticipated to allow species and ecosystems to adapt to a changing climate by allowing species to follow changes in climate across the landscape and maintain critical ecological processes such as dispersal and gene flow.

King County's Fish Passage Restoration Program is an example of prioritizing investments in habitat restoration with a focus on restoring habitat connectivity. The program has surveyed more than 3,000 potential blockages to salmon migration up streams and prioritized 50 barrier locations where restoration of fish passage would open half of historically connected habitat blocked by County-owned barriers. The County-owned barriers occur mixed with fish passage barriers owned by other municipalities and landowners. Coordination with other barrier owners to address nearby barriers will maximize the habitat benefits of restoring fish passage in county waterways.

E-342 **King County shall work with non-governmental organizations and regulatory agencies to accelerate removal of barriers to fish passage and shall:**

- **a. Seek opportunities to accelerate permitting and project implementation;**
- **b. Explore all mechanisms available to remove barriers and restore salmon access to the most and highest quality habitat as quickly as possible; and**
- **c. Aggressively seek funding for projects to remove barriers.**

E-343 **King County should use the information from local and regional water comprehensive plans to enhance the county's water resource protection and planning efforts, including implementation of Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plans.**

E-344 **Watershed-based plans should define how the natural functions and values of watersheds critical to salmonids are protected so that the quantity and quality of water and sediment entering the streams, lakes, wetlands and rivers can support salmonid spawning, rearing, resting, and migration.**

King County contains a number of wetlands, floodplains, lakes, and river and stream reaches that are important to the viability of fish and wildlife populations and are therefore considered biological, social and economic resources. Some areas have been

identified as high-priority habitat areas through Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plans, the Land Conservation Initiative, and through the Critical Areas Ordinance basin conditions map used to establish protective buffers along wetlands and streams under the King County Code. Protection and restoration of connections between rivers and their floodplains is increasingly recognized as a priority element of salmon recovery and climate resiliency efforts.

These areas contribute to the resource base of the entire Puget Sound region by virtue of exceptional species and habitat diversity and abundance when compared to basins of similar size and structure elsewhere in the region. These areas may also support rare, endangered, or sensitive species, including Endangered Species Act-listed salmonids. They also provide wetland, lake, and stream habitat that is important for wildlife and salmonid diversity and abundance within the basin.

The Puget Sound region has responded commendably to the listing of Puget Sound Chinook. In King County, more than 40 jurisdictions have joined together to cooperatively lead salmon recovery in the county's watersheds. In the 17 years since the plans were adopted (2006 - 2022), King County has implemented 80 priority salmon-restoration capital projects within its jurisdiction in addition to dozens of small habitat projects, such as riparian restoration on private lands. King County has identified nearly 100 additional capital projects for future implementation. Since 2011, the National Marine Fisheries Service has conducted several five-year assessments of progress to implement the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. The assessments have repeatedly concluded that good habitat projects are being implemented across Puget Sound, but that the pace of salmon recovery implementation is too slow, primarily due to insufficient funding. This is true in King County as well, though in recent years the County has developed significant additional sources of local revenue to advance restoration. King County has renewed interlocal agreements with its 44 jurisdictional partners to continue to fund salmon recovery coordination in those watersheds through at least 2025, with the expectation of renewal for another 10 years beyond that date.

Key conclusions and recommendations from the five-year assessments include:

- Habitat continues to decline, and the region needs to increase its scrutiny of the sources of habitat decline and the tools used to protect habitat sites and ecosystem process.
- Habitat protection needs improvement, and salmon recovery lead entities and regional groups should advocate for stronger regulatory programs to protect habitat.
- While extensive habitat work has taken place across King County and in the broader Puget Sound, funding has fallen well short of the need as identified in the work plans that have been developed in each watershed. Moreover, most sources only fund on-the-ground projects rather than the staffing that is needed to plan and coordinate overall recovery efforts.

Although Water Resource Inventory Area plans are Chinook salmon-focused, they are expected to also provide the basis for recovery planning for other listed aquatic species, including orca, steelhead and bull trout.

The Puget Sound Partnership works to consolidate and significantly strengthen the federal, state, local, and private efforts undertaken to date to protect and restore the health of Puget Sound and its watersheds, and serves as an umbrella group for salmon recovery efforts in Puget Sound, including implementation of salmon recovery plans prepared for Chinook salmon. King County, through its land use decisions, management of stormwater and wastewater discharges, development of recycled water supplies, cooperative habitat protection and restoration projects, work in flood risk reduction, salmon recovery, support for agricultural and natural land protection, actions

to address climate change, and ongoing environmental monitoring, is actively involved in the conservation and recovery of Puget Sound.

E-345 **King County should actively participate in updating and implementing the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda, through the following Local Integrating Organizations: Puyallup-White River; South Central Action Area Caucus Group; Snohomish-Stillaguamish; and West Sound Partners for Ecosystem Recovery.**

E-346 **King County should collaborate with other watershed forum partners to ensure that recommendations of watershed-based salmon recovery plans for King County are integrated with the Puget Sound Partnership recommendations.**

E-347 **King County should encourage integration of King County goals for regional stormwater controls and human and community health into Puget Sound Partnership recommendations.**

E-348 **King County should identify opportunities for coordinating its existing monitoring programs with monitoring and assessment work conducted through the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program, the Puget Sound Partnership's Strategic Science Plan, and the Puget Sound Partnership's Biennial Science Work Plan.**

4. Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds

Nonnative species are often invasive because they did not evolve as part of the ecosystem and therefore do not have natural controls or competition. These species may be terrestrial, freshwater, or marine. Invasive species can create costly maintenance problems for both public and private landowners. Invasive plant and animal species pose threats to the environmental health of all landscapes in King County, including natural, agricultural, wildlife, wetland, stream, and recreational areas. They alter ecosystems through disrupting food chains, out-competing native species, and reducing habitat for native wildlife. Invasive species, including weeds, are widely recognized as having a significant negative impact on wildlife biodiversity. Invasive plants can also increase the risk of forest fire by acting as an accelerant for fire (when extremely flammable) and/or by acting as ladder fuels that carry a fire from ground level to the crown of trees.

Noxious weeds can significantly impact public and private land use in the County. Left uncontrolled, noxious weeds will ultimately undermine many of the County's environmental goals and initiatives, including the Local Food Initiative, salmon habitat restoration projects, and the Land Conservation Initiative. The State Noxious Weed Control Law (Chapter 17.10 Revised Code of Washington) establishes all property owners' responsibility for preventing and controlling the spread of noxious weeds. Because plants grow without regard to property lines or political jurisdictions, everyone's cooperation is needed. The key to successful noxious weed control is effective engagement and participation of landowners and communities in the stewardship of their lands.

The State Weed Law applies to both private and public lands (except for Indian tribal and federal lands). King County manages approximately 4,400 parcels of public land totaling over 36,000 acres. King County also owns or manages approximately 1,500 linear miles of roads and right-of-way. These lands are managed by multiple County agencies, including the King County Departments of Natural Resources, Local Services, and Executive Services. Since weed infestations can spread from property to property, on both public and private lands, it is critical that the County have a coordinated strategy for controlling noxious and invasive weeds on County-owned and managed lands.

The King Conservation District and the County offer guidance and assistance on use of native plants. These plants are more resistant to pests and able to withstand the wet winters and dry summers. They can be used for nature-scaping (low-water requirement landscapes), wildlife enhancement, erosion control, and beautification. The County also establishes a list of "climate-smart plants," which are native plant species currently, historically, or prehistorically found within the surrounding ecoregion that are predicted to maintain their abundance under climate change.

E-349 **King County should promote and restore native plant communities where sustainable, feasible, and appropriate to the site and surrounding ecological context and should incorporate climate change considerations into planting design, including:**

- **a. Management and control of nonnative invasive plants, including aquatic plants;**
- **b. Using environmentally safe methods to control noxious weeds;**
- **c. Use of locally or climate-adapted species for landscaping, restoration, rehabilitation, and erosion control on County-owned lands; and**
- **d. Routine maintenance of plantings to prevent invasive species and ensure survival of plantings.**

E-350 **King County should provide incentives for landowners who are seeking to remove invasive plants and noxious weeds, such as providing technical assistance or access to native or climate-smart plants.**

E-351 **King County shall minimize impacts of noxious weeds to the environment, recreation, public health, and the economy on all lands in the County. This includes preventing, monitoring and controlling infestations of state-listed noxious weeds and other nonnative invasive weeds of concern on County-owned and managed lands.**

E-352 **King County shall be a good steward of public lands and protect water quality by reducing the use of insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides through integrated pest and vegetation management practices. Through training and other programs, King County should actively encourage the use of environmentally safe methods of vegetation control. Herbicide use on King County-owned and leased properties shall be restricted to low-toxicity products applied by trained and licensed staff or contractors, and used only as necessary.**

E-353 **King County shall:**

- **a. Work with the King County Noxious Weed Control Board to provide public oversight and direction of the County's Noxious Weed Control Program;**
- **b. Implement a program of activities that minimizes the impacts of noxious weeds to the environment, economy, recreation, and public health within the county;**
- **c. Adopt rules to ensure control of noxious weeds and weeds of concern as identified by the Noxious Weed Control Board; and**
- **d. Ensure close coordination between the King County Noxious Weed Control Board and King Conservation District in the control of noxious weeds.**

E-354 **Management activities should be implemented in a manner that can test results against management objectives and be adjusted as appropriate.**

IV. Water

King County's aquatic resources include rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, groundwater, and the marine waters of Puget Sound. These resources provide many beneficial functions, including fish and wildlife habitat; food supplies; flood risk reduction; water supply for agricultural, commercial, domestic, and industrial use; energy production; transportation; recreational opportunities; and scenic beauty.

In order to preserve and enhance aquatic resources in King County, they must be managed as an integrated system together with terrestrial resources, and not as distinct and separate elements. The hydrologic cycle (the occurrence, distribution, and circulation of water in the environment) is the common link among aquatic resources and describes their interdependence.

Use and modification of water resources and the surrounding terrestrial environment affects how the hydrologic cycle functions and can cause unintended detrimental impacts such as flooding, low stream and river flows, reduced groundwater availability, erosion, degradation of water quality, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and loss of archeological and traditional cultural resources that depend upon but do not damage natural resources. In order to minimize adverse impacts on the water resources of King County and ensure the continued ability to receive the beneficial uses they provide, the County will need to promote responsible land and water resource planning and use. These beneficial uses include fish and wildlife habitat, flood risk reduction, water quality control, sediment transport, energy production, transportation; recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and water supply for agricultural, municipal, and industrial purpose.

A. Watersheds

A watershed is an area that drains to a common outlet or identifiable water body such as Puget Sound, a river, stream, lake, or wetland. There are six major watersheds in King County (Cedar/Lake Washington, Green/Duwamish, Puget Sound, South Fork Skykomish, Snoqualmie, and White) that, in turn, contain numerous smaller catchments and water bodies. Surface and ground waters are managed most effectively by understanding and considering potential problems and solutions for an entire watershed. Because watersheds frequently extend into several jurisdictions, effective restoration and preservation planning and implementation must be coordinated.

E-401 **King County shall protect and should enhance surface waters, including streams, lakes, wetlands, and the marine waters and nearshore areas of Puget Sound, on a watershed basis by analyzing water quantity and quality problems and their impacts to beneficial uses, including fish and wildlife habitat, flood risk reduction, and erosion control. Conditions of and impacts to the downstream receiving marine beaches and waters of Puget Sound shall be included in watershed management efforts.**

E-402 **King County's watershed management plans, Water Resource Inventory Area salmon recovery plans, flood management plans, master drainage plans, open space acquisition plans, and critical areas regulations should apply a tiered system of protection that affords a higher standard of protection for more significant resources.**

E-403 **King County shall integrate watershed plans with marine and freshwater surface water, flood hazard management, stormwater, groundwater, drinking water, wastewater, and recycled water planning, as well as federal and state Clean Water Act compliance and monitoring and assessment programs, to provide efficient water resource management.**

B. Wetlands

Wetlands are valuable natural resources in King County. They include deep ponds, shallow marshes and swamps, wet meadows, and bogs. Wetlands comprise forested and scrub-shrub communities, emergent vegetation, and other lands supporting a prevalence of plants adapted to saturated soils and varying flooding regimes. Wetlands, with their highly diverse forms and diffuse distribution, can be particularly challenging to categorize and manage.

The federal and state governments also have roles in identifying and regulating certain types of wetlands and development activity. To streamline and synchronize regulatory standards for wetlands, the County relies on guidance from the Washington State Department of Ecology, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Seattle District, and Environmental Protection Agency for wetland identification, delineation, categorization, and, where appropriate, mitigation.

E-404 **King County shall encourage the establishment of uniform countywide wetlands policies that provide protection of both regionally and locally highly rated wetlands.**

Wetlands are productive biological systems, providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Wetlands also store flood waters and control runoff, thereby reducing flooding, downstream erosion, and other damage. Further, wetlands protect water quality by trapping sediments and absorbing pollutants. They allow rain and snowmelt to infiltrate into aquifers, recharging them and potentially making that water available for human use. They discharge groundwater, making it available to plants and animals. Wetlands store peak flows and discharge to streams in dry periods, thus enabling fish and riparian animal populations to survive. They may serve as outdoor classrooms for scientific study. Some are used for hiking, hunting, and fishing. These wetland functions and values need consideration from a watershed perspective. Measures to protect wetland functions and values need to be taken at both the site-specific and watershed scale. In the Urban Growth Area, land use authority is often shared by multiple jurisdictions at the scale of a drainage basin. Similarly, efforts to protect and restore wetlands may be sponsored by multiple parties, including local governments.

Buffers are necessary but often insufficient to adequately protect wetland values and functions especially when wetlands are small and the adjacent watershed large. Consequently, the location of development in addition to its size is important in determining its impact on wetland functions and values.

The functions and values of a wetland will change as the surrounding land is altered by development and other human activities, and as local conditions are influenced by climate change. Silviculture, agriculture, and development-related changes in forest cover and impervious surface affect stormwater runoff patterns, flooding, water quality, and wetland hydrology.

E-405 **King County shall protect wetlands to achieve no net loss of wetland functions and values within each drainage basin. Acquisition, enhancement, regulations, and incentive programs shall be used to protect and enhance wetland functions and values. Watershed management plans, including Water Resource Inventory Area plans, should be used to coordinate and inform priorities for acquisition, enhancement, regulations, and incentive programs within unincorporated King County to achieve the goal of no net loss of wetland functions and values within each drainage basin.**

The diversity of plants and animals found in wetlands generally far exceeds that found in terrestrial habitats in the Pacific Northwest. Habitat loss and fragmentation are considered the greatest threats to this native biodiversity. Wetlands in the Urban Growth Area will experience the largest reduction in the distribution and number of native animals and plants due to habitat loss and fragmentation. It is anticipated that climate change will exacerbate the adverse effects of habitat loss and fragmentation by further reducing existing wetland habitat and altering wetland hydroperiods thereby increasing the inter-habitat distances and potentially restricting the dispersal and movement of plants and wildlife between favorable wetlands and habitats.

Protecting wetland biodiversity depends upon supporting the natural processes (including hydrology, nutrient cycling, and natural disturbances) that shape wetland habitat, protecting wetlands functions and values from the impacts of adjacent land uses, maintaining biological linkages, and preventing fragmentation of wetland habitats. Small wetlands strategically located between other wetlands may provide important biological links or "stepping stones" between other, higher quality wetlands. Wetlands adjacent to habitat networks also are especially critical to wildlife because they allow individual animals to escape danger and populations to intersperse and breed. Wetlands adjacent to habitat networks should receive special consideration in planning land use.

Many wildlife species require access to both wetlands and adjacent terrestrial lands to support them at different stages of their lives. For example, many amphibians breed in the water and need access to terrestrial habitat for feeding and for shelter during the winter. Fixed-width buffers alone are unlikely to adequately address these needs or entirely protect wetlands from surrounding human activity. Adjacent and accessible terrestrial habitat may be too small or fragmented to provide core feeding, overwintering, and other habitat needs.

E-406 **King County should identify upland areas of native vegetation that connect wetlands to upland habitats and that connect upland habitats to each other. The County should seek protection of these areas through acquisition, stewardship plans, and incentive programs such as the Public Benefit Rating System and the Transfer of Development Rights Program.**

E-407 **The unique hydrologic cycles, soil and water chemistries, and vegetation communities of bogs and fens shall be protected through the use of incentives, acquisition, best management practices, and implementation of the King County Surface Water Design Manual to control and/or treat stormwater within the wetland watershed.**

E-408 **Public access to wetlands for traditional cultural, scientific, and recreational use should be encouraged, if:**

- **a. Public access trails are carefully sited;**
- **b. Protection is provided for critical areas; and**
- **c. Hydrologic continuity is maintained.**

E-409 **Regulatory approaches for protecting wetland functions and values, including the application of wetland buffers and the siting of off-site compensatory mitigation, should consider intensity of surrounding land uses and basin conditions. King County shall continue to review and evaluate wetland research and implement changes in its wetland protection programs based on such information.**

E-410 **Enhancement or restoration of degraded wetlands may be allowed to improve wetland functions and values, provided that all wetland functions are evaluated in a wetland management plan, and adequate monitoring, code enforcement, and evaluation is provided and assured by responsible parties. The enhancement or restoration must result in a net improvement to the functions and values of the wetland system. Within available resources, King County should provide technical assistance to small property owners as an incentive to encourage the enhancement or restoration of degraded wetlands.**

E-411 **Provided all wetland functions are evaluated, impact avoidance and minimization sequencing is followed, affected functions are appropriately mitigated, and mitigation sites are adequately monitored, alterations to wetlands may be allowed to:**

a. Accomplish a public agency or utility development;
b. Provide necessary crossings for utilities, stormwater tightlines and roads; or
c. Allow constitutionally mandated "reasonable use" of the property.

When adverse impacts cannot be avoided, compensatory mitigation may be allowed. This means wetland enhancement, restoration, or creation to replace project-induced losses of wetland functions and values. The County recognizes that, especially in the Urban Growth Area, allowing alteration of low-function wetlands in exchange for compensatory mitigation that contributes to wetlands of higher functions and values within a connected wetland system may achieve greater resource protection than simply preserving the low functioning wetland.

E-412 **A small Category IV wetland that is less than 2,500 square feet and that is not part of a wetland complex may be altered to move functions to another wetland as part of an approved mitigation plan that is consistent with E-413 and E-414.**

E-413 **Wetland impacts shall be avoided if possible, and minimized in all cases. Applicants shall demonstrate that impacts are unavoidable due to circumstances outside of the applicant's control, and not for the profit or convenience of development. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be mitigated on site if the proposed mitigation is practical, ecologically appropriate, and likely to continue providing equivalent or better biological functions in perpetuity. When it is demonstrated that there are not enough opportunities available for on-site mitigation, King County may approve off-site mitigation.**

E-414 **Mitigation projects should contribute to an existing wetland system or restore an area that was historically a wetland. Mitigation should only create new wetlands after site monitoring indicates that hydrologic conditions exist to support a new wetland. Mitigation sites should be strategically located to reduce habitat fragmentation or to restore and enhance area-specific functions within a watershed.**

E-415 **Land used for wetland mitigation should be preserved in perpetuity. Monitoring and maintenance in conformance with King County standards should be provided or paid for by the project proponent until the success of the site is established. Long-term stewardship should occur at mitigation sites to ensure sites continue to provide desired functions and values.**

Mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs are forms of watershed-based compensatory mitigation, with the goal of providing greater resource protection and benefit to the public. Both approaches can allow for the consolidation of multiple, small mitigation projects into a large-scale wetland or wetland complex, resulting in economies of scale in planning, implementation, and maintenance. Depending on their location and functions, mitigation banks and projects constructed using in-lieu fee programs can result in wetlands of greater hydrologic, chemical, and biological value because of their size and ecological context and the commitment to long term management. These mitigation approaches also provide applicants with a range of options for meeting their off-site mitigation obligations.

Mitigation banking allows compensatory mitigation to occur prior to the loss of existing wetlands and their functions and values, thereby reducing "temporal" losses. Mitigation banking allows a project proponent to mitigate for their impacts by contributing fees to a bank sponsor for the creation or restoration of the bank site. In-lieu fee programs, such as King County's Mitigation Reserves Program, allow an applicant to meet its off-site wetland mitigation requirements through payment of a fee to King County or another authorized agent with the capacity to design and construct, maintain, and monitor a successful mitigation project. Both types of programs enable fees to be pooled so that larger projects can be constructed to offset impacts elsewhere in a watershed.

Moreover, King County's Mitigation Reserves Program enables such projects to be constructed on lands with degraded wetlands or aquatic areas or lands with the potential to reestablish wetlands or aquatic areas that could be restored or enhanced to benefit overall watershed functions. These Mitigation Reserve lands are managed for long term ecological protection, so that the landscape and stream basin context support a successful enhancement project. Such projects should be planned in a watershed context and may achieve multiple ecological objectives, including meeting salmon conservation and other habitat protection objectives as well as wetland enhancement needs.

E-416 **King County, in partnership with other governmental entities and interested parties, should encourage the development and use of wetland mitigation banks through which functioning wetlands or aquatic areas are enhanced, restored, or created prior to the impacting of existing wetlands or aquatic areas.**

King County is a regional service provider for compensatory in-lieu fee mitigation – both to permittees in unincorporated King County and within cities. The County's compensatory mitigation program offers private and public project proponents the opportunity to pay a fee to King County in lieu of completing their own mitigation. These fees in turn will be used to implement mitigation projects, equitably applied among larger- and smaller-scale developments, that address watershed needs as determined through analysis of best available science.

E-417 **King County should continue to implement and encourage use of its Mitigation Reserves Program to provide a fee-based option for permit applicants to mitigate for unavoidable impacts of permitted development on wetland and aquatic area functions and values. The fee structure shall be based on the full costs of land acquisition, site selection, design, construction, and long term maintenance and monitoring. Mitigation projects implemented through the Mitigation Reserves Program should occur within a watershed context.**

E-418 **King County should be a regional service provider of compensatory mitigation through the Mitigation Reserves Program by working with local cities, other counties, and state agencies to establish partnerships for implementation of interjurisdictional in-lieu fee mitigation.**

E-419 **When implementing in-lieu fee mitigation projects, King County should consider the ecological context of the impacted wetland, and the impacted wetland's acreage, functions, and values. In-lieu fee mitigation should result in no net loss, and if possible, in an increase in overall wetland functions and values within the watershed in which the impacted site is located.**

Through the King County Mitigation Reserves Program, mitigation sites are selected to offset development-related impacts. Selected sites, with wetland or aquatic area preservation, enhancement, restoration, or creation potential, will be protected in perpetuity as open space and actively managed as mitigation sites. Mitigation projects implemented through the Mitigation Reserves Program will preserve, enhance, restore, and/or create ecological functions at the site to compensate for wetland, stream, river, and/or buffer functions and values lost during unavoidable impacts associated with permitted construction of projects at other locations. Sites and projects through the Mitigation Reserves Program will occur where the projects will have sustainable long-term benefits to aquatic resources in the watershed, ensuring projects at protected sites occur in places with importance to ecological integrity of the watershed. King County's Mitigation Reserves Program is approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Department of Ecology, and other agencies to provide mitigation for the impacts to wetlands and other aquatic resources.

A large portion of western Washington farming occurs in lands that were once wetlands. Region-wide, agricultural lands have been targeted as mitigation sites because the relative cost of land is low and the likelihood of success in returning wetland functions is high. King County's Agricultural Production Districts that are located in floodplains and the poorly drained Osceola soils of the Enumclaw Plateau are no exception. Unless carefully sited and engineered, wetland mitigation projects can inadvertently raise water tables on adjacent agricultural properties. King County has joined other counties in discouraging the use of productive farmland for wetland mitigation, while working with farmers on wetland enhancement and restoration at a scale appropriate to sustaining their farms.

E-420 **Wetland mitigation projects should avoid impacts to and prevent loss of farmable land within Agricultural Production Districts. Creation of wetland mitigation banks shall not be allowed in the Agricultural Production Districts when the purpose is to compensate for wetland impacts from development outside the Agricultural Production Districts.**

C. Rivers, Streams, and Floodplains

There are approximately 6,400 miles of rivers, streams, and creeks in King County and more than 59,000 acres of floodplains along rivers, streams, and marine shorelines. The river and stream channels, the surrounding riparian (streamside) areas and upland

areas, their floodplains all contribute to the functioning and integrity of rivers and streams. Many rivers and streams provide habitat that is essential for various life stages of many species of wildlife and fish, including salmonids.

Rivers, streams, and floodplains are dynamic systems. When flood waters overtop banks, floodplains temporarily store that water. Depending on the depth and flow, floods can dramatically alter river and stream courses, creating new channels, eroding banks, and depositing sediment and gravel. Flooding and erosion can also dislodge trees. These changes slow flood flows and help to support dynamic and complex habitat for fish and wildlife. At the same time, they can create public safety issues for people living along and recreating in rivers.

In addition, public access to rivers and streams is both a requirement of the Shoreline Management Act and a goal for King County to support the regional economy and provide recreational opportunities for the community. People enjoy rivers and streams for the scenic and recreation values, including boating, floating, swimming, fish and wildlife viewing, and fishing. Management of these systems needs to consider not only habitat protection, but also public health and safety and opportunities for education and stewardship.

E-421 **The existing flood storage and conveyance functions and ecological values of floodplains, wetlands, and riparian areas shall be protected, and should be restored and enhanced through integrated actions that provide multiple benefits, such as preservation of open space and adjacent low-density development.**

E-422 **King County should coordinate across County departments and with other agencies and organizations to promote public awareness of the dynamics and dangers of river and stream systems and the need for personal responsibility when living near or recreating in or on rivers and streams.**

E-423 **When King County places large wood in rivers and streams for habitat restoration or enhancement, it should do so in a manner that minimizes danger to the public.**

Specific policies addressing management of large wood are found in the King County Flood Management Plan. In urban areas, rivers and streams in some cases also serve as stormwater drainage systems. During the winter months, stormwater runoff during storms can bring pollutants to these water bodies. During the summer months, lawn irrigation and other water uses can also carry pollutants to rivers and streams.

E-424 **River and stream channels, stream outlets, headwater areas, riparian areas, and areas where dynamic ecological processes are present should be preserved, protected, and enhanced for their hydraulic, hydrologic, ecologic, and aesthetic functions, including their functions in providing large wood to salmonid-bearing streams. Actions taken along river and stream channels should provide multiple benefits, including resiliency to climate change. Flood risk reduction actions should benefit all communities, especially frontline communities, consistent with equity and racial and social justice goals and the policies of the King County Flood Management Plan or successor plans.**

E-425 **To protect or improve adjacent wetlands and aquatic habitat, the designation of buffers for aquatic areas, including rivers and streams, should take into account watershed-scale actions to mitigate the impacts of upland development on flooding, erosion, and habitat.**

E-426 **King County shall continue to monitor and assess river and stream flows, water and sediment quality, physical habitats, and biotic resources in rivers and streams. Assessment shall identify trends and describe impacts on human health and safety, aquatic life, and wildlife habitat.**

E-427 **To maintain and restore stream health, sources of uncontrolled stormwater flows contributing to peak flows in small streams should be managed using on-site structural or non-structural flow control techniques.**

Most streams in King County originate in either mountainous terrain or on rolling glacial uplands. These streams often descend through steep, narrow ravines before reaching the floodplain. At the point where these streams leave their ravines and flow onto the floodplain, the channel gradient (slope) and confinement decrease quickly, dramatically reducing the streams' ability to carry sediment. These are areas of natural sediment deposition and channel migration. The combination of sediment deposition and repeated channel migration creates fan-shaped depositional features known as alluvial "fans."

During periods of heavy rainfall, streams often carry large sediment loads from upstream that deposit on downstream alluvial fans. Landslides, beaver dam failures and other natural disturbances can create episodes of particularly high rates of sediment production and delivery. In many stream systems, instances of heavy sediment deposition may occur episodically with years or decades of apparent stability in the intervening periods. In many instances, sediment production and tributary or stream flow rates are exacerbated by upland land use conditions and associated stormwater effects.

Alluvial fans share many of the ecological attributes and land use risks associated with channel migration hazard areas and landslide hazards, though they are unique in many respects. In a natural environment, alluvial fans often provide some of the best available spawning habitat in a tributary stream, while also providing a source of gravel for areas downstream. In some heavily altered streams, the alluvial fan may represent the only remaining areas that are suitable for spawning. Alluvial fans can also form the highest ground available in the floodplain, and have historically been used for construction of buildings (including farm buildings), roads, and other structures. Unfortunately, they are inherently unstable environments in which to build. During high flows coupled with sediment deposition, a stream may jump its bank in the area of the alluvial fan, in some cases damaging private property, disrupting agricultural activities, destroying culverts and road crossings, stranding fish, and creating risks to public safety. Protecting buildings, roads, bridges, and crops on and adjacent to alluvial fans often requires extensive and costly ongoing maintenance activities. Maintenance activities can have adverse effects on habitat, and in some circumstances may not be permittable under state regulations nor feasible as a management strategy.

E-428 **King County should improve the management of alluvial fans through mapping the locations of existing alluvial fans and areas at risk of alluvial fan hazards, and through developing appropriate management strategies such as development standards and mitigation requirements. Strategies should:**

- **a. Address potential conflicts between adjacent landowners and natural alluvial fan hazards and processes;**
- **b. Take climate change into account;**
- **c. Protect intact habitat;**
- **d. Restore degraded habitat; and**
- **e. Reduce threats to public safety for existing land uses.**

Much of the county's farmland is located on valley floors, and agricultural landowners frequently have properties on alluvial fans. The episodic deposits of sediment and debris that naturally occur on alluvial fans can reduce the capacity of stream channels and wetlands, and debris flows may cover fertile farmland, disrupting agricultural operations. Sudden shifts in the location of streams on alluvial fans can also flood agricultural buildings and farm residences. Obtaining permits allowing active management to remove the accumulated sediments and reestablish stream channels can be difficult given the regulations that apply to critical areas such as alluvial fan hazards, aquatic areas, and floodplains.

E-429 **King County should provide regulatory options to protect existing residences and agricultural operations that are threatened by alluvial fan hazards. These options should provide emergency relief from debris and stream flow changes and consider long-term multi-benefit solutions that protect and restore fish habitat.**

D. Flood Hazard Management

Floodplains are lands adjacent to lakes, rivers, and streams that are subject to periodic flooding. Floodplains naturally store flood water, contribute to groundwater recharge, protect water quality, and are valuable for recreation, agriculture, and fish and wildlife habitat. Floodplains also provide a deposition zone for sediments mobilized by rivers and streams. Wetlands are often an integral part of floodplains.

There are two primary types of flood hazards: inundation and channel migration. Inundation is defined as floodwater and debris flowing through an area that is not normally under water. Such events can cause minor to severe damage, depending on the velocity and depth of flows, the duration of the flood event, the quantity of logs and other debris carried by flows, and the amount and type of development and personal property in the floodwater's path. Floodplains are designated based on the predicted frequency of flooding for a particular area. For example, a 100-year floodplain is a land area that has a one percent probability of experiencing flooding in any given year. Inundation hazards can come from major rivers, smaller tributary streams, local stormwater runoff, high lake levels, high groundwater levels, coastal storm surge, and tidal action.

Channel migration results from the wearing away of a riverbank by flowing water. Ongoing erosion of one riverbank coupled with sediment deposition along the opposite bank results in the lateral movement or migration of a channel across its floodplain. When this shift is abrupt it is called channel avulsion. Channel migration can lead to flood and erosion damage to structures, farms, and critical infrastructure. At the same time, it is a natural process that forms complex fish habitat by creating braided channels and causing trees to fall into rivers. Bank stabilization actions to limit channel migration have negative impacts on channel processes and reduce salmonid habitat quality and quantity. Channel migration hazard areas are designated based on geomorphic analyses and review of historical channel migration patterns and rates, consistent with the King County Flood Management Plan and the Shoreline Management Act.

Development can reduce the floodplain's ability to store and convey floodwaters, thereby increasing the velocity and depth of floodwaters in other areas. In addition, floodplain development puts humans in harm's way and often occurs at the expense of important fish and wildlife habitat. King County has adopted the Flood Management Plan as a functional element of the King County Comprehensive Plan to detail regional policies, programs, and projects to reduce the risk to people and property from river flooding and channel migration in King County and to provide guidance for decisions related to land use and floodplain management activities.

E-430 **King County shall implement a comprehensive local floodplain management program that, consistent with the King County Flood Management Plan or successor plans: protects lives; minimizes damage and disruption to infrastructure and critical facilities; preserves and restores natural floodplain functions; uses integrated approaches to provide multiple benefits; is resilient to climate change; supports floodplain management actions that benefit frontline communities; and ensures that new development does not put people in harm's way or cause adverse flooding impacts elsewhere.**

E-431 **King County shall continue to exceed the federal minimum standards stipulated by the National Flood Insurance Program for unincorporated areas to better protect public safety, reduce the risk of flood and channel migration hazards to existing public and private property, and prevent new at-risk development.**

E-432 **King County's floodplain land use and floodplain management activities shall be carried out in accordance with policies, programs, and projects detailed in the King County Flood Management Plan or successor plans.**

Beaver ponds, created when beavers dam watercourses, provide a protective pool for a beaver lodge and environmental benefits. They help retain stormwater runoff, trap sediment and pollutants, maintain stream flow during summer, reduce downstream flooding and erosion, raise groundwater levels, and help create diverse plant and animal habitat. Beaver ponds also provide significant environmental benefits and functions for salmon rearing habitat, floodplain connectivity, wood inputs, increased complexity of aquatic systems, and biodiversity.

Beaver dams may also cause upstream flooding of roads, utilities, and both public and private property, and create the potential for downstream risk to public safety and infrastructure should dam failure occur. If a dam is harmed or removed, the beavers will typically repair the damage quickly, because their survival depends on having the entrance to their lodge underwater.

E-433 **King County should support the coexistence of beavers and people in rural King County.**

E. Lakes

There are approximately 700 lakes in King County ranging in size from less than one acre to Lake Washington's roughly 21,500 acres. These lakes provide habitat that is essential for various life stages of many species of fish and wildlife, including salmonids, as well as recreational opportunities and scenic beauty. Watershed development, shoreline alteration, and stormwater runoff into lakes can alter their functioning and lead to eutrophication (increases in nutrients), loss of habitat, and threats to human and ecosystem health. Although sewage treatment has greatly reduced pollution in urban lakes like Lake Washington, stormwater runoff polluted by oil, metals, sediments, pet waste, lawn fertilizers, and toxic chemicals can threaten lake ecosystems and those who use them.

King County conducts water quality monitoring assessment on lakes throughout the county, including sediment quality, habitat, biotic resources, and hydrology. This monitoring supports restoration and protection of lakes in King County, as well as improves understanding of climate change, watershed development, stormwater impacts, and swimming, fishing, and drinking water uses.

King County also conducts specialized monitoring assessments for public health and safety. During the summer months, the County conducts regular monitoring at public

swimming beaches and contaminate monitoring of some fish species. When monitoring indicates a public health hazard, the County works collaboratively with state agencies and local jurisdictions, and information is provided to Public Health - Seattle & King County. This can result in public warnings, consumption advisories, management recommendations, and a temporary closure order if necessary. King County also offers technical response assistance to harmful algal bloom incidents.

E-434 **Lakes shall be protected through management of lake watersheds and shorelines. Lakes should also be protected through the management of nutrients that stimulate potentially harmful algae blooms and aquatic plant growth. Where sufficient information is available, measurable standards for lake quality should be set and management plans established to meet the standards.**

E-435 **When a lake borders multiple jurisdictions, King County should coordinate with those jurisdictions on lake protection and management. Formation of lake management districts or other financing mechanisms should also be considered to provide the financial resources necessary to support actions for protection of lakes.**

E-436 **King County, in partnership with other governments and community groups, should monitor and assess lake water and sediment quality, physical habitat, biotic resources, and hydrology. Assessment should identify trends and describe impacts on human and ecosystem health, aquatic life, and wildlife habitat.**

E-437 **King County should collaborate with other jurisdictions, Public Health - Seattle & King County, and state agencies to identify and address pollutant sources adversely impacting aquatic life and/or human and ecosystem health.**

E-438 **Swimming beaches on lakes should be monitored for fecal contamination and algal toxins. When data shows public health to be at risk, Public Health - Seattle & King County should take appropriate action to address public health risks.**

F. Puget Sound

There are approximately 51 miles of marine shoreline in unincorporated areas. Shorelines provide important functions for maintaining a healthy ecosystem and also provide essential habitat for a variety of important and listed species, including mammals, birds, fish, and invertebrates. In addition to recreational opportunities, the marine nearshore environment provides essential habitat for a variety of species including juvenile salmonids, forage fish, and several commercially important shellfish species. Kelp and eelgrass populations are particularly important for providing food and habitat, especially for juvenile life stages for a variety of key fish and invertebrate species. The intertidal area of marine beaches are the only spawning habitats for Pacific sand lance and surf smelt, which form the base for much of the food chain in Puget Sound and are highly susceptible to impacts from residential development of shoreline areas. Marine resources and shorelines, especially embayments, are susceptible to impacts from water pollution, changes in upland vegetation, alteration of natural bluff and beach erosion patterns, and alteration of nearshore substrates and aquatic vegetation.

The majority of marine waters within King County are subtidal waters, which provide important ecosystem functions and essential habitat for a variety of important species, including marine mammals, birds, salmonids and other fish, and invertebrates. Subtidal waters support geoduck, shrimp, and commercial and Indian tribal fisheries, and also provide critical rearing habitats for salmonids and migratory pathways for marine

mammals. Resident orca are often observed in King County subtidal waters feeding on salmonids, and Biggs' whales are often seen feeding on seals and sea lions. Adult life stages of many species, such as rockfish and Dungeness crab, use subtidal waters extensively. In addition, subtidal waters provide an important connection to Pacific Ocean waters as well as waters within other parts of Puget Sound. Subtidal habitat is susceptible to impacts from water pollution, over-utilizing of biological resources, and climate change.

King County conducts water quality monitoring in marine offshore and nearshore areas throughout King County as part of the Marine Monitoring Program. Nutrients, chlorophyll, and dissolved oxygen are measured along with other physical and chemical parameters. Biological parameters, such as fecal indicator bacteria and phytoplankton and zooplankton community structure are also assessed. Offshore sediment quality is assessed in various subtidal areas and nearshore sediments are assessed throughout King County. The Washington State Department of Health issues fish and shellfish consumption advisories to protect human health. There are consumption advisories for a number of species within King County marine waters. King County maintains a monitoring program to track the level of select contaminants in some species of fish and shellfish in Elliott Bay and King County's marine waters. These data are used to evaluate the potential for both human health (through consumption) and ecological impacts.

King County's freshwater and saltwater environments are integrally linked. Water, sediments, and nutrients move from upland areas to Puget Sound. Many species, including salmon, spend critical periods of their lives in both fresh and salt water. Salmon migrating from saltwater to their spawning areas bring marine-derived nutrients back to the upland areas.

E-439 **King County should collaborate with Indian tribes, federal and state agencies, the Puget Sound Partnership, cities, other counties, and universities to monitor and assess Puget Sound marine waters, nearshore areas, and embayments. Monitoring and assessment should:**

a. Address water and sediment quality, bioaccumulation of chemicals, physical habitat, biotic resources, and hydrology; and

b. Identify trends and describe impacts on human and ecosystem health and safety, aquatic life, and wildlife habitat.

E-440 **King County should collaborate with other jurisdictions, Public Health – Seattle & King County, and state agencies to identify and address pollutant sources adversely impacting aquatic life and/or human and ecosystem health.**

E-441 **King County should protect and enhance the natural environment in those areas recommended or adopted as Aquatic Reserves by Washington State Department of Natural Resources. This should include participation in management planning for the aquatic reserves and working with willing landowners adjacent to the reserve on restoration and acquisition projects that enhance the natural environment.**

E-442 **King County shall support efforts of the Poverty Bay Shellfish Protection District to safeguard against threats to water quality that limit access to existing commercial shellfish harvesting areas.**

E-443 **King County should continue to support regional programs and actions to monitor and address fecal pollution of King County lakes, streams, and beaches, such as the Pollution Identification and Control Program being run in collaboration with the King Conservation District and Public Health – Seattle & King County.**

Human waste contains high levels of nutrients and pathogens. These pollutants can enter Puget Sound marine waters from a variety of pathways including combined sewer overflow outfalls, septic systems, stormwater runoff, ships and boats, and rivers and streams. Nutrients are also present in treated wastewater effluent. Public Health – Seattle & King County is responsible for assuring that on-site sewage systems in King County meet state and local regulations. In addition, Public Health – Seattle & King County is required to identify areas where marine water quality is threatened or impaired as a result of contamination from on-site sewage systems, to designate these areas as Marine Recovery Areas, Public Health – Seattle & King County has developed a Marine Recovery Areas plan for Vashon-Maury Island to identify failed septic systems within the Marine Recovery Areas, and to assure that these systems are repaired and maintained.

The State Department of Health conducts shoreline surveys, which identify pollution sources that may impact water quality. Marine water sampling is to determine fecal coliform bacteria levels in the marine waters. Shellfish-growing areas are classified according to whether shellfish in the area can be harvested for human consumption. Public Health – Seattle & King County, in partnership with Department of Natural Resources and Parks and King Conservation District, has implemented the Quartermaster Pollution Identification and Correction programs to address the fecal coliform discharges that limit commercial harvesting.

The Marine Recovery Areas/Pollution Identification and Correction program has successfully returned portions of Quartermaster Harbor to harvestable condition and is continuing work on Vashon-Maury Island to address fecal coliform sources such as properties that have on-site sewage systems that pre-date regulatory oversight systems or that have failing systems. In addition to Quartermaster Harbor, other commercial shellfish beds that are listed as threatened or concerned in King County are East Passage and Colvos Passage on Vashon, and Poverty Bay on the mainland.

Most landowners act as responsible managers of their septic systems and maintain them effectively. However, those septic systems that are not maintained can fail, and impact the environment.

E-444 **King County should work with landowners, other jurisdictions, the state Department of Health, sewer districts, and the Puget Sound Partnership to proactively address failing septic systems with a priority in areas where on-site septic could pose an increased public health risk, critical areas and their buffers, and constrained shoreline environments.**

G. Groundwater Resources

Protecting groundwater is an important regional issue because groundwater provides approximately 30 percent of the water used in King County and is the primary source of water in the Rural Area geography. On Vashon-Maury Island and in other sole-source aquifer areas, it is the only source of drinking water.

The natural hydrologic system can be altered by development practices and overuse of the aquifer. The result may be depletion of aquifers. Groundwater is also subject to contamination from human activity. Once a source of groundwater is contaminated it may be lost forever. The cost of protection is considerably less than the cost of remediation and replacement. Having accurate, up-to-date information on groundwater quality and quantity is essential for managing this resource. Mapping risk could be achieved for a variety of pollutants or pollutant classes by integrating groundwater protection level, distance to groundwater, soil type, pollutant mobility, and land use information into a new map layer for each pollutant. Finally, public education (particularly for individual well owners) and coordinated groundwater management efforts will help to protect this resource over the long run.

E-445 **King County shall identify and map areas in unincorporated King County that are considered Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas and sole-source aquifers. The County shall periodically update this map with new information from adopted groundwater and wellhead protection studies and other relevant sources. King County should develop and maintain map layers of groundwater risk level when funding is available.**

E-446 **King County should protect the quality and quantity of groundwater countywide.**

E-447 **King County should work with partners to implement adopted Groundwater Management Plans and approved Wellhead Protection Programs, to coordinate groundwater management among jurisdictions, and to monitor groundwater status and trends.**

E-448 **King County should work with partners to develop best management practices for development, for resource-based operations, and for the general public, and should work to educate the public on groundwater best management practices.**

E-449 **King County should incorporate into its land use and water service decisions consideration of potential impacts on groundwater quality and quantity and the need for long-term aquifer protection and should require the proper decommissioning of any well abandoned in the process of connecting an existing water system to a Group A water system.**

E-450 **King County shall evaluate and monitor groundwater policies, their implementation costs, and the impacts upon the quantity and quality of groundwater at least two years prior to each 10-year Comprehensive Plan update, using best available science. The depletion or degradation of aquifers needed for potable water supplies shall be avoided or mitigated, and the need to plan and develop feasible and equivalent replacement sources to compensate for the potential loss of water supplies shall be considered.**

E-451 **King County should protect groundwater in the Rural Area by:**

- **a. Preferring land uses that retain a high ratio of permeable to impermeable surface area, and that maintain and/or augment the natural soil's infiltration capacity and treatment capability for groundwater;**
- **b. Evaluating impacts on groundwater, where appropriate, during review of commercial, industrial, and residential subdivision development projects that are proposed to be located within critical aquifer recharge areas, and, where appropriate, requiring mitigation for anticipated groundwater impacts to domestic water supply resulting from these projects; and**
- **c. Requiring standards for vegetation clearing, impervious surface limits, and, where appropriate, infiltration of surface water.**

Climate change has the potential to impact future groundwater availability. Warmer temperatures in the Pacific Northwest are projected to lead to greater demand for water in the summer and fall, while reduced snow pack and associated stream flows could reduce seasonal groundwater recharge. Further analysis of the potential impacts of climate change on groundwater supplies in King County is needed to understand and mitigate for potential impacts.

E-452 **King County should, in partnership with water utilities, work to ensure that climate change impacts on groundwater are being accounted for in water supply planning and management, such as by:**

a. Evaluating effects of climate change on aquifer recharge and groundwater supplies; and

b. Developing strategies through climate change initiatives with Indian tribes, cities, water districts, groundwater committees, and state and federal agencies to mitigate impacts of climate change.

H. Stormwater Quality

Rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater must be protected from the adverse impacts of development and land use change to continue functioning in a beneficial manner. Because development both increases runoff from storms and reduces streamflows in dry months by limiting infiltration, control of the rate, volume, and quality of stormwater runoff is critical. Unmitigated stormwater runoff can cause erosion, sedimentation, and flooding with resulting adverse impacts on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, property, and human safety. In addition, stormwater runoff can carry pollutants, such as oil, heavy metals, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, animal wastes, dust from tires, naturally occurring nutrients at problematic levels, and toxins and contaminants of emerging concern into waters. Sedimentation from soil disturbed by clearing, grading, farming and logging can reduce river or stream channel capacity, fill lakes and wetlands, and smother aquatic life and habitat.

King County stormwater management encompasses a wide range of strategies that include maintenance of more traditional, "gray" infrastructure such as stormwater ponds, and encourage more "green" approaches, such as low impact development practices intended to manage stormwater runoff on site, reducing discharges of pollutants in stormwater runoff and mimicking natural hydrology.

E-453 **Stormwater runoff shall be managed through a variety of methods, with the goal of protecting surface water quality, in-stream flows, and aquatic habitat; promoting groundwater recharge while protecting groundwater quality; reducing the risk of flooding; protecting public safety and properties; and enhancing the viability of agricultural lands.**

E-454 **King County should:**

a. Evaluate the need for product or material restrictions because of water quality impacts;

b. Use a data- and science-driven approach to identify and reduce the use of contaminants of emerging concern, such as 6PPD; and

c. Seek changes to state regulations and permits to incentivize regional stormwater investments where they will achieve the best outcomes for pollution reduction.

The Clean Water Act requires that all states protect and restore their waters to beneficial uses. This is accomplished through the development of a permitting framework called the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program. Authority for administering the NPDES Program has been delegated by the Environmental Protection Agency to the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), and King County holds a number of NPDES general permits for various specified activities.

When a particular water body falls short of state surface water quality standards Ecology must impose a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). A TMDL is developed to restore beneficial uses to the water body by reducing or eliminating pollutants. The Bear-Evans watershed, Issaquah Creek, and the Puyallup/White watershed are impaired by elevated levels of fecal coliform. The Lower White River has a TMDL for elevated pH and Cottage Lake is impaired by elevated levels of total phosphorous. The actions to counteract these elevated levels of pollution include animal waste education and collection stations

at municipal parks, and inventorying and inspecting commercial animal handling facilities.

In addition to the TMDLs found in the Permit, several others have been approved within King County, including for the Snoqualmie River, Little Bear Creek, Lake Fenwick, Lake Sawyer, the Duwamish River, Lower Green River, Pipers Creek, North Creek, Newaukum Creek, Puyallup River, White River, and Fauntleroy Creek. King County TMDLs under development or pending approval by the Environmental Protection Agency include Green River and Newaukum Creek, White and Puyallup Rivers, and Soos Creek.

E-455 **When environmental monitoring, testing, or reliable data indicates human activities have caused impaired water quality, such as increased water temperature, fecal contamination, low oxygen, excess nutrients, metals, or other contaminants, King County shall take actions that help moderate those impairments.**

E-456 **King County shall use incentives, regulations, capital projects, open space acquisitions, public education and stewardship, and other programs, such as recycled water, to manage its aquatic resources and to protect and enhance their multiple beneficial uses. Use of water resources for one purpose should, to the fullest extent practicable, preserve opportunities for other uses.**

E-457 **Development shall occur in a manner that supports continued ecological and hydrologic functioning of water resources and should not have a significant adverse impact on water quality, water quantity, or sediment transport, and should maintain base flows, natural water level fluctuations, unpolluted groundwater recharge in Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas, and fish and wildlife habitat.**

V. Upland Areas

A. Forest Cover

King County recognizes the value of trees and forests in both rural and urban communities for benefits such as improving air and water quality and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat. Forests absorb and slowly release rainwater to streams and aquifers, filter runoff, store carbon, and provide food, shade, and cover for wildlife. In doing so, they help to prevent flooding and erosion, reduce stormwater runoff and increase infiltration, protect drinking water, support fish and wildlife and their habitat, and provide recreational opportunities and health benefits to communities. Forested headwaters in upper reaches of watersheds can be especially important for preventing flooding, improving water quality, and protecting salmon and other wildlife habitat, given the presence of large areas of with relatively low levels of development. Forests in rural King County are also relied upon for recreation and resource use, including harvest and firewood collection and cultivation of special forest products categorized as edibles, florals, and medicinals. Forest Stewardship Plans provide mechanisms for tailoring regulations and best management practices for forest management to individual properties. Completion of one of these plans can also qualify landowners for tax incentive programs and streamlined permitting.

E-501 **The central role that forests play in supporting hydrologic and other ecological processes should be reflected in stormwater management, flooding, fish and wildlife, and open space policies and programs.**

E-502 **King County's critical areas and clearing and grading regulations should provide for activities compatible with long-term forest use, including use of recreational trails, firewood collection, forest fire risk reduction, forest management, and control of invasive plants.**

E-503 **King County shall promote retention of forest cover and significant trees using a mix of regulations, incentives, and technical assistance.**

E-504 **King County shall identify and implement recommended strategies to establish and protect corridors of forest with old growth characteristics, particularly in upper watershed areas and along major river corridors in support of habitat for salmon and other wildlife.**

B. Organics and Waste

Organics comprise a large portion of the waste generated by King County residences, businesses, and farms. Management of this organic waste stream requires significant solid waste, farm management, and wastewater treatment resources. Many of these "waste materials" (yard debris, food and wood waste, soiled paper, biosolids, and agricultural livestock wastes), can be minimized, recycled, and reused to provide numerous uses that are beneficial to the environment and the economy.

The Re+ program focuses on actions to minimize King County's environmental footprint, create more green jobs, divert waste from the landfill, and ensure everyone in King County has equitable access to efficient waste services.

E-505 **King County should implement programs to improve availability and markets for organic materials for soils that have been disturbed by new and existing developments.**

E-506 **King County shall work with regional partners to ensure a viable and safe organics recycling infrastructure that allows for yard, food, wood, biosolids, manure and other organic wastes to be turned into resources benefiting climate change, soil health, water quality, and maximizing landfill diversion, consistent with the County's zero waste of resources goals.**

E-507 **King County shall promote, encourage, and require, where appropriate, the beneficial use and reuse of organic materials in soils and minimize their disposal, including but not limited to their use in the following activities: agriculture and silviculture; road, park, and other public project development; site development and new construction; restoration and remediation of disturbed soils; nursery and sod production; and landscaping. For these purposes, organic materials do not include fly ash.**

E-508 **King County agencies shall use and promote compost whenever feasible to compensate for historical losses of organic content in soil caused by human actions, including development, landscaping, agricultural practices, and resource extraction. Where use of compost is not feasible, agencies shall consider use of other recycled organic products, such as biosolids.**

E-509 **King County shall seek to enhance soil quality and protect water quality and biodiversity across the landscape by developing policies, programs, and incentives that support the goal of no net loss of organic material.**

Biosolids are the nutrient-rich organic product from the wastewater treatment process which can be recycled as a soil amendment. At King County's wastewater treatment

plant, solids are removed from the wastewater and treated in large digesters where the organic solids are stabilized, reducing the volume by half. After digestion, a portion of water is removed, leaving the semisolid material ready for recycling.

The Biosolids Management Program's mission is to safely and sustainably return carbon and nutrients to the land through the use of biosolids. The Biosolids Management Program pursues environmental stewardship through diverse public-private partnerships. One hundred percent of county biosolids are beneficially used through the forestry and agriculture programs.

E-510 King County supports and should explore ways to beneficially use biosolids locally, whenever feasible.

On-farm composting as a method of managing livestock waste and other organic waste materials is an important waste management strategy for farmers. Benefits of on-farm composting include:

- Additional revenue from the sale of compost;
- Reduced costs for water, fertilizers and pesticides, due to reduced water usage and reduced reliance on fertilizers and pesticides;
- Reduced impacts to surface waters; and
- Increased crop yields.

Regulations for managing livestock encourage farmers to implement farm plans in collaboration with the King Conservation District to protect and enhance natural resources, including water quality. The King Conservation District provides technical assistance and education to agricultural landowners on how to implement best management practices, which include manure storage facilities and pasture renovation, as well as stream and wetland buffer fencing. The resulting farm plans can include provisions for on-site and off-site management of livestock wastes and strategies to integrate processing livestock wastes with other organic waste materials. These strategies should be consistent with the King County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, including but not limited to on-farm composting and land application of processed yard debris. Farm plans that address livestock waste management further compliance with the provisions of the Clean Water Act and other federal and state mandates regarding water quality.

E-511 King County shall promote livestock waste management that keeps waste out of stormwater runoff and from infiltration to groundwater, and enhances soil health by methods such as combining livestock waste with other plant and animal waste material for incorporation into crop soils.

Throughout King County, businesses use and generate hazardous materials as part of their normal operations. There are numerous rules and requirements for the proper management of these materials and requirements can vary slightly by jurisdiction. Often the businesses will learn of these requirements after they have found out that they are not in compliance. To help mitigate the potential harmful effects to human health and the environment and to minimize the economic impacts to businesses that may generate hazardous chemicals, King County provides education and technical assistance to businesses on requirements for proper management and disposal of hazardous chemicals, as well as information on less toxic alternatives.

Contacting businesses with information on proper hazardous waste disposal as early as possible in the business development phase can help to prevent improper disposal of hazardous waste and associated risks to public safety and the environment. Taking a preventative approach can also help to avoid costly code violations.

E-512 **King County should review permits for new businesses that propose to use hazardous chemicals or generate hazardous waste as part of their operations. The County should offer to provide technical assistance related to hazardous waste disposal requirements and non-toxic alternatives.**

VI. Geologically Hazardous Areas

King County is located at a tectonically active convergent plate margin, which is characterized by dynamic geologic processes including active mountain building, abundant seismic activity, and volcanism. In addition, the relatively recent glacial history has resulted in the creation of numerous steep and unstable hillsides throughout the county, many of which are prone to naturally occurring landslides. Snow avalanches are also a common occurrence in the Cascade Mountains in eastern King County. The hazardous impacts from these processes can be worsened with climate change, and increases in extreme wet weather increase risks from geologic hazards.

Often, the result of these naturally occurring events can be beneficial to the environment by providing gravel and woody debris in streams and rivers and continuing the process of natural regeneration. Salmon need gravel for spawning and in-stream debris for cover and to provide shade and regulate temperature. While the relatively flat Puget Lowlands made it historically ideal for development and agriculture, the natural processes of erosion and deposition will continue. King County must balance the positive benefits of these natural occurrences with any adverse impacts that pose a threat to public health and safety. The County must also strike a balance between allowing naturally occurring landslides and erosion, and the need to prevent the unnatural acceleration of landslides and erosion due to development activities.

Coal mines have created additional areas of subsidence and instability in addition to those that occur naturally. When human activity occurs in areas subject to such active geologic processes, the potential consequences to life, property, and environmental integrity can be enormous. If geologic processes are recognized and appropriately addressed in the course of development activities, adverse consequences can be substantially reduced if not completely eliminated.

A. Erosion Hazard Areas

Virtually any area in King County can experience soil erosion if subjected to inappropriate grading and construction practices. The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service has identified certain soil types in King County as being especially subject to erosion if disturbed. These Erosion Hazard Areas may not be well suited to high-density developments and intensive land uses because of the sensitivity of these soils to disturbance.

E-601 **Land uses allowed in Erosion Hazard Areas shall minimize soil disturbance and should maximize retention and replacement of native vegetative cover.**

E-602 **Slopes with a grade of 40 percent or more shall not be developed unless the risks and adverse impacts associated with such development can be reduced to a non-significant level.**

B. Landslide Hazard Areas

Certain hillsides in King County are either naturally unstable or susceptible to instability when disturbed. These hillsides contain slopes greater than 15 percent, are underlain

by impermeable soils, and are subject to seepage. They also include areas that have experienced landslides in the past.

Many of the largest and most active landslides in King County are associated with the steep slopes adjacent to river corridors or along marine shorelines where glacial strata are eroded and steepened. Areas undergoing rapid undercutting due to stream bank erosion, wave action, or human alteration of stormwater discharge are potentially unstable and such areas may be prone to damaging landslides.

Construction in areas susceptible to landslides is expensive and difficult. Landslides on such slopes following development can result in enormous public and private costs and severe threats to human health and safety. Such landslides can also cause severe natural resource damage.

King County has undertaken an effort to refine its knowledge of landslide hazard areas using updated mapping methods. King County has mapped and characterized landslide hazard areas using the best available Light Detection And Ranging imagery and recent geologic mapping to identify potential areas at risk of landslide. Known and potential landslide hazard areas can be indicated by the known presence of shallow landslides, deep-seated slumps, debris fans and flows, rockfalls, avalanches, unstable and over-steepened slopes along river and stream channels, long runout presence or potential. This mapping is used to inform future planning, outreach, and regulatory decisions.

E-603 **King County should partner with jurisdictions to periodically review and update the inventory and map of known and potential landslide hazards using best available science and current data.**

E-604 **King County shall make landslide hazards information readily available to the public to improve the general understanding of landslides and their associated hazards. This may include making information available on a public website and providing outreach and assistance to current and prospective property owners and developers.**

E-605 **Landslide hazard areas shall not be developed unless the risks and adverse impacts associated with such development are eliminated or minimized so that they are at a non-significant level. Development proposed in areas affected by landslide hazards shall be adequately reviewed and mitigated as needed to eliminate or minimize risk to the development as well as to ensure the development does not increase landslide or erosion hazards that would adversely impact adjacent properties or natural resources.**

E-606 **King County shall consider landslide hazards and related flooding hazards in the context of hazard communication, operational preparedness, and emergency response.**

C. Volcanic Hazard Areas

King County is located in a region characterized by active volcanism. The volcanic hazard that poses the greatest risk to safety and wellbeing of county residents would be from a lahar (volcanic mudflow) originating on Mount Rainier and flowing down the White River valley (possibly overflowing into the lower Green River Valley). Ongoing investigations by the United States Geological Survey continue to clarify the nature of this hazard. Current information provides the basis for taking steps to mitigate that risk.

E-607 **King County should work with the United States Geological Survey to identify lahar hazard areas and shall work with local governments to assess the risk to county residents from lahars and to implement appropriate emergency planning and implement appropriate development standards.**

D. Coal Mine Hazard Areas

King County has a long and varied history of underground and surface coal mining. Some coal mining was conducted by large, well-capitalized mining companies that used methods such as detailed underground and surface mapping and protection of surface improvements. Other mines were small operations or re-mining operations that sought to maximize coal extraction with less regard for surface impacts or mapping. Some intensively developed areas of King County are located over abandoned underground coal workings, including Talbot Hill and the north Benson Hill of Renton, the Spring Glen area around Cascade Vista, East Fairwood, Black Diamond, southwest Issaquah, and the Newcastle/Coal Creek area.

The greatest dangers to people, wildlife, and surface facilities typically exist around mine portals, timber chutes, air shafts, and workings which have collapsed to the surface. Other areas were deep mined by "room and pillar" mining techniques in which "pillars" of coal were left to provide support for the mining of adjacent "rooms." Once abandoned, pillars would collapse and rooms of mined-out coal would fill with collapsed roof material, coal debris, and water. Regional downwarping of these areas was generally not observable and usually happened in the early years following mining of a section. Deep-mined areas with a high ratio of overburden/cover-to-void usually present no hazards for surface development. However, areas with low overburden/cover-to-void ratio present higher risks and may require more advanced investigations and construction techniques for development. Mine portals, timber chutes, airshafts, and workings which have collapsed to the surface require the greatest need for detailed engineering studies to ensure that these sites are safe for new, productive use.

E-608 **King County shall encourage efforts by public and private property owners and the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement to return lands to their highest productive use by safely minimizing or eliminating coal mine hazards.**

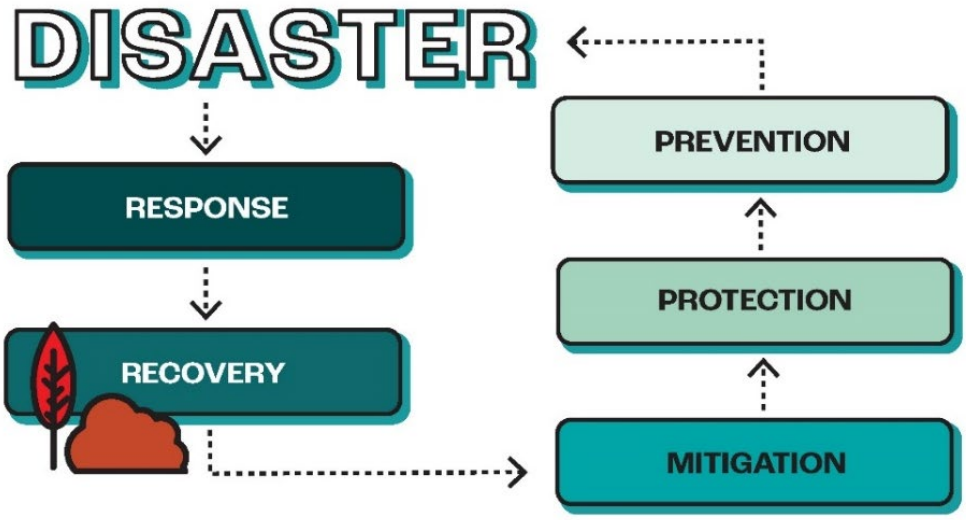
E-609 **King County shall require all development proposals potentially subject to coal mine hazards to assess the mine-related hazards, including risks to structures, improvements, occupants, and public health and safety.**

E-610 **King County shall allow development within coal mine hazard areas if the proposal includes appropriate mitigation for identified, mine-related hazards using best available engineering practices and if the development is in compliance with all other local, state, and federal requirements.**

VII. Planning for Disasters

King County has an active emergency planning program based on the five phases of emergency management (protection, prevention, response, recovery, and mitigation). King County is susceptible to multiple hazards including earthquakes, flooding, and landslides. The process of mitigation allows the County to build more resilient communities by assessing vulnerabilities and take sustained action to permanently

eliminate or reduce risk to future disasters. These actions can inform land use planning, such as in critical areas regulations.



When a disaster does occur, the process of recovery allows the County to review the Comprehensive Plan and its core principles, develop a recovery strategy by engaging the community, and rebuild the community in a way that sustains physical, emotional, social, and economic wellbeing.

E-701 **King County shall consider high-priority strategies and actions identified in the King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan or successor plans in its land use and transportation planning, economic development efforts, and natural resource management, to reduce impacts from natural hazards such as earthquake, flooding, and landslides.**

VIII. Air Quality

A. Overview

King County works to ensure clean and healthy air in partnership with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, which serves as the lead air quality regulatory and monitoring agency for the region in accordance with the Clean Air Act. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency is the lead agency responsible for monitoring and regulating criteria air pollutants (fine particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxide, oxides of nitrogen, and lead).

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency also focuses on reducing harmful air toxics that come from wood smoke and diesel burning and greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane from landfills. They also regulate air pollution emissions, such as asbestos and gasoline vapors, from businesses. King County coordinates with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency on regional air quality data and on related community plans and projects.

Efforts to address climate change and improve air quality are strongly linked. For example, conversion from conventional to electric buses and fleet vehicles reduces greenhouse gas emissions and emissions of fine particulate matter that can be harmful to public health. Similarly, in indoor settings, conversion from gas to electric stoves and furnaces reduces indoor and outdoor pollution. Additionally, a likely impact of climate

change on air quality is an increase in fine particulate matter from more wildfires and wildfire smoke episodes that can impact regional air quality and increase ground-level ozone because higher temperatures enhance the conversion of precursors into ground-level ozone. Ozone and fine particulate matter can exacerbate health conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and heart disease, and generally reduce respiratory system functioning. Because of these linkages, there is significant overlap between this section and the climate change section of this chapter.

B. Ozone, Fine Particulate and Toxics

Reducing criteria pollutants continue to be a primary focus for King County. The ozone strategy identified by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency for the central Puget Sound region focuses on reducing volatile organic compounds, which are precursors to ozone formation. Emission of volatile organic compounds results mostly from vehicles, as well as to a significant degree from household chemicals and paint evaporation.

In addition to ozone, fine particulate matter (dust, soot, and smoke) also represent a serious health threat. Health studies have shown a significant association between exposure to fine particulate matter and premature death from heart or lung disease. Fine particulate matter can aggravate heart and lung diseases and have been linked to effects such as: cardiovascular symptoms; cardiac arrhythmias; heart attacks; respiratory symptoms; asthma attacks; and bronchitis. These effects can result in increased hospital admissions, emergency room visits, absences from school or work, and restricted activity days. Individuals that may be particularly sensitive to fine particulate matter exposure include people with heart or lung disease, people aged 45 years and older, and children. Diesel emissions are one of the county's largest sources of fine particulate matter emissions. Indoor burning and outdoor burning are a major source of fine particulate matter, especially during winter months.

Contributions of fine particulate matter from wildfire smoke are also a growing concern. Climate change is contributing to an increase in the frequency of large wildfires in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. As a result, King County is seeing more days in summer with degraded air quality. For example, in 2020, King County experienced 14 days of air quality identified as "unhealthy for sensitive groups" to "hazardous," due to smoke from fires near Portland, Oregon. In 2022, King County experienced more than 30 days with "moderate" to "very unhealthy" air quality due to smoke from the Bolt Creek fire near Skykomish. Public Health has partnered with community-based organizations to develop outreach materials on wildfire smoke hazards, to distribute box fans and air filters for indoor air filtration, and to set up HEPA air filtration units for homeless service providers, small businesses, childcare providers, and schools.

King County will continue to face risks from air pollution that can be toxic to people, pets, and wildlife. Examples of toxins that may be present in air pollution include benzene, formaldehyde, mercury, and dioxins. The air quality impact of these toxins cannot be evaluated in isolation. Their greatest health risk comes from their combined effect. The Environmental Protection Agency and its regulatory partners at the state and local level identify steps to reduce toxic air pollutants and provide important health protections by reducing toxic emissions from industrial sources; reducing emissions from vehicles and engines through stringent emission standards and cleaner burning gasoline; and addressing indoor air pollution though voluntary programs.

Local air monitoring data done by the Washington State Department of Ecology indicates that diesel exhaust and wood smoke are key contributors to air pollution toxins.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has adopted increasingly stringent air pollution standards for heavy-duty vehicles, which has significantly reduced air pollution. In 2020, Metro retired the last of its diesel-only fleet vehicles; the entire bus

fleet is now either diesel electric hybrid or zero-emission. Metro has continued its efforts to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and has committed to transitioning to a fully zero emission bus fleet by 2035. As of 2023, Metro operates a fleet of more than 1,300 buses, comprised of approximately 1,145 diesel-electric hybrids, 174 zero emission trolleys, and 45 zero emission battery electric buses.

The focus of King County air quality improvement efforts is to engage in projects and changed practices that reduce county emissions, reduce the impacts of poor air quality on health (particularly for frontline communities), and promote policies that incorporate consideration of air quality impacts. Motorized vehicle and other fuel burning engine-related emissions are the primary source of ozone, fine particulate matter, toxins, and greenhouse gas emissions in King County and therefore should be a primary focus for emissions reduction.

E-801 **King County should support initiatives that reduce air pollution emissions due to indoor and outdoor wood burning consistent with the actions of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency to control this source of health impacts.**

E-802 **King County shall continue to actively develop partnerships with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, local jurisdictions, the state, and public, private, and nonprofit groups to promote programs, policies, and code changes that reduce emissions and health impacts of ozone, wildfire smoke, fine particulates, toxics, and greenhouse gases, particularly for those populations already experiencing health disparities linked to air quality.**

E-803 **King County shall encourage the use of methods to improve indoor air quality and reduce smoke infiltration into indoor environments during wildfire smoke events, particularly for populations already experiencing health disparities, such as air filtration technologies and other mechanisms that reduce the level of wildfire smoke that can make its way into indoor environments.**

IX. Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Assessing the effectiveness of specific and cumulative actions requires data collected within rigorous monitoring programs. Monitoring provides essential information to track: (1) changes in the natural and built environment, (2) implementation of planned and required actions (like construction of wetland mitigation projects), and (3) effectiveness of environmental protection actions. Monitoring information is essential to supporting a formal adaptive management program to modify policies, goals, and management decisions as necessary, and inform regulatory change.

Adaptive management can be used to help ensure that projects, programs, and policies are moving the County toward its environmental goals over time. Adaptive management is defined as the process of making hypotheses of management outcomes, collecting data relevant to those hypotheses, and then using monitoring data to inform changes to policies and actions to better achieve intended goals. Adaptive management concepts are often applied in programs intended to address complex natural resource management problems, for example in Water Resource Inventory Area plans for salmon recovery or in Habitat Conservation Plans to comply with the Endangered Species Act. The Washington Administrative Code calls for local governments to use monitoring and adaptive management to address uncertainties in best available science for protecting critical areas like wetlands.

King County conducts a diverse array of monitoring activities, including monitoring of Capital Improvement Projects and legally required monitoring of municipal wastewater and stormwater discharges in compliance with NPDES permit requirements. Effectiveness monitoring is used to evaluate projects and programs to improve project designs and ecosystem management activities. Ambient monitoring is performed watershed -wide, encompassing groundwater, rivers, streams, lakes, and marine waters of Puget Sound to the extent that funding allows. For example, King County maintains a continuous water quality monitoring program for freshwater streams, rivers, lakes, and marine waters. This long-term monitoring program informs the County's understanding of changes in water quality over time allowing for the identification of emerging pollution issues and sources of water pollution. The status and trends information provided by long-term monitoring programs allows for better understanding of how systems are responding to pressures like climate change and human impacts The data collected by these programs additionally provides the necessary baseline information for many scientific studies conducted in King County wetlands, lakes, streams, and marine waters by County scientists, as well as scientists at universities and state and federal agencies.

Financial resources for environmental protection programs, including monitoring, are limited and generally do not compete well with other priorities for limited funding. However, investments in monitoring will provide essential information for evaluating the effectiveness of current actions and guiding future policy decisions, priorities, and investments. To make the most efficient use of limited resources, it is critical that the County look for opportunities to coordinate its data collection and dissemination efforts so that they can meet as many information needs as possible. The County should also partner with entities conducting monitoring, including other governments and universities.

E-901 **King County should conduct a comprehensive and coordinated program of environmental monitoring and assessment to track long-term changes in climate (such as precipitation and temperature), water quality and quantity, toxics in fish and shellfish, land use, land cover and aquatic and terrestrial habitat, natural resource conditions, and biological resources as well as the effectiveness of policies, programs, regulations, capital improvement projects, and stormwater treatment facility design. This monitoring program should be coordinated with Indian tribes, other jurisdictions, state and federal agencies, and universities to ensure the most efficient and effective use of monitoring data.**

E-902 **King County should seek to develop and maintain a publicly accessible geo-spatial database on environmental conditions to inform policy decisions, support technical collaboration, and inform the public.**

E-903 **King County should establish a decision-support system suitable for adaptive management that uses data from its environmental monitoring programs.**

King County reports to the public both community-level conditions and agency performance measures. Monitoring data referenced in this chapter serves as a core element of helping elected officials and the public stay informed about the state of the environment and the effectiveness of agency programs.

E-904 **King County should continue to collect data on key natural resource management and environmental parameters for use in environmental monitoring programs. Findings should be reported to the public, partner agencies, and decision-makers. The information collected should be used to inform decisions about policies, work program priorities and resource allocation.**

WILDLIFE HABITAT NETWORK AND PUBLIC OWNERSHIP 2024

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter Five, Environment

Data Sources:
US Forest Service, King County Departments of Assessments, and Local Services, and Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Notes:
The maps in the King County Comprehensive Plan and its technical appendices are produced with a computer geographic information system. They are reduced in size but available at a larger scale.

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is 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 this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

Date: October 2023
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King County GIS Center

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October 2023

Public Lands
- King County Open Space System
- State
- Federal
- City & Other Jurisdiction

Wildlife Habitat Network
Alpine Lakes Wilderness
Incorporated City
Potential Annexation Areas
Indian Reservation Boundary
Indian Trust Land
City in Rural Area
King County Boundary
Freeways
Municipal Watershed



CHAPTER 6

SHORELINES

I. Introduction

A. Recitals

King County adopts the following recitals, which are based on the Shoreline Management Act legislative findings in Revised Code of Washington 90.58.020. These recitals represent King County's belief and agreement that a coordinated approach to utilizing, managing, and protecting the shoreline resource is necessary and essential.

1. Shorelines are some of the most valuable and fragile of King County's natural resources. There is appropriate concern throughout the county relating to the utilization, protection, restoration, and preservation of the shoreline jurisdiction.
2. Ever increasing pressures of additional use are being placed on the shoreline jurisdiction, which in turn necessitates increased coordination in its management and development.
3. Much of the shoreline jurisdiction and the uplands adjacent thereto are in private ownership. Unrestricted construction on the privately owned or publicly owned shorelines is not in the best public interest; and therefore, coordinated planning is necessary to protect the public interest associated with the shoreline jurisdiction while recognizing and protecting private property rights consistent with the public interest.
4. There is a clear and urgent demand for a planned, rational, and concerted effort, jointly performed by federal, state, and local governments, to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of King County's shoreline jurisdiction.
5. It is the intent of King County to provide for the management of the shoreline jurisdiction by planning for and fostering all reasonable and appropriate uses. This program is designed to ensure the development in a manner that, while allowing for limited reduction of rights of the public in the navigable waters, will promote and enhance the public interest.
6. King County shoreline policies are intended to protect against adverse effects to the public health, the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the waters of the state and their aquatic life, while protecting generally public rights of navigation and corollary rights incidental thereto.
7. In the implementation of this chapter, the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural shorelines shall be preserved to the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the state, the county, and the people generally. To this end uses shall be preferred which are consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment or are unique to or dependent upon use of the state's shoreline.
8. Alterations of the natural condition of the shoreline jurisdiction, in those limited instances when authorized, shall be given priority for single detached residences and their appurtenant structures; ports; shoreline recreational uses, including but not limited to, parks, marinas, piers, and other improvements facilitating public access to shorelines; industrial and commercial developments that are particularly dependent on their location on or use of the shoreline jurisdiction; and other development that will provide an opportunity for substantial numbers of the people to enjoy the shorelines.

9. Shorelines and shorelands in King County shall be appropriately designated and these classifications shall be revised when circumstances warrant, regardless of whether the change in circumstances occurs through man-made causes or natural causes. Any areas resulting from alterations of the natural condition of the shorelines and shorelands no longer meeting the definition of "shorelines of the state" shall not be subject to the provisions of King County Shoreline Master Program.
10. Permitted uses in the shorelines zone shall be designed and conducted in a manner to minimize, insofar as practical, any resultant damage to the ecology and environment of the shoreline jurisdiction and any interference with the public's use of the water.

B. About King County Shorelines

1. Geography

King County covers 2,130 square miles and extends from Puget Sound in the west to 8,000-foot Mt. Daniel at the Cascade crest in the east. King County's shoreline jurisdiction includes saltwater coastline, river floodplains, and extensive lakes and streams.

King County's diverse shorelines fringe or flow into Puget Sound. Puget Sound and surrounding lowland lakes and river valleys are relatively young in geologic terms. Puget Sound is a glacially carved, deep fjord between the Cascade and Olympic mountains.

Puget Sound is King County's link to the Pacific Ocean via two connections: the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia. Water, people, and a diverse array of fish and wildlife travel freely between the ocean and King County via Puget Sound and these Straits.

Puget Sound is a large estuary complex created by the freshwater it receives from streams, rivers and springs, and tidal exchange introduced through the two Straits. It is one of the more prominent and productive estuaries in the world. In 1988, it was identified as an Estuary of National Significance by the United States government. Within Puget Sound are numerous small to large estuaries. The largest estuary in King County is the Green-Duwamish, although it is now a small remnant of its pre-development state.

Puget Sound consists of five basins. King County's portion of Puget Sound lies within the Central Basin and includes Vashon-Maury Island. The Central Basin extends from Admiralty Inlet to Tacoma Narrows. It is the largest and deepest of the basins. The major drainages to the Central Basin, including the Cedar River/Lake Washington watershed (including Lake Sammamish and the Sammamish River), the Green-Duwamish watershed, and the Puyallup River/White River watershed, drain a total area of about 2,700 square miles and contribute slightly less than 20 percent of Puget Sound's freshwater input. The Snohomish watershed (including the Snoqualmie River Basin that lies mostly in King County) outlet into Puget Sound lies in Everett.

Shorelines of the State in King County, as defined by the Shoreline Management Act, include the total of all shorelines and shorelines of statewide significance. Shorelines include shorelands, which are defined as those lands 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 currently includes the 100-year floodplain in its shoreline jurisdiction. Shoreline jurisdiction under the Shoreline Management Act does not include Indian tribal reservation lands or lands held in trust by the federal government for Indian tribes.

Table S-1 below shows the number of shoreline miles managed under King County's Shoreline Master Program.

Table S-1. Miles of shoreline under King County's jurisdiction

Lake	River/Stream	Marine
229	1,690	51

2. Washington State Shoreline Management Act

The Shoreline Management Act establishes a broad policy giving preference to uses that:

- Protect the quality of water and the natural environment,
- Depend on proximity to the shoreline ("water-dependent uses"), and
- Preserve and enhance public access or increase recreational opportunities for the public along shorelines.

The Shoreline Management Act establishes a balance of authority between local and state government. Cities and counties are the primary regulators but the state, through the Department of Ecology, has authority to review local shoreline master programs and shoreline permit decisions.

Under the Shoreline Management Act, the County adopts a Shoreline Master Program that is based on the Department of Ecology's Shoreline Master Program rules or guidelines, but tailored to the specific needs of the community.

Local governments may modify Master Programs to reflect changing local circumstances, new information, or improved shoreline management approaches.

C. King County's Shoreline Master Program

The Shoreline Master Program adopted by King County provides a legal framework for decision-making on land use and other activities that complies with the Shoreline Management Act. This section describes the elements of the Shoreline Master Program, with the details being further described throughout this chapter.

1. Components of the Shoreline Master Program

The King County Shoreline Master Program consists of this chapter and the implementing shoreline management regulations.

This chapter describes King County's shoreline goals and policies. It addresses the shoreline jurisdiction, overall shoreline policy goals, shoreline element policies, Shoreline Master Program relationship to other laws, shoreline environment designations, environmental protection, shoreline use and modification, and administrative policies.

The terms "Shoreline Master Program," "Shoreline Program" and "Program" are all used throughout this chapter to describe King County's shoreline policies (this chapter) and shoreline management regulations in their entirety.

The following documents provide supporting information for these goals and policies:

King County Shoreline Protection and Restoration Plan (September 2010): The Shoreline Protection and Restoration Plan summarizes the methods and results of King County's shoreline analysis with respect to restoration planning, the elements and applicability of the restoration plan, and the ways in which shoreline restoration is expected to occur over time.

King County Shoreline Public Access Plan (September 2010): The Shoreline Public Access Plan includes an inventory of existing formal and informal shoreline public access opportunities in the unincorporated area, and identifies gaps in public access opportunities. The Shoreline Public Access Plan describes King County's priorities for providing new public access to major shorelines in the unincorporated area.

King County Shoreline Cumulative Impacts Assessment (September 2010): The Shoreline Cumulative Impacts Assessment provides a mechanism for examining the potential success of County policies and regulations in meeting the goal of no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.

King County Shoreline Inventory and Characterization (May 2007): The Shoreline Inventory and Characterization includes the data and analytic methods used to develop King County's shoreline inventory and shoreline characterization (including evaluation of existing physical and shoreline ecological processes and functions, public access and recreation, land use and economic development, public facilities and utilities, and archaeological and historic resources). In addition, the Shoreline Inventory and Characterization includes methodologies for cumulative impact analysis associated with shoreline management and comprehensive shoreline restoration planning.

King County Shoreline Map Folio (September 2010): The Shoreline Map Folio includes all maps produced and referenced as part of the Shoreline Master Program, with the exception of those maps included in this chapter.

King County Shoreline List (December 2020): The King County Shoreline List includes all streams and lakes within the shoreline jurisdiction.

2. Shoreline Policies

The Shoreline Master Program contains specific policies relating to a wide variety of shoreline uses and issues.

Shoreline policies establish broad shoreline management directives. They are statements of intent by King County that direct or authorize a course of action or specify criteria for regulatory or non-regulatory action. The policies serve as the basis for regulations that govern use and development along the shoreline.

King County's shoreline policies must:

1. Be consistent with the Shoreline Management Act;
2. Address the Master Program elements of Revised Code of Washington 90.58.100;
3. Include policies for environmental designations as described in Washington Administrative Code 173-26-211;
4. Be designed and implemented in a manner consistent with all relevant constitutional and other legal limitations on regulation of private property; and
5. Be consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan.

Shoreline policies provide a comprehensive foundation for the Shoreline Master Program regulations, which are more specific standards that are used to evaluate shoreline development proposals. King County must evaluate permit applications in light of the shoreline policies and may approve a permit only after determining that the development conforms to the policies in the Shoreline Master Program.

In addition, shoreline policies assist in prioritizing King County's spending on facilities and services within shorelines of the state. Finally, the shoreline policies provide direction for regional issues such as resource management, environmental protection, transportation, inter-governmental coordination, and regional planning.

3. Shoreline Environments

The Shoreline Management Act requires that shoreline programs classify shoreline areas into specific environment designations. These environment designations are listed below and further discussed in the "Shoreline Environment Designations" section of this chapter.

- High Intensity Shoreline Environment
- Residential Shoreline Environment
- Rural Shoreline Environment
- Conservancy Shoreline Environment
- Resource Shoreline Environment
- Forestry Shoreline Environment
- Natural Shoreline Environment
- Aquatic Environment

4. Shoreline Modifications and Uses

The Shoreline Management Act makes a distinction between a shoreline use and a shoreline modification. A shoreline use is an activity that is allowed within the shoreline jurisdiction. In most cases, to engage in an activity, the shoreline must be modified. Shoreline modifications often involve construction of a physical element, such as a dike, breakwater, dredged basin, or fill, as well as other actions such as clearing, grading, application of chemicals, or significant vegetation removal. This means that shoreline modifications are often undertaken in support of or in preparation for an activity along shorelines.

Shoreline modifications are generally related to construction of a physical element, such as a dike, breakwater, dredged basin, or fill, but can include other actions such as clearing, grading, or application of chemicals. A shoreline modification is usually undertaken in support of or in preparation for a shoreline use.

Shoreline uses are classified as "water-dependent," "water-related," "water-enjoyment," or "water-oriented."

A water-dependent use is a use or portion of a use that cannot exist in a location that is not adjacent to the water and that is dependent on the water by reason of the intrinsic nature of its operations.

A water-related use is a use or portion of a use that is not intrinsically dependent on a waterfront location but whose economic viability is dependent upon a waterfront location because:

(a) The use has a functional requirement for a waterfront location such as the arrival or shipment of materials by water or the need for large quantities of water; or

(b) The use provides a necessary service supportive of the water-dependent uses and the proximity of the use to its customers makes its services less expensive or more convenient.

A water-enjoyment use is a recreational use or other use that facilitates public access to the shoreline as a primary characteristic of the use; or a use that provides for recreational use or aesthetic enjoyment of the shoreline for a substantial number of people as a general characteristic of the use and which, through location, design, and operation, ensures the public's ability to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline. In order to qualify as a water-enjoyment use, the use must be open to the general public and the shoreline-oriented space within the project must be devoted to the specific aspects of the use that fosters shoreline enjoyment.

A water-oriented use is a use that is water-dependent, water-related, water-enjoyment, or a combination of such uses.

II. Shoreline Jurisdiction

A. King County's Responsibility to Regulate Shorelines

S-101 **King County's Shoreline Master Program shall be interpreted consistently with the policies and requirements of the Shoreline Management Act (Chapter 90.58 Revised Code of Washington) and the shoreline guidelines found in Chapters 173-26 and 173-27 of the Washington Administrative Code.**

B. King County's Shoreline Jurisdiction

The Shoreline Management Act applies to all "shorelines of the state," which include "shorelines" and "shorelines of statewide significance." These terms are used throughout the Shoreline Management Act and define the scope of King County's shoreline jurisdiction. The distinction is important because the Shoreline Management Act imposes greater and more specific obligations when dealing with shorelines of statewide significance.

a. **"Shorelines of the state"** are defined in the Shoreline Management Act as follows:
"Shorelines of the state" are the total of all "shorelines" and "shorelines of statewide significance" within the state.

b. **"Shorelines"** are defined in the Shoreline Management Act as follows:
"Shorelines" means all of the water areas of the state, including reservoirs, and their associated shorelands, together with the lands underlying them; except (i) shorelines of statewide significance; (ii) shorelines on segments of streams upstream of a point where the mean annual flow is 20 cubic feet per second or less and the wetlands associated with such upstream segments; and (iii) shorelines on lakes less than 20 acres in size and wetlands associated with such small lakes.

c. **"Shorelines of statewide significance,"** as specifically defined in the Shoreline Management Act, include:

- Those areas of Puget Sound between the ordinary high water mark and the line of extreme low tides;
- Lakes, whether natural, artificial or a combination thereof, with a surface acreage of 1,000 acres or more measured at the ordinary high water mark; and
- Natural rivers or segments thereof downstream of a point where the mean annual flow is measured at 1,000 cubic feet per second or more.

In unincorporated King County, the water bodies that qualify as shorelines of statewide significance include:

- The marine waters around Vashon-Maury Island
- Northeast Lake Washington (north of Kirkland) and southwest Lake Washington (west of Renton)
- Lake Sammamish at Marymoor State Park and Lake Sammamish State Park
- Mud Mountain Reservoir and White River from river mile 15.5 to river mile 46 (excluding the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation between river mile 8.9 and river mile 15.5)
- Green River from its confluence with the Duwamish River to river mile 95
- Duwamish River from river mile 3.5 to river mile 5
- Chester Morse Lake (Reservoir)
- Tolt Reservoir
- Mainstem Snoqualmie River to river mile 43 and Middle Fork Snoqualmie River to river mile 39
- South Fork Skykomish River to river mile 30

Associated shorelands that are adjacent to shorelines of statewide significance are included within the shoreline of statewide significance jurisdiction.

d. **"Shorelands"** are defined in the Shoreline Management Act as follows:

"Shorelands" or "shoreland areas" means those lands extending landward for two hundred feet in all directions as measured on a horizontal plane from the ordinary high water mark; floodways and contiguous floodplain areas landward 200 feet from such floodways; and all wetlands and river deltas associated with the streams, lakes, and tidal waters which are subject to the provisions of [Chapter 90.58 RCW].

e. Shoreline jurisdiction

S-102 **King County's shoreline jurisdiction extends over the shorelines of the state and 100-year floodplain of the shorelines of the state in unincorporated King County. This includes shorelines, shorelines of statewide significance, shorelands, floodways, and the adjacent land extending 200 feet landward from the floodway.**

S-103 **Where critical areas are located within the shorelines of the state in unincorporated King County, the shoreline jurisdiction shall not include the critical area buffers that extend outside of the shoreline jurisdiction boundary.**

Applying these definitions within King County has involved an extensive survey of the shoreline jurisdiction, which is discussed in detail in the King County Shorelines Inventory and Characterization (May 2007). The Shorelines of the State map at the end of this chapter generally shows the scope of King County's shorelines and shorelines of statewide significance.

III. Shoreline Policy Goals

A. Introduction to Shoreline Goals

King County's shoreline has a long history of settlement because of the abundant natural resources, availability of water, and usefulness as transportation routes. The shoreline also draws people to enjoy the aesthetic and recreational value that marine beaches, lakes, and rivers provide. The shoreline supports some of the region's most important industries, such as shipping, fishing, and tourism.

Because of the unique and irreplaceable value of the shorelines of the state, King County recognizes that it is in the public interest to protect shoreline ecological processes and functions, while allowing reasonable and necessary use of shorelines to support the regional economy and provide recreational opportunities for the public.

The high demand for shoreline use over time has degraded shoreline ecological processes and functions in many areas. Many segments of King County's shoreline jurisdiction are devoid of native vegetation, the banks are hardened with additions of rock and other materials, sediment movement is no longer driven by natural forces, and valuable fish and wildlife habitat is gone or impaired to a significant extent. Unaltered shorelines are increasingly rare. It has become critical to restore and enhance degraded shorelines.

A vast majority of the shoreline jurisdiction, particularly in the lower parts of the regional watersheds and along the marine shorelines, is in private ownership, giving the residents of King County an important role in protecting unique and irreplaceable shoreline values. The challenge for King County is to manage these lands in a manner that protects, restores, and enhances King County's shoreline jurisdiction, while respecting private property rights and protecting the public interest.

B. Statement of Applicability

S-201 **All proposed uses and development occurring within King County's shoreline jurisdiction shall conform to the Shoreline Management Act and to King County's Shoreline Master Program.**

S-202 **King County should require applicants with exempt projects to apply for a shoreline exemption.**

S-203 **Nothing in the King County Shoreline Master Program nor in any action taken under the Shoreline Master Program shall be construed to affect any Indian tribal treaty right to which the United States is a party.**

C. Shoreline Preferred Uses

S-204 **In establishing and implementing shoreline policies and development regulations, King County shall give preference to uses that are unique to or dependent upon a shoreline location.**

S-205 **King County, when determining allowable uses and resolving use conflicts in the shoreline jurisdiction, shall apply the following preferences and priorities in the order listed below:**

- **a. Reserve appropriate areas for protecting and restoring shoreline ecological processes and functions to control pollution and prevent damage to the natural environment and to public health.**
- **b. Reserve shoreline areas for water-dependent and associated water-related uses. Harbor areas, established pursuant to Article XV of the State Constitution, and other areas that have reasonable commercial navigational accessibility and necessary support facilities, such as transportation and utilities, should be reserved for water-dependent and water-related uses that are associated with commercial navigation, unless adequate shoreline is reserved for future water-dependent and water-related uses and unless protection of the existing natural resource values of such areas preclude such uses. Shoreline mixed-use developments may be allowed if they include and support water-dependent uses and address specific conditions that affect water-dependent uses.**
- **c. Reserve shoreline areas for other water-related and water-enjoyment uses that are compatible with ecological protection and restoration objectives.**
- **d. Locate single detached residential uses where they are appropriate and can be developed without significant impact to shoreline ecological processes and functions or displacement of water-dependent uses.**
- **e. Limit nonwater-oriented uses to those locations that are inappropriate for higher priority uses or locations where the nonwater-oriented uses demonstrably contribute to the objectives of the Shoreline Management Act.**

S-206 **In particular circumstances, the preferred use policies, the local economic and land use conditions, and the policies and regulations that ensure protection of shoreline resources may result in a determination that other uses may be considered as necessary or appropriate. These other uses may be accommodated, provided that the preferred uses are reasonably provided for throughout the shoreline jurisdiction.**

D. General Policy Goals

S-207 **The following policy goals shall apply to all of the shoreline jurisdiction. The goals are not ranked in importance and have been assigned a letter for identification purposes only.**

- **a. The use of the shoreline jurisdiction for those economically productive uses that are particularly dependent on shoreline location or use.**
- **b. The use of the shoreline jurisdiction for public access and recreation.**
- **c. Protection and restoration of the ecological processes and functions of shoreline natural resources.**
- **d. Protection of the public right of navigation and corollary uses of waters of the state.**
- **e. The protection and restoration of buildings and sites having historic, cultural, and educational value.**
- **f. Planning for public facilities and utilities correlated with other shorelines uses.**
- **g. Prevention and minimization of flood damage.**
- **h. Recognizing and protecting private property rights.**
- **i. Preferential accommodation of single detached residential uses.**
- **j. Coordination of shoreline management with other relevant local, state, and federal agencies and programs.**

E. Shorelines of Statewide Significance Policy Goals

S-208 **The interests of all people shall be paramount in the management of shorelines of statewide significance within King County.**

The Legislature has established policy goals that govern shorelines of statewide significance. Significantly, these policy goals are ranked in order of preference, meaning the first goal must be given priority over all subsequent goals.

The following policy recognizes and accepts the policy goals as directed by the Shoreline Management Act for shorelines of statewide significance:

S-209 **In developing and implementing its Shoreline Master Program for shorelines of statewide significance, King County shall give preference, in the following order of preference, to uses that:**

- **a. Recognize and protect the statewide interest over local interest;**
- **b. Preserve the natural character of the shoreline;**
- **c. Result in long-term over short-term benefit;**
- **d. Protect the resources and ecology of the shoreline;**
- **e. Increase public access to publicly owned areas of the shorelines;**
- **f. Increase recreational opportunities for the public in the shoreline; and**
- **g. Provide for any other element as defined in Revised Code of Washington 90.58.100.**

S-210 **In developing and implementing policies relating to shorelines of statewide significance, King County shall provide for optimum implementation of policies that satisfy the statewide interest.**

F. Balancing Policy Goals

S-211 **The policy goals of King County's Shoreline Master Program relate both to the use and protection of the extremely valuable and vulnerable shoreline resources of the state.**

S-212 **King County shall accommodate in the shoreline jurisdiction all reasonable and appropriate uses consistent with protecting against adverse effects to the public health, the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the waters of the state, and consistent with public rights of navigation.**

S-213 **Development regulations shall provide both shoreline use and protection by requiring permitted uses in the shoreline jurisdiction to be designed and conducted in a manner to avoid or minimize, in so far as practical, any resultant damage to the ecology and environment of the shoreline area and the public's use of the water.**

S-214 **King County shall balance shoreline use and shoreline protection when meeting the policy goals of the Shoreline Management Act.**

S-215 **King County should encourage and help facilitate the use of state-owned shorelines for public recreational activities, where appropriate.**

S-216 **The King County Shoreline Master Program policies may be achieved by a number of different means, both regulatory and non-regulatory. These include, but are not limited to:**

- **a. Regulations controlling development within the shoreline jurisdiction;**
- **b. Acquisition of land and easements by purchase, lease, or gift, either alone or in concert with other local governments;**
- **c. Accepting grants, contributions, and appropriations from any public or private agency or individuals;**
- **d. Public facility and park planning;**
- **e. Watershed planning;**
- **f. Voluntary salmon recovery projects; and**
- **g. Incentive programs, such as the transfer of development rights or the public benefit rating system.**

IV. Shoreline Element Policy Goals

A. Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element considers the location and design of industries, industrial projects of statewide significance, transportation facilities, port facilities, tourist facilities, commerce, and other developments that are particularly dependent on shorelines of the state.

S-301 **King County should plan for the location and design of industries, transportation facilities, port facilities, tourist facilities, commerce, and other developments that are particularly dependent on their location on or use of the shorelines of the state.**

B. Public Access Element

The Public Access Element considers public access to publicly owned land along shorelines of the state. The King County Shoreline Public Access Plan (July 2009) provides details on the analysis of existing shoreline public access in King County, identified public access gaps and opportunities, and the resulting shoreline Public Access policies.

S-302 **King County shall:**

a. Support the public interest with regard to rights to access waters held in public trust by the state, while protecting private property rights and public safety, as well as considering impacts on shoreline ecological processes and functions.

b. Protect the rights of navigation and the space necessary for water-dependent uses.

c. To the greatest extent feasible and consistent with the overall best interest of the state and the people generally, protect the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of shorelines of the state, including views of the water.

e. Regulate the design, construction, and operation of permitted uses in the shorelines of the state to minimize, insofar as practical, interference with the public's use of the water.

S-303 **The King County Shoreline Master Program should increase the amount and diversity of public access to the shoreline jurisdiction in areas identified within a shoreline public access gap. New public access should minimize impacts to shoreline ecological processes and functions, preserve natural shoreline character as much as possible, protect private property rights, and consider public safety.**

S-304 **Public agencies, including local governments, port districts, state agencies, and public utility districts, should include public access in their development proposals if public access is compatible with the activity and can be provided safely. An assessment of the impact of public access on the shoreline and constructed features should also be conducted.**

S-305 **King County shall require public access to shorelines of the state for land division of five or more lots, tracts, or parcels and for new non-residential uses unless:**

a. The development proposal is not compatible with public access;

b. There is a safety or security concern;

c. Inclusion of public access will have an environmental impact that cannot be mitigated; or

d. There are legal limitations on allowing public access.

S-306 **King County shall adopt development regulations that establish maximum building height limits, setbacks, and view corridors to minimize the impact to existing views from public property or a substantial number of residences. Where providing direct public access or allowing for water dependent shoreline uses conflicts with maintaining existing views, the direct public access or water dependent shoreline uses shall have priority.**

C. Recreational Element

Shorelines provide many opportunities for recreation, such as boating, swimming, beach combing, hiking, and nature viewing. Since much of the shoreline jurisdiction is in private ownership, using public lands for recreation will become increasingly important. Opportunities should be sought through public projects to protect and enhance recreational opportunities. The Recreational Element identifies recreational opportunities along shorelines, such as parks, tidelands, beaches, and recreational areas, and pursues acquisition through implementation of the King County Shoreline Master Program.

S-307 **King County should protect and, when possible, expand recreational opportunities, including but not limited to parks, beaches, tidelands, swimming beaches, and boat launches.**

S-308 **King County should evaluate opportunities to acquire shoreline property for purposes of public recreation from willing sellers of private property.**

D. Circulation Element

The Circulation Element consists of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other public utilities and facilities.

S-309 **The King County Shoreline Master Program should guide the County's transportation plans and projects within the shoreline jurisdiction.**

E. Land Use Element

The Land Use Element considers the general distribution and location, as well as the extent of use on the shorelines and adjacent areas for housing, business, industry, transportation, agriculture, natural resources, recreation, education, public buildings and grounds, and other categories of public and private use of the land.

S-310 **The King County Comprehensive Plan should consider the policy goals of the King County Shoreline Master Program when designating land use and zoning on shorelines of the state and adjacent lands.**

F. Conservation Element

The Shoreline Management Act requires local master programs to include a conservation element for the preservation of natural resources, including critical areas, scenic vistas, aesthetics, and vital freshwater, saltwater and estuarine areas for fish and wildlife. The Conservation Element addresses the preservation of natural resources including, but not limited to, scenic vistas, aesthetics, and vital estuarine areas for fish and wildlife.

Past development of the shorelines has degraded the habitat for many species by activities such as armoring banks against wave action and the erosive force of water flowing downstream; removal of vegetation; straightening channels; installing in-stream structures for flood control, hydroelectricity, and water supply; and allowing stormwater runoff that degrades water quality.

S-311 **King County shall protect shoreline critical areas and, where possible, should restore degraded habitat and critical area functions and values.**

The natural topography of King County provides numerous scenic vistas of the shoreline. King County should ensure that development occurring both within and outside the shorelines of the state avoids impacts on scenic vistas and protects view corridors while balancing other policy goals of this program.

S-312 **King County should consider and, when possible, require protection of scenic vistas of the shoreline jurisdiction when reviewing public and private development proposals.**

Natural shorelines are visually aesthetic in their natural state. When these shorelines are altered through development, the aesthetic value of the shoreline should be preserved as much as possible. In areas where shorelines have already been developed with little consideration of the aesthetics, restoration should return the shoreline to an aesthetically pleasing environment.

S-313 **King County should ensure that public and private development proposals protect and restore the aesthetic quality of shorelines in the project design.**

G. Historic, Cultural, Scientific, and Educational Element

The Historic, Cultural, Scientific, and Educational Element provides for protection and restoration of historic resources. Historic resources include historic building, sites, objects, districts and landscapes, prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, and traditional cultural places.

S-314 **Historic resources in the shoreline jurisdiction should be protected to prevent the destruction of, or damage to, any site having archaeological, historic, cultural, or scientific value through coordination and consultation with the appropriate Indian tribal, local, state, and federal authorities.**

- **a. Cooperation among public and private parties should be encouraged in the identification, protection, and management of cultural resources.**
- **b. Where appropriate, access to such sites should be made available to parties of interest. Access to such sites shall be designed and managed in a manner that gives maximum protection to the resource.**
- **c. Opportunities for education related to archaeological, historical, and cultural features should be provided where appropriate and incorporated into public and private programs and development.**

S-315 **King County should work with Indian tribal, state, federal, and local governments to maintain an inventory of all known historic resources. King County shall protect these inventories from public disclosure to the extent permitted or required under applicable federal and state law. As appropriate, such sites should be preserved and restored for study, education, and public enjoyment to the maximum possible extent.**

S-316 **Provisions for historic resource preservation, restoration, and education should be incorporated with open space or recreation areas in site development plans whenever compatible and possible.**

S-317 **Cooperation among parties should be encouraged to protect historic, cultural, scientific, and educational resources.**

S-318 **Private and public owners of historic resources should be encouraged to provide public access and educational opportunities at levels consistent with long term protection of both historic values and shoreline ecological processes and functions. Site-specific conditions may require public site access to be restricted at times, but educational means should be provided whenever possible.**

S-319 **Historic resource development should be planned and carried out so as to prevent impacts to the resource. Impacts to neighboring properties and other shoreline uses should be limited to temporary or reasonable levels.**

S-320 **Owners of historic resources are encouraged to make plans known well in advance of application so that appropriate agencies, such as Indian tribes, the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and others, may have ample time to assess the site and make arrangements to preserve historic, cultural, scientific, and educational values as applicable.**

S-321 **If development is proposed adjacent to an historic resource, the proposed development should be designed and operated so as to be compatible with continued protection of the historic, cultural, or archaeological resource.**

V. Shoreline Master Program Relationship to County Regulations

A. Critical Areas Regulations

Critical areas located within shorelines are regulated under the Shoreline Management Act and implemented through local Shoreline Master Programs.

S-401 **The King County Shoreline Master Program shall provide a level of protection for critical areas in the shoreline jurisdiction that ensures no net loss of shoreline ecological functions necessary to sustain shoreline natural resources.**

S-402 **The King County Shoreline Master Program includes by reference portions of the King County critical areas regulations into the Shoreline Master Program to meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 90.58.090.**

B. Zoning, Clearing and Grading, and Stormwater Regulations

King County has adopted a wide array of development regulations that protect various aspects of the environment and implement other King County policies. These regulations generally include King County's surface water management regulations, clearing and grading regulations, and zoning. In the shoreline jurisdiction, the Shoreline Master Program may impose additional requirements. Shoreline management regulations must:

1. Be sufficient in scope and detail to ensure implementation of the Shoreline Management Act shoreline policies, this chapter, and the King County Comprehensive Plan and functional plans;
2. Include regulations that apply to the environmental designations classified under Washington Administrative Code 173-26-211;
3. Include general regulations, specific use regulations that address issues of concern in regard to specific uses, and modification regulations;
4. Include clearing and grading and stormwater regulations that protect the ecological processes and functions of the shorelines; and
5. Design and implement regulations and mitigation standards in a manner consistent with all relevant constitutional and other legal limitations on the regulation of private property.

S-403 **To the maximum extent practical, King County's Shoreline Master Program shall rely on King County's existing regulations, including critical areas regulations, surface water management regulations, clearing and grading regulations, and zoning to comply with the Shoreline Management Act and the Department of Ecology's guidelines.**

C. Flood Management Plan

The King County Flood Management Plan directs floodplain management within King County. This Plan was developed in coordination with incorporated cities within King County as directed by Revised Code of Washington 86.12.210 and is binding on each jurisdiction located within King County. The goals of the King County Flood Management Plan are:

1. To reduce risks from flooding and channel migration and support resilient, viable communities and economies.
2. To achieve multi-benefit flood risk reduction outcomes that preserve, restore, and enhance the natural functions of flood-prone areas; improve floodwater storage and conveyance; contribute to habitat restoration; honor tribal sovereign rights, including treaty-reserved fishing, hunting, and gathering rights; and meet other needs identified by local communities.
3. To implement flood risk reduction solutions that are comprehensive, community-based, and climate-resilient, and that reduce long-term costs of flood risk reduction.

Flood hazard regulations are implemented within unincorporated King County. Each jurisdiction within King County is required under the Flood Management Plan to adopt flood hazard management regulations that meet the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program.

S-404 **The King County Shoreline Master Program shall rely on the policies and programs established in the King County Flood Management Plan and flood hazard regulations to meet the requirements of the Shoreline Management Act and the Department of Ecology's guidelines for flood hazard reduction.**

VI. Shoreline Environment Designations

A. Introduction

The Shoreline Master Program classifies shoreline reaches into defined environment designations, based on the existing use pattern, the current biological and physical character of the shoreline, and the goals and aspirations of the community. King County prescribes environmental protection measures, allowable use provisions, and development standards for each shoreline environment designation.

King County has established eight shoreline environment designations:

- High Intensity Shoreline Environment
- Residential Shoreline Environment
- Rural Shoreline Environment
- Conservancy Shoreline Environment
- Resource Shoreline Environment
- Forestry Shoreline Environment
- Natural Shoreline Environment
- Aquatic Environment

This section sets forth the purpose, criteria, and management policies for each shoreline environment designation. The Shoreline Environment Designation map at the end of this chapter show how the environment designations apply to shoreline reaches within the shoreline jurisdiction in unincorporated King County.

S-501 Shoreline areas that are not mapped or designated shall be assigned a Conservancy Shoreline Environment until the Shoreline Master Program is amended to assign a shoreline environment designation to that shoreline reach.

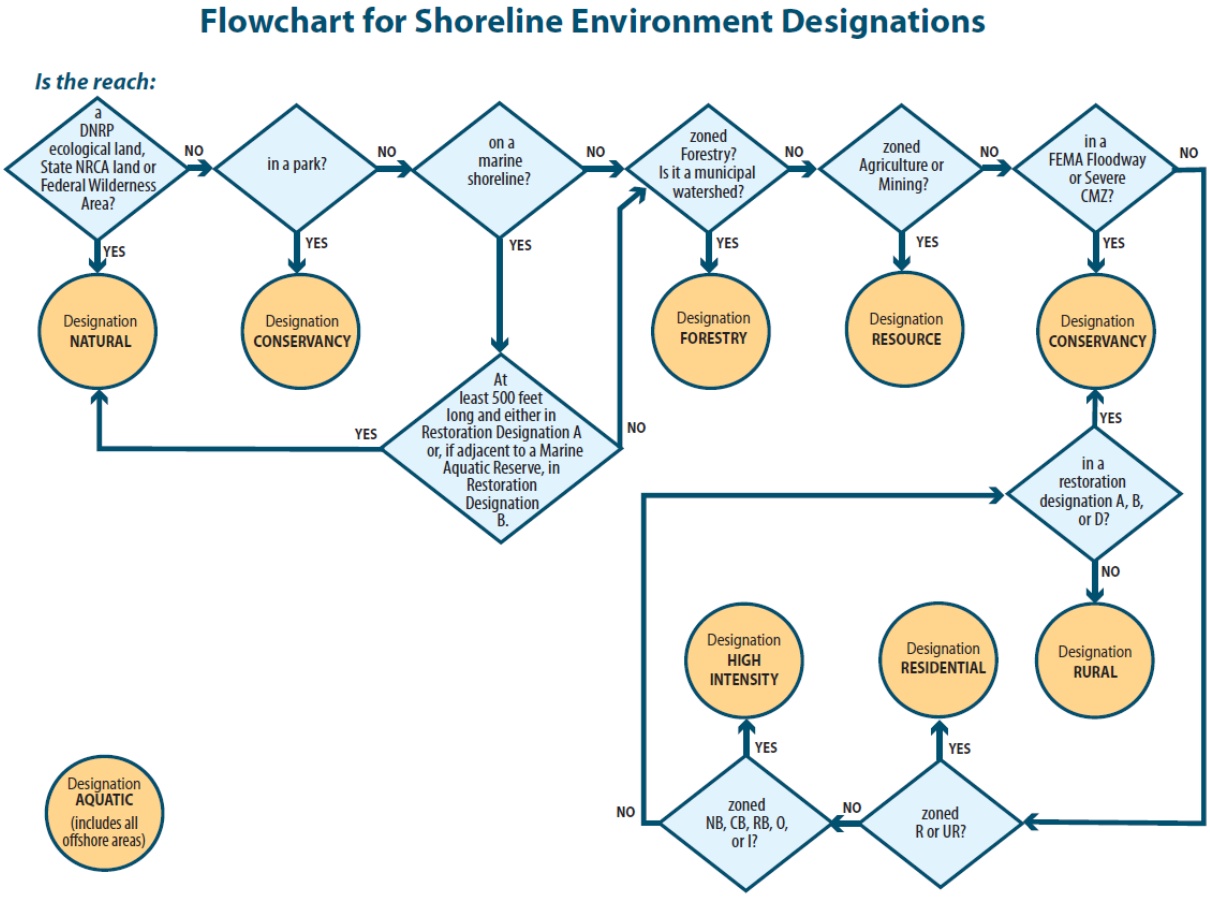
1. Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

To ensure that the shoreline environment designations help King County achieve the goals of the Shoreline Management Act, the following factors are considered for a given shoreline:

- Existing development patterns together with zoning, the King County Comprehensive Plan land use designations and other officially adopted plans;
- Existing shoreline ecological processes and functions and the degree of human alteration;
- Whether the reach has a restoration priority that demonstrates it has both basin conditions and existing shoreline condition that support extra efforts to maintain shoreline ecological processes and functions and the length of such reaches;
- Indian tribal, federal, state, county, and municipal watershed ownership status;
- The goals of King County residents for their shorelines as set forth in this chapter;
- Pursuant to Revised Code of Washington 90.58.100, for state-owned shorelines the public demand for wilderness beaches and other recreational activities and for ecological study areas; and
- Other state policies in the Shoreline Management Act and the Department of Ecology's guidelines (Revised Code of Washington 90.58.020 and Chapter 173-26 Washington Administrative Code, respectively).

Figure S-1 depicts the decision-making process that is used to determine the appropriate shoreline environment designation for a given shoreline.

Figure S-1: Pathway of decisions in applying criteria to produce shoreline environment designations.



The shoreline environment designations take into account several elements. Areas currently meeting the criteria for high levels of protection are given greater levels of protection. The determination of whether an area deserves a greater level of protection is based either on its current ownership and condition, such as publicly owned natural areas or wilderness areas, or on its restoration rating. The restoration rating is discussed in more detail below. Zoning is also an important criterion. King County has for years implemented zoning as a means to protect more sensitive areas from intense development. Shoreline environment designations also take into account whether a reach is located within a floodway and severe channel migration hazard area and gives greater protection to these areas due to their importance in maintaining shoreline ecological processes and functions and because of public health and safety concerns.

The restoration rating (see King County Shoreline Protection and Restoration Plan (July 2009)) is included in the shoreline environment designation as a way to incorporate more strongly the current degree of alteration along the shoreline, the biological importance of the reach in a watershed context, and the restoration priorities associated with the combination of the two analyses. The restoration ratings are largely concerned with whether it is most appropriate to implement measures to protect or conserve a site, restore it to a previous condition, or undertake projects to enhance its current condition or to create new features with shoreline ecological processes and functions. These ratings also provide guidance on areas where it is important to protect existing shoreline ecological processes and functions.

Restoration ratings combine the reach characterization based on the results from an alterations analysis with the context of basin analyses (See Table S-2). The reach or drift cell characterization is an assessment of the extent to which ecosystem structure, processes, and, ultimately, functions for a reach or drift cell are affected by anthropogenic factors. Scores resulting from this assessment are indicative of the degree to which shoreline ecological processes have been altered and impaired. The reach characterizations are found in King County Shoreline Inventory and Characterization: Methodology and Results (May 2007). The basin analysis is based on the Basin Condition Map in King County Code 21A.24.065.

Table S-2. Restoration ratings and associated actions.

Restoration Score	Basin Condition	Reach Condition	Actions
A	High	High	Conserve, Preserve
B	High	Moderate	Conserve, Preserve, Restore, Enhance
C	High	Low	Restore, Enhance
D	Moderate	High	Conserve, Enhance, Restore, Preserve
E	Moderate	Moderate	Conserve, Enhance, Restore
F	Moderate	Low	Enhance, Restore
G	Low	High	Enhance, Conserve
H	Low	Moderate	Enhance, Create
I	Low	Low	Enhance, Create

Each rating has specific restoration goals associated with it, based on the conditions observed on-site and in the basin. Depending on condition, as indicated by the degree of alteration, reaches and drift cells were placed into one of nine categories of preferred actions. These range from preservation and conservation under the highest conditions (high basin and reach conditions, meaning the least altered from natural) to enhancement and creation under the poorest condition (low basin and reach conditions, the most altered from natural).

The various actions are defined as follows:

Preserve – To protect intact processes, often through acquiring lands or easements to exclude activities that may negatively affect the environment.

Conserve – To maintain biodiversity by protecting or increasing the natural potential of landscapes to support multiple native species. Typically, this is accomplished through financial incentives for landowners intended to offset any economic loss resulting from managing the land for conservation.

Restore – To transform degraded conditions to a close approximation of historical conditions. Restoration generally involves more intense and extensive modification and manipulation of site conditions than would occur with enhancement projects. Example actions include levee breaching, removal, or setback.

Enhance – To improve a targeted ecological attribute and/or process. Example actions may include culvert replacement, riparian plantings and fencing, invasive species removal, and streambank stabilization.

Create – To construct or place habitat features where they did not previously exist to foster development of a functioning ecosystem. Examples include tidal channel excavation and the placement of dredge material intended to create marsh or other habitat. Creation represents the most experimental approach and, therefore, may have a lower degree of success, particularly when landscape-scale ecological processes are not sufficient to support the created habitat type.

The marine shoreline around Vashon-Maury Island is treated a little differently than freshwater shorelines in the designation strategy. This is in recognition of both the differing character of marine shorelines, which are subject to tidal influences, wakes from large commercial vessels, and some variation in the ecological processes affecting them, as well as the creation of the Maury Island Environmental Aquatic Reserve along Maury Island and Quartermaster Harbor shorelines by the Washington state Department of Natural Resources. More protection by shoreline designation was afforded to marine shorelines with active feeder bluffs and little alteration to processes. As a result, in these areas, areas with a restoration rating of A or B were designated natural in recognition of the importance of conserving existing shoreline ecological functions and processes in this area.

B. High Intensity Shoreline Environment

1. Purpose

S-502 **The purpose of the High Intensity Shoreline Environment is to provide for high intensity water-oriented commercial and industrial uses.**

2. High Intensity Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

S-503 **A shoreline may be designated High Intensity Shoreline Environment if the shoreland is characterized by high intensity development or uses or is zoned Neighborhood Business (NB), Commercial Business (CB), Regional Business (RB), Office (O), or Industrial (I), and:**

a. The shoreland does not contain limitations on urban uses, such as geological hazards or flood hazards; and

b. The shoreline does not provide important shoreline ecological processes and functions that would be significantly compromised by high intensity residential, commercial, or industrial use.

3. High Intensity Shoreline Environment Management Policies

S-504 **In the High Intensity Shoreline Environment, King County shall give priority to non-residential land uses that are water-dependent or water-related.**

S-505 **King County shall discourage nonwater-oriented, non-residential land uses in the High Intensity Shoreline Environment. Shoreline mixed-use developments that include and support water dependent uses may be allowed. King County should allow nonwater-oriented land uses in the High Intensity Shoreline Environment only in limited situations and only if they do not conflict with or limit opportunities for water-dependent uses or are located on sites where there is no direct access to the shoreline.**

S-506 **Prior to allowing expansion of a high intensity nonwater-oriented use in the shoreline environment, King County shall determine that there is no feasible alternative for locating the expansion outside of the shoreline jurisdiction.**

S-507 **King County should require visual or physical public shoreline access to be provided in the High Intensity Shoreline Environment.**

S-508 **King County shall protect the aesthetic character of the shoreline in the High Intensity Shoreline Environment through development regulations, including sign controls, development siting criteria, screening requirements and architectural standards, landscaping requirements, and maintenance of natural vegetation.**

S-509 **King County shall require that the scale and intensity of new uses and development within the High Intensity Shoreline Environment is compatible with, and protects or enhances, the existing character of the area.**

C. Residential Shoreline Environment

1. Purpose

S-510 **The purpose of the Residential Shoreline Environment is to accommodate residential and commercial uses on a scale appropriate with urban residential zones.**

2. Residential Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

S-511 **A shoreline may be designated Residential Shoreline Environment if the shoreland is characterized by urban levels of residential development or uses or is zoned Urban Residential (R) or Urban Reserve (UR) and:**

a. The shoreland does not contain limitations on urban uses, such as geological hazards or flood hazards; and

b. The shoreline does not provide important shoreline ecological processes and functions that would be significantly compromised by urban levels of residential development.

3. Residential Shoreline Environment Management Policies

S-512 **King County shall require that the scale and intensity of new uses and development within the Residential Shoreline Environment is compatible with and protects or enhances the existing character of the area.**

S-513 **King County should encourage outdoor recreation facilities that are compatible with the character of the area in the Residential Shoreline Environment. Water-dependent and water-enjoyment recreation facilities that provide opportunities for people to access and enjoy the shoreline are preferred uses in the Residential Shoreline Environment.**

S-514 **King County should discourage nonwater-oriented commercial uses in the Residential Shoreline Environment. A nonwater-oriented commercial use may be allowed as part of a shoreline mixed-use development or if the nonwater-oriented use provides a substantial benefit with respect to the goals and policies of this Program, such as providing public access or restoring degraded shorelines.**

D. Rural Shoreline Environment

1. Purpose

S-515 **The purpose of the Rural Shoreline Environment is to accommodate land uses normally associated with rural levels of development while providing appropriate public access and recreational uses to the maximum extent feasible.**

2. Rural Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

S-516 **A shoreline may be designated Rural Shoreline if the shoreland is characterized by rural levels of development or if the shoreland is zoned Rural Area (RA-2.5, RA-5, RA-10, and RA-20) and:**

- **a. The shoreland does not contain limitations on rural residential uses, such as geological hazards or flood hazards; and**
- **b. The shoreline does not provide important shoreline ecological processes and functions that would be significantly compromised by rural levels of residential development.**

3. Rural Shoreline Environment Management Policies

S-517 **King County should limit uses in the Rural Shoreline Environment to those rural development activities and associated services that sustain the shoreline's physical and biological resources and that protect options for restoration to the maximum extent feasible given the nature of rural development.**

S-518 **King County shall require that residential land division and recreational developments in the Rural Shoreline Environment provide public access and joint use for community recreational facilities, where appropriate.**

E. Conservancy Shoreline Environment

1. Purpose

S-519 **The purpose of the Conservancy Shoreline Environment is to conserve areas that are a high priority for restoration, include valuable historic properties, or provide recreational opportunities.**

2. Conservancy Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

S-520 **A shoreline may be designated Conservancy Shoreline Environment if it is in an area where important shoreline ecological processes have not been substantially degraded by human activities, where important shoreline ecological processes would be degraded by development or present a public health or safety risk, or where the shoreline is in public ownership and is managed for public access or recreation. Areas that may be included in Conservancy Shoreline are:**

- **a. Shoreline reaches primarily within an identified FEMA floodway or severe channel migration hazard zone;**
- **b. Lake shorelines or river shorelines with a restoration rating of A, B, or D;**
- **c. Marine shorelines with a restoration rating of A, B, or D; and**
- **d. Shorelines in public ownership and managed for public access or recreation.**

3. Conservancy Shoreline Environment Management Policies

S-521 **King County should limit uses in the Conservancy Shoreline Environment to those that sustain the shoreline area's physical and biological resources or to uses of a nonpermanent nature that do not substantially degrade the rural or natural character of the shoreline area or disturb historic and cultural resources. King County should discourage non-residential uses in the Conservancy Shoreline Environment except as follows:**

- **a. King County should allow aquaculture, forestry, and agriculture in the Conservancy Shoreline Environment; and**
- **b. King County should allow water-dependent and water-enjoyment recreation facilities as preferred uses if significant adverse impacts to the shoreline are mitigated.**

S-522 **King County shall require that new uses or development in the Conservancy Shoreline Environment preserve the existing character of the shoreline consistent with the purpose of the environment, including:**

- **a. Limiting the total effective impervious surface in the shoreline jurisdiction to no more than 10 percent to maintain the existing hydrologic character of the site; and**
- **b. Allowing more effective impervious surface coverage on lots legally created prior to the date of adoption of this update to King County's Shoreline Master Program. In these cases, effective impervious surface coverage shall be limited to the maximum extent feasible.**

F. Resource Shoreline Environment

1. Purpose

S-523 **The purpose of the Resource Shoreline Environment is to allow for mining and agricultural uses on lands that have been designated under the Growth Management Act as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance or mineral resource lands where those lands do not provide significant shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

2. Resource Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

S-524 **A shoreline may be designated Resource Shoreline Environment if the shoreland is zoned Agriculture or Mineral and the shoreline is not designated Natural Shoreline Environment under Policy S-525.**

3. Resource Shoreline Environment Management Policies

S-525 **King County should limit uses in the Resource Shoreline Environment to agricultural and mining activities.**

S-526 **King County shall adopt development standards for the Resource Shoreline Environment to preserve the existing character of the shoreline consistent with the purpose of the environment.**

G. Forestry Shoreline Environment

1. Purpose

S-527 **The purpose of the Forestry Shoreline Environment is to allow for forestry uses in the Forest Production District and to protect municipal watersheds.**

2. Forestry Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

S-528 **A shoreline may be designated Forestry Shoreline Environment if the shoreland is within the Forest Production District and the shoreline is not designated as a Natural Shoreline or a Conservancy Shoreline Environment.**

3. Forestry Shoreline Environment Management Policies

S-529 **King County shall require forest practices in the Forestry Shoreline Environment to comply with standards that provide protection for shoreline ecological processes and functions equal to or greater than the forest practice rules adopted by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.**

S-530 **King County shall allow activities related to the direct management and delivery of municipal domestic water supplies in the Forestry Shoreline Environment only when consistent with municipal domestic water supply best management practices.**

S-531 **King County shall allow agricultural and aquaculture uses within the Forestry Shoreline Environment if the use is subject to appropriate limitations or conditions to ensure that the use does not expand or alter practices in a manner inconsistent with the purpose of the designation.**

H. Natural Shoreline Environment

1. Purpose

S-532 **The purpose of the Natural Shoreline Environment is to protect those shoreline areas that are relatively free of human influence and are of high ecological quality. This designation allows only very low intensity uses to maintain the existing high levels of ecological process and function.**

2. Natural Shoreline Environment Designation Criteria

S-533 **A shoreline may be designated Natural Shoreline Environment if the shoreline is:**

a. Of high ecological quality and is performing an important, irreplaceable ecological process or function that would be damaged by human activity;

b. Unable to support new development or uses without significant adverse impacts to shoreline ecological processes and functions or risk to human safety;

c. A federally designated wilderness area or in an area managed by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks as natural lands; or

d. A marine shoreline reach that extends at least five hundred feet along the ordinary high water mark and either has a restoration plan rating of A or has a restoration plan rating of B and is located adjacent to the Maury Island Marine Aquatic Reserve.

3. Natural Shoreline Environment Management Policies

S-534 **King County shall not allow new shoreline armoring in the Natural Shoreline Environment.**

S-535 **King County shall prohibit the following new uses in the Natural Shoreline Environment:**

a. Commercial uses;

b. Industrial uses;

c. Nonwater-oriented recreation uses that require shoreline modification to provide shoreline access;

d. Mining and associated facilities, such as docks, piers, and loading facilities; and

e. Transportation facilities, utility corridors, and parking areas that can be located outside of the Natural Shoreline Environment.

S-536 **King County may allow single detached residential development in the Natural Shoreline Environment as a shoreline conditional use if the scale and intensity of the use is limited to protect shoreline ecological processes and functions and is consistent with the purpose of the environment. King County shall require new subdivisions and short subdivisions in the Natural Shoreline Environment to locate new structures and impervious surfaces outside of the shoreline jurisdiction to the maximum extent feasible.**

S-537 **King County shall allow scientific, historical, cultural, and educational research uses in the Natural Shoreline Environment if no significant ecological impact on the area will result.**

S-538 **Except for removal of noxious weeds or invasive vegetation as provided for in Policy S-635, King County shall not allow vegetation removal in the Natural Shoreline Environment that will reduce the capability of vegetation to perform normal ecological processes and functions.**

S-539 **King County shall allow agricultural and aquaculture uses of a very low intensity nature within the Natural Shoreline Environment if the use is subject to appropriate limitations or conditions to ensure that the use does not expand or alter practices in a manner inconsistent with the purpose of the designation.**

S-540 **King County shall allow passive and low impact recreational activities in the Natural Shoreline Environment. New passive and low impact recreation activities shall use designs that avoid or minimize impacts to shoreline processes and functions. Maintenance of trails and campsites shall minimize disturbance, and restoration of impacted areas is encouraged.**

S-541 **King County should use tax incentives, easements, and buyouts to protect shorelines in the Natural Shoreline Environment with important fish and wildlife habitat at risk from moderate to high intensity development.**

I. Aquatic Environment

1. Purpose

S-542 **The purpose of the Aquatic Environment is to protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics and resources of the areas waterward of the ordinary high water mark.**

2. Aquatic Environment Designation Criteria

S-543 **A shoreline shall be designated Aquatic if it is waterward of the ordinary high water mark.**

3. Aquatic Environment Management Policies

S-544 **King County shall allow new in-water and over-water structures in the Aquatic Environment only for water-dependent uses, public access, or ecological restoration.**

S-545 **King County shall limit the size of new over-water structures in the Aquatic Environment to the minimum necessary to support the structure's intended use.**

S-546 **King County shall encourage multiple uses of over-water facilities in the Aquatic Environment to reduce the impacts of shoreline development and increase the effective use of water resources.**

S-547 **King County shall require all developments and uses on navigable waters or their beds in the Aquatic Environment to be located and designed to minimize interference with surface navigation, to consider impacts to public views, and to allow for the safe, unobstructed passage of fish and wildlife and materials necessary to create or sustain their habitat, particularly those species dependent on migration.**

S-548 **King County shall not allow uses in the Aquatic Environment that adversely impact the ecological processes and functions of critical saltwater and freshwater habitats, except when necessary to achieve the objectives of Revised Code of Washington 90.58.020, and then only when the adverse impacts are mitigated according to the sequence described in Washington Administrative Code 173-26-201 as necessary to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

S-549 **King County shall consider the guidance in the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve Management Plan in making decisions about permitted uses in the shoreline jurisdiction.**

VII. Environment Protection Policies

A. General Environmental Protection Policy Goals

The concept of ecological processes and functions recognizes that any ecological system is composed of a wide variety of interacting physical, chemical, and biological processes. These processes are interdependent in varying degrees and at different scales, and that result in the landscape, habitats and species as they exist at any time. Ecological functions are the work performed or roles played individually or collectively within ecosystems by these processes.

Nearly all shoreline areas, even substantially developed or degraded areas, retain important ecological processes and functions that contribute to the survival and successful reproduction of plants and animals. For example, an intensely developed harbor area may also have an important function as a fish migration corridor and feeding area critical to species survival. In addition, ecosystems are interconnected and many species may depend on the functioning of multiple systems for critical resources. As examples, anadromous fish depend upon the viability of freshwater, marine, and terrestrial shoreline ecosystems, and many wildlife species associated with shorelines depend on the functioning of both terrestrial and aquatic environments. Therefore, the policies for protecting and restoring ecological processes and functions should apply to the maximum extent practical to all shoreline areas, not just those that remain relatively unaltered.

1. Cumulative Impacts and "No Net Loss" of Ecological Processes and Functions

The Shoreline Management Act requires that King County's Shoreline Master Program achieve no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions from new uses or development, and that it address the cumulative impacts on shoreline ecology that would result from future shoreline development. The following policies ensure that King County will address cumulative impacts of existing and proposed shoreline development and work towards improving shoreline ecological processes and functions.

S-601 **The Shoreline Master Program shall consider the cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable future development to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

S-602 **King County shall ensure that new uses, development, and redevelopment within the shoreline jurisdiction do not cause a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

S-603 **The Shoreline Master Program is intended to fairly allocate the burden of addressing cumulative impacts. King County should adopt policies and regulations that are designed to avoid the need for individualized cumulative impacts analysis for commonly occurring and planned development.**

S-604 **King County shall require shoreline uses and modifications to be designed and managed to prevent degradation of water quality and alteration of natural hydrographic conditions to the maximum extent practical.**

S-605 **The Shoreline Master Program shall promote restoration of impaired shoreline ecological processes and functions. Policies and programs and non-regulatory actions that contribute to restoration goals shall be identified. King County should consider the direct and indirect effects of regulatory or non-regulatory programs of other local, state, and federal governments, as well as any restoration effects that may result from shoreline management regulations and mitigation standards.**

S-606 **When updating the Shoreline Master Program, King County should analyze proposed policies and regulations to determine whether they will cause cumulative adverse impacts to the shoreline and consider how such impacts may be avoided. The evaluation of cumulative impacts should consider:**

- **a. Current condition of the shorelines and associated natural processes;**
- **b. Reasonably foreseeable future development and shoreline uses;**
- **c. An appropriate evaluation of the effect on shoreline ecological processes and functions caused by unregulated activities, development exempt from permitting, and effects such as the incremental impact of residential bulkheads, residential piers, or runoff from newly developed properties; and**
- **d. Beneficial effects of any established regulatory programs under other local, state, and federal laws.**

S-607 **King County should use the shoreline permitting or shoreline conditional use permitting processes for development proposals that may have impacts that cannot be anticipated or uncommon impacts that have not been considered or identified at time of adoption of the Shoreline Master Program to ensure that all impacts are addressed and that there is no net loss of shoreline ecological function after mitigation.**

S-608 **King County shall consider and address cumulative impacts of shoreline development on shoreline ecological processes and functions and on shoreline uses given priority under Chapter 90.58 Revised Code of Washington.**

S-609 **King County shall apply mitigation measures in the following sequence of steps listed in order of highest priority to lowest priority:**

- **a. Avoid the impacts altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action;**
- **b. Minimize impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation by using appropriate technology or by taking affirmative steps to avoid or reduce impacts;**
- **c. Rectify impacts by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment;**
- **d. Reduce or eliminate the impacts over time by preservation and maintenance operations;**
- **e. Compensate for impacts by replacing, enhancing, or providing substitute resources or environments; and**
- **f. Monitor the impact and the compensation projects and taking appropriate corrective measures.**

2. Ongoing Evaluation, Review of Cumulative Impacts, and Duty to Update

S-610 **King County shall periodically review and amend its Shoreline Master Program using a process that inventories and ensures meaningful understanding of current and potential ecological processes and functions provided by affected shorelines.**

B. Shoreline Critical Areas

1. Standard for protection under the Shoreline Management Act

The Growth Management Act requires King County to protect the functions and values of critical areas, which are defined as wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. Critical areas located within the shoreline jurisdiction are protected under the Shoreline Master Program rather than the Growth Management Act. The Shoreline Master Program provides a level of protection for critical areas to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological functions. In addition, the Shoreline Management Act requires King County to give optimum protection of shorelines of statewide significance. The King County Comprehensive Plan also guides the protection of critical areas within the shoreline jurisdiction.

2. Use of scientific and technical information

The Shoreline Management Act requires local governments to use scientific and technical information when establishing protection measures for critical areas. To achieve this requirement, King County has, to the extent feasible:

1. Used a systematic interdisciplinary approach that ensures the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts;
2. Consulted with and obtained the comments of any federal, state, regional, or local agency having any special expertise with respect to environmental impacts;
3. Considered all plans, studies, surveys, inventories, and systems of classification made or being made by federal, state, regional, or local agencies, by private individuals, or by organizations dealing with King County shorelines;
4. Used all available information regarding hydrology, geography, topography, ecology, economics, and other pertinent data; and
5. Employed, when possible, all appropriate, modern scientific data processing and computer techniques to store, index, analyze, and manage the information gathered.

King County has reviewed and synthesized a wide range of scientific information resulting in regulatory standards based on the best available science for the protection of critical areas. In addition, King County considered Indian tribal, state, and federal programs to provide a full spectrum of planning and regulatory measures to guide critical areas protection in shorelines.

S-611 **In considering development regulations to protect shoreline ecological processes and functions, King County shall consider the scientific and technical information contained in functional plans, watershed plans, critical areas regulations, and Indian tribal, state, and federal programs.**

3. Wetlands

S-612 **King County wetland regulations shall address the following uses to achieve, at a minimum, no net loss of wetland area and functions:**

- **a. Removal, excavation, grading, or dredging of soil, sand, gravel, minerals, organic matter, or material of any kind;**
- **b. Dumping, discharging, or filling with any material, including discharges of stormwater and domestic, commercial, or industrial wastewater;**
- **c. Draining, flooding, or disturbing of the open water level, duration of inundation, or groundwater table;**
- **d. Driving of pilings;**
- **e. Placing of obstructions;**
- **f. Construction, reconstruction, demolition, or expansion of any structure;**
- **g. Significant vegetation removal, except for non-conversion forest practices regulated under Chapter 76.09 Revised Code of Washington;**
- **h. Other uses or development that results in a significant ecological impact to the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of wetlands; and**
- **i. Activities reducing the functions of buffers.**

S-613 **King County shall categorize wetlands within shorelines of the state as provided for in Chapter 5, Environment.**

S-614 **King County should allow alterations to wetlands only if there is no net loss of wetland functions and values and the alteration is consistent with the critical areas regulations.**

S-615 **King County shall delineate buffers around wetlands to protect and maintain wetland functions. Buffer widths shall be based on wetland category, ecological function, characteristics and setting, potential impacts with adjacent land use, and other relevant factors.**

S-616 **King County may allow compensatory mitigation only after a mitigation sequence is applied consistent with Policy S-609 and higher priority means of mitigation are determined to be infeasible.**

- **a. Compensatory mitigation replacement ratios or other mitigation provisions shall consider:**
  1. **The risk of failure of the compensatory mitigation action;**
  2. **The length of time the compensatory mitigation action will take to replace adequately the impacted wetland functions and values; and**
  3. **The gain or loss of the type, quality, and quantity of the ecological functions of the compensation.**
- **b. Performance standards shall be established to evaluate the success of compensatory mitigation.**
- **c. Long-term monitoring shall be required to determine if performance standards are met.**
- **d. Long-term protection and management shall be required for compensatory mitigation sites.**

4. Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas

King County has classified and mapped critical aquifer recharge areas according to the vulnerability of the aquifer. Vulnerability is the combined effect of hydrogeological susceptibility to contamination and the contamination loading potential. High vulnerability is indicated by land uses that contribute contamination that may degrade groundwater and by hydrogeologic conditions that facilitate degradation. Low vulnerability is indicated by land uses that do not contribute contaminants that will

degrade groundwater and by hydrogeologic conditions that do not facilitate degradation.

S-617 **The King County Shoreline Master Program shall protect critical aquifer recharge areas consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan and critical areas regulations.**

5. Geologically Hazardous Areas

Geologically hazardous areas include areas susceptible to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological processes and events. They pose a threat to the health and safety of residents when incompatible commercial, residential, or industrial development is sited in areas of significant hazard. Some geological hazards can be reduced or mitigated by engineering, design, or modified construction or mining practices, so that risks to health and safety are acceptable. When technology cannot reduce risks to acceptable levels, building in geologically hazardous areas is best avoided. Under the King County Shoreline Master Program, geologically hazardous areas include:

- Alluvial fan hazard areas;
- Channel migration zones;
- Erosion hazard areas;
- Landslide hazard areas;
- Seismic hazard areas;
- Coal mine hazard areas;
- Volcanic hazard areas;
- Tsunami hazard area; and
- Steep slope hazard areas.

The following policies to protect health and safety and also to reduce the loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions apply to geological hazardous areas located within the shoreline jurisdiction.

S-618 **King County shall prohibit development and new lot creation in geologically hazardous areas if it would result in increased risk of injury to people or property damage, consistent with King County Code Chapter 21A.24.**

6. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

The Department of Commerce identifies the following areas as being suitable for fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas:

1. Areas with which endangered, threatened, and sensitive species have a primary association;
2. Habitats and species of local importance;
3. Commercial and recreational shellfish areas;
4. Kelp and eelgrass beds; herring, smelt and sand lance spawning areas;
5. Naturally occurring ponds under twenty acres and their submerged aquatic beds that provide fish or wildlife habitat;
6. Waters of the state;
7. Lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers planted with game fish by an Indian tribal or other governmental entity; or
8. State natural area preserves and natural resource conservation areas.

The King County Comprehensive Plan and its development regulations protect the functions and values of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas through its provisions governing aquatic areas and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

The Department of Ecology's guidelines divide fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas into critical saltwater and critical freshwater habitats.

Critical saltwater habitat

Critical saltwater habitats include all kelp beds, eelgrass beds, spawning and holding areas for forage fish, such as herring, smelt and sand lance; subsistence, commercial and recreational shellfish beds; mudflats, spits, intertidal habitats with vascular plants; and areas with which priority species have a primary association. Critical saltwater habitats include both the shorelines and the adjacent submerged areas.

S-619 King County shall provide a high level of protection to critical saltwater habitats due to the important ecological functions they provide.

S-620 Protection and restoration of critical saltwater habitats should integrate management of shorelands as well as submerged areas.

Comprehensive planning for the protection and restoration of critical saltwater habitat should include state resource agencies, local and regional government entities including, but not limited to, affected Indian tribes, the Port of Seattle, and Sound Transit. To reverse the impacts from development on critical saltwater habitats, the King County Shoreline Master Program should look for opportunities to restore critical saltwater shorelines and protect them from further degradation. All resources should be reviewed and considered.

S-621 As part of its management planning for critical saltwater habitats, King County should include an evaluation of current data and trends regarding:

- **a. Available inventory and collection of necessary data regarding physical characteristics of the habitat, including upland conditions, and any information on species population trends;**
- **b. Terrestrial and aquatic vegetation;**
- **c. The level of human activity in such areas, including the presence of roads and level of recreational types. Passive or active recreation may be appropriate for certain areas and habitats;**
- **d. Restoration potential;**
- **e. Tributaries and small streams flowing into marine waters;**
- **f. Dock and bulkhead construction, including an inventory of bulkheads serving no protective purpose;**
- **g. Conditions and ecological function in the near-shore area;**
- **h. Uses surrounding the critical saltwater habitat areas that may negatively impact those areas, including permanent or occasional upland, beach, or over-water uses;**
- **i. Potential Indian tribal uses of critical saltwater habitats to ensure that these uses are protected and restored when possible; and**
- **j. An analysis of what data gaps exist and a strategy for gaining this information.**

Because of the need for a higher level of protection for critical saltwater habitat, allowed uses should be carefully limited and only allowed to meet other policy goals of the Shoreline Management Act.

S-622 **Docks, bulkheads, bridges, fill, floats, jetties, utility crossings, and other human-made structures shall not intrude into or over critical saltwater habitats except when all of the conditions below are met:**

- **a. The public's need for such an action or structure is clearly demonstrated, and the proposal is consistent with protection of the public trust, as embodied in Revised Code of Washington 90.58.020;**
- **b. Avoidance of impacts to critical saltwater habitats by an alternative alignment or location is not feasible or would result in unreasonable and disproportionate cost to accomplish the same general purpose;**
- **c. The project, including any required mitigation, will result in no net loss of ecological functions associated with critical saltwater habitat; and**
- **d. The project is consistent with Indian tribal and state interests in resource protection and species recovery.**

S-623 **Public or private noncommercial docks for public, individual residential, or community use may be authorized provided that:**

- **a. Avoidance of impacts to critical saltwater habitats by an alternative alignment or location is not feasible; and**
- **b. The project, including any required mitigation, will result in no net loss of ecological functions associated with critical saltwater habitat.**

Critical freshwater habitat

Critical freshwater habitats are as equally important as saltwater areas for fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas along shorelines of the state. Critical freshwater habitats include streams and rivers, with their associated channel migration zones, floodplains, wetlands, and lakes. Shorelines along these freshwater habitats often have been highly developed and are currently adversely impacted by improper stormwater, sewer, or industrial outfalls; unmanaged clearing and grading; and stormwater runoff from buildings and parking lots. Some impacts include altered quality and quantity of stormwater runoff, as well as destruction or alteration of vegetation. Potential impacts from vegetation changes can include increased water temperatures and altered hydrographic conditions. All of these changes create inhospitable conditions in water bodies for priority species and, in addition, make them more susceptible to problems stemming from catastrophic flooding, droughts, landslides, and channel changes.

Some freshwater habitats, particularly rivers and floodplains, often are considered as hazardous areas that can threaten life and property during catastrophic events, such as flooding. Development can exacerbate such conditions.

As with critical saltwater habitats, comprehensive planning for the protection and restoration of critical freshwater habitat should include affected Indian tribes, state resource agencies, and local and regional government entities including, but not limited to the Port of Seattle and Sound Transit. To reverse the impacts from development on critical freshwater habitats, the King County Shoreline Master Program should look for opportunities to restore critical freshwater shorelines and protect them from further degradation. All resources should be reviewed and considered.

S-624 **King County shall provide a high level of protection to critical freshwater habitats due to the important ecological functions they provide.**

S-625 **King County should establish priorities for protection and restoration, where appropriate, along unincorporated river corridors and lake shorelines.**

S-626 **King County shall regulate uses and development as necessary within and along stream channels, associated channel migration zones, wetlands, lake shorelines, floodplains, and other critical areas within the shoreline jurisdiction, to ensure that no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions results from new development near freshwaters of the state, including associated hyporheic zones.**

S-627 **King County shall protect ecological functions associated with critical freshwater habitat as necessary to ensure no net loss from shoreline activities and associated changes.**

S-628 **King County should facilitate authorization of appropriate restoration projects.**

C. Frequently Flooded Areas and Channel Migration Hazard Areas

The King County Flood Management Plan (Flood Plan) is adopted as a functional plan of the King County Comprehensive Plan. The Flood Plan outlines the policies, programs, and projects that King County uses to reduce the risk from flooding and channel migration. The Flood Management Plan was reviewed for consistency with the Shoreline Management Act and determined to be consistent with it. King County maps Channel Migration Hazard Areas and applies critical areas regulations to ensure that channel migration can be accommodated.

S-629 **The policies contained within the King County Flood Management Plan, or successor plan, constitute the policies for the protection of frequently flooded areas and channel migration within shorelines. Provisions implementing these policies are included in the critical areas regulations.**

S-630 **King County shall continue mapping channel migration zones on all of its rivers and streams within shoreline jurisdiction where channel migration zones have not already been mapped.**

D. Shoreline Vegetation Conservation

A major intent of vegetation conservation is to protect and restore the ecological processes and functions performed by stands of vegetation along shorelines. Vegetation conservation can also be undertaken to protect human safety and property, to increase the stability of river banks and coastal bluffs, to reduce the need for structural shoreline stabilization measures, to improve the visual and aesthetic qualities of the shoreline, to protect particular plant and animal species and their habitats, and to enhance shoreline uses.

In King County, aquatic environments, as well as their associated upland and wetland vegetated areas, provide significant habitat for a wide variety of fish and wildlife species. Healthy environments for aquatic species are inseparably linked with the ecological integrity of the surrounding terrestrial ecosystems. For example, nearly continuous stretches of mature forest characterize the natural riparian conditions of the Pacific Northwest. Riparian areas along marine shorelines provide the same or similar functions as their freshwater counterparts. The most commonly recognized functions of the shoreline vegetation include, but are not limited to:

- Providing shade necessary to maintain cool water temperatures required by salmonids, spawning forage fish, and other aquatic biota.
- Providing external organic inputs critical for some aquatic life.

- Providing food for various insects and other benthic macro invertebrates, which are in turn food sources for fish, birds, and other wildlife.
- Stabilizing banks, minimizing erosion, and reducing the occurrence of landslides. The roots of trees and other riparian vegetation provide the bulk of this function.
- Reducing fine sediment input into the aquatic environment through stormwater retention and vegetative filtering.
- Filtering and vegetative uptake of nutrients and pollutants from groundwater and storm runoff.
- Providing a source of large woody debris for introduction into the aquatic system. Large woody debris is a primary structural component in streams that functions as a hydraulic roughness element to moderate flows and store sediment. Large woody debris also serves a pool-forming function, providing critical salmonid rearing and refuge habitat. Abundant large woody debris increases aquatic diversity and stabilizes systems.
- Regulating microclimates in the lake and stream-riparian and intertidal corridors.
- Providing critical wildlife habitat, including migration corridors and feeding, watering, rearing, and refuge areas.

The length, width, and species composition of a shoreline vegetation community all contribute substantively to aquatic ecological functions. Likewise, the biological communities of the aquatic environment are essential to ecological functions of the adjacent upland vegetation. The ability of vegetated areas to provide critical ecological functions diminishes as the length and width of the vegetated area along shorelines is reduced. When shoreline vegetation is removed, there is a greater risk that important ecological functions will not be provided.

Sustaining different ecological functions requires varying widths, compositions, and densities of vegetation. The importance of the different functions, in turn, varies with the type of shoreline setting. For example, in forested shoreline settings, periodic introduction of fallen trees, especially conifers, into the stream channel is an important attribute that is critical to natural stream channel maintenance.

Vegetation conservation includes activities to protect and restore vegetation that contributes to the ecological functions of shoreline areas along or near marine and freshwater shorelines. Vegetation conservation provisions generally include prohibiting or limiting plant clearing and earth grading, restoring vegetation, and controlling invasive weeds and nonnative species. Vegetation conservation does not include those activities covered under the Washington State Forest Practices Act, except for conversion to other uses and those other forest practice activities over which local governments have authority.

S-631 **King County shall adopt provisions to address vegetation conservation and restoration to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions, to avoid adverse impacts to soil hydrology, and to reduce the hazard of slope failures or accelerated erosion.**

S-632 **Vegetation conservation provisions apply to all shoreline uses and developments, regardless of whether the use or development requires a shoreline permit.**

S-633 **Vegetation conservation standards shall not apply retroactively to existing uses and structures, such as existing agricultural practices.**

S-634 **King County should identify which ecological processes and functions are important to the local aquatic and terrestrial ecology, and then conserve sufficient vegetation to maintain these functions. Vegetation conservation areas are not necessarily intended to be closed to use and development, but should provide for management of vegetation in a manner adequate to assure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

S-635 **King County should adopt mechanisms to implement the vegetation conservation policies of this chapter. These mechanisms may include setback or buffer requirements, riparian widths sufficient to support the growth of mature trees and recruitment of woody vegetation, clearing and grading standards, regulatory incentives, environment designation standards, or other provisions. Selective pruning of trees for safety and view protection may be allowed. Removal of noxious weeds and invasive vegetation should be allowed as long as appropriate best management practices are followed.**

E. Water Quality, Stormwater, and Non-Point Pollution

The Shoreline Master Program must protect against adverse impacts to the public health, to the land with its vegetation and wildlife, and to the waters of the state and their aquatic life. The intent of water quality, stormwater, and non-point pollution policies is to provide shoreline protection by preventing adverse impacts to shoreline ecological processes and functions, aquatic habitats, and water dependent uses such as aquaculture and fishing.

S-636 **King County should work to prevent impacts to water quality and stormwater quantity that would result in a net loss of shoreline ecological functions, degraded aesthetic qualities, loss of recreational opportunities, or reduction in water-dependent uses, such as aquaculture and fishing.**

S-637 **King County should ensure mutual consistency between shoreline management provisions and other regulations that address water quality and stormwater quantity, including Public Health – Seattle & King County standards, the King County Surface Water Design Manual, and King County surface water management regulations. The regulations that are most protective of ecological functions shall apply.**

S-638 **The Shoreline Master Program shall include provisions to implement the water quality, stormwater, and non-point pollution policies in this chapter.**

F. Preparing for Climate Change

Climate change will have significant impacts on shorelines and shoreline habitats. Sea level rise and storm surges may place at risk infrastructure, habitat restoration projects, and other development, including residential development. King County has adopted a Sea Level Rise Risk Area and associated code requirements for properties located in areas adjoining the current coastal high hazard area on Vashon-Maury Island. The Risk Area recognizes that coastal flooding will expand inland with sea level rise, affecting areas that may not experience flooding today.

S-639 **New development and improvements to existing development should take into account the impacts that can result from sea level rise.**

S-640 **King County shall ensure that new projects for and major maintenance or replacement of utilities, roads, and other public infrastructure consider the impacts of sea level rise in the location, design, and operation of the projects.**

S-641 **Habitat protection and restoration projects in the shoreline jurisdiction shall consider implications of sea level rise and other climate change impacts to promote resiliency of habitats and species.**

VIII. Shoreline Use

A. General Shoreline Uses

The baseline permitted uses are established in zoning regulations. Land uses that would be allowed in zoning may be further limited by the King County Shoreline Master Program and shoreline management regulations.

S-701 **Development within the shoreline jurisdiction shall protect the public's health, safety, and welfare, as well as the land, including its vegetation and wildlife, and protect property rights, while implementing the policies of the Shoreline Management Act.**

S-702 **Where there is a conflict between the uses permitted in the zoning code and the Shoreline Master Program for a site, the Shoreline Master Program shall control and preference shall be given first to water-dependent uses, then to water-related uses, and finally to water-enjoyment uses.**

S-703 **King County shall adopt use policies and development regulations to achieve consistency among and between shorelands and adjacent lands as required by Revised Code of Washington 90.58.340.**

B. Shoreline Conditional Uses

A shoreline conditional use may be appropriate to:

1. Effectively address unanticipated uses that are not classified in the Shoreline Master Program;
2. Address cumulative impacts; or
3. Provide the opportunity to require specially tailored environmental analysis or design criteria for types of use or development that may otherwise be inconsistent with a specific designation within the Shoreline Master Program or with the Shoreline Management Act policies.

S-704 **The following types of uses and development should require a shoreline conditional use permit:**

- **a. Uses and development that may significantly impair or alter the public's use of the waters of the state;**
- **b. Uses and development which, by their intrinsic nature, may have a significant impact on shoreline ecological processes and functions depending on location, design, and site conditions; and**
- **c. Development in critical saltwater habitats.**

C. Agriculture

The Shoreline Management Act defines agricultural activities as:

> "agricultural uses and practices including, but not limited to: Producing, breeding, or increasing agricultural products; rotating and changing agricultural crops; allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie fallow in which it is plowed and tilled but left unseeded; allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie dormant as a result of adverse agricultural market conditions; allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie dormant because the land is enrolled in a local, state, or federal conservation program, or the land is subject to a conservation easement; conducting agricultural operations; maintaining, repairing, and replacing agricultural equipment; maintaining, repairing, and replacing agricultural facilities, provided that the replacement facility is no closer to the shoreline than the original facility; and maintaining agricultural lands under production or cultivation".

The Shoreline Management Act prohibits shoreline master programs from requiring modification to or limiting existing agricultural activities on agricultural lands in the shoreline jurisdiction. This limitation does not apply to new agricultural activities.

The Shoreline Master Program encourages agricultural uses that are compatible with the shoreline designation in which they are proposed.

S-705 **The King County Shoreline Master Program shall not require modification of or limit existing agricultural activities in the shoreline jurisdiction. Existing agricultural activities in the shoreline jurisdiction shall be governed by existing provisions of the King County Comprehensive Plan and the King County Code.**

S-706 **New agricultural activities within the shoreline jurisdiction and outside the Agricultural Production Districts shall be consistent with the shoreline designation where the land is located.**

S-707 **New agricultural activities within the shoreline jurisdiction and outside the Agricultural Production Districts shall be located and designed to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions and shall not result in an adverse impact on other shoreline resources and ecological values.**

S-708 **Development and uses on land removed from the Agricultural Production Districts shall be consistent with the shoreline designation where the land is located.**

D. Forestry

In general, the Department of Ecology's guidelines require local shoreline master programs to rely on the Forest Practices Act and the rules implementing that Act and the Forest and Fish Report as adequate management of commercial forest uses within the shoreline jurisdiction. When a property owner chooses to convert commercial timber land to a use other than timber production, the regulations for commercial forestry no longer apply. Shorelines of statewide significance require a higher level of protection.

S-709 **If land is being converted to a non-forest use through Class IV-General forest practice, the provisions of the King County Shoreline Program that apply to development activities govern the proposed land use.**

S-710 **Within shorelines of statewide significance, selective commercial timber cutting shall be used for timber harvest within two hundred feet abutting landward of the ordinary high water mark so that no more than thirty percent of the merchantable trees may be harvested in any 10-year period of time. Through a shoreline conditional use permit, King County may approve:**

a. Other timber harvesting methods in those limited instances where the topography, soil conditions, or silviculture practices necessary for regeneration render selective logging ecologically detrimental; and

b. Clear cutting of timber that is solely incidental to the preparation of land for other uses authorized by the King County Shoreline Master Program.

S-711 **For forest practice conversions and other Class IV-General forest practices, where there is a likelihood of conversion to nonforest uses, King County shall ensure that there is no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions and that there are no significant adverse impacts to other shoreline uses, resources, and values such as navigation, recreation, and public access.**

E. Surface Drilling for Oil and Gas

The Shoreline Management Act prohibits surface drilling in the waters of Puget Sound north to the Canadian border and the Strait of Juan de Fuca seaward from the ordinary high water mark and on all lands within one thousand feet landward from that line.

S-712 **Surface drilling for oil or gas shall be prohibited in Puget Sound seaward from the ordinary high water mark and on all lands within one thousand feet landward from the ordinary high water mark on Puget Sound.**

F. Aquaculture

1. General Aquaculture

Aquaculture is the culture or farming of fish, shellfish, or other aquatic plants and animals. Aquaculture does not include the harvest of wild geoduck associated with the state managed wildstock geoduck fishery. The visual and aesthetic impacts of aquaculture should not overwhelm adjacent land uses.

S-713 **Aquaculture is a water-dependent use and should be an allowed use of the shoreline when consistent with control of pollution and avoidance of adverse impacts to the environment and preservation of habitat for native species, consistent with Washington Administrative Code 173-26-241.**

S-714 **King County shall prohibit nonnative marine finfish aquaculture.**

S-715 **Potential locations for aquaculture activities are relatively restricted because of specific requirements related to water quality, temperature, oxygen content, currents, adjacent land use, wind protection, commercial navigation, and salinity. The technology associated with some forms of aquaculture is still experimental and in formative states. Therefore, when implementing development regulations related to aquaculture, King County should provide flexibility in its development regulations governing the siting of aquaculture facilities, where appropriate. Those regulations shall require avoidance of adverse impacts to existing uses to the maximum extent practical, and no net loss in shoreline ecological functions and processes. If King County determines that certain types of aquaculture involve a significant risk of net loss in shoreline ecological functions or cumulative adverse effects on the environment or native species and their habitats, the County may prohibit or condition such uses in its development regulations.**

S-716 **Aquaculture activities shall be designed, located, and operated in a manner that supports long-term beneficial use of the shoreline and protects and maintains shoreline ecological processes and functions. Aquaculture permits shall not be approved where it would result in net loss of shoreline ecological functions; net loss of habitat for native species including eelgrass, kelp, and other macroalgae; adverse impacts to other habitat conservation areas; or interference with navigation or other water-dependent uses.**

S-717 **Aquaculture facilities shall be designed, operated, and located so as not to spread disease to native aquatic life, establish new nonnative species that cause significant ecological impacts, or substantially impact the aesthetic qualities and public access of the shoreline.**

S-718 **Preference should be given to those forms of aquaculture that involve lesser environmental and visual impacts and lesser impacts to native plant and animal species. In general, projects that require no structures, submerged structures, or intertidal structures are preferred over those that involve substantial floating structures. Projects that involve little or no substrate modification are preferred over those that involve substantial modification, recognizing that in some circumstances that the importation of sand or pea gravel on rocky or cobble substrates may result in more diverse habitat. Projects that involve little or no supplemental food sources, pesticides, herbicides, or antibiotic application are preferred over those that involve such practices.**

S-719 **Aquaculture shall not be permitted if it involves significant risk of cumulative adverse effects on water quality, sediment quality, benthic and pelagic organisms, or wild fish populations through potential contribution of antibiotic resistant bacteria, escapement of nonnative species, or other adverse effects on native species or threatened or endangered species and their habitats.**

S-720 **King County shall consider the potential beneficial impacts and the potential adverse impacts of new aquaculture development on the physical environment; on other existing and approved land and water uses, including navigation; and on the aesthetic qualities of a project area.**

S-721 **Legally established aquaculture uses, including authorized experimental projects, should be protected from incompatible uses that may seek to locate nearby. King County may deny uses or developments that have a high probability of damaging or destroying a legally established existing aquaculture.**

S-722 **King County should review and make permit decisions on restoration projects associated with aquaculture in a timely manner.**

S-723 **Experimental aquaculture projects in water bodies should be limited in scale and should be approved for a limited period of time. Experimental aquaculture means an aquaculture activity that uses methods or technologies that are unprecedented or unproven in the State of Washington.**

S-724 **King County should actively seek substantive comment regarding potential adverse impacts of any shoreline permit application for aquaculture from all appropriate Indian tribal, federal, state, and local agencies, and the general public. Comments of nearby residents or property owners directly affected by an aquaculture proposal should be considered and evaluated, especially in regard to use compatibility and aesthetics.**

S-725 **The rights of treaty Indian tribes to aquatic resources within their usual and accustomed areas should be addressed through the permit review process. Direct and early coordination between the applicant or proponent and the relevant tribes should be encouraged.**

S-726 **King County should ensure proper management of upland uses in the shoreline jurisdiction to avoid degradation of water quality of existing shellfish areas, including adoption of additional protections from impacts of geoduck aquaculture.**

2. Net Pens

One specific type of aquaculture is a net pen, which is a type of large cage used to farm finfish in open water. These net pens allow for the exchange of water between the farm and the surrounding environment. Commercial salmon net pen aquaculture operations generally have adverse environmental and ecological impacts that do not appear to meet the Shoreline Management Act standard of 'no net loss of ecological function.' These adverse impacts include increased disease transmission, increased water quality impacts, competition for food and habitat, predation on local native salmon, and genetic introgression.

King County's native salmon runs are among the Puget Sound region's most precious and irreplaceable natural resources. King County, Indian tribes, the state, the region, and the federal government have collectively invested hundreds of millions of dollars over many years to help protect and restore native salmon species.

The environmental and ecological risks associated with commercial salmon net pens may also apply to other finfish net pens, including net pens for noncommercial native salmon and commercial native finfish.

S-727 **King County shall prohibit new commercial salmon net pen aquaculture operations to avoid adverse impacts on native salmon runs.**

S-728 **King County shall support Indian tribal treaty fishing rights, including operation of noncommercial native salmon net pens for temporary rearing and brood stock recovery programs.**

S-729 **King County shall review and condition the siting of net pens to ensure they apply all necessary environmental and ecological protections and meet the standard of no adverse impacts and no net loss of ecological function.**

S-730 **King County shall revisit its policies and regulations associated with net pens, including the prohibition on commercial native salmon net pens, during the next statutory-required periodic review of this program. At that time, additional research and guidance from the state is expected to be available.**

G. Boating Facilities

Boating facilities provide recreational opportunities on waters of the state. "Boating facilities" do not include docks serving four or fewer single detached residences.

S-731 **Boating facilities shall be located only at sites with suitable environmental conditions, shoreline configuration, access, and neighboring uses, and:**

- **a. Meet health, safety, and welfare requirements;**
- **b. Mitigate aesthetic impacts;**
- **c. Provide public access in new marinas, unless there is a safety or security concern;**
- **d. Prevent the impacts to shoreline resources from boaters living on their vessels;**
- **e. Restrict vessels from extended mooring on waters of the state unless authorization is obtained from the Washington Department of Natural Resources and impacts to navigation and public access are mitigated;**
- **f. Ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions or other significant adverse impacts; and**
- **g. Protect the rights of navigation.**

H. Commercial Development

Some commercial uses within the shoreline jurisdiction may be required to incorporate appropriate design and operational elements to qualify as water-related or water-enjoyment. Public access and ecological restoration are considered appropriate mitigation for the impact to shorelines unless it is determined public access is infeasible or inappropriate. Most commercial land in unincorporated King County is located outside the shoreline jurisdiction.

S-732 **King County shall require all commercial development on public land to provide public access, unless the use is incompatible with public access or there are public safety concerns.**

S-733 **King County shall permit nonwater-oriented commercial uses in the shoreline jurisdiction only if:**

- **a. The nonwater-oriented commercial use is limited to the minimum size necessary for the use;**
- **b. The use provides a significant public benefit with respect to the Shoreline Management Act's objectives such as providing public access and ecological restoration; and**
- **c. The use is part of a mixed-use project that includes water-dependent uses or navigability is severely limited at the proposed site.**

S-734 **King County may allow nonwater-oriented commercial development in the shoreline jurisdiction if the site is physically separated from the shoreline by another property or public right-of-way.**

S-735 **King County shall allow over-water nonwater-dependent commercial uses only in existing structures or if the use is auxiliary to and necessary to support a water-dependent use. The area of any over-water structure shall be limited to the maximum extent practical.**

S-736 **King County may allow water-related and water-enjoyment uses as part of a shoreline mixed-use development on over-water structures where they are clearly auxiliary to and in support of water-dependent uses, provided the minimum size requirement needed to meet the water-dependent use is not violated.**

S-737 **King County shall prohibit commercial development that will have significant adverse impact to other shoreline uses, resources, and values, such as navigation, recreation, and public access. King County shall require mitigation for all commercial development in the shoreline jurisdiction to ensure that it does not cause a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

I. Industrial Development

S-738 **In the shoreline jurisdiction, King County shall give preference to industrial uses in the following order: first, water-dependent industrial uses; second, water-related industrial uses; and third, nonwater-oriented industrial uses.**

S-739 **King County shall require ecological restoration and public access for industrial development, where appropriate.**

S-740 **King County shall require industrial uses located on public land in the shoreline jurisdiction to provide public access, unless the use is incompatible with public access or there are public safety concerns.**

S-741 **King County should encourage industrial development and redevelopment to be located where environmental cleanup and restoration of the shoreline can be incorporated.**

S-742 **King County shall permit new nonwater-oriented industrial development in the shoreline jurisdiction only if:**

a. The use is part of a mixed-use project that includes water-dependent uses or navigability is severely limited; and

b. The use provides a significant public benefit with respect to the Shoreline Management Act's objectives, such as providing public access and ecological restoration.

S-743 **King County may allow nonwater-oriented industrial uses in the shoreline jurisdiction if the site is physically separated from the shoreline by another property or public right-of-way.**

J. In-Water Structures

"In-water structure" means a structure placed by humans within a stream, river, or lake waterward of the ordinary high water mark that either causes or has the potential to cause water impoundment or the diversion, obstruction, or modification of water flow. In-water structures may include those for hydroelectric generation, irrigation, water supply, flood control, transportation, utility service transmission, fish collection weir, or other purposes.

S-744 **In-water structures shall provide for the protection and preservation of shoreline ecological processes and functions, and cultural resources, including, but not limited to, fish and fish passage, wildlife and water resources, shoreline critical areas, hydro geological processes, and natural scenic vistas.**

S-745 **The location and planning of in-water structures shall give due consideration to the full range of public interests and shoreline ecological processes and functions, with special emphasis on protecting and restoring habitat for threatened or endangered species.**

K. Mining

King County has identified and designated land that is appropriate for the removal of sand, gravel, soil, minerals, and other extractable resources. Mining within shorelines can have significant impacts, particularly to habitat for threatened and endangered aquatic and riparian species.

S-746 **Mining may be allowed within the shoreline jurisdiction if it is:**

a. Consistent with the environment designation policies of the King County Shoreline Master Program and provisions of the Shoreline Management Act; and

b. Located within mineral resource lands designated by the King County Comprehensive Plan.

S-747 **New mining and associated activities shall be designed and conducted to comply with the regulations of the environment designation where the activity occurs and the provisions applicable to critical areas where relevant. Accordingly, meeting the standard of no net loss of ecological function shall include avoidance and mitigation of adverse impacts during the course of mining and reclamation. It is appropriate, however, to determine whether there will be no net loss of ecological function based on evaluation of final reclamation required for the site. Preference shall be given to mining proposals that result in the restoration, creation, or enhancement of habitat for threatened or endangered species.**

S-748 **The King County Shoreline Master Program provisions and permit requirements for mining should be consistent with the requirements of Chapter 78.44 Revised Code of Washington.**

S-749 **The proposed subsequent use of mined property shall be consistent with the provisions of the shoreline environment designation in which the property is located.**

S-750 **King County shall permit mining within the active channel of a river only as follows:**

a. **Removal of specified quantities of sand and gravel or other materials at specific locations will not adversely affect the natural processes of gravel transportation for the river system as a whole;**
b. **The mining and any associated permitted activities will not have significant adverse impacts to habitat for threatened or endangered species nor cause a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions;**
c. **The determinations required by items a. and b. of this policy shall be consistent with Revised Code of Washington 90.58.100 and Washington Administrative Code 173-26-201. Such evaluation of impacts should be appropriately integrated with relevant environmental review requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act and the Department of Ecology guidelines;**
d. **In considering renewal, extension, or reauthorization of gravel bar and other in-channel mining operations in locations where they have previously been conducted, King County shall require compliance with this policy if no such review has previously been conducted. Where there has been prior review, King County shall review the previous determinations to ensure that current site conditions comply with the Program; and**
e. **These requirements do not apply to dredging of authorized navigation channels when conducted in accordance with Washington Administrative Code 173-26-231.**

S-751 **King County shall require a shoreline conditional use permit for mining activity within a severe channel migration hazard zone located within the shoreline jurisdiction.**

L. Recreational Development

Recreational development includes uses and activities designed to allow public enjoyment and use of the water and shoreline, including parks, trails, open space, and opportunities for both active and passive recreational use.

S-752 **Recreational development is allowed in the shoreline jurisdiction and shall be consistent with the shoreline environment designation in which the property is located.**

S-753 **King County shall plan to provide public recreational uses on County-owned shoreline, consistent with the goals of this chapter.**

M. Residential Development

The Shoreline Management Act recognizes single detached residential development as a priority use within shorelines of the state. The term "residential development" also includes attached and multiunit dwellings as well as subdivision of shoreline land into new residential lots. In King County, single detached residences are the most common shoreline development. Residential development is often fairly high density to maximize water frontage. Care must be taken to assure that shoreline residential development and the related impacts from shoreline armoring, stormwater runoff, on-site sewage disposal systems, introduction of pollutants, and vegetation modification and removal do not result in significant damage to the shoreline.

S-754 **Single detached residential development is a priority use in the shoreline jurisdiction in King County.**

S-755 **King County shall require a conditional use permit for construction or expansion of a single detached residence that is located within an aquatic area buffer in the Forestry or Natural Shoreline Environments.**

S-756 **New over-water residences are not a preferred use and shall be prohibited in the shoreline jurisdiction. Existing communities of over-water homes should be reasonably accommodated to allow improvements associated with life-safety matters and to ensure protection of private property rights. King County shall limit the expansion of existing over-water communities to the minimum necessary to ensure consistency with constitutional and other legal limitations that protect private property.**

S-757 **King County should require multiunit residential development and subdivisions within the shoreline jurisdiction creating more than four lots to provide public access.**

S-758 **King County shall require subdivisions and short subdivisions to:**

a. Be designed, configured, and developed in a manner that ensures no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions at full build-out of all lots;

b. Prevent the need for new shoreline stabilization or flood risk reduction measures that would cause significant impacts to other properties or public improvements, a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions, or interfere with channel migration; and

c. Implement the provisions and policies for shoreline designations and the general policy goals of this chapter.

N. Transportation and Parking

Providing for transportation and parking is necessary to support water-dependent uses, to support the regional economy, and for access to privately owned property. Transportation planning in shorelines should consider a wide range of options, including vehicles, buses, light rail, commuter rail, bicycle, equestrian, and pedestrian facilities. Transportation planning can be a tool for providing public access to the shorelines.

S-759 **King County shall require transportation and parking plans and projects located in the shoreline jurisdiction to be consistent with the public access policies in this chapter and environmental protection provisions.**

S-760 **Where appropriate, circulation system planning in the shoreline jurisdiction shall include systems for pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation and combine transportation uses to minimize the footprint of transportation facilities. Circulation planning and projects should support existing and proposed shoreline uses that are consistent with the King County Shoreline Master Program.**

S-761 **Transportation and parking facilities located in the shoreline jurisdiction shall be planned, located, and designed to have the least possible adverse impact on unique or fragile shoreline features, not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions, or adversely impact existing or planned water-dependent uses. Where other options are available and feasible, new transportation facilities or transportation facility expansions should not be constructed within the shoreline jurisdiction.**

S-762 **Parking facilities in the shoreline jurisdiction are not a preferred use. King County shall allow parking facilities in the shoreline jurisdiction only when necessary to support an authorized use and when an alternatives analysis shows there are no feasible alternatives outside of the shoreline jurisdiction. Parking facilities in the shoreline jurisdiction shall use low impact designs, such as porous concrete and vegetated swales, and be planned, located, and designed to minimize the environmental and visual impacts.**

O. Utilities

Utilities include services and facilities that produce, convey, store, or process power, gas, water, sewage, stormwater, communications, oil, or waste. Utilities that are classified as on-site utilities serving only one primary use are considered "accessory utilities" and are considered part of the primary use.

S-763 **Utility facilities shall be designed and located to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions, preserve the natural landscape, and minimize conflicts with present and planned land and shoreline uses, while meeting the needs of future populations in areas planned to accommodate growth.**

S-764 **King County shall allow modification of existing utility facilities and the location of new water-oriented portions of utility facilities in the shoreline jurisdiction provided that mitigation sequencing is applied consistent with Policy S-609 and there is no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions. To the maximum extent practical, those parts of utility production and processing facilities that are not water-oriented, such as power plants and sewage treatment plants, shall be located outside of the shoreline jurisdiction.**

S-765 **Transmission facilities for the conveyance of services, such as power lines, cables, and pipelines, shall be located outside of the shoreline jurisdiction wherever feasible.**

S-766 **Utilities should be located in existing developed rights-of-way and corridors to the maximum extent practical.**

S-767 **Unless no other feasible alternative location exists, King County should discourage:**

a. Locating pipelines and cables in water, on tidelands, or roughly parallel to the shoreline; and

b. The development of facilities that may require periodic maintenance that disrupts shoreline ecological processes and functions.

IX. Shoreline Modifications

A. General Policies Governing Shoreline Modifications

A shoreline modification is construction of a physical element, such as a dike, breakwater, dredged basin, or fill, as well as other actions such as clearing, grading, application of chemicals, or significant vegetation removal to support or prepare for a shoreline use.

S-801 **King County should allow structural shoreline modifications only when necessary to support or protect a legally established structure or a legally existing shoreline use that is in danger of loss or substantial damage, or when a modification is necessary for reconfiguration of the shoreline for mitigation or enhancement purposes.**

S-802 **To reduce the adverse effects of shoreline modifications, King County should limit the number and extent of shoreline modifications.**

S-803 **King County shall only allow shoreline modifications that are appropriate to the specific type of shoreline and environmental conditions for which they are proposed.**

S-804 **King County shall ensure that shoreline modifications individually and cumulatively do not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions. To achieve this goal, King County shall give preference to those types of shoreline modifications that have a lesser impact on the shoreline and by requiring mitigation of identified impacts resulting from shoreline modifications.**

S-805 **Where applicable, King County shall develop regulations and impose conditions based on scientific and technical information and a comprehensive analysis of shoreline conditions for drift cells for marine waters or reaches for lakes and river and stream systems.**

S-806 **King County should plan for the enhancement of impaired shoreline ecological processes and functions where feasible and appropriate, while accommodating permitted uses. To the maximum extent practical, King County should incorporate appropriate measures to protect shoreline ecological processes and functions from the impacts of shoreline modifications.**

B. Shoreline Stabilization

Shorelines are impacted by wind and wave action, currents, tides, and flood waters, resulting in erosion of banks and shifts in channels. These are natural processes that support shoreline ecological processes and functions, but they also impact human use of shorelines.

These natural processes are likely to be affected by climate change. Lowland rivers may see higher flows in the autumn and winter and mid-elevation rivers may see higher winter flows. In both cases, these changes could lead to more frequent flooding. The marine shorelines around Vashon-Maury Island and the Duwamish Estuary may also see effects due to sea level rise. Increased sea elevations will make development and infrastructure in low-lying areas more susceptible to flooding due to high tides and storms. Waves will encroach further onto low-lying beaches and cause greater beach erosion, threatening or damaging low-lying structures. At the same time steep slopes may receive increased moisture due to predicted changes in precipitation patterns, potentially resulting in an increase in landslides that may cause property destruction and threaten human safety.

Humans have long desired to "control" these natural processes by constructing shoreline stabilization structures. The negative impacts of structural solutions includes the high cost of construction, long-term cost of maintenance and repair, the false sense of security for humans relying on these structures, and the high impact to the shoreline environment. These negative impacts are likely to increase as the effects of climate change become more apparent. These impacts include:

1. Beach starvation where sediment is prevented from supplying the beach, thus impeding a dynamic process.
2. Habitat degradation, particularly through removal of shoreline vegetation.
3. Sediment impoundment where the sources of sediment are lost and longshore transport is diminished, resulting in lowering of down-drift beaches, narrowing of the high tide beach, and the coarsening of beach sediment.
4. Exacerbation of erosion as wave energy is reflected back from hard surfaces onto the beach, increasing erosion.
5. Groundwater impacts that can lead to a rise of the water table on the landward side of an erosion control structure, which results in increased pore pressures in the beach material and accelerated erosion of sand-sized material from the beach.
6. Hydraulic impacts where wave energy is reflected back onto the beach, resulting in scour lowering the beach elevation, or coarsening the beach, resulting in failure of the structure.
7. Loss of shoreline vegetation and the loss of erosion control that the vegetation provided, as well as loss of the habitat function provided by vegetation.
8. Loss of large woody debris, which plays an important role in biological diversity and habitat as well as stabilizing the shoreline.
9. Restriction of channel movement and creation of side channels, impacting recruitment of large woody debris and gravel for spawning.

As alternatives to constructing a hard-surfaced structural facility, nonstructural methods that have lesser impacts on shoreline ecological processes and functions are available. These nonstructural methods may also allow for adaptation to the effects of climate change. For example, if buildings are constructed further away from the existing water edge, beyond the range of sea level rise, shoreline protection would be unnecessary. For most projects, a range of options is available. These include “soft” measures, such as revegetation to stabilize banks, which provide a variety of other ecological processes and functions, and "hard" measures, such as bulkheads, which often detract from or provide only limited ecological function. Shoreline stabilization options include, but are not limited to:

1. Vegetation enhancement;
2. Upland drainage control;
3. Biotechnical measures;
4. Beach enhancement;
5. Anchor trees;
6. Gravel placement;
7. Rock revetments;
8. Gabions;

9. Concrete groins;
10. Retaining walls and bluff walls;
11. Bulkheads; and
12. Seawalls.

S-807 **King County shall require shoreline stabilization to be consistent with Washington Administrative Code 173-26-221 for vegetation retention and protection of critical areas.**

S-808 **King County shall adopt standards to first avoid and then mitigate the impact to shoreline ecological processes and functions when alteration of the shoreline is allowed for the construction of single detached residences and accessory structures. These standards shall address the design and type of protective measures and devices that are allowed.**

S-809 **King County shall:**

a. Require new shoreline development, including subdivisions and short subdivisions, to be located and designed to avoid the need for future structural slope or shoreline stabilization;
b. Require new development to be set back from steep or eroding slopes so that structural slopes or shoreline stabilization is not needed for the life of the development; and
c. Not allow new development that requires shoreline stabilization that will cause significant impacts to adjacent or down-current properties and shoreline areas.

S-810 **New or enlarged structural shoreline stabilization to protect an existing primary structure shall be allowed only when:**

a. The structure is at imminent risk from shoreline erosion caused by tidal action, currents, or waves;
b. No lower-impact alternative exists, including relocation or reconstruction of the structure;
c. On-site drainage has been directed away from the shoreline edge; and
d. There is no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.

S-811 **King County shall allow new structural stabilization measures for new nonwater-dependent development, as follows:**

a. The erosion is not the result of upland conditions, such as the loss of vegetation and drainage;
b. Nonstructural measures, such as locating the development further from the shoreline, planting vegetation, or installing on-site drainage improvements, are not feasible or not sufficient;
c. The need to protect primary structures from imminent risk of damage due to erosion is demonstrated through a geotechnical report submitted by a qualified specialist. The damage must be caused by natural processes, such as tidal action, currents, and waves; and
d. Mitigation is provided such that the shoreline stabilization will not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.

S-812 **King County shall allow new structural shoreline stabilization for water-dependent development, as follows:**

- **a. The erosion is not the result of upland conditions, such as the loss of vegetation and drainage;**
- **b. Nonstructural measures, planting vegetation, or installing on-site drainage improvements are not feasible or not sufficient;**
- **c. The need to protect primary structures from damage due to erosion is demonstrated through a geotechnical report submitted by a qualified specialist; and**
- **d. The shoreline stabilization will not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

S-813 **King County shall allow new structural stabilization to protect shoreline restoration projects or hazardous substance remediation projects pursuant to Chapter 70A.305 Revised Code of Washington as follows:**

- **a. Nonstructural measures, planting vegetation, or installing on-site drainage improvements are not feasible or not sufficient; and**
- **b. The shoreline stabilization will not result in a net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

S-814 **An existing shoreline stabilization structure may be replaced with a method that is similar or less impactful, as follows:**

- **a. The replacement is designed, located, sized, and constructed to ensure no net loss of ecological functions;**
- **b. The replacement does not encroach waterward of the ordinary high water mark or the existing shoreline stabilization structure and is moved as far landward of the ordinary high water mark as possible;**
- **c. The existing shoreline stabilization structure is removed;**
- **d. The replacement does not increase the size of the existing stabilization structure; and**
- **e. The existing shoreline stabilization can no longer adequately serve its purpose and there is a demonstrated need to protect principal uses or structures from erosion caused by currents, tidal action, or waves.**

S-815 **Replacement walls or bulkheads to protect a residence shall not encroach waterward as measured at an elevation of two-feet above the current ordinary high water mark, unless:**

- **a. The residence was occupied prior to January 1, 1972;**
- **b. There are overriding safety or environmental concerns; and**
- **c. The replacement shall abut the existing shoreline stabilization structure and be located on the landward side of the existing structure.**

S-816 **If a net loss of ecological processes and functions associated with critical saltwater habitats will result from leaving an existing shoreline protection structure that is proposed for replacement, King County shall require the structure to be removed as part of the replacement measure.**

S-817 **King County shall require the use of soft shoreline stabilization measures that use placement or growth of natural materials that closely resemble natural scales and configurations, or other soft stabilization measures where appropriate, and that provide restoration of shoreline ecological processes and functions waterward of the ordinary high water mark.**

S-818 **King County should encourage replaced structural shoreline stabilization located on Vashon-Maury Island to be relocated outside of the coastal high hazard area (also known as the coastal 100-year floodplain) whenever possible.**

S-819 **If structural shoreline stabilization measures are demonstrated to be necessary, King County shall:**

- **a. Limit the size of stabilization measures to the minimum necessary;**
- **b. Require the use of measures designed to ensure no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions;**
- **c. Ensure the shoreline stabilization method is the least ecologically impactful, technically feasible option; and**
- **d. Require the use of soft approaches, unless they are demonstrated not to be sufficient to protect primary structures, dwellings, and businesses.**

S-820 **King County shall ensure that publicly financed or subsidized shoreline erosion control measures do not restrict appropriate public access to the shoreline, except where such access is determined to be infeasible because of incompatible uses, safety, security, or harm to shoreline ecological processes and functions. Where feasible, King County shall require ecological restoration and public access improvements to be incorporated into the project.**

S-821 **King County shall discourage new development and redevelopment on feeder bluffs. Where a legal building lot exists and the landowner has no option to locate new development or redevelopment away from feeder bluffs and other areas that affect beach sediment-producing areas, King County shall require that they avoid, to the maximum extent feasible, and then minimize the adverse impacts to sediment conveyance systems from erosion control measures.**

S-822 **King County should prioritize feeder bluffs as areas for protection using acquisition, easement, transfer of development rights, and other programs that eliminate or reduce development threats.**

Mass wasting is the geomorphic process by which soil, mud, rock, and other particles move downslope under the force of gravity. Types of mass wasting include creep, slides, flows, topples, and falls, each with its own characteristic features. Mass wasting may occur at a very slow rate, particularly in areas that are very dry or those areas that receive sufficient rainfall such that vegetation has stabilized the surface.

S-823 **The impacts of erosion and mass wasting should be mitigated through protection of geological hazardous areas.**

C. Piers and Docks

Piers and docks are some of the most commonly requested modifications to the shorelines. Because they extend over the water, piers and docks can have a significant impact on the shoreline ecological processes and functions. Careful consideration should be given to the construction of new piers and docks, and how they are constructed to minimize their impacts.

S-824 **King County shall require piers and docks to be designed and constructed to avoid and then minimize and mitigate the impacts to shoreline ecological processes and functions. King County shall prohibit the use of creosote or pentachlorophenol pilings.**

S-825 **King County shall allow new piers and docks only for water-dependent uses, single detached residences, or for public access.**

- **a. For single detached residences, the pier or dock shall be considered a water-dependent use if it is designed and intended as a facility for access to watercraft. As an alternative to individual private moorage for residential development: mooring buoys are preferred over floats or docks and shared moorage facilities are preferred over single use moorage, where feasible or where water use conflicts exist or are predictable.**
- **b. For all other development, piers or docks shall only be allowed when the applicant demonstrates that a specific need exists to support the intended water-dependent use.**

S-826 **King County shall require piers and docks to be limited to the minimum size necessary to meet the needs of the proposed water-dependent use.**

S-827 **King County shall prefer and provide special permitting considerations for docks and piers that are shared among multiple landowners.**

S-828 **If new piers or docks are allowed, King County shall require new residential development of two or more dwelling units, subdivisions, and short subdivisions to provide joint use or community dock facilities, when feasible, rather than individual docks for each dwelling unit or lot. King County shall allow only one pier or dock associated with a residential development on a parcel.**

D. Fill

Fill is not permitted within the 100-year floodplain without providing compensatory flood storage to prevent a rise in the base flood, which is a flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year, often referred to as the "100-year flood." Fill can impact shoreline ecological processes and functions, including channel migration.

S-829 **King County shall require fill to be located, designed, and constructed to protect shoreline ecological processes and functions and ecosystem-wide processes, including channel migration and side channels.**

S-830 **King County shall allow fill waterward of the ordinary high water mark only when necessary to support:**

- **a. Water-dependent use;**
- **b. Public access;**
- **c. Cleanup and disposal of contaminated sediments as part of an interagency environmental clean-up plan;**
- **d. Disposal of dredged material considered suitable under, and conducted in accordance with, the dredged material management program of the Washington Department of Natural Resources;**
- **e. Expansion or alteration of transportation facilities of statewide significance currently located on the shoreline and then only upon a demonstration that alternatives to fill are not feasible;**
- **f. Mitigation actions, environmental restoration, beach nourishment, enhancement projects; or**
- **g. Flood risk reduction projects implemented consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the King County Flood Management Plan where no reasonable alternative exists.**

S-831 **King County shall require a shoreline conditional use permit for fill waterward of the ordinary high water mark for any use, except for projects for ecological restoration or for the maintenance, repair, or replacement of flood protection facilities.**

E. Breakwaters, Jetties, Groins, and Weirs

Breakwaters, jetties, groins, and weirs are all structural elements that are constructed to absorb or deflect wave action or to control excess sediment. A breakwater is an off-shore structure, either floating or not, which may or may not be connected to the shore and is designed to absorb and reflect back into the water body the energy of the waves. A jetty is an artificial barrier used to change the natural littoral drift to protect inlet entrances from clogging by transported sediment. A groin is a barrier-type structure extending from the backshore into the water across the beach, which is constructed to interrupt sediment movement along the shore. A weir is a small dam in a stream or river to control the flow of water.

S-832 **King County shall allow breakwaters, jetties, and weirs located waterward of the ordinary high water mark only where necessary to support water-dependent uses, public access, shoreline stabilization, or other specific public purpose.**

S-833 **Groins are prohibited except as a component of a publicly sponsored project to protect or restore shoreline ecological processes and functions.**

S-834 **King County shall require a shoreline conditional use permit for the construction of breakwaters, jetties, groins, weirs, and similar structures, except for those structures installed to protect or restore shoreline ecological processes and functions, such as woody debris installed in streams.**

S-835 **Breakwaters, jetties, groins, and weirs shall be designed to protect critical areas and shall provide for mitigation according to the sequence in policy S-616 and defined in Washington Administrative Code 173-26-201.**

F. Beach and Dunes Management

There are no beaches with associated dunes in King County.

G. Dredging and Dredge Material Disposal

Dredging is the removal, displacement, or disposal of unconsolidated earth material such as sand, silt, gravel, or other submerged materials, from the bottom of water bodies, ditches, or natural wetlands. Long-term maintenance and support activities are also considered dredging. Dredging can cause significant ecological damage, which cannot always be avoided.

King County has a channel monitoring program for King County rivers, which can be used to inform decisions on dredging activities. Development of shorelines that would require new or maintenance dredging should be avoided.

S-836 **King County shall require that new development should be sited and designed to avoid, to the maximum extent practical, and then to minimize, the need for new or maintenance dredging.**

S-837 **King County shall allow dredging for the purpose of establishing, expanding, or relocating or reconfiguring navigation channels and basins when necessary to ensure safe and efficient accommodation of existing navigational uses. Significant adverse ecological impacts shall be minimized and mitigation shall be provided to ensure that there is no net loss of shoreline ecological processes and functions. Maintenance dredging of established navigation channels and basins should be restricted to maintaining previously dredged or existing authorized location, depth, and width.**

S-838 **King County shall not allow dredging waterward of the ordinary high water mark for the primary purpose of obtaining fill material, except for the restoration of shoreline ecological processes and functions. The fill shall be placed waterward of the ordinary high water mark. The project must be either associated with a habitat restoration project under the Model Toxics Control Act or the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, or, if approved through a shoreline conditional use permit, any other significant habitat enhancement project.**

S-839 **King County shall only allow disposal of dredge material on shorelands, in side channels within a river's channel migration zone, and in wetlands located through a shoreline conditional use permit.**

S-840 **King County shall require dredging to be conducted consistent with the King County Flood Management Plan or successor plans.**

H. Shoreline Habitat and Natural Systems Enhancement Projects

Shoreline habitat and natural systems enhancement projects should be supported and coordinated with other planning processes, such as salmon conservation plans and the King County Flood Management Plan or successor plans.

S-841 **King County should allow for habitat and natural systems enhancement projects that include, but are not limited to:**
- **a. Modification of vegetation;**
- **b. Removal of nonnative or invasive plants;**
- **c. Shoreline stabilization using soft or non-structural techniques; and**
- **d. Dredging, and filling, provided that the primary purpose of such actions is clearly restoration of the natural character and shoreline ecological processes and functions of the shoreline.**

S-842 **Habitat and natural systems enhancement projects should ensure that the projects address legitimate restoration needs and priorities.**

X. Nuisance Abatement Policies

S-901 **Nothing in the King County Shoreline Master Program shall be construed to limit the power of King County or the State of Washington to abate nuisances within the shoreline jurisdiction.**

S-902 **King County specifically reserves all rights, power, and authority granted to it by law. Nothing in the King County Shoreline Master Program shall be construed in any way to limit any power or authority possessed by King County.**

SHORELINES OF THE STATE 2024

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter Six, Shorelines

SNOHOMISH COUNTY
KING COUNTY

SNOHOMISH COUNTY
KING COUNTY

KING COUNTY
CHELAN COUNTY

KITSAP COUNTY
KING COUNTY

KING COUNTY
PIERCE COUNTY

KITTITAS COUNTY
KING COUNTY

KING COUNTY
PIERCE COUNTY

SHORELINE
LAKE FOREST PARK
BOTHELL
WOODINVILLE
KENMORE
KIRKLAND
REDMOND
DUVALL
BEAR CREEK
CARNATION
SKYKOMISH
YARROW HUNTS POINT
CLYDE HILL
MEDINA
BEAUX ARTS
BELLEVUE
MERCER ISLAND
SEATTLE
SAMMAMISH
NEWCASTLE
ISSAQUAH
SNOQUALMIE
NORTH BEND
RENTON
BURIEN
TUKWILA
NORMANDY PARK
SEATAC
DES MOINES
KENT
COVINGTON
MAPLE VALLEY
AUBURN
FEDERAL WAY
BLACK DIAMOND
ALGONA
PACIFIC
MILTON
ENUMCLAW

Puget Sound
Lake Washington
Lake Sammamish

Shoreline Jurisdiction
SMP Environment Designations

- Aquatic Shoreline
- Natural Shoreline
- Forestry Shoreline
- Resource Shoreline
- Conservancy Shoreline
- Rural Shoreline
- Residential Shoreline
- High Intensity Shoreline
- Incorporated City
- Potential Annexation Areas
- City in Rural Area
- Indian Reservation Boundary
- Indian Trust Land
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- Forest Production District Boundary
- Agricultural Production District Boundary
- King County Boundary
- Freeways

Data Sources:
King County Departments of Natural Resources and Parks, and Local Services, and Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget

Notes:
The maps in the King County Comprehensive Plan and its technical appendices are produced with a computer geographic information system. They are reduced in size but available at a larger scale.

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Date: October 2023
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October 2023



CHAPTER 7

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, & CULTURAL RESOURCE

I. Parks, Recreation, and 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. King County manages a regional open space system of parks, regional trails, natural or ecological areas, and working resource lands, which includes unincorporated areas in addition to regional facilities.

Additional benefits beyond recreation include providing transportation alternatives, health benefits from physical activity, and access to the outdoors for those who have mobility disabilities. Large, forested parks and natural areas help maintain air quality and water quality and quantity, and help mitigate the effects of climate change. Parks and green spaces also provide stress relief, rest, and relaxation and contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing. The policies also reinforce the County's focus on linking components of the open space system with an emphasis on completing the regional trails system, connecting riparian habitat, and reducing forestland fragmentation.

Regional recreation and multiuse parks serve a countywide population and provide high-quality, developed facilities that support multiple events, large group gatherings, and special events. Passive parks serve less formal, organized, or intense activities. Local park sites provide for active and passive recreation close to home. The Regional Trails network forms the foundation for King County and other agencies' shared-use path networks that reach broadly throughout the County, linking cities, other counties, and the state, and offering extensive recreation opportunities. In addition to serving recreational users, the Regional Trails network also provides interconnected active transportation options that are important for getting King County residents from place to place. Local trails provide circulation within local communities and access to the larger Regional Trails network.

Natural areas and working forest sites can provide opportunities for informal, low intensity, and low-impact activities which enable the understanding, appreciation, and significance of natural resources. Passive recreation use of these sites requires little infrastructure, although amenities such as backcountry trails and trailhead facilities may be needed to accommodate appropriate types and levels of public use. Natural areas often contain undeveloped or undevelopable acreage that is managed primarily to support habitat to provide ecological benefits. Forested areas provide carbon sequestration and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and play a role in adaptation to climate change.

For the purposes of the King County open space system, "regional" means sites and facilities that are large in size and serve communities from long distances and multiple jurisdictions. "Local" means sites and facilities that serve unincorporated communities and are smaller sites servicing close-to-home park and recreation needs.

A. King County's Open Space System of Parks, Trails, Natural Areas, and Working Resource Lands

The policies in this chapter provide the basis to develop a contiguous and functional open space system, connecting and including recreation and multiuse parks, natural areas, working resource lands and regional trails. The Open Space System Map shows these publicly owned open space lands and provides the basis for identifying the linkages necessary to strengthen the physical and functional connectivity of the County's

open space system. The following policies reinforce the importance of the County's open space system and guide planning and management of appropriate recreational opportunities that best meet regional and local unincorporated area needs, preserve ecologically significant resources and protect working resource lands.

P-101 **King County shall provide a regional open space system consisting of regional and local parks, regional and backcountry trails, natural areas, working resource lands, and flood hazard management lands.**

P-102 **Management of the County's open space system shall be guided by the King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails and Natural Areas.**

P-103 **King County shall:**

a. Prioritize equity and use the opportunities areas map in the development and acquisition of its open space system to help reduce health disparities and promote environmental justice;

b. Promote equitable access to the open space system for historically underrepresented and historically underinvested communities; and

c. Ensure that equity and racial and social justice benefits to all residents are prioritized in the open space system.

P-104 **King County shall preserve wildlife corridors, riparian habitat, contiguous forest land, and open space areas separating urban areas from the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, as part of its open space system.**

B. Components of King County's Open Space System

King County's open space system contains lands with many functions including: active and passive recreation; special purpose sites such as pools and trails; natural areas with educational, scientific, wildlife habitat, cultural or scenic values; working resource lands including agriculture and forestlands; and community-defining systems, including physical and or visual buffers between areas of urban and rural development.

1. Recreation Sites

Regional Parks

King County's regional parks and facilities accommodate a wide range of recreational activities. Recreation sites that make up a functional system include: highly developed sites with organized, scheduled activities such as soccer and softball; informal play, trail use, and picnicking; and multiuse sites that include a spectrum of recreational opportunities. Regional parks include recreational facilities that rely on a broad user base, require a large area, include a specialized facility, or offer a unique experience.

Educational and interpretive programming promotes appropriate and enjoyable use of the park system, increases public awareness of the park system's resources and values, and builds support and stewardship for the system and its resources. Programming and special events provide activities and entertainment that attract people to the parks.

P-105 **King County shall provide regional parks and recreational facilities that serve users from multiple neighborhoods and communities and strive to be equitably and geographically distributed, and shall ensure that investments prioritized using opportunity area metrics are delivered in collaboration with the community, cities, and other partners.**

P-106 **King County should facilitate affordable and culturally accessible educational, interpretive, and aquatic programs on County-owned properties that further the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the park system and the region.**

P-107 **King County should facilitate and seek regional and national programs and special events at regional sites and facilities.**

2. Local Open Space

In the Rural Area, the large geographic area and dispersed populations, individual lots, low residential density, and economies of site management dictate fewer and smaller individual park sites than in urban areas. King County's role in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands reflects rural levels of service. King County also provides local parks in unincorporated urban areas and the County's role in these parks reflect urban levels of service.

P-108 **King County shall provide local parks, trails, and other open spaces in urban and rural unincorporated areas. Local parks, trails, and other open spaces that complement the regional open space should be provided in each community to meet local recreation and open space needs and enhance environmental quality and view corridors.**

P-109 **King County should provide local parks that include fields and other active recreation facilities in urban and rural unincorporated areas. These facilities shall be additional and complimentary to those in regional parks.**

3. Regional Trails Network

The Regional Trails network is a major element of the county's greater open space system that provides opportunities for recreation and active transportation, as well as corridors often used by wildlife. This system contributes to the health and wellbeing of trail users and the environment. King County is home to one of the largest regional trail networks in the North America. King County and local jurisdictions collectively offer over 300 miles of shared-use (multipurpose) paved and unpaved paths connecting communities and linking Puget Sound urban areas with the Rural Area, Natural Resource Lands, and the Cascade Mountains. King County stewards some 175 miles of the overall network. The remaining portions of the network are managed by local cities, the Port of Seattle, and Washington State.

Recreation remains the primary use on regional trails, but some trips are made for work and school, combining the healthy recreational benefits of cycling and walking with the workday commute. The trails are also used for a variety of special activities that enrich life in the central Puget Sound region, from art-related treks to community fundraisers to long-distance cycling events.

Regional trails in King County now include decades-old popular routes like the Burke-Gilman Trail and trails networking many landscapes and destinations. Routes follow abandoned railroad lines, water pipeline and power line corridors, river levees, and other special features or they may establish their own alignments as they seek out practical courses between destinations. More interconnections provide more travel opportunities. Paths access parks and scenic landscapes, but they also now serve urban centers, major transit facilities, and other important everyday destinations. Future facilities will continue to provide the joint benefits of recreation and regional mobility. More information regarding King County's Regional Trails network, including the proposed future regional trails plan, the Regional Trails Needs Report, can be found in Appendix C2.

P-110 **King County shall complete and maintain a regional trails network, to provide recreational opportunities and to allow for transportation and wildlife corridor uses to contribute to the health and wellbeing of both trail users and the environment. King County shall continue to primarily own the land necessary for the operation and management of the trail network and pursue public-private funding opportunities for development and maintenance, while ensuring opportunities for access for all King County residents.**

Eastrail

Eastrail provides a unique opportunity to develop a major north-south, dual-use corridor in support of active transportation and transit mobility consistent with its federal railbanked status. The owners share multiple objectives for the corridor including accommodating utilities, parks, recreation, and cultural amenities, and encouraging equitable access to these facilities, and to housing and jobs, in support of economic opportunity for all King County residents. King County is actively developing the regional trail component of Eastrail, connecting regional growth centers, urban communities, other regional trails, and local and high-capacity transit. The trail will connect to existing major regional trail corridors including the Mountains to Sound/I-90 Trail, State Route 520 Trail, Sammamish River Trail, Lake to Sound Trail, and others.

P-111 **King County shall develop Eastrail in coordination with the other trail owners, other jurisdictions, local and state agencies, utilities with property interests, and nonprofit and private partners to enhance regional recreation and mobility and connectivity between regional growth centers, urban communities, other regional trails, and local and high-capacity transit, consistent with a commitment to dual use (recreational trail and public transportation), and consistent with federal railbanking. The trail corridor shall include high-quality landscaping and environmental features, where appropriate, to enhance the trail experience and to provide ecological benefits to the region.**

4. Multiuse Sites

P-112 **Multiuse sites should include lands that have areas of environmental value, but also may accommodate extensive public access and active and/or passive recreation opportunities. Each portion of a multiuse site shall be developed and managed to support the level of use or conservation appropriate to that portion of the site.**

5. Natural Areas

The King County open space system includes many sites owned by King County whose primary purpose is to conserve and restore ecological value. These sites may allow varying types of public use that do not harm the ecological resources of the site. These sites include many scenic and environmental features of King County's landscape, which play a role in protecting a diversity of vegetation and fish and wildlife important to the beauty and character of the region. King County focuses on linking natural areas to create regional open space corridors of greenways and waterways along the major natural systems, such as rivers and shorelines.

P-113 **King County shall manage its natural areas to protect, preserve, and enhance important natural resource habitat, biological diversity, and the ecological integrity of natural systems.**

P-114 **King County shall recognize and protect the natural character and ecological value of its natural areas. These areas are important for preserving fish and wildlife and their habitat, native vegetation, features of scientific and educational value, and Indian tribal cultural and historic resources. Development and public use may be limited to preserve the natural state and reduce disturbance of the natural and cultural resources. Site improvements should be focused on providing educational and interpretive opportunities. Public access should be directed to less-fragile portions of a site to ensure continued protection of the ecological and cultural resources.**

6. Working Resource Lands

The County's open space system includes lands owned by King County that are managed as working farms and forests. The County has purchased these properties with the intention of conserving the resource use on the site. County ownership and management of these lands conserves the resource land base, allowing the resource activity to continue, while contributing to the local economy, providing healthy foods, reducing carbon emissions associated with importing food into the region, providing education about agriculture and forestry, and providing passive recreational opportunities on some properties. The County's policies to conserve farmland and encourage agriculture are discussed in Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands.

Farmland

The County occasionally acquires farmland, either to address farmland access issues or as part of an acquisition for other purposes, such as habitat protection, food risk reduction, or recreational access. Although the County usually intends to resell farmland to a farmer while retaining a Farmland Preservation Program easement, some farmland has strategic importance to advancing County initiatives and priorities and will be retained in County ownership long-term. The County has developed a program to lease farms until such time that the property is resold.

P-115 **Farmland owned by King County shall:**

a. Contribute to the preservation of contiguous tracts of agricultural land; or

b. Provide access to farmland to farmers who are historically underrepresented in agriculture, beginning farming, or economically disadvantaged.

P-116 **King County shall explore opportunities to allow farmers who are historically underrepresented in agriculture, beginning farming, or economically disadvantaged to build equity while leasing farmland owned by the County.**

P-117 **The use and management of farmlands owned by King County shall be consistent with any requirements imposed by the funding program used to purchase each property and shall serve to meet and enhance the objectives of the King County Agriculture Program.**

Forestland

Conservation of forestland, through acquisition of land or conservation easements, decreases threats of conversion resulting from development and fragmentation, and promotes understanding of the importance of forest management, including restoration of the forests to more natural conditions. The working forests owned by King County are generally very large parcels of land (several hundred acres or more) that support sustainable forest management practices and contribute to the retention of a contiguous forest.

These properties contain valuable fish and wildlife habitat, provide environmental services (such as stormwater management, clean air and water and carbon sequestration), and help mitigate the impacts of climate change, as well as provide high-quality passive recreation, scenic vistas, and educational and interpretation opportunities.

P-118 **Working forest land and conservation easements owned by King County shall provide large tracts of forested property in the Rural Forest Focus Areas, the Forest Production District, and Rural Area.**

P-119 **Working forest land and conservation easements owned by King County shall remain in active forestry, protect areas from development, or provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development, and may provide ecological or recreational benefits.**

P-120 **Management goals for working forest land owned by King County shall include enhancing ecological benefits and functions, demonstrating best forest management practices, providing passive recreation opportunities, and generating revenue to facilitate sustainable management of those sites.**

7. Backcountry Trails

Backcountry trails are facilities located within King County's multiuse sites, forest lands and natural areas. These trails allow visitors to directly experience the county's beautiful natural environment as found in its forests, meadows, and marine and freshwater shoreline. Unlike multipurpose regional trails that network urban and rural landscapes throughout the county, these soft-surface trails are intended for outdoor recreation and appreciation and enjoyment of a natural experience with forest and trees, streams and wetlands, shorelines, and birds and wildlife. Where backcountry trails are developed on lands containing fish, wildlife, and cultural resources, development and management of such trails is undertaken to minimize the impacts on those resources.

P-121 **King County shall continue to provide and manage a backcountry trail system on its lands in collaboration with other public and private landholders and consistent with its Trail Programmatic Permit.**

8. Other Open Spaces

Preservation of open space in the county reaches beyond the County-owned system. Large areas of the county are owned and managed by federal agencies, the state, and other local jurisdictions for environmental protection, resource production, or a wide range of recreational uses. Additionally, open space benefits are often provided by private landowners managing their land in ways that protect the environment, conserve natural resources, or provide scenic vistas.

P-122 **King County shall encourage and pursue partnerships and mutually beneficial agreements with Indian tribes, public agencies, nonprofit and community organizations, and the private sector to fund, program, manage, and steward sites and facilities for public recreation and natural resource protection consistent with the classification, role, and use of said sites and facilities.**

C. Sustaining and Growing the Open Space System

Parks and other County-owned open space lands ensure a quality of life today and a legacy to future generations. In King County, many types of open spaces and fish and wildlife habitat remain in private ownership and may be subject to future development. King County's Land Conservation Initiative guides the collaborative strategy to accelerate the preservation of natural lands, working farms and forests, urban green space, and trails in the next 30 years. To ensure that these lands and resources are protected and to offer an alternative to acquisition, the County offers landowners a wide variety of tools to preserve their property.

Cooperation, coordination, and partnerships with public agencies, private groups, and individuals are necessary to develop the open space system, to meet existing needs for park and recreation facilities, and to accommodate the needs of growth. The Mountains-to-Sound Greenway National Heritage Area, along the I-90 corridor, is a successful model for coordination of efforts by public and private entities to protect the backbone of the County's open space system. King County will achieve the multiple benefits of resource protection and recreation by building partnerships and coordinating with providers and user groups of the open space system. Working together, stewardship can be fostered and these lands and facilities can be enhanced, restored, and operated more economically and efficiently to benefit all county residents.

1. Priorities

P-123 **Open space lands should be acquired to expand and enhance the open space system as identified in the King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails and Natural Areas.**

P-124 **Regional trail corridors should be acquired when identified in King County's Regional Trails Needs Report or other trails plans.**

2. Criteria

P-125 **Lands preserved for open space should provide multiple benefits whenever possible.**

P-126 **Decisions on acquisition and development of park, regional trail, and other open space sites should consider funding needs for public engagement, initial stewardship, site development, long-term maintenance, and operations.**

P-127 **A variety of measures should be used to acquire, protect, manage, and develop regional and local open space. Measures can include funding mechanisms, grants, partnerships, incentives, regulations, dedications, contributions from residential and commercial development based on their service impacts, trades of lands, and shared development activities.**

3. Managing the System

As the caretaker of 205 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, more than 250 miles of backcountry trails, 32,000 acres of open space, and 150,000 acres of conservation easements, King County is one of the region's important providers and managers of public lands. As such, the principles and policies that guide stewardship and management of these lands and resources are critical to ensure these assets continue to contribute to the region's quality of life now and for future generations.

P-128 **Development and management of open space should be consistent with the purposes of their acquisition and in consideration of their funding sources.**

P-129 **Open space lands shall be classified to identify their role in the open space system and the purpose of the acquisition as recreation site, regional trail, natural area, working forestland, or multiuse site.**

P-130 **King County should develop management plans (such as master plans, forest stewardship plans, or site management guidelines) that outline goals and objectives and management recommendations for sites within the open space system, as appropriate.**

P-131 **King County's use of pesticides and fungicides shall be based on integrated pest management principles.**

P-132 **King County shall support activities at County parks that advance public health, provide clean environments, and avoid exposure to harmful products, such as tobacco and vaping products, to promote play, physical activity, and family and community connection.**

4. Coordination and Partnerships

P-133 **Recognizing the value of open space in promoting social and economic health and wellness across the county, King County shall be a leader in establishing partnerships with Indian tribes, cities, adjacent counties, state and federal agencies, school and special purpose districts, community organizations, nonprofit organizations, landowners, and other residents. The County and these partners should work to:**

a. Support and strengthen the linkages between rural, resource, and urban communities' use and maintenance of open spaces;

b. Promote and protect all aspects of environmental quality, while addressing equity and racial and social justice goals to complete the open space system through joint planning and management of local and regional sites and facilities.

P-134 **In the Urban Growth Area, King County shall work in partnership with other jurisdictions to facilitate annexation and transfer of local parks and other open space sites to cities or other providers to ensure continued service to the community.**

P-135 **King County shall encourage and support volunteer efforts to maintain and enhance programs, sites, and facilities.**

5. Public Participation

P-136 **King County shall encourage and seek public input, advice, and participation in decisions about the open space system and to advance equitable access to parks and trails.**

P-137 **King County shall use a variety of methods to ensure early, continuous, and broad engagement with the public consistent with the County's equity and racial and social justice goals and policies. King County shall intentionally engage communities that are the most affected by proposals and plans and shall provide equitable access for historically underrepresented and underinvested populations in public engagement about and access to the open space system.**

II. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources make a significant contribution to the quality of life in King County. Arts and heritage organizations, public art, historic and archaeological properties, and Indian tribal celebrations and traditional cultural events contribute to the region's economic vitality, play an essential role in cultural tourism, and contribute significantly to the county's overall quality of life. As King County grows, the need to protect, support, and enhance cultural opportunities and resources is essential to livability. King County plays an important role in supporting the region's cultural life. 4Culture, a County-chartered Public Development Authority, serves as the cultural services agency of King County. 4Culture has operational responsibility for advancing the work of the cultural community in King County by advocating for, supporting, promoting, and enhancing:

- arts;
- heritage;
- preservation; and
- public art.

4Culture and the King County Historic Preservation Program work together to provide funding, advocacy, assistance, and support in preserving and conserving the county's historical and archeological resources through projects and programs including interpretation, community education and outreach, cultural tourism, and rehabilitation of historical resources, as well as to ensure that historic properties throughout King County are protected and enhanced.

King County government can lead by example through stewardship and wise management of its own cultural resources. Historic public buildings and facilities, such as bridges and roads, can be preserved and continue to be used; other historic resources can be converted to public use. As set by Policy ED-109, found in Chapter 10, Economic Development, to enhance the region's quality of life and economic vitality, the County will engage in programs and projects to protect cultural resources and promote expanded cultural opportunities for the county's residents and visitors.

P-201 **King County shall be a steward of cultural resources under its control. It shall identify and evaluate cultural resources, preserve public art and significant historic properties, and interpret and provide public access to them whenever appropriate. County departments and divisions shall collaborate with the Historic Preservation Program to nominate eligible properties for landmark designation.**

P-202 **King County shall consider equity and racial, social, and environmental justice in its promotion and protection of cultural resources.**

P-203 **King County shall encourage preservation and reuse of historic buildings in its facilities planning and other relevant actions, including open space acquisition, and shall encourage the salvage and recycling of those that cannot be feasibly reused. King County shall also encourage interested parties in pursuing preservation, restoration, and repurposing projects, particularly in those doing repairs and/or upgrades themselves.**

A. Relationships

County residents need arts and heritage opportunities. These include both attendance-driven programs and projects, as well as more localized, community-orientated opportunities for hands-on participation and education. The county's cultural system is comprised of regional and local arts and heritage

organizations, individuals, and venues. It also involves relationships with both public and private entities to preserve the region's history, as well as to enhance placement of art in public places. As such, cultural resource management crosses jurisdictional boundaries and involves countless public and private entities and artists throughout the region. The range and complexity of cultural activity in the region requires coordination and cooperation. King County, through its creation of 4Culture, provides this regional coordination and leadership.

While 4Culture is not a County department, the County and 4Culture maintain a unique cooperative relationship. Historically, over 95 percent of 4Culture's budget has been funded by King County resources from either dedicated tax revenue or capital improvement project budgets. The Council appoints and confirms members of the 4Culture board of directors, and three Councilmembers serve on the board. Additionally, the Council annually receives briefings from 4Culture on its work program and budget. Therefore, it is through 4Culture that King County maintains its regional role in cultural resource management.

P-204 **King County shall support the retention and promotion of the region's cultural legacy, promote cultural education, and encourage the preservation and celebration of cultural diversity and creativity.**

P-205 **King County shall support and encourage development of regional cultural organizations, facilities, and services that address a countywide audience or are dedicated to unique and significant cultural themes or disciplines.**

P-206 **King County shall support and encourage community cultural organizations, facilities, and services to provide opportunities for local access and participation by all residents throughout the county.**

P-207 **King County shall encourage excellence and vitality in the arts by supporting opportunities for attendance at and participation in diverse arts, cultural, and heritage activities throughout the county.**

P-208 **King County shall pursue its cultural resource goals by working with Indian tribes, residents, property owners, cultural organizations, public agencies, schools and school districts, and others.**

P-209 **King County shall provide leadership in pursuing its cultural resource goals by actively advancing the protection, enhancement, and ongoing use of County-owned and other cultural resources, and by promoting intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships for the preservation and use of cultural resources.**

P-210 **King County shall partner with cities to protect and enhance historic resources and public art located within city boundaries and Potential Annexation Areas.**

B. Arts, Heritage, and Public Art

P-211 **King County shall continue to collaborate with 4Culture when developing programs, policies, and regulations that support, enrich, and increase access to the arts, public art, and King County's heritage.**

P-212 **King County shall continue to provide financial support for culture through the Doors Open cultural access program or similar programs that provide operational and capital support to arts, culture, heritage, science, and historic preservation non-profit organizations; increase access to programming for public school children; help launch new organizations and expand access in underinvested areas; and provide free public access.**

King County's public art collection includes portable, permanently sited, and architecturally integrated artworks that help define County buildings as cultural spaces. Public art also includes art installed or incorporated in places developed by others, but accessible to the public. Public art enhances community character and diversity, sparks imagination, and provides a direct cultural experience for county residents and visitors every day. For new or changing communities, public art is a powerful contributor to local character, sense of place, and belonging. Public art can also help mitigate the adverse effects of new development.

P-213 **King County shall, as appropriate, incorporate public art in its construction and mitigation projects, as well as its undertakings involving public-private partnerships and development authorities that include public funds or resources or have publicly accessible components.**

P-214 **Maintenance and conservation shall be a consideration in the development and management of public art.**

P-215 **King County shall incorporate public art into its open space system.**

C. Historic Preservation

Historic properties maintain a tangible connection with the past and contribute to community understanding, character, and diversity. Preservation can save energy, conserve existing housing and commercial buildings, and retain historically significant open space. Historic properties also play a major role in attracting tourists. The mission of the King County Historic Preservation Program is to conserve existing historic housing, commercial buildings, and other significant properties and to foster heritage tourism throughout the county. It provides technical and other assistance. It also supports the work of the King County Landmarks Commission.

Many municipalities do not have sufficient resources to administer an historic preservation program. As a result, the history of the region is endangered. King County helps in this regard by providing contracted historic preservation services to interested King County cities. Comprehensive and coordinated protection of significant historic properties is necessary to ensure that King County's history is preserved.

P-216 **King County shall acquire and preserve historic properties for use by the County and other public agencies and shall give priority to occupying historic buildings whenever feasible.**

P-217 **King County shall regularly seek advice from the Landmarks Commission on programs, policies, and regulations that support and enhance preservation and protection of significant historic properties.**

P-218 **King County shall administer a historic preservation program to identify, protect, and enhance historic properties throughout the region.**

Review of development proposals and other actions affecting historic properties resources is necessary to eliminate or minimize adverse effects of development or

changing land use. Archaeological sites are particularly sensitive and endangered because they are not visible and may be unexpectedly encountered. King County government can also protect historic properties through careful planning and review of its own undertakings, both directly and in partnerships with private parties and other agencies.

P-219 **King County shall establish comprehensive review and protection procedures for historic properties affected by public and private projects.**

P-220 **King County should condition public and private projects to protect historic properties. King County agencies shall coordinate with the Historic Preservation Program to provide consistent review and mitigation for their projects and undertakings throughout the county.**

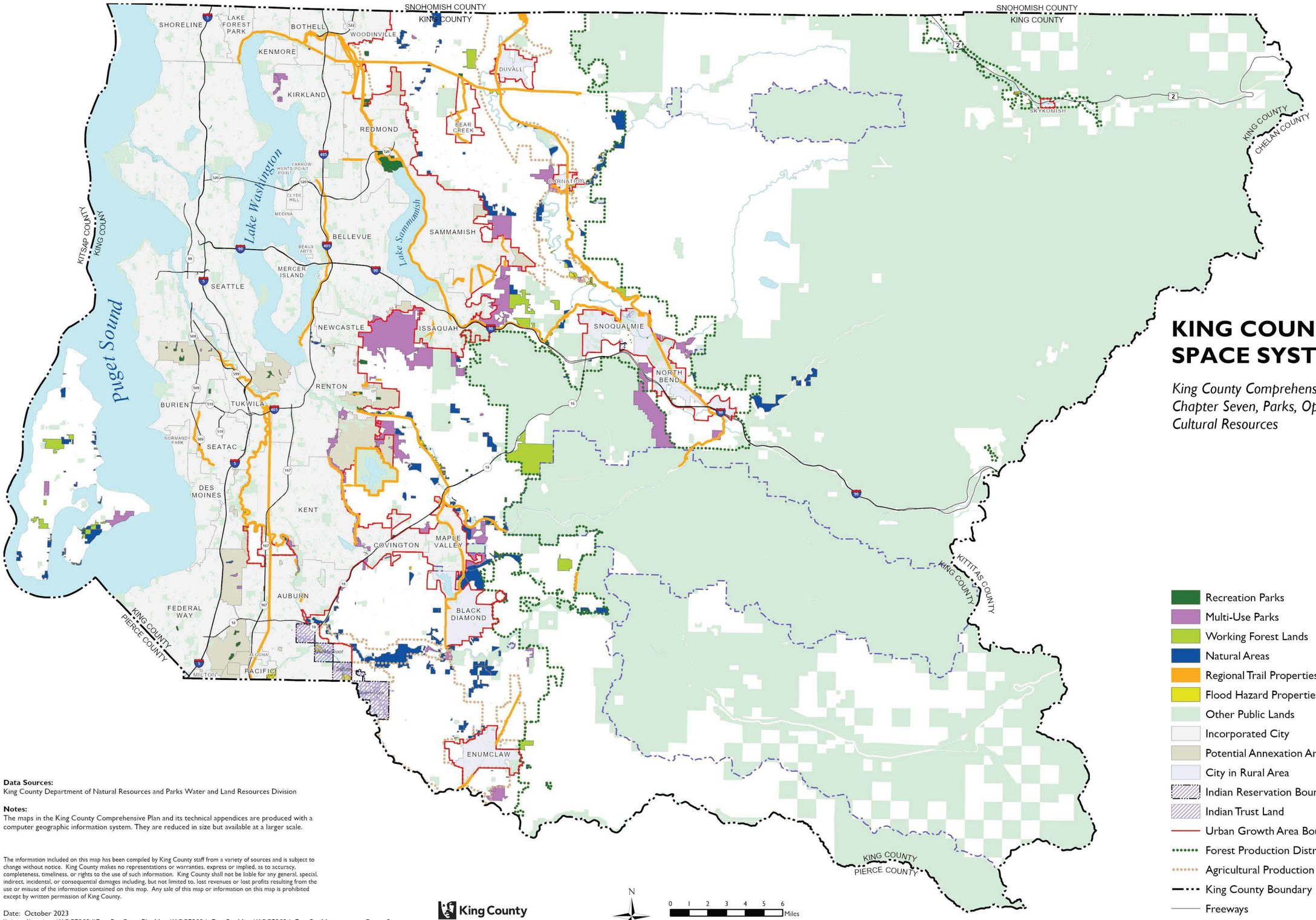
P-221 **King County shall encourage land uses and development that retain and enhance significant historic properties and sustain historic community character. County building and zoning codes and other regulations and standards should provide flexibility to accommodate preservation and reuse of historic properties. Zoning actions should take into account the effects of zoning on historic properties.**

P-222 **Parcels on which a cemetery is located should be given a land use designation, a zoning classification, or both, that allows less intensive development than would be assigned to the parcel were the cemetery not present.**

P-223 **King County shall maintain an inventory of historic properties to guide its historic preservation decision making.**

KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM 2024

King County Comprehensive Plan, 2024
Chapter Seven, Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Resources



- Recreation Parks
- Multi-Use Parks
- Working Forest Lands
- Natural Areas
- Regional Trail Properties
- Flood Hazard Properties
- Other Public Lands
- Incorporated City
- Potential Annexation Areas
- City in Rural Area
- Indian Reservation Boundary
- Indian Trust Land
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- Forest Production District Boundary
- Agricultural Production District Boundary
- King County Boundary
- Freeways
- Municipal Watershed

Data Sources:
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Water and Land Resources Division

Notes:
The maps in the King County Comprehensive Plan and its technical appendices are produced with a computer geographic information system. They are reduced in size but available at a larger scale.

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is 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 this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

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October 2023



CHAPTER 8

TRANSPORTATION

I. The Regional Transportation System

A. Introduction

King County collaborates with the state and other local governments with the goal of providing an integrated, multimodal transportation system for the Puget Sound region. These intergovernmental partnerships seek to ensure that the county's transportation system is designed, operated, and maintained in a manner that provides mobility options for a wide range of users; contributes to safe, affordable, and accessible communities for all; advances social and racial equity; helps address complex issues like climate change and homelessness; and safeguards and enhances King County's natural resources and environment. It is important that the county's and the region's transportation system provide equitable travel opportunities for all people and communities. It is also important for all jurisdictions, including King County, to exercise sound financial management in the provision of transportation services and infrastructure.

Transportation and mobility are implemented in King County through the functional plans: the King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031, Metro Connects (Metro's long-range plan), the King County Metro Service Guidelines, the Strategic Plan for Road Services, and the King County International Airport Strategic Plan. Implementation of the Regional Trails network, which provides important bicycling and walking links, is guided by Chapter 7, Parks, Open Space, & Cultural Resources, and the 2022 King County Open Space Plan. King County transportation planning is further informed by the Strategic Climate Action Plan, which provides additional guidance related to greenhouse gas reduction goals, community-driven transit development, and climate-resilient transit infrastructure; and King County Code Chapter 2.10, which establishes an integrated effort that intentionally applies the "Fair and Just" principle to all work to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities.

The County's priorities include:

- Maintain safe and secure County-owned infrastructure, including roads, bridges, trails, transit vehicles (buses, paratransit vehicles, passenger ferries, non-revenue fleet, etc.), transit facilities, and airport facilities;
- Coordinate and develop multimodal services and facilities for an integrated and seamless regional and local transportation system;
- Deliver transportation services that support density and growth in the urban area, and meet the transportation needs of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands without creating additional growth pressure;
- Maintain and preserve infrastructure that facilitates the efficient movement of freight and goods to support economic vitality and regional trade;
- Provide transportation choices and support travel modes that use less energy, produce fewer pollutants, and reduce greenhouse gases in the region;
- Identify and adapt to the impacts of climate change on transportation infrastructure and services;
- Provide opportunities for people to make active transportation choices by increasing the convenience, accessibility, safety, and comfort of taking transit, walking, and bicycling;

- Support safe and equitable access to mobility options through transportation investments where needs are greatest, including for historically underinvested groups, people with disabilities, seniors (depending on the program, the age threshold for a senior could be 55, 62, or 65 years and over), and people with special transportation needs;
- Address homelessness and other significant issues using a holistic, countywide approach, through actions such as supporting equitable and affordable transit-oriented development, making transit more accessible through actions such as Metro's income-based approach to fare discounts, and by connecting people to the services and opportunities they need;
- Integrate transportation and land use planning to increase transit use; support sustainable community development, including equitable and affordable transit-oriented development; and provide mobility services that are responsive to community characteristics;
- Incorporate sustainable development practices into the design, construction, and operation of infrastructure and facilities;
- Establish and implement clear transportation service priorities and guidelines – with a focus on equity and racial and social justice – and use transportation resources wisely and efficiently;
- Develop sustainable, equitable funding sources to support the level of services needed by communities; and
- Monitor and measure system performance and use this feedback to continuously improve transportation products and services.

The current and projected economic climate, however, places severe constraints on the County's ability to meet these important goals. The strategic plans for the Road Services Division, Metro Transit Department (Metro), and the Marine Division identify priorities, analyze available funding and constraints, and set targets to help reach these goals.

B. Components of the Transportation Element

The following documents address the Growth Management Act requirements for the transportation element:

a. This Transportation chapter, which includes the narrative and policy language;
b. Technical Appendix C, Transportation, which contains the Travel Forecast Summary, Arterial Functional Classification Map, Transportation Inventory; and Transportation Needs Report, which contains a multiyear financial forecast and a multiyear list of road facility needs;
c. The Roads Capital Improvement Program;
d. The King County Metro Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Metro Connects, and the Transit Capital Improvement Program; and
e. Concurrency regulation, which implements the concurrency requirements and is codified in King County Code Title 14.

C. Transportation System, Services, and County Responsibilities

The region's transportation system is comprised of the following elements:

a. Highways, arterial streets, and local/neighborhood streets;
b. Bridges;
c. Local and express bus transit and paratransit services and facilities, including Americans with Disabilities Act service programs;
d. High-capacity transit;
e. High-occupancy-vehicle lanes and ridesharing facilities;

f. Facilities and programs for active transportation, including sidewalks, shoulders, bicycle racks on transit, and regional trails;
g. Facilities to accommodate freight and goods movement, including railroads, intermodal yards, and distribution centers;
h. Marine transportation services, ferries and ferry facilities, and navigable waterways;
i. Airports;
j. Transportation Demand Management programs, systems, facilities, and technologies; and
k. Facilities to maintain the transportation system elements.

1. Public Transportation

Public transportation enhances regional economic vitality by providing connections to jobs, schools, and other destinations, and enables those with limited mobility options to travel. It helps accommodate regional growth by more efficiently moving people within the region's existing infrastructure and reducing the need for single-occupant vehicles and space for parking. Public transportation can help address major societal issues, such as homelessness, by connecting people to the services and opportunities they need. It improves the quality of life and health for residents and visitors to the Puget Sound region.

Metro operates more than 180 bus routes, and its fixed-route services delivered more than 130 million passenger trips in 2019. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro delivered more than 400,000 trips every weekday; roughly half of downtown Seattle commuters relied on transit. Even at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro delivered more than 100,000 trips daily. Its fixed-route system includes a network of frequent all-day bus routes between residential, business, and other activity centers; express and peak-period commuter service to major destinations from many neighborhoods and from a network of park-and-ride lots; and local bus services that connect people to their communities and the larger transportation system. For people with disabilities who cannot use Metro's regular fixed-route buses, Metro offers Access paratransit service. Metro also offers additional services for specific age groups, such as people aged 55 years and over via the Community Access Transportation program, which is open to people with disabilities as well. Metro also operates a commuter vanpool program for people who don't have convenient transit service between home and work. As of 2023, the vanpool program was serving 1,200 commuter groups with a fleet of 1,347 vehicles.

Metro augments its own investments by developing partnerships with a range of entities, including transit providers; community-based groups; schools and universities; human service organizations; property owners and managers; businesses; and local, regional, and state agencies and jurisdictions. By working with partners, Metro can leverage public and private resources and discover new opportunities to improve service or infrastructure. Metro can expand its accomplishments by collaborating with partners to design and deliver services, facilities, and access improvements, and to develop policies, programs, products, and incentives. Metro's Service Guidelines and Metro Connects include more information about how Metro will partner with other entities and offer examples of such partnerships.

Metro is guided by the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031, the King County Metro Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects. The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation defines a vision and mission for public transportation services in King County and describes the strategies to implement that vision. It also defines desired outcomes and describes how progress will be measured. The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation and Service Guidelines prioritizes social equity and sustainability to ensure Metro invests where needs are greatest (including for populations who identify

as Black, Indigenous, other People of Color; immigrants; refugees; people with low- or no incomes; people with disabilities; and people who are linguistically diverse); addresses climate change; and meets public transportation needs throughout the county. The Service Guidelines identifies detailed methodologies for how Metro should measure the performance of its transit network as a whole and of its individual bus routes, and provides clear guidance on how Metro should use transit resources in alignment with Metro and King County policies and values, including equity. Metro Connects sets the long-term vision for service and supporting capital infrastructure.

Increasing the use of public transportation plays an important role in King County's efforts to address climate change and support livable, healthy communities. Public transportation reduces greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating private vehicle trips, reducing vehicle miles traveled, mitigating traffic congestion, and supporting efficient land use. Metro provides public transportation using a "green" fleet of electric trolleys, hybrid diesel-electric buses fueled with a biodiesel blend, and battery electric buses. This efficient fleet adds to the environmental advantage of combining many riders in a single vehicle. Metro's policies articulate a goal of transitioning to a zero-emissions bus fleet powered by renewable energy by 2035. Metro's wide range of mobility alternatives (including fixed-route transit, passenger ferries, flexible services, and Access paratransit); its support of choices such car- and bicycle-sharing, walking and rolling to transit; and its commitment to seek out and support opportunities for transit-oriented development make transit a powerful tool to help reduce pollution and support active, healthy lifestyles.

Metro is committed to being a leader in environmentally friendly operating and maintenance practices and minimizing its energy use. The King County Employee Transportation Program educates people about commuting to work via another option than a single-occupancy vehicle. The agency also incorporates cost-effective green building and sustainable development practices in all capital projects that it plans, designs, constructs, remodels, renovates, and operates.

Bus, rail, passenger-only ferry, and flexible transit services provide the critical transportation links on which the regional economy depends. These public transportation services depend on convenient connections to roads, highways, and active transportation systems. As the region grows, coordinating public transportation routes and schedules across agencies and modes will make public transportation a more viable and convenient option for people traveling in King County. King County seeks input from a broad spectrum of county residents and businesses to identify needs and provide services to meet those needs.

2. Road System

Travelers in King County use a system of interconnected roads that includes interstate highways, state highways, urban and rural arterials, local access roads, private roads, and forest and logging roads. King County is responsible for all County-owned roads, bridges, and related infrastructure in the unincorporated areas of the county, and must meet the road-related transportation needs of a very large and geographically and demographically diverse service area. The County's many bridges are an integral part of the road system, as are other components such as sidewalks, shoulders, pathways, bicycle lanes, guardrails, stormwater drainage and water quality treatment facilities, traffic control equipment, and traffic cameras. Interstate highways, state highways, city roads, and private roads are not under County jurisdiction; rather, they are the responsibility of other government agencies or property owners.

The Strategic Plan for Road Services defines the strategic direction for the King County Department of Local Services - Road Services Division as it seeks to safely connect

communities while addressing a county road funding crisis, widespread and aging infrastructure, and historical underinvestment in urban areas.

As of winter 2023, the County-owned unincorporated area road system includes approximately:

- 1,469 miles of roadway;
- 185 bridges, including several jointly owned with cities;
- 275 miles of sidewalks;
- 79 traffic signals;
- 49,000 traffic control signs;
- 57 traffic cameras;
- 3.5 million linear feet of drainage pipes; and
- 118 miles of protective guardrail.

The users of the County road system may travel on foot or by car, public transit, truck, or bicycle, or even on horseback. They may live in an unincorporated area, in cities, or in another county. The unincorporated road system supports local trips close to home, commuter trips, the movement of freight and goods, and regional travel between jurisdictions. The system also provides access to outdoor recreational activities in King County. Public service providers, such as police, fire, emergency medical responders, Metro, and school buses are also key users. In total, more than one million daily trips are taken on King County's unincorporated road network.

3. Air Transportation

Established in 1928, the King County International Airport/Boeing Field is located in south Seattle in the Duwamish River Industrial Corridor. It operates on a twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week basis and in all weather. King County plans, designs, and implements services, programs, and facilities for the King County International Airport in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulatory requirements to support a safe, secure, and efficient international aerospace system. The airport is also a significant employment center and supports more than 50 on-airport aviation-related businesses, including The Boeing Company. The airport is a port of entry for international flights and serves regional air carriers, national and regional cargo carriers, corporate aviation, and general aviation.

King County International Airport/Boeing Field is the 75th busiest airport in the United States and ranks 46th in cargo handling. The airport's air taxi carrier serves the San Juan Islands. It is also the largest corporate aircraft center in the Pacific Northwest. Airport business activities are estimated to support almost 7,000 direct jobs, plus more than 9,000 additional jobs in the region. The airport's total positive economic impact within the Puget Sound Region and Washington State is more than $5.2 billion in direct and induced economic activity, including the sale of goods and services, labor income, and tax revenues.

The King County International Airport Strategic Plan, or successor plans, guides the planning, development, and implementation of airport facilities and services managed by the King County International Airport. Management of the airport is informed by the King County International Airport Master Plan and the Federal Aviation Administration-mandated Airport Layout Plan.

The Bandera and Skykomish Airports, located in eastern King County near the communities of North Bend and Skykomish, are state-owned and operated. Vashon Airport, located on Vashon-Maury Island, is publicly owned and operated by King County Airport Special District Number One. King County does not have operating or regulatory authority over these airports, but does control land use activity adjacent to the facilities.

II. General Policy Guidance

County transportation services and policies support the County's land use strategy, which seeks to concentrate development and services in urban areas, conserve and enhance the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, and create communities that have a positive effect on public health and climate change.

T-101 **King County should provide a safe and accessible system of transportation services and facilities that offers travel options to all members of the community.**

T-102 **King County should seek to ensure that its system of transportation services and facilities equitably serves the mobility needs of communities with the greatest need, including historically underinvested groups, people with disabilities, seniors, and people with special transportation needs.**

T-103 **As a transportation provider and participant in regional transportation planning, King County should support, plan, fund, design, and implement an integrated and coordinated multimodal transportation system that serves the growing travel needs of the county safely, equitably, effectively, sustainably, affordably, and efficiently, and reduces vehicle miles traveled.**

T-104 **In striving to meet the growing need for transportation services, King County shall seek to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of its services, infrastructure, and facilities.**

T-105 **The Strategic Plan for Public Transportation 2021-2031, King County Metro Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects, or successor plans, shall guide the planning, development, and implementation of the public transportation system and services operated by the King County Metro Transit Department.**

T-106 **The King County Strategic Plan for Road Services, or successor plans, shall guide the planning, development, and implementation of the unincorporated road system managed by the King County Road Services Division.**

T-107 **The King County International Airport Strategic Plan, or successor plans, shall guide the planning, development, and implementation of airport facilities and services managed by the King County International Airport.**

T-108 **King County shall evaluate equity impacts and benefits when planning, developing, and implementing transportation programs, projects, and services, including physical, economic, and cultural displacement risk.**

T-109 **As directed by the King County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, King County shall seek to protect its transportation system against disasters, to the extent possible, by developing prevention and recovery strategies in partnership with other jurisdictions and agencies, and coordinating emergency transportation response.**

A. Land Use and Growth Strategy

The transportation element of this Comprehensive Plan is grounded in a firm understanding of the important relationship between land use and transportation. A thoughtfully designed transportation system that supports the County's long-term land use vision and regional growth strategy should provide improved mobility and greater accessibility for all users and contribute to vibrant, thriving communities. Considering the interconnection of land use and transportation can also help address issues like regional affordability by supporting equitable, transit-oriented communities. It should also facilitate more efficient travel that addresses climate change, in part, by reducing energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and other forms of pollution.

Integrated transportation and land use planning is called for at the regional level in VISION, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the Countywide Planning Policies regarding transportation; these plans and policies outline and support a 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. The Countywide Planning Policies' 2019-2044 housing and employment growth targets have been incorporated into the travel demand forecast developed for this plan.

VISION, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the Countywide Planning Policies also promote the concept of maximizing mobility choices through a multimodal approach to moving people, goods, and services efficiently within and beyond the region. Travel to and within regional and countywide growth centers is emphasized, with a focus on the availability of transit and active transportation facilities in centers. These urban centers are characterized by compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of office, commercial, civic, entertainment, and residential uses that can be efficiently and cost-effectively served by transit and active transportation options. In addition, these regional plans and policies address the importance of protecting and preserving the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands and avoiding construction of major new roads and capacity expansion on existing roads in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.

Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects also emphasize the importance of integrated transportation and land use planning in providing an integrated mobility network that advances policy goals related to equity, climate change, transit-oriented communities, and others. A multimodal transportation system supports healthful choices by providing greater access to housing, jobs, schools, medical care, healthy food, shopping, recreation, and other services – all of which contribute to a high quality of life. Designing highly connected communities that support safe active transportation and access to the transit system without a car reduces the overall cost of living by controlling or lowering transportation costs, reduces vehicle miles traveled, reduces air pollution, and leads to opportunities for greater levels of physical activity.

Regional and countywide guidance also encourages innovative approaches to transportation and land use management, including Transportation Demand Management strategies designed to reduce vehicle miles traveled, single-occupant vehicle trips, and greenhouse gas emissions.

In the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, protection of natural resources, agriculture and forestry, and the rural lifestyle and character are a high priority. However, there is still a limited amount of growth within the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands, significant growth in some adjacent Cities in the Rural Area, and growth beyond the county's boundaries that must be considered in managing the road system.

The County's arterial network weaves through urban areas, the Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands as it facilitates regional mobility. This presents challenges to planning for the region's mobility needs and providing safe and adequate roadways. High traffic volumes on roads in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands may necessitate road improvements to ensure safe and efficient travel. However, it is critical to ensure that appropriate development regulations and access management strategies are first in place to prevent unplanned and unwanted growth in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.

T-110 **King County prioritizes multimodal transportation options in the urban areas, where they are most effective. King County's transportation investments in urban areas should emphasize public transportation and road services and facilities that support multiple modes and facilitate connections between them.**

T-111 **King County's transportation investments in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands should emphasize maintaining, preserving, and, where appropriate, providing flexible service options and safe road infrastructure that is compatible with the preservation of rural character and does not promote urban or unplanned growth.**

T-112 **In areas not well suited to fixed-route transit, the County should work with partners to develop a range of flexible service options, consistent with Metro plans and policies.**

T-113 **King County should partner with jurisdictions and the private sector to spur infrastructure investments that enhance safe, equitable, and accessible opportunities for transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, carpools and vanpools, and other alternatives to single-occupant vehicles.**

B. Level of Service Standards

Level of service for arterials is a qualitative measure that describes traffic flow and is often represented by a system using the letters A through F. Level of Service A represents the least-congested conditions and Level of Service F represents the most-congested conditions. Level of Service B is indicative of stable traffic flow. However, unlike Level of Service A, operating speed is beginning to be restricted by other traffic. At Level of Service E, operation is unstable, and speeds are reduced but will fluctuate widely from point to point. Level of Service F is indicative of forced flow of traffic with extremely low speeds and long delays at intersections.

In the remaining urban pockets of unincorporated King County, road usage is heavily impacted by development in the larger surrounding cities; however, there are more travel choices available in these areas. The urban level of service reflects these factors.

The differences in the nature and character of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands as compared with the urban area means that level of service standards for arterials allow less congestion in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. In the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands the majority of the road network operates at Level of Service B; however, there are key arterials (typically the Rural Regional Corridors) that are frequently congested from carrying traffic from one urban area to another, and these often operate at a Level of Service C or lower.

In addition, King County recognizes that Rural Towns, or Rural Mobility Areas, have land use designations that support a greater variety of transportation mode choices. The level of service standards for Rural Mobility Areas are set to recognize these greater choices and support and encourage people to use forms of transportation other than single-occupant vehicles.

In addition to Rural Mobility Areas, certain areas with the Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center land use designation are recognized as having distinct mobility characteristics and have a level of service standard consistent with their land use character. These are Cottage Lake, Maple Valley, Preston, and Cumberland.

The framework for identifying appropriate levels of service for King County Metro services is established in Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, the King County Metro Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects. Level of service standards for Regionally Significant State Highways are adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council. Level of service standards for Highways of Statewide Significance are set by the Washington State Department of Transportation. Highway level of service standards are shown in Appendix C, Transportation.

T-114 **The level of service standard for the Urban Area shall be E except as provided in Policy T-115. The level of service standard for the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands shall be B, except as provided in Policies T-115, T-116, and T-117. These standards shall be used in concurrency testing.**

T-115 **The level of service standard for certain minor residential and minor commercial developments and certain public and educational facilities, as established in the King County Code, shall be Level of Service F. This standard shall be used in concurrency testing.**

T-116 **Rural Mobility Areas shall be defined as Rural Towns. The level of service standard for designated Rural Mobility Areas shall be E. This standard shall be used in concurrency testing.**

T-117 **The level of service standards for the Cottage Lake, Maple Valley, Preston, and Cumberland Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers shall be D. This standard shall be used in concurrency testing.**

T-118 **The appropriate levels of service for King County Metro transit services shall be established in Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, the King County Metro Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects, or successor plans.**

C. Travel Forecasts

Travel demand forecasts are used to project transportation system needs. They provide an important link between land use and transportation. The Puget Sound Regional Council's Forecasting Model uses regionally adopted growth targets for the year 2050, and was used to develop the travel demand forecasts for this plan, the Transportation Appendix, and the Transportation Needs Report Appendix.

D. Impact Mitigation

T-119 **Needed rights-of-way, strategies to manage transportation demand, and off-site improvements should be identified and required as conditions of development approval to the extent that such conditions are directly related to impact mitigation.**

T-120 **King County shall encourage the development of highly connected, grid-based arterial and nonarterial road networks in new developments and areas of infill development. To this end, the County should:**

a. Make specific findings at the time of land-use permit review to establish a nonarterial grid system for public and emergency access in developments; and

b. Require new commercial and multiunit developments and residential subdivisions to develop highly connective street networks to promote better accessibility and avoid single street-only access.

T-121 **Development proposals should extend the public road system through dedication when the extension is in the public interest. Conditions that may warrant such an extension include, but are not limited to, impacts on neighborhood circulation, increases in the use of arterials for local vehicular trips, reductions in traffic safety through uncoordinated and inadequately spaced street access to arterials, and restrictions on the availability of alternative emergency access routes.**

T-122 **As mitigation for the impacts of new development and as a condition of development approval, King County shall require the improvement of existing off-site roadways and undeveloped road rights-of-way, and other strategies to reduce demand on roads. Impacts that may warrant such mitigation include, but are not limited to, those that create safety concerns, raise road operational issues, or increase the number of residences served by a single access route.**

E. Funding Priorities

Metro's budget provides for both the operating and capital needs of its public transportation system. The operating budget funds Metro's broad range of public transportation services. The capital budget provides for transit facilities needed to operate Metro's services, such as maintenance and bus storage facilities, transit centers and park-and-ride lots, bus shelters and other passenger facilities, buses, and non-revenue vehicles.

Metro's primary source of revenue, a 0.9 percent sales tax (the maximum authorized by the state), provides more than half of Metro's revenues. This rate has been in effect since late 2006, when voters approved a 0.1 percent increase as part of the Transit Now initiative. Sales tax is a highly volatile revenue source because it fluctuates with changes in economic conditions. It is also regressive, as people with lower incomes spend a larger portion of their income on sales tax than people with higher incomes. Metro has had to rely more on sales tax since 2000, when the Washington legislature eliminated the motor vehicle excise tax for transit.

King County levies a 1.25 cent property tax for ferry service and a 5.5 cent property tax for other Metro transit services. Fares paid by users of Metro's system provided about 15 percent of Metro's operating revenues before the COVID-19 pandemic and about five percent of operative revenues in 2022. Other sources of revenues include: federal and state grants, which can fluctuate significantly and contribute primarily to capital expenses, and revenues from vanpool operations, investment income, and service partners. Examples of service partnership funding include revenue from Sound Transit for operating Link light rail and Sound Transit Express, and from the City of Seattle; these sources account for about 15 percent of Metro's total operating revenue.

The COVID-19 pandemic added uncertainty to Metro's financial situation, particularly due to the pandemic's impact on ridership and the resultant fare revenue impacts. The need remains for long-term, sustainable funding that fully meets King County's current

and future demand for transit service. The need for transit outlined in Metro Connects exceeds Metro's current funding capacity for service, and the funding gap will only increase as Metro moves toward the 2050 service network, which envisions approximately 70 percent more transit service. Metro will not be able to grow its system as planned without significant amounts of new, sustainable funding. Funding source volatility has a uniquely negative impact on service growth and capital program development.

King County has a structural roads funding crisis, largely due to municipal annexations, Washington State's outdated tax system, stagnant gas tax revenues, the effects of voter initiatives, and an aging bridge and road system. The lack of revenue is significantly impacting the County's capacity to maintain and improve roads. Regional growth over the last few decades has resulted in higher traffic volumes and congestion, contributing to the deterioration of the County's road network.

King County receives road revenues from a variety of sources, including a dedicated unincorporated King County property tax, gas tax, federal and state grants, and local taxes. The dedicated property tax and gas tax provide the largest portion of funding for the Road Services Division (76 percent in 2023). The property tax is tied to the assessed value of properties in unincorporated King County. The County road system and its funding mechanisms predate growth management. After annexation of high-property value properties into cities, the County's unincorporated area tax base is small relative to the size and age of the unincorporated road system. In King County, 13 percent of the total population pays for the roads that support more than one million trips every day.

Property tax growth is capped at one percent annually, a pace slower than the ongoing growth in the cost of delivering services or the rate of inflation. Washington State's outdated tax system limits the County's ability to leverage revenue sources to support its funding needs. Local governments, like King County, need the flexibility and tools to help implement a more effective tax system and to preserve and maintain local roads. Gas tax revenues are flat, in part because of increased vehicle fuel efficiency, lower sales of gas due to economic conditions, changing driving patterns, and a decline in the revenue allocation to King County due to the reduction in road miles from annexations.

Grant funding supports important road projects, but grants alone, even sizeable ones, will not be sufficient to address the current and growing volume of unmet road and bridge needs. In addition, grants typically fund capital projects, are rarely available for maintenance and operations, and are an unpredictable and unreliable source of funding due to the competitiveness of the grant process.

In response to the funding crisis, the County halved its staffing level, refocused on core safety services, and pursued funding solutions through regional collaboration. These efforts included the 2015 Bridges and Roads Task Force and the 2017 Regional Transportation System Initiative. The former quantified the size of the funding gap and developed responsive policy recommendations. The latter identified a transportation network of regionally significant city, county, and state facilities; its unmet needs; and ways to improve network performance on the roads, streets, and routes that connect communities. Over 2020 and 2021, the County considered legislation that would have proposed voter propositions authorizing a six-year permanent levy lid lift to support the maintenance and preservation of the King County roads system. However, as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its uncertain impact on the economy, neither proposal moved forward. Roads has subsequently prioritized sustainable funding as a key strategic objective. To support this priority, a dedicated team was established to pursue grant opportunities, resulting in the successful acquisition of 48 grants totaling $121.8 million since 2019. Roads has also expanded its Fish Passage Program as a targeted strategy to attract further funding and grant revenues. To further these efforts, a

sustainable funding program manager was hired to lead and coordinate initiatives focused on long-term financial sustainability. Additionally, King County's legislative priorities in the Washington State Legislature since 2019 have included advocating for tax reform to help local governments provide critical services, such as maintaining road infrastructure. County leaders have urged the Legislature to lift the arbitrary cap on local property taxes; and offer flexible, progressive revenue options for County government services and the preservation of County roads and bridges. Solutions are still needed at state, regional, and local levels to address the estimated $250-$400 million annual funding gap, including the needs identified in the Transportation Needs Report. The County has identified several strategies to address the funding shortfall, including:

- Advocating for state legislative changes for additional or more flexible tools, such as raising the one percent property tax limit and addressing the fiscal impacts of successfully implementing the Growth Management Act.
- Advocating for state funding dedicated to the management of the County road system.
- Advocating for authority from the state Legislature for a fair, non-regressive, sustainable countywide revenue tool tied to inflation that provides a benefit to both cities and the County.
- Advocating for support from the state Legislature to facilitate the annexation of County roads inside and adjacent to city boundaries and annexation of Potential Annexation Areas.
- Collaborating with regional partners to identify a mutually beneficial transportation funding solution that recognizes that county roads form one element in a regional road network and are used to travel to and between urban residential and employment centers.
- Increasing pursuit of grant funding.
- Potentially implementing road usage charges at the local, regional, or state level.
- Potentially leveraging of King County Transportation District funding through vehicle license fees, sales taxes, general obligation bonds, impact fees, or other mechanisms.
- Potentially implementing a levy lid lift.

The Road Services policies and priorities in the Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Plan for Road Services direct the County's prioritization of projects in the context of this scarce funding. Using this guidance, the County prioritizes projects and activities that address operational safety and property damage hazards, meet regulatory compliance, maintain and preserve existing infrastructure, enhance mobility, and address roadway capacity, in that order. Project prioritization also considers road function, traffic volume, life-safety needs, network connectivity, and transit use. The Transportation Needs Report provides more detailed prioritization factors by project type. The County's Capital Improvement Program and Financial Plan for Road Services is reassess during the budget process to assure alignment with these guiding policies.

Financial viability to support the operation of the road system and provide for capital construction and preservation needs is tested over two timeframes for the Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Needs Report, the County's 20-year transportation plan, identifies the road-related investments needed to support the land use vision of the Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Needs Report provides an assessment of revenues projected from currently available resources and identifies reasonable options for securing additional revenues over the life of the plan. Secondly, the biennial update of the Roads Capital Improvement Program examines the specifics of how to implement the financing plan over the next six years.

T-123 **Financial investments in transportation should support a sustainable transportation system, consistent with the priorities established in each department and division's strategic plan or other functional plans.**

T-124 **King County should pursue and support regional planning and funding sources that recognize the interdependent, cross-jurisdictional nature of the region's transportation system, including impacts of urban development on the rural area transportation network.**

T-125 **When funding transportation projects in areas where annexations or incorporations are expected, King County should seek interlocal agreements with the affected cities and other service providers to provide opportunities for joint grant applications and cooperative funding of improvements.**

The state Growth Management Act provides guidance for managing a revenue shortfall. The following actions can be used to balance the funding shortfall of the plan:

1. Reduce transportation funding needs;
2. Develop new revenue options;
3. Change level of service; or
4. Change land use.

T-126 **During review of its Comprehensive Plan, King County should consider and address any potential shortfalls likely to occur between expected revenues and costs to maintain, preserve, and improve transportation infrastructure and service levels. Such review could include a reassessment of land use, growth targets, level of service standards, and revenue availability.**

T-127 **King County shall continually work to improve the efficiency of its operations and delivery of projects and services.**

T-128 **To provide adequate and sustainable resources for transportation services, infrastructure, and facility improvements, King County shall maximize its efforts to obtain federal and state funding and should identify and pursue new funding sources, including leveraging partnership opportunities, grants, and other cooperative funding mechanisms. These funding sources should not be regressive, and whenever possible, provide multijurisdictional benefits.**

F. Climate Change, Air Quality, and the Environment

Clean air and minimizing greenhouse gas emissions contribute to the health of people, ecosystems, and the economy. The County is working to reduce transportation-related emissions, which are the primary source of air pollutants regionally and a major driver of climate change.

In addition to reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, King County must also prepare County roads and transit infrastructure for climate change. More extreme heat events, heavier rain events, and sea level rise increase the potential for damage to roads, bridges, and sea walls, particularly as infrastructure ages. This can result in higher maintenance costs, more service disruptions, and mobility impacts. Increased flood impacts will require public investment to ensure public safety and mobility, particularly on the County road system.

King County transportation services are integral to implementing the Strategic Climate Action Plan. The Strategic Climate Action Plan sets transportation-related greenhouse

gas reduction goals and guides the planning, development, prioritization, implementation, and tracking of County actions, such as linking transportation and land use, developing community-driven transit, and creating climate-resilient transit infrastructure and services.

T-129 **Transportation improvements should be designed, built, and operated to minimize air, water, and noise pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and the disruption of natural surface water drainage in compliance with provisions and requirements of applicable federal, state, and local environmental regulations. Natural and historic resource protection should also be considered. Particular care should be taken to minimize impacts where the location of such facilities could increase the pressure for development in critical areas or the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

T-130 **King County should proactively identify barriers to fish passage created by existing County roads and prioritize multiple-benefit solutions that enhance high-priority habitats and address critical roadway maintenance and preservation needs.**

T-131 **King County, through its Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations, should support healthy community, road, and other transportation infrastructure designs that enable active transportation and public transit use, increase community cohesion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and preserve natural habitats.**

T-132 **Through its own actions and through regional partnerships, King County shall pursue strategies to reduce emissions from the transportation sector, including new vehicle technologies, the use of low-carbon fuels, land use changes, investment in equitable transit-oriented development, provision of transit, promotion of active transportation, joint purchasing, pilot projects, and actions to reduce vehicle miles traveled.**

T-133 **King County shall increase the share of its fleet that is electric vehicles, as guided by County policies.**

T-134 **King County shall strive to become a world leader in the use of transportation fuels and technologies that reduce operational greenhouse gas emissions from its fleets and vessels. King County shall achieve this goal by:**

- **a. Buying electric, zero-emission, and other clean transportation technologies when feasible to meet operational needs;**
- **b. Using clean fuels in its fleets and vessels;**
- **c. Implementing demonstration projects that use alternative fuels and technologies;**
- **d. Purchasing locally produced energy sources when practical;**
- **e. Seeking local and federal support to expand the use of low-carbon fuels and alternative, zero-emission technologies;**
- **f. Promoting best practices, innovations, and developments in transportation fuels and technologies; and**
- **g. Seeking to deploy and use its vehicles in an energy-efficient manner through vehicle routing, idling-reduction, and operator practices.**

T-135 **King County shall reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its off-road vehicles and equipment by using low-carbon fuels and advanced technologies, and by partnering with other agencies to implement demonstration projects using these vehicle technologies.**

1. Electric Vehicles

Transportation emissions – primarily from passenger cars and trucks – are the biggest source of carbon pollution in Washington, accounting for 39 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. Supporting the transition of private cars and trucks to electric vehicles will lead to fewer climate-altering pollutants, improved air quality, lower maintenance and fueling costs for car owners, and reduced pollution exposure for communities along major transportation corridors.

The Strategic Climate Action Plan supports efforts to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles while ensuring the equitable distribution of benefits of electric vehicles and promoting equitable access to mobility that prioritizes shared mobility solutions. The Strategic Climate Action Plan sets the following targets for the share of new vehicles sold that are electric vehicles by 2035: 100 percent of light-duty vehicles, 50 percent of medium-duty vehicles, and 28 percent of heavy-duty vehicles. King County and the State have adopted regulations requiring electric vehicle charging infrastructure be provided with new and substantial improvements to residential and nonresidential development. Washington State has also developed the Washington State Plan for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment and has set a target that all model year 2030 and later passenger and light-duty vehicles that are sold, purchased, or registered in Washington be zero-emission vehicles. The State also mandates that all new vehicles must be zero-emission vehicles from model year 2035 onward.

Challenges remain for equitable access to electric vehicles due to higher vehicle costs and access to charging infrastructure. On average, electric vehicles have a higher purchase price, though they are less expensive to own overall. Additionally, people who live in older multiunit or rental housing face barriers to securing electric vehicle charging at home, as tenants do not have property control and property owners have few incentives to install charging equipment. Constricted charging supply is exacerbated by existing disparities, as historically underinvested families disproportionately rent. However, there are some state and federal financial incentives available.

T-136 **King County should support expansion of private electric vehicle use and the provision of necessary charging infrastructure, including opportunities to improve equitable access to the benefits of electric vehicles and geographically dispersed access to public vehicle charging at King County-owned facilities and at partner locations, by taking action such as convening partners and leading grant proposals, administering grants, and supporting regional planning for electric vehicle infrastructure.**

T-137 **King County should support expansion of private electric vehicle freight use and the geographically dispersed charging infrastructure necessary to enable the emission-free movement of goods traveling throughout the county, regionally, nationally, and internationally.**

III. Multimodal Transportation

A. Public Transportation System

Metro plays an important role in achieving the region's growth strategy by focusing public transportation services in the Urban Growth Area of King County and providing service to designated regional, countywide, and other centers and areas of concentrated activity. Centers and other communities that are compact and designed to prioritize walking and biking are most easily served by transit. Such communities foster healthier, more active lifestyles while reducing vehicle dependency and associated road investments. By the same token, transit service can support and encourage development that is more compact. Metro's Service Guidelines describe the types of land uses that support different types of transit service. Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation and Metro Connects direct Metro to support equitable, affordable, transit-oriented communities and development.

T-201 **King County should support local and regional growth plans and policies by focusing transit services on centers and other areas of concentrated activity.**

T-202 **King County should support, encourage, and implement high-capacity transit facilities and services that are consistent with, and supportive of, the Comprehensive Plan, Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Metro's Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects, or successor plans.**

B. Public Transportation Policies and Service Guidelines

Metro is committed to delivering a regional, innovative, and integrated mobility network that is safe, equitable, and sustainable. To do this, Metro must invest in line with its values and policies, use resources wisely, and increase the efficiency of its operations. Consistent with its Strategic Plan and Metro Connects, Metro emphasizes planning and delivery of productive services and is committed to controlling costs. To help ensure efficiency and investments aligned with Metro's values, Metro uses service guidelines and performance measures to manage the transit system. Performance monitoring helps Metro evaluate its progress, plan and budget for the future, and improve agency practices. Metro is also committed to improving its transparency and so makes performance reports readily available to internal and external audiences.

Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects emphasize advancing equity and addressing climate change. The three documents strongly emphasize the need to invest upstream and where needs are greatest, including for priority populations: people who have low or no income; are Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; are immigrants or refugees; have disabilities; or are linguistically diverse. For example, when considering where to add new service, Metro's Service Guidelines now direct Metro to consider social equity first, and land use second.

T-203 **King County should provide reliable, safe, convenient, equitable, and accessible public transportation services that are responsive to the needs of people, businesses, and communities in King County – especially where needs are greatest.**

T-204 **King County should be a leader in regional mobility by providing service that benefits the community, helps reduce road congestion, can assist in emergency management needs, and supports the economic development and growth management needs of King County.**

T-205 **King County should provide service that is efficient, safe, accessible, and reliable, in addition to providing excellent customer service while being responsive and accountable to the public.**

T-206 **King County should work with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Kitsap County, and other entities offering passenger ferry services to ensure that service and capital plans for ferries are consistent with Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects, or successor plans.**

C. Active Transportation Program

Active transportation – such as walking, biking, using a wheelchair, and, in some parts of the county, equestrian travel – is an essential component of King County's multimodal transportation system. Regional trails serve a recreational function and also allow for uses such as transportation–enabling integration of the trail network with other active transportation networks.

Active transportation is an energy efficient, economical, and low impact mode of travel that promotes health. By providing options for active transportation, King County helps to reduce vehicle dependency and congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create opportunities for individuals to integrate healthy exercise into everyday activities. The ability to safely use active transportation can provide varying levels of accessibility and mobility to almost everyone, including people who are young, seniors, who have physical disabilities, who are part of a household at or below 80 percent of area median income, or who may not drive for other reasons. Well-designed, strategically located active transportation facilities can also provide increased and safer access to transit for more people.

In unincorporated King County, the Road Services Division is responsible for active transportation facilities such as bicycle lanes, sidewalks, or shoulders on County roads. The Division also provides crosswalks and specialized signals or signage that help facilitate safer active transportation. The King County Road Design and Construction Standards specify bicycle lane, sidewalk, or road shoulder criteria for unincorporated roads. Sidewalks are allowed in Rural Towns and, under certain circumstances, are allowed in the Rural Area as a spot improvement to address an existing safety or high-use issue when other walkway alternatives would not be as effective and for safe routes to school. Road-related active transportation capital needs in the unincorporated area are included in the Transportation Needs Report and are programmed in the six-year Roads Capital Improvement Program as funding allows. Road safety, including consideration of vehicle speeds in roadway design, and strategic, capital, and operational countermeasures to enhance safety are critical tools to provide for safe and easy transportation options.

The Regional Trails network is an integral component of the county's recreational and transportation system. It includes facilities located both in cities and the unincorporated area. Transit and active transportation are highly synergistic; transit use tends to be highest in locations where active transportation use is prevalent, and vice versa. Metro supports active transportation programs such as bicycle racks on transit buses and passenger ferries, and bicycle lockers at park-and-ride lots, employment sites, ferry terminals, and other locations.

T-207 **King County shall consider the safety, needs, and abilities of active transportation users in the planning, design, construction, maintenance, preservation, and operation of road infrastructure and other transportation facilities.**

T-208 **Consistent with the priorities defined in the County's transportation plans and the Regional Growth Strategy, active transportation system investments should aim to increase safety, accessibility, and mobility; facilitate mode integration and intermodal connections; improve access to centers, where appropriate; and provide opportunities for healthy activity and alternatives to driving for all populations.**

T-209 **King County shall evaluate active transportation improvements in its road construction projects and shall implement these improvements where appropriate and feasible.**

T-210 **In unincorporated areas of King County, the following needs shall be given the highest priority when identifying, planning, and programming active transportation improvements:**

a. Addressing known collision locations;
b. Fostering safe active transportation routes to schools and other areas where school-aged children regularly assemble;
c. Filling gaps in, or enhancing connections to, the Regional Trails network;
d. Serving locations of high concentration of pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic; and
e. Providing safe routes to transit.

T-211 **In urban areas, active transportation improvements should increase access to transit and urban centers while enhancing community connections to parks, local trails, shopping, libraries, healthcare, and other public and private services and facilities.**

T-212 **The King County Regional Trails network shall be the centerpiece of the network for active transportation in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. The County's efforts to enhance the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands active transportation network should include completing the Regional Trails network's gaps, coordinating road and trail projects whenever possible, considering access from roadways such as gateway (trailhead) parking, and enhancing access to transit, especially park-and-ride lots and transit centers.**

T-213 **The Regional Trails network, and its use, shall be for both recreation and transportation purposes. Not all facilities are appropriate for all modes and may have restrictions on the use of any mode.**

T-214 **In the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, active transportation improvements shall be provided at rural levels of service, preserve rural character, and avoid impacts to the environment and significant historic properties.**

T-215 **To increase equitable access to walking, bicycling, and transit mobility options, the County should actively seek grant funding to improve active transportation infrastructure that serves the needs of historically underinvested groups, people with disabilities, seniors, and people with special transportation needs.**

T-216 **New school development should address safe walking and bicycling routes for students. If the existing transportation infrastructure within a one-mile radius, together with the school's road frontage improvements, cannot support safe walking or bicycling to school, King County shall use its development review authority to require the school district and the new school to address the long-term transportation needs of students, including through the state-mandated Safe Routes to School program.**

T-217 **New binding site plans, commercial developments, and subdivisions shall seek to accommodate internal active transportation mobility and access to nearby shopping, parks, trails, schools, healthcare, community resources, and other public and private services and facilities, consistent with the different needs and service levels for urban areas, the Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands.**

T-218 **The specifications in the King County Road Design and Construction Standards shall support active transportation safety and accessibility, consistent with the County's adopted policies regarding appropriate urban and rural levels of service.**

T-219 **In supporting equestrian travel in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, King County should emphasize safety and connection to established trail networks open to equestrian use.**

T-220 **King County shall seek opportunities to acquire and develop active transportation corridors. Evaluation of requests to vacate unused road rights-of-way should consider existing active transportation uses and future development of such uses.**

T-221 **King County should coordinate with active transportation users and advocacy organizations to ensure that their input is included early and throughout the planning and project design process for projects with active transportation elements or that have the potential to affect these users.**

T-222 **King County should participate in the Puget Sound Regional Council's regional bicycle network planning efforts and consider related project needs within King County's jurisdiction in the County's active transportation planning and project prioritization processes.**

D. Transportation Demand Management

Transportation affects every aspect of the lives of King County residents, not only in terms of mobility but also in terms of health, equity, racial and social justice, economy, and environment. Transportation Demand Management consists of a broad range of strategies that provide for reduced reliance on single occupancy vehicle trips, reduced vehicle miles traveled, and increased efficiency of the whole transportation system. Transportation Demand Management results in lower greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, and equitable access to alternative mobility options.

Transportation Demand Management strategies include (but are not limited to):

- Public education, information, and incentive programs;
- Public transportation (bus, rail, passenger ferry, vanpool, and carpool);
- Active transportation options;
- State-mandated Commute Trip Reduction and Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers;

- Roadway and lane management (such as ridesharing, intelligent traffic systems, and active traffic management);
- Congestion pricing strategies (such as high-occupancy toll lanes, express toll lanes, corridor tolling, cordon tolling, system-wide tolling, and vehicle miles traveled charges);
- Joint use and intermodal transfer facilities (such as park-and-ride lots);
- Parking management and pricing (such as connecting supply with mode split targets; mode split is the percentage of a specific mode's use from among all modes of travel);
- Telecommunications substitutes for physical travel, such as remote work; and
- Land use decisions (such as site design standards and concurrency).

T-223 **King County shall implement policies and programs that support Transportation Demand Management, active transportation, transit service improvements, and expansion of high-occupancy vehicle travel to increase the share of trips made by modes other than driving alone, and should partner with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Puget Sound Regional Council, local jurisdictions, employers, major institutions, and developers to implement programs that support, encourage, and raise awareness of alternatives to driving alone.**

T-224 **King County should consider Transportation Demand Management strategies, beyond those adopted as County regulation, among a menu of measures to mitigate for traffic impacts of proposed development or major highway construction projects.**

T-225 **King County should promote employee transportation programs, including those for its own employees, that encourage trip reduction, use of public transportation, walking, and bicycling.**

T-226 **King County should participate in local, regional, and statewide efforts to implement and measure the results of Transportation Demand Management strategies, technologies, and systems, including policies developed through regional consensus and adopted by the County. To this end, the County shall identify funds to research, plan, implement, and measure the success of Transportation Demand Management strategies.**

T-227 **King County shall work with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Transportation Commission, Puget Sound Regional Council, and cities to implement Transportation Demand Management strategies, such as congestion pricing, to support increased efficiency and reduce the need for new facilities.**

T-228 **King County should support Transportation Demand Management strategies, including congestion pricing and other road usage pricing strategies, and should especially support more-equitable and less-regressive approaches, as a means to optimize transportation system performance and efficiency, generate revenues, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and support King County environmental and climate goals.**

T-229 **Revenue from congestion pricing and other road usage pricing should be used to improve, preserve, and operate the transportation system, including transit and other multimodal investments, as well as to help fund improvements that address the diversionary impacts on non-tolled facilities.**

T-230 **King County shall provide culturally appropriate opportunities to inform and participate in programs that increase access to effective alternatives to driving alone for households at or below 80 percent of area median income; Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; people speaking languages other than English; immigrants; and refugees.**

IV. Roads

A. Road System

T-301 **King County shall not construct and shall oppose the construction by other agencies of any new arterials or highways in the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands.**

T-302 **King County recognizes the importance to regional and local mobility of existing state highways that traverse the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands and should advocate for state and federal agencies to improve the safety, efficiency, and resiliency of these facilities where they prevent unplanned development in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands and preserve rural character.**

T-303 **King County shall not expand capacity of existing arterial roads in the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands, except for roads where needed for safety, or for segments of rural regional corridors that pass through the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands, or both, to accommodate levels of traffic between urban areas. Appropriate rural development regulations and strong commitments to access management should be in place prior to authorizing capacity expansion of rural regional corridors to prevent unplanned growth in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. Rural regional corridors shall be identified in the Transportation Needs Report (Appendix C1) and shall meet all of the following criteria:**

- **a. Connects one urban area to another, or to a highway of statewide significance that provides such connection, by traversing the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands;**
- **b. Classified as a principal arterial;**
- **c. Carries high traffic volumes (at least 15,000 average daily traffic); and**
- **d. At least half of p.m. peak trips on the corridor are traveling to cities or other counties.**

T-304 **Any capacity increases to rural regional corridors shall be designed to accommodate levels of traffic between urban areas consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies regarding development in the surrounding Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands. The County shall seek to maximize the efficient use of existing roadway capacity before considering adding new capacity to rural regional corridors.**

T-305 **Any segment of a County roadway that forms the boundary between the Urban Growth Area and the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands should be designated urban and all associated road right-of-way fully contained within the Urban Growth Area boundary. Such urban boundary roads shall be designed and constructed to urban roadway standards on both sides of the roadway segment.**

T-306 **King County shall work with cities for the annexation of County roadways and/or street segments located in the urban area and within or between cities to provide for a consistent level of urban services on the affected roads and reduce the burden on unincorporated taxpayers that are supporting this urban infrastructure.**

B. Concurrency

The Transportation Concurrency Management program requires that adequate transportation facilities must be available to carry the traffic of a proposed development at County level of service standards, or that construction for needed improvements is funded in the adopted Six-Year Roads Capital Improvement Program, or else the proposed development cannot be approved.

The Transportation Concurrency Management program has been designed to meet the following goals:

- Fulfill the requirements of state growth management legislation;
- Be simple to understand, easy to implement and administer, and transparent to those affected by its processes and regulations;
- Consider and encourage multimodal travel;
- Encourage growth in urban areas where provision of transportation infrastructure and services is most efficient and economical; and
- Efficiently integrate concurrency determination into the permit system process and database.

Transportation concurrency is a plan-level system that does not require testing of individual developments. Instead, concurrency status is determined by broad geographic areas within unincorporated King County called travelsheds, which were drawn to reflect where travel patterns share common characteristics. Trips associated with development within a particular travelshed would likely use or be affected by traffic on arterials located within and bordering that travelshed. A development proposal will be considered to meet the transportation concurrency standard if it is located in a travelshed that meets level of service standards as depicted on the concurrency map in effect at the time of development application. Development proposals must still meet all applicable zoning and land use regulations.

T-307 **The concurrency map shall identify the travelsheds that meet or do not meet concurrency standards. Any proposed development in travelsheds that meet concurrency standards shall be deemed concurrent.**

T-308 **The concurrency test shall be based on the level of service on arterials in unincorporated King County using the County's adopted methodology.**

T-309 **The concurrency test may include provision of factors for safety, pavement condition, and availability of multiple modes of transportation.**

T-310 **In the Rural Area, the concurrency test may include a provision that allows the purchase of Transferable Development Rights to satisfy transportation concurrency requirements.**

C. Road Services Policies and Priorities

Effective design, management, and operation of the road system are critical to mobility and quality of life. King County strives to make efficient use of the existing infrastructure, serve the broad needs of users, address safety issues, and design facilities that are appropriate for the surrounding communities. King County has a structural funding deficit that continues to severely impact the County's ability to provide basic preservation and maintenance of its aging and declining road system. Therefore, as the revenue available to manage the road system fluctuates, so will the County's ability to maintain and preserve its roads and bridges. If sufficient revenue is not available to sustain the road system, then infrastructure may be downgraded or closed. The County's focus will remain on the priorities in the Strategic Plan for Road Services to guide these critical decisions. The Strategic Plan for Road Services also prioritizes funding of services and projects, including both the type of activities and the location of investments.

The Strategic Plan for Road Services lays out the priority for the Road Services Division funding decisions in the following order:

1. Prevent and respond to immediate operational life safety and property damage hazards.
2. Meet regulatory requirements and standards in cooperation with regulatory agencies.
3. Maintain and preserve the existing roadway facilities network.
4. Enhance mobility (movement of people and goods) by facilitating more efficient use of the existing road system.
5. Address roadway capacity when necessary to support growth targets in the urban area.

Based on the Strategic Plan for Road Services, King County has implemented a graduated service level decision framework that considers road function, traffic volume, life-safety needs, network connectivity, and transit use. Priority will be given to keep the most vital components of the road system operational for users. This approach guides service provision under limited funding scenarios and also helps direct investments toward the most critical needs when additional resources are available. Performance measurement and reporting is also an important aspect of the Strategic Plan for Road Services and a critical tool in managing the County's road system.

To improve efficiency and productivity, King County has implemented and continues to enhance and refine a data-driven asset management approach that, combined with the policy direction in this Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Plan for Road Services, will guide investment choices over the next biennium and beyond.

The Road Services Division's Capital Improvement Program and Financial Plan must be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan and consider the current performance of the transportation system, concurrency needs of planned developments, priority projects, phased implementation of improvements, and other related factors. Revenues from a range of sources, including grants, are programmed to appropriate projects.

While new streets are designed to balance the safety and mobility needs of all users, including people walking and biking, much of the network was built many generations

ago using the standards of the time. Over time, as resources become available, the County strives to improve the system to one that is designed and operated in a human-centric manner to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes, accommodates physical human vulnerabilities, proactively addresses safety, and reduces risk through redundant measures. The responsibility for traffic safety outcomes on the road network is shared between multiple actors, including the Road Services Division as the road system manager, as well as public health organizations, law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, road users, and others.

Arterial Functional Classification, established in Appendix C, Transportation, is implemented through the specifications provided in the King County Road Design and Construction Standards. The Urban Growth Area boundary provides the distinction between urban and rural arterials.

Management of the County road network gives special consideration to its designated Heritage Corridors, where travelers can still experience a sense of the county's rich transportation history. These historic and scenic corridors include:

- Cedarhurst Road/Westside Highway and Dockton Road on Vashon-Maury Island;
- Green Valley Road in the Auburn Black Diamond area;
- Issaquah Fall City Road, West Snoqualmie River Road, and West Snoqualmie Valley Road/Carnation Farm Road in the Snoqualmie Valley;
- Old Cascade Scenic Highway and Old Sunset Highway in Stevens Pass; and
- Osceola Loop in the Enumclaw Plateau.

Likewise, travelers in King County also benefit from multiple scenic, historic, and recreational highways located within King County. Designated Washington Scenic and Recreational Highways include:

- I-90 (Mountains to Sound Greenway),
- US 2 (Stevens Pass Greenway),
- State Route 410 (Chinook Pass Scenic Byway), and
- State Route 202 (Cascade Valleys Scenic Byway).

Equity and racial and social justice principles receive significant consideration in decision-making processes. The Road Services Division's approach to integrating equity and racial and social justice into agency business operations and budgeting includes the following components:

- Prioritize emergency snow and ice response along Metro's highest priority transit snow routes, since these may be the only source of transportation available to lower-income residents.
- Promote equal access to, and availability of, information and services for all county residents by designing Division communications and public engagement processes that are culturally relevant for diverse communities, including communities whose residents speak languages other than English.
- Utilize partnerships with other King County or external agencies, community groups, and nonprofit organizations to better understand community needs and obtain community input and involvement.
- When available, grant-funded active transportation improvements are directed to historically underinvested communities because they both help to support active, healthy lifestyles and also facilitate mobility for people with disabilities and those who cannot drive or are unable to afford a car.

- Acknowledge that Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; households at or below 80 percent of area median income; people speaking languages other than English; immigrants; and refugees disproportionately reside in some King County neighborhoods. The County also recognizes that these groups of people are dispersed across the county.

T-311 **King County shall maintain and preserve the unincorporated area road system to keep it operating safely, protect mobility and infrastructure investments, and maximize the useful life of transportation assets to the extent feasible under available funding levels.**

T-312 **To keep the most vital components of the road system operational for users, King County should use a decision framework that considers road function, life-safety needs, network connectivity, traffic volume, transit use, and other assessment criteria to both guide service provision and help direct investments toward the most critical needs when additional resources are available.**

T-313 **King County should fund safety, essential regulatory compliance, and maintenance and preservation needs of the existing road system prior to mobility and capacity improvements.**

T-314 **Maintenance and preservation of the unincorporated rural roadway system shall be emphasized in long-term planning and asset management in recognition of the fact that Rural Area and Natural Resource Land roads and bridges will remain the County's long-term responsibility after all annexations are complete.**

T-315 **King County should contribute to achieving the state traffic safety goal of zero deaths and serious injuries using a safe systems approach, through which road system managers, public health organizations, law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, road users, and other parties collaborate to prioritize the elimination of crashes that result in death and serious injuries.**

T-316 **Decisions on long-term road closures and abandonments should be made based on public safety considerations, technical or engineering standards, and the policy guidance set forth in the Strategic Plan for Road Services, including preservation of local access to adjacent property. Impacts to residents, businesses, and other road users or affected parties should be identified and communicated to them in a timely manner.**

T-317 **Roadway stormwater facilities are an integral component of a properly functioning transportation network and shall be maintained, preserved, and, when feasible, upgraded to protect infrastructure, public health, and the natural environment, as well as meet federal, state, and local regulations.**

T-318 **Road projects and programs should be implemented in ways that avoid or minimize negative impacts to, as well as seek to provide positive benefits for, historically underinvested groups, people with disabilities, seniors, and people with special transportation needs.**

T-319 **To facilitate the establishment of a safe and efficient traffic circulation network reflecting all transportation modes and to retain the availability of access to adjacent properties, the County shall review and comment on the appropriate placement of new or major modified facilities or physical barriers, such as buildings, utilities, and surface water management facilities in or adjacent to road rights-of-way.**

T-320 **King County should design and operate roads to direct pass-through traffic away from local roads and encourage such traffic to use highways or arterials, which are designed to accommodate higher traffic volumes at higher speeds.**

T-321 **The King County Road Design and Construction Standards shall promote safe, cost-effective roads that, to the extent practical and allowed by law, incorporate complete streets infrastructure to balance the health and safety needs of all road users, contribute to the state traffic safety goal of zero deaths and serious injuries, and reflect the function of the road and the different needs of and service levels for the Urban Growth Area and Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

T-322 **King County should provide road services in a manner that is sensitive to the natural environment, historic properties, and archaeological resources, and to design new facilities that fit within the context of the built or natural environments in which they are located.**

T-323 **King County should preserve its identified Heritage Corridors through context-sensitive design, planning, and maintenance, as exemplars of historic and scenic character. In-kind replacement of road and roadside features and the use of materials that complement the character of each corridor should be utilized to the extent feasible and meets safety needs. King County should encourage adjacent property owners, through outreach efforts, to similarly support the preservation of these corridors.**

T-324 **King County shall support and encourage the preservation and enhancement of scenic, historic, and recreational resources along the designated Washington Scenic and Recreational Highways located in the county. The corridor management plans established for these highways should be considered in the development and implementation of King County's plans, projects, and programs.**

V. Air Travel

A. Airports

T-401 **King County should use its authority, including zoning, permitting, and development standards, to protect the Bandera, Vashon, and Skykomish public-use airports and private airports from encroachment of non-compatible land uses. Compatible airport land uses are those that comply with Federal Aviation Administration guidance on location, height, and activity that provide for safe aircraft movement, airport operations, including expansion, and community safety.**

B. Air Transportation

T-402 **King County shall plan, design, and implement services, programs, and facilities for the King County International Airport to support a safe, secure, and efficient global aerospace system.**

T-403 **King County International Airport shall continue to provide and maintain safe and secure transportation services and facilities for the flying public and aviation community in support of a broad range of uses, including corporate general aviation, small general aviation, charter and commercial passenger services, military aircraft, air cargo, and aircraft manufacturing, maintenance, storage, and service, while improving mobility for people and freight to meet growing and evolving demand.**

T-404 **King County and King County International Airport planning efforts shall:**

a. Promote coordinated planning and effective management to optimize the movement of people and goods in the region's aviation system in a manner that minimizes health, air quality, and noise impact to the community, especially frontline communities;

b. Consider demand management alternatives as future aviation growth needs are analyzed, recognizing capacity constraints at existing facilities and the time and resources necessary to build new ones; and

c. Support the ongoing process of development of a new commercial aviation facility in Washington State.

King County International Airport noise-reduction efforts in communities surrounding Boeing field are guided by the Federal Aviation Administration approved Part 150 Noise and Land Use Compatibility Plan. The Plan supports King County International Airport efforts to be a "good neighbor" to affected residential areas and identifies many actions that may be taken by King County International Airport, pilots, tenants, the Federal Aviation Administration, and others to reduce noise impacts on residential areas.

T-405 **Recognizing that certain noise-reduction measures are contingent on ongoing and future Federal Aviation Administration funding, King County shall implement those actions under its control and identified in the Part 150 Noise and Land Use Compatibility Plan. King County shall encourage other entities to implement those measures under their control and also identified in the Part 150 Noise and Land Use Compatibility Plan.**

T-406 **King County shall work with airports, federal agencies that oversee flight operations, local jurisdictions, community-based partners, and others to advance health equity and racial and social justice by mitigating exposure to noise and other airport-related harm.**

VI. Coordination and Public Outreach

The elements of the transportation system outlined in the Comprehensive Plan are planned and operated in coordination with the cities in and abutting King County, the adjoining counties, the Puget Sound Regional Council, the Port of Seattle, the transit agencies providing service in and connecting to King County, and the Washington State Department of Transportation.

The following activities support the coordination process:

- Review of plan updates by affected and interested parties, such as the transportation subarea boards and unincorporated area residents and organizations;

- Updates of King County functional, strategic, and other plans such as the Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Metro Service Guidelines, Metro Connects, the Open Space Plan, and the Strategic Climate Action Plan;
- The statewide and countywide grant application process;
- The Transportation Needs Report and Capital Improvement Program coordination process;
- Participation in the Puget Sound Regional Council;
- Review of information provided online by external agencies and organizations;
- Public information; and
- Public outreach and meetings.

A. Regional Coordination

T-501 **King County should pursue regional coordination and partnership to address countywide transportation challenges.**

T-502 **King County should promote a multijurisdictional, multimodal regional corridor approach to reducing congestion and improving efficiency on highways and arterial roads.**

T-503 **King County should lead, partner in, and promote regional technology initiatives that help to improve mobility.**

T-504 **King County should work with state agencies, the Puget Sound Regional Council, and other jurisdictions to ensure that any regional projected aviation capacity problems, and the air transportation needs of the region's residents and economy, are addressed in a manner that is timely and reflects the County's land use plans, transportation plans, and infrastructure capacity.**

T-505 **King County shall support active management of state-owned freeways to optimize movement of people. High-Occupancy Vehicle, High-Occupancy Toll, or Express Toll lanes should be managed to prioritize reliable speed advantage for transit and vanpools, and maintain a reliable speed advantage for the other high-occupancy vehicles consistent with the State's High-Occupancy-Vehicle lane minimum performance standard.**

T-506 **King County shall advocate that transit should be exempt from paying tolls as it is an essential element of the transportation system, and is critical to maintaining and increasing the person-carrying capacity of the highway and arterial network. Transit provides an alternative travel mode and improves mobility for all users of the system. Transit also increases the efficiency of transportation infrastructure, thereby reducing investments needed in roadway expansion and additional parking.**

T-507 **King County should collaborate with the Puget Sound Regional Council, cities, and other affected agencies to develop a regional parking strategy consistent with the parking pricing and management recommendations of the Regional Transportation Plan, or successor plans.**

T-508 **King County should collaborate with the Puget Sound Regional Council, cities, and other agencies to improve interjurisdictional coordination on active transportation and Regional Trail infrastructure. The County should support efforts to maintain comprehensive information about existing and planned facilities, model plans and best practices, and grant opportunities.**

The Eastrail corridor provides a unique opportunity to support active transportation and transit mobility, consistent with its federal railbanked status. The County's goal for the corridor is to support economic opportunity for all King County residents by linking jobs and housing through multimodal connections between regional growth centers, urban communities, local and high-capacity transit, and other regional trails – while accommodating utilities, parks, recreation, and cultural amenities.

T-509 **King County, in coordination with federal, state, and other local agencies, shall develop the Eastrail corridor in ways that enhance multimodal mobility and connectivity, with a commitment to dual use (recreational trail and public transportation), consistent with federal railbanking. Planning and development should consider opportunities for integration of multimodal facilities, including regional trails, into the greater transportation network.**

B. Freight Mobility

Freight mobility is critical to King County's economy and western Washington's role as a major national and international trading region. King County supports efforts to plan and create a fast, reliable freight transportation system in the region. To maintain the region's competitive edge, transportation infrastructure must provide for the efficient movement of goods and freight to and from ports, airports, and industrial areas balanced with the needs of general purpose and high-occupancy vehicle traffic.

T-510 **The King County transportation system should support reliable and efficient movement of goods throughout the county, while minimizing the impacts of freight traffic on general purpose traffic and residential neighborhoods. The County should participate in regional efforts and partnerships to achieve these goals.**

T-511 **King County should support regional freight mobility by incorporating freight considerations into road planning, design, construction, and maintenance.**

T-512 **King County should coordinate with other jurisdictions, the public, and the private sector to identify barriers to the effective and efficient movement of freight and goods and develop proposals to improve freight mobility on the arterial system.**

New or expanded truck parking along the I-5 corridor within the Seattle, Tacoma, and Federal Way areas is needed. Improved and expanded truck parking facilities are also needed at the chain-up locations on both sides of Snoqualmie Pass. The lack of truck parking capacity not only causes safety problems, it also has a negative impact on communities in high-demand areas. For example, the city of North Bend is inundated with trucks parking on local roads when Snoqualmie Pass is closed in the winter.

Federal law limits the number of hours that truck drivers may work. This means that drivers must stop for rest frequently and need access to safe, secure, and legal truck parking facilities. The shortage of truck parking can contribute to truck drivers driving while fatigued and parking illegally, creating a safety hazard on highways and greater community impacts.

Interstate commerce is a state and national priority and small communities located next to high-volume, long-haul truck corridors are not able to resolve multistate truck parking issues by themselves. Washington State Department of Transportation Truck Parking Studies show that the state's greatest need for additional truck parking is along I-5, I-405, State Route 167 in central Puget Sound, and I-90 near North Bend.

T-513 **King County should work with regional partners to plan for and develop adequate truck parking in high-demand locations along King County's Truck Freight Economic Corridors to improve safety and reduce negative impacts on local communities. Development of truck parking should be supportive of technologies that reduce greenhouse gases, such as electric charging, energy efficiency, and biodiesel.**

C. Public Involvement

T-514 **King County should provide accessible, culturally appropriate, timely, accurate, and consistent public information about transportation services, infrastructure, and funding issues, and ensure a wide range of opportunities for input and engagement with county residents, including historically underinvested groups, people with disabilities, seniors, and people with special transportation needs, and other affected community members.**

T-515 **King County should actively engage the public and other appropriate parties, such as the Community Service Areas constituencies, community groups, elected officials, and jurisdictions throughout the region, in transportation planning processes and plan updates.**

T-516 **King County Metro Transit's engagement should follow guidance in Metro's Strategic Plan for Public Transportation, Service Guidelines, and Metro Connects, or successor plans, to prioritize equity, involve communities in upstream decisions, and build lasting relationships with community partners.**



CHAPTER 9

SERVICES, FACILITIES, & UTILITIES

I. Identifying Needs for Facilities and Services

Public facilities and services are vital to protect public health, safety, and welfare and to protect and enhance community and environmental quality. Inadequate sewage disposal, for example, could directly threaten public health. Inadequate groundwater protection could result in unsafe drinking water and threaten stream flow. Deficiencies in services, such as police protection or parks, might not raise severe obstacles to any single new development, but over time could cause general threats to public health, safety, and welfare and deterioration of community quality.

King County government is responsible for ensuring adequate facilities and services are available or can be made available to support planned growth. This responsibility is carried out by identifying needs for facilities and services based on the planned amount and location of growth. The mechanism for identifying needs is capital improvement programming.

The Growth Management Act requires the County to prepare a capital facility plan that includes an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, a forecast of the future needs for capital facilities, including the proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new facilities, a six-year plan that will finance the expanded or new facilities, and direction for reassessment of land use if funding is unavailable to meet existing and future needs. These requirements are addressed through:

- Chapter 9, Services, Facilities, & Utilities, including Policies F-405, F-406, F-411, F-413, and F-306;
- Chapter 8, Transportation, including the "Funding Priorities" section and Policy T-126; and
- Appendix A, Capital Facilities and Utilities.

F-101 **King County shall seek to identify the needs and propose strategies for public facilities and services, including physical infrastructure and health, human, and public safety services necessary to support all communities at appropriate urban and rural service levels.**

F-102 **Results from equity impact reviews shall be used as an important consideration in evaluating funding, capital project, and service delivery decisions, and the County's equity and racial and social justice principles should be used to improve residents' access to the determinants of equity.**

F-103 **King County agencies shall engage communities in a culturally and audience-appropriate manner, including language access. King County agencies shall also engage communities most affected by proposed projects.**

F-104 **King County shall consider historical inequities and historically underinvested communities both in rural and unincorporated urban areas in determining the priority areas for public funding of capital facilities, services, and infrastructure.**

II. Regional Services

King County is a regional and local service provider. Regional services provided by the County include transit, wastewater treatment, human services, and solid waste management. For residents of unincorporated urban areas, the Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands in King County, local services may include sheriff, development review, land use regulation, and the coordination of water, sewer, and health service providers.

F-201 **King County shall provide or manage regional services and programs, which include but are not limited to:**

- **a. Affordable housing;**
- **b. Economic development;**
- **c. Flood warning and flood hazard management;**
- **d. Harborview Hospital;**
- **e. Hazardous waste management;**
- **f. Human services;**
- **g. Public health;**
- **h. Law and criminal legal services;**
- **i. Park, trails, and open space systems;**
- **j. Wastewater collection, treatment, and resource recovery;**
- **k. Solid waste management, including recycling;**
- **l. Transit; and**
- **m. Water resource management.**

F-202 **King County should work with cities and other service providers to establish priority areas for public funding of capital facilities, services, and infrastructure.**

III. Partnerships and Coordination

F-301 **King County shall plan as partners with cities, special purpose districts, other local service providers, and residents to provide local and regional services. As cities assume primary responsibility for coordinating the provision of local services delivery in urban areas, the County shall continue to provide local services delivery within the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, consistent with rural standards and needs. Special purpose districts may still provide services, where appropriate. The County shall also assume primary responsibility for coordinating the provision of regional services, including services that must be delivered within city boundaries. The County shall also work with cities, special purpose districts, and other counties to identify regional service and facility needs and develop strategies to provide them.**

F-302 **King County should work with service providers to implement incentives that encourage green building, such as financial and development incentives, and help more people to access healthier buildings with reduced utility bills.**

F-303 **Public and private community service providers should be encouraged to share or reuse facilities when appropriate to reduce costs, conserve land, and provide convenience, access, and amenity for the public, and to reduce the generation of greenhouse gases. Joint siting and shared use of facilities should be encouraged for schools, community centers, health facilities, cultural facilities, libraries, swimming pools, and other social and recreational facilities. Sharing of facilities may include providing meeting space that can be accessed by the community, as appropriate.**

F-304 **King County should make its public facilities and properties available for renewable energy production, such as community solar programs, when such use is compatible with the primary use of and any regulations associated with the facility.**

F-305 **King County should make its public facilities or properties available for use as a P-patch or community garden when such use is compatible with the primary public use of the facility.**

A. Addressing Service Deficiencies

F-306 **If a service provider declares, through their capital facilities plan, an inability to accommodate projected service needs inside their service area, King County and the service provider shall remedy the deficiency through a joint planning process addressing capital improvement programs, long-term funding strategies, or other appropriate corrective actions. If those actions cannot resolve the deficiency, King County shall not allow for expansion of the service provider's service area and shall consider regulations to mitigate the effect of the deficiency.**

F-307 **King County should coordinate with Indian tribes, cities, and hospital districts on health and human service facilities and services. County investments in health and human service facilities should be targeted primarily to the designated Urban Centers and secondarily to other locations in the Urban Growth Area and Rural Towns.**

B. Financing Strategies

F-308 **As part of pre-annexation or annexation agreements, excluding Four-to-One Program-related agreements, King County shall work with the cities to create a financing partnership for areas of the Urban Growth Area that the cities will annex. This includes determining county/regional and city/municipal facilities and services and then committing to a shared financing strategy to build or provide these infrastructure improvements or services.**

F-309 **King County should, in cooperation with other jurisdictions, develop funding strategies for governmental infrastructure that take into account economic development goals and consider the costs to, and benefits for, the jurisdictions and the region.**

F-310 **King County should identify, strengthen, and support equitable discount or low-rate service fees to reduce cost burden on seniors and households at or below 80 percent of area median income.**

Depending on the program, the age threshold for a senior could be 55, 62, or 65 years or over.

IV. Facilities and Services

F-401 **Public spending to support growth should be directed to the Urban Growth Area and to maintain existing infrastructure in the unincorporated area, and should be prioritized through the Capital Facility Plan to comply with the concurrency requirements of the Growth Management Act.**

F-402 **In the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, services provided by agencies shall support a rural level of development and support service that meets the needs of the community and not facilitate urbanization.**

F-403 **King County shall provide or manage local services and programs for unincorporated areas, which include but are not limited to:**

a. Permitting and code enforcement;
b. District Court;
c. Economic Development;
d. Land use regulation;
e. Law enforcement;
f. Local parks;
g. Roads;
h. Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands protection, preservation, and management; and
i. Surface water management.

F-404 **King County shall encourage investment in improved infrastructure and amenities in existing neighborhoods, particularly in communities at risk of displacement.**

F-405 **When planning major capital investments in areas at risk of displacement, King County should coordinate such actions with equitable engagement and anti-displacement measures.**

A. Capital Facility Planning

F-406 **The capital facility plans and capital improvement programs prepared by all other agencies that provide services to unincorporated areas should be consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan.**

F-407 **King County shall engage in ongoing facilities planning to ensure that it has sufficient workspace to meet its operational needs on a going-forward basis. Facilities planning shall include an assessment of current facilities and future needs and shall promote equity, economic and operational efficiencies, and environmental sustainability. Facilities planning, decisions, and implementation shall be guided by the Real Property Asset Management Plan.**

F-408 **King County shall take into account the equity and racial and social justice opportunities for capital investments within a community when siting a facility or changing locations to improve service delivery.**

F-409 **To reduce overall public costs, noise, climate change impacts, and disruption to the local area during construction, installation of new or maintenance of existing utility facilities should be timed and coordinated with other projects that utilize public rights-of-way and easements, where possible.**

F-410 **King County's capital facility plans shall identify financing strategies to support the land use assumptions in the Comprehensive Plan, including adopted growth targets and allocated housing needs.**

F-411 **King County shall work with neighboring counties, the state, Puget Sound Regional Council, special purpose districts, ports, and cities to identify areas of shared need and adequate land supply for public facilities. The County's capital acquisition budget shall reflect the jointly agreed-upon priorities and schedule.**

F-412 **King County's capital improvement program shall demonstrate that projected needs for facilities and services can be met within the Urban Growth Area and can be served in compliance with the concurrency requirements of the Growth Management Act. If that is not possible, King County shall determine where and when deficits may occur and how needed facilities and services might be phased in and/or financed to serve such deficit areas. Alternative phasing and financing strategies must be identified and determined to be infeasible prior to triggering a land use and zoning reassessment.**

F-413 **King County shall work with the school districts and other special purpose districts to plan for growth in line with the county's housing and job growth targets.**

F-414 **School districts that choose to have the County collect impact fees for them, and water and sewer utilities that provide their services to unincorporated King County shall prepare capital facility plans consistent with requirements of the Growth Management Act, the Countywide Planning Policies, and King County Code.**

F-415 **Provision of an adequate supply of kindergarten through 12th grade public schools and public school facilities is essential to avoid overcrowding and to enhance the educational opportunities for children. King County shall adopt regulations that are supportive of the permitting of kindergarten through 12th grade public schools and facilities in a manner consistent with the goals of the Growth Management Act and as provided in Policies R-327 and R-328.**

F-416 **King County shall strive to provide services and build and operate public buildings and infrastructure that are fossil fuel free and shall strive to eliminate fossil fuels in new construction.**

B. Sustainable Capital Facilities

King County's goal is to work toward a model sustainable community to balance growth with natural resource protection while addressing climate change. Sustainable development seeks to achieve this goal by addressing the impacts of the built environment in which people live and work.

Traditional development practices can contribute significantly to the adverse impacts of buildings and associated infrastructure on the environment and people's health. These impacts include heavy consumption of material resources, energy, and water, large-scale production of wastes, water pollution, degradation of habitats and other ecological resources, and contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Implementing sustainable development includes incorporating green building practices into policies through education, incentives, and regulations that help reduce negative impacts.

The elements of green building include:

- Siting the project to take advantage of existing services, retain existing landscaping and natural features, and increase building energy performance;
- Requiring energy efficiency to reduce energy consumption, increase occupants' comfort, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Managing building construction and demolition materials efficiently to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the life cycle of the building;
- Increasing water efficiency to reduce water consumption and wastewater treatment;
- Improving water management to reduce stormwater runoff and produce less pollution and damage to water bodies;
- Using sustainable materials to improve indoor air quality, minimize toxic materials, reduce material consumption, and foster sustainable manufacturing;
- Addressing equity and racial and social justice to ensure equitable access to sustainable development, services, and community amenities; and
- Implementing universal design to ensure potential for aging in place and to service diverse occupancy opportunities.

The incorporation of sustainable practices into the design, construction, and operation of King County capital improvement projects can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, the use of natural resources, energy, and other operating costs, and can enhance asset value, optimize performance, promote cultural sustainability by preserving historic resources, and create healthier and more appealing environments for the visiting public and for King County employees.

The LEED rating system is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high performance, sustainable buildings and guiding project design. The LEED rating system components include sustainable site design, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, indoor environmental quality, materials and resources, innovation in design, and regional priorities. For those projects that are not eligible for LEED certification, the County's Green Building Team, comprised of representatives from the various County departments that have capital projects, developed a Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard and guidelines to help such projects achieve measurable green building goals.

The Green Building and Sustainable Development Ordinance 19402, adopted in 2022, requires that new County capital projects achieve a platinum level certification using the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system or the King County Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard, or the highest certification level using an approved alternative rating system. Minimum performance requirements include implementing energy and emission reduction targets as instructed by the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan; diverting 85 percent of demolition and construction materials by 2025 and zero waste of resources by 2030; integrating equity and racial and social justice efforts; and implementing the King County Surface Water Design Manual or more stringent guidelines required by jurisdiction.

F-417 **King County capital facilities and County-funded projects should be designed and constructed using sustainable development practices, with consideration for long-term environmental and economic sustainability.**

F-418 **All eligible King County new capital projects shall achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification level using the LEED rating system or the Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard, or achieve the highest certification level using an accepted alternative green building rating system.**

F-419 **All eligible King County major remodels and renovations shall achieve LEED Gold certification level using the LEED rating system or the Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard, or achieve a similar certification level using an accepted alternative green building rating system.**

F-420 **All King County-owned new construction capital projects should achieve net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2030.**

F-421 **All King County capital programs shall evaluate their project portfolio for opportunities to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through alternative green building rating systems such as LEED Zero Energy or Zero Carbon, Living Building Challenge, Living Communities Challenge, Net Zero Energy, Built Green Emerald Star, or EcoDistrict.**

F-422 **King County should build and operate public buildings and infrastructure that result in regenerative and net positive benefits related to energy, water, greenhouse gas emissions, and other resources.**

F-423 **King County shall increase water efficiency, improve conservation, and minimize the purchasing of water in its facilities through methods such as reuse of wastewater effluent, recycled water, stormwater, and harvested rainwater.**

F-424 **King County should leverage its purchasing power related to capital improvement projects to help expand the markets for green building products, including recycled-content materials and clean, renewable energy technologies such as zero-emission buses, and particularly for products and services that are locally produced.**

C. Essential Public Facilities

F-425 **King County should ensure that proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities are sited consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan, and allow existing essential public facilities to be preserved and maintained until alternatives or replacements for such facilities can be provided.**

F-426 **King County and neighboring counties should share essential public facilities to increase efficiency of operation, including consideration of the overall value of the essential public facility to the region and the county and whether expansion of an existing essential public facility might be more economical and environmentally sound. The County should work with neighboring counties to reasonably minimize impacts to the communities in which facilities are located, consistent with state law.**

F-427 **King County shall strive to site essential public facilities equitably so that:**

a. **No racial, cultural, or socio-economic group, or community, is disproportionately impacted by, nor benefits from, essential public facility siting or expansion decisions; and**
b. **No single community should absorb an inequitable share of these facilities and their impacts. An assessment of existing facilities should be conducted when siting new facilities. Siting shall consider equity; environmental justice; and environmental, economic, technical, and service area factors. Communities with a disproportionate share of existing facilities shall be actively engaged in the planning and siting process for new facilities or the expansion of an existing facility.**

F-428 **King County should weigh the net impact of siting new essential public facilities against the net impact of expansion of existing essential public facilities, with appropriate buffering and mitigation.**

F-429 **King County shall discourage essential public facilities that directly serve the public beyond their general vicinity from locating in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**

F-430 **King County shall determine a facility to be an essential public facility if it has one or more of the following characteristics:**

a. **The facility meets the Growth Management Act definition of an essential public facility;**
b. **The facility is on a state, county, or local community list of essential public facilities;**
c. **The facility serves a significant portion of the county or metropolitan region or is part of a countywide service system; or**
d. **The facility is the sole existing facility in the county for providing that essential public service.**

F-431 **The proponent's siting analysis for proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities shall consist of the following:**

- **a. An inventory of similar existing essential public facilities in King County and neighboring counties, including their locations and capacities;**
- **b. A forecast of the future needs for the essential public facility;**
- **c. An analysis of the historical, current, and potential social, equity, health, and economic impacts and benefits and burdens to communities receiving or surrounding the facilities;**
- **d. An analysis of the proposal's consistency with Policies F-425 through F-430;**
- **e. An analysis of alternatives to the facility, including decentralization, conservation, demand management, and other strategies;**
- **f. An analysis of economic and environmental impacts, including mitigation, of any existing essential public facility, as well as of any new site(s) under consideration as an alternative to expansion of an existing facility;**
- **g. An analysis of potential climate change impacts on the essential public facility, including consideration of sea level rise and options for reducing climate change impacts on the facility, including locating the facility outside of the mapped 500-year floodplain along the marine shoreline (except for water-dependent facilities, such as wastewater treatment facilities and associated conveyance infrastructure);**
- **h. To the extent allowable under the Growth Management Act, the locational criteria in Policies R-327 and R-328; and**
- **i. A cumulative impact analysis to include all other facilities, public or private, that may pose health risks, located near the proposed facility.**

F-432 **When new or expanded essential public facilities are proposed by the County or others, the proponent shall:**

- **a. Conduct extensive public involvement, which strives to effectively engage a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic groups, including the most-impacted communities; and**
- **b. Consider any applicable prior review conducted by a public agency, local government, or interested parties.**

F-433 **For existing essential public facilities, King County should consider potential impacts from climate change and identify and implement actions to improve resiliency and mitigate for impacts, including consideration of potential long-term relocation of facilities that are in the mapped 500-year floodplain along the marine shoreline (except for water-dependent facilities, such as wastewater treatment facilities and associated conveyance infrastructure).**

D. Solid Waste

King County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, prepared by the Solid Waste Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, guides the management of solid waste in the unincorporated county and for cities with which the County has interlocal agreements. The Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan presents policies, recommendations, and goals for the following elements of solid waste management: system planning, policy priorities, waste prevention, recovery and recycling, solid waste collection and processing, the transfer system, landfill management, solid waste disposal, and system financing. The overall vision is for healthy, safe, and thriving communities in a zero-waste county, working in partnership

with communities, businesses, local jurisdictions, and residents to create a more circular economy through programs like Re+.

F-434 **Regional solid waste planning should integrate the principles of environmental stewardship, circular economy, equity and racial and social justice, and sustainable development into all aspects of solid waste management.**

F-435 **Solid waste should be collected, handled, processed, and disposed of in ways that reduce waste, conserve resources, and protect public health and the environment.**

F-436 **King County should achieve zero waste of resources by 2030 and an 85 percent construction and demolition diversion rate by 2025 by targeting areas of the waste stream that have the greatest potential for prevention and reuse, product stewardship, recycling and composting, beneficial use, and recovery while regenerating natural systems.**

F-437 **King County shall plan for and operate a regional transfer system that is dispersed throughout the county to ensure access to safe, reliable, efficient, and affordable solid waste services, and improves recycling opportunities for residents and businesses. King County should continue to provide facilities for self-haulers.**

F-438 **King County should implement strategies that increase equitable participation from frontline communities and that maximize the safety and efficiency of the transfer system and encourage use of solid waste curbside collection services.**

F-439 **To minimize the disposal of materials with economic value, King County should work with partners and jurisdictions to encourage implementation of frequency and separation policies for curbside collection of garbage, recyclables, and organics throughout the county, including in unincorporated areas.**

F-440 **King County shall collaborate with cities to achieve a circular economy and preserve landfill space by implementing policies and hauler contract amendments that harmonize recycling and compost standards regionally, such as through the zero waste of resources plan.**

F-441 **King County should maximize the capacity and lifespan of the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill and plan for future disposal when Cedar Hills Landfill closes to ensure no gap in service, subject to environmental constraints, relative costs to operate, partner and public interests, and overall solid waste system optimization. The County shall not seek to site a replacement landfill in King County for the Cedar Hills regional landfill.**

F-442 **King County shall:**

a. Encourage sustainable development and development of markets for reusable and recyclable materials; and

b. Provide consumer education in the public and private sectors regarding green building practices, product stewardship, extended producer responsibility, circular economy, recycling, purchasing, and consumption to reduce the amount of waste disposed.

F-443 **King County should consider opportunities to increase energy recovery from select solid waste materials including organics, mixed plastics, and the non-recyclable portion of the waste stream by factoring in the financial, environmental, greenhouse gas, and community impacts.**

E. Public Sewers and On-Site Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems

King County protects water quality and public health in the central Puget Sound region by providing high-quality and effective treatment to wastewater collected from 34 local sewer utilities. The County's Wastewater Treatment Division serves about 1.9 million people within a 424-square-mile service area, which includes most urban areas of King County and parts of south Snohomish County and northeast Pierce County. In addition to treating wastewater, King County also creates resources such as energy, recycled water, and biosolids from byproducts of the treatment process.

The County's wastewater system includes:

- Three large regional wastewater treatment plants (the West Point Plant in the City of Seattle, the South Plant in the City of Renton, and the Brightwater Plant in unincorporated Snohomish County);
- Two small wastewater treatment plants (one on Vashon-Maury Island and one in the City of Carnation);
- One community septic system (Beulah Park and Cove on Vashon-Maury Island);
- Five combined sewer overflow treatment facilities (Alki, Carkeek, Georgetown, Henderson/Martin Luther King Jr. Way, and Mercer/Elliott West--all in the City of Seattle);
- More than 390 miles of pipes;
- 25 regulator stations;
- 48 pump stations; and
- 39 combined sewer overflow outfalls.

Recycled water is an important wastewater-management tool that can also be used as a beneficial resource. King County has been producing and distributing recycled water since 1997. Recycled water is used for treatment process water and on-site landscaping at the County's wastewater treatment plants. In addition, some of the recycled water from the South Treatment Plant is used off-site for irrigation purposes and public works uses, such as street sweeping and sewer flushing. Recycled water from the Carnation Treatment Plant is used for wetland enhancement at the Chinook Bend Natural Area in accordance with the County's commitment to use the wetlands as its primary discharge location rather than the Snoqualmie River. The Brightwater Treatment Plant distributes recycled water to the Brightwater Education Center for irrigation and toilet and urinal flushing, as well as to the Sammamish Valley to irrigate turf and trees.

The King County Regional Wastewater Services Plan establishes, or sets direction to establish, a number of programs to guide long-term planning and investments in wastewater infrastructure. The Regional Wastewater Services Plan guides improvements to the regional wastewater system to ensure the continuation of wastewater treatment services in the future to sustain a healthy environment and economic development in the King County wastewater service area. Many of the major projects outlined in the Regional Wastewater Services Plan have been completed, are underway, or are planned to begin by 2030. The Regional Wastewater Services Plan, codified in King County Code Chapter 28.86, and component plans (such as the Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan) serve as the most recent amendment to King County's general sewer plan until a new plan is developed. The County is working on a wastewater planning effort that is expected to result in a new plan that sets the direction beyond 2030.

In addition to King County's role as the regional wastewater treatment provider, Public Health – Seattle & King County is the agency responsible for permitting on-site

wastewater treatment and disposal systems (septic systems). In addition, the Utilities Technical Review Committee and the King County Council review and approve sewer utility comprehensive plans.

F-444 **In the Urban Growth Area, all new development shall be served by public sewers unless:**

- **a. Application of this policy to a proposal for a single detached residence on an individual lot would deny all reasonable use of the property; or**
- **b. Sewer service is not available for a proposed short subdivision of urban property in a timely or reasonable manner as determined by the Utilities Technical Review Committee. These on-site systems shall be managed by one of the following entities, in order of preference:**
  1. **The sewer utility whose service area encompasses the proposed short subdivision;**
  2. **The provider most likely to serve the area; or**
  3. **An On-site Sewage System Maintainer certified by the Public Health – Seattle & King County.**

The on-site system shall meet all state and county approval requirements. The approved short subdivision shall indicate how additional lots to satisfy the minimum density requirements of the zoning will be located on the subject property in case sewers become available in the future. There shall be no further subdivision of lots created under this policy unless served by public sewers.

F-445 **In the Urban Growth Area, King County and sewer utilities should jointly prioritize the replacement of on-site systems that serve existing development with public sewers, based on the risk of potential failure. King County and sewer utilities should analyze public funding options for such conversion and should prepare conversion plans that will enable quick and cost-effective local response to health and pollution problems that may occur when many on-site systems fail in an area.**

F-446 **City-owned parks that are redesignated from Rural to Urban on or after September 20, 2004 to allow future annexation by a city, and that are subsequently served by public sewers, shall be tightlined.**

F-447 **The existing public sewer system in the Rural Towns of Vashon and Snoqualmie Pass shall not be expanded to serve land beyond the boundaries of the town, except as provided in Policy F-453 and as consistent with Title 57 Revised Code of Washington. Subject to Policy F-452, on-site systems, community on-site systems, or decentralized treatment systems may be used as appropriate for planned growth in the Rural Town of Fall City.**

F-448 **Sewer facilities such as pump stations, force mains, and trunk lines that do not provide connections to the Rural Area may be located in the Rural Area only when they are identified in a King County-approved comprehensive sewage system plan and upon a finding by King County that it is technically necessary to provide service to the Urban Growth Area.**

F-449 **On-site wastewater treatment systems in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands that serve the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands should be designed, built, and operated as permanent methods of sewage disposal.**

F-450 **King County should monitor on-site wastewater systems that have shown evidence of failure or potential for failure. The data should be used to correct existing problems and prevent future problems. King County should analyze public funding options for correcting on-site wastewater system failures and only as a last resort in Rural and Natural Resource Lands, and as otherwise consistent with this plan, conversion to community sewage systems or installation of public sewers.**

F-451 **King County should work with landowners, other jurisdictions, the state Department of Health, sewer districts, and the Puget Sound Partnership to develop effective strategies and additional resources for working with landowners to provide technical assistance and requested support regarding managing on-site septic systems, and proactively addressing failing septic systems in critical areas.**

F-452 **Developments using a community on-site sewage system or large on-site sewage system may be allowed only in the following circumstances in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands:**

- **a. Existing on-site systems are failing within an area and Public Health – Seattle & King County concurs that long-term individual on-site sewage system repairs are not feasible or water quality is threatened by the presence of or potential for health hazards resulting from inadequate on-site wastewater disposal methods;**
- **b. An authorized public agency will manage the system;**
- **c. The system is designed only to serve existing structures and lots. Modifications to existing structures and lots shall not be allowed if the modification triggers an expansion of sewage capacity above the original approval of the system;**
- **d. The system cannot be used as a basis to exceed base density for the zone, special district overlay(s), or p-suffix(es). Substandard vacant lots must be combined to the extent feasible to meet rural density policies and regulations;**
- **e. A system serving residentially developed lots cannot be used to: expand existing allowed nonresidential uses in size or scale; establish new allowed nonresidential uses; or serve commercially zoned properties; and**
- **f. For a system serving commercially developed lots: the system is used only to serve commercially zoned properties; development conditions are imposed that establish a range of allowed uses that can be adequately served by the system at the time of its construction; and the allowed uses are not more expansive than those allowed in the underlying zone.**

F-453 **Public sewer service shall be prohibited in the Rural Area or on Natural Resource Lands, except where needed to address specific health and safety problems threatening the use of existing structures, and the use of septic or other on-site wastewater systems has been determined by King County to be not feasible; or to serve a new school authorized to be located in the Rural Area by Policy R-328. An extension may only be approved if:**

- **a. It is tightlined;**
- **b. After a finding is made by King County determining that no reasonable alternative technologies are feasible; and**
- **c. It does not add pressure to convert Rural Area land or Natural Resource Lands to urban uses and densities or to expand nonresidential uses.**

F-454 **King County should support development and implementation of innovative technologies, such as composting toilets and greywater reuse systems, to process wastewater on-site in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands. The County should seek regulatory changes at the state level and explore regulatory options to allow use of such technologies, including use of composting toilets to reduce the demand on on-site septic systems for primary and accessory dwelling units.**

F. Stormwater Management

Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation runs off the landscape and picks up pollutants, including pesticides, fertilizers, pet wastes, oils, metals, and other chemicals. These pollutants enter surface and ground waters, disrupt ecosystems, and threaten public health. Runoff can also cause erosion, create higher peak flows in streams and rivers in winter, and create lower flows in summer due to reduced infiltration.

Untreated stormwater runoff is the largest source of pollution to Puget Sound. The lack of stormwater flow controls in older developed areas is one of the most significant problems impacting receiving water bodies in King County and preventing Puget Sound recovery. Although King County has been developing and applying best available stormwater controls to new development since the late 1970s, the application of water quality controls and more effective flow controls did not occur until the early 1990s.

Consequently, nearly all development occurring prior to 1990 has little or no flow control and no water quality control. In unincorporated King County, over two-thirds of the developed land was created prior to 1990. This amounts to about 150 square miles of land on which native forest was converted to impervious surfaces (such as roads, parking lots, and rooftops), lawns, and landscape surfaces without stormwater controls to mitigate the increased runoff and pollution generated by these surfaces.

The County also promotes site development that preserves natural hydrologic processes by protecting and enhancing native vegetation and soils, reducing impervious surfaces, and managing stormwater on-site. This approach, termed low impact development, is used to reduce impacts on aquatic resources. In the King County Surface Water Design Manual, King County provides a menu of low impact development options for individuals planning new or redevelopment projects. King County continues to help minimize new impervious surfaces through code and incentive programs that keep lands in forest and agricultural uses. Implementing low impact development satisfies requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit, while helping to protect the region's streams, rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound from harmful pollutants.

The County has identified watershed-based management efforts as a strategy that simultaneously integrates floodplain connectivity, salmon recovery, habitat restoration, stormwater flow control and water quality retrofits, economic development, agricultural preservation, and principles of equity and racial and social justice. One strategy that holds promise for reducing pollutants and improving water quality while providing access to new green space for communities is creating "stormwater parks." Stormwater parks, if located strategically, could treat billions of gallons of stormwater a year, significantly reducing stormwater pollution reaching receiving water bodies, which would in turn improve salmon recovery and habitat. The County will leverage alternative funding mechanisms, and engage in various partnerships with groups that include, but are not limited to, the existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitted jurisdictions, Water Resource Inventory Areas, the Puget Sound Partnership,

and Local Integrating Organizations to undertake a collaborative watershed-based approach to restoring aquatic ecosystems.

F-455 **To reduce flooding, erosion, and sedimentation, prevent and mitigate habitat loss, enhance groundwater recharge, and prevent groundwater and surface water quality degradation, consistent with the Growth Management Act, King County shall manage stormwater through plans, programs, and regulations developed by the County in cooperation with affected jurisdictions and agencies whenever possible.**

F-456 **King County shall take a watershed approach for stormwater management, with responsibility shared between King County and affected jurisdictions. This approach should emphasize prevention of surface water and groundwater degradation through education programs, retrofits of existing stormwater controls or the placement of new controls, and implementation of best management practices to reduce pollution entering the region's groundwater and surface waters, including Puget Sound. This approach should also continue to support and build upon regional collaborative stormwater management planning including consideration of incentives for regional collaboration and identification of supplemental funding sources for collaborative stormwater management in the region.**

F-457 **King County shall implement stormwater management that protects native vegetation and soils, restores disturbed soils, facilitates reuse of recycled or harvested water, maximizes the use of natural systems and protects the ecological function of natural systems by:**

- **a. Minimizing grey infrastructure in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands;**
- **b. Requiring low impact development to the maximum extent feasible, as a part of its strategy to mitigate impacts from new development;**
- **c. Considering additional supportive strategies, such as in-lieu fee mechanisms to result in overall benefits to regional stormwater management and water quality;**
- **d. Continuing to support innovative stormwater management programs, such as the RainScapes Green Stormwater Infrastructure Incentive program for private landowners; and**
- **e. Incorporate innovative stormwater management techniques into the design, construction, and operation of all County facilities and County-funded projects to the maximum extent feasible.**

F-458 **King County shall plan and manage stormwater by basin or sub-basin consistent with Policies E-403 and E-401. To accomplish this goal, stormwater runoff should not be diverted from one basin or sub-basin into another, unless no other reasonable alternative is available for managing runoff within the same basin and an analysis using evidenced-based science determines cross-basin diversion or mitigation actions for unavoidable impacts will have greater benefit to regional stormwater management. Where such diversions are allowed, King County shall require environmental analysis and mitigation adequate to protect surface water and groundwater resources from significant adverse impacts.**

F-459 **In the Urban Growth Area, shared surface water management facilities should be encouraged to support infill development to preclude the need for individual on-site facilities, provide development incentives, encourage efficient use of land, and reduce overall facility maintenance costs. These facilities should be planned and financed through public and private partnerships.**

F-460 **Stormwater programs including public education, stormwater system mapping, construction of shared stormwater facilities, retrofitting developed areas, and operation and maintenance programs should be funded through an adequate and equitable funding mechanism. Stormwater facilities required for new development, redevelopment, and retrofitting should be designed and built to improve regional water quantity and quality to the maximum extent possible, as well as for aesthetic value and low-cost, long-term maintenance.**

F-461 **When scoping and designing flood risk reduction, fish passage, park, trails, and habitat restoration projects, the County should actively review and pursue opportunities to support stormwater retrofit projects.**

F-462 **King County shall continue to promote the preservation of native vegetation and soils and the restoration of disturbed soils on Rural Area-zoned parcels to the maximum extent feasible. Minimized impervious areas and the dispersion of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces into native vegetation in accordance with the Surface Water Design Manual are the preferred methods of stormwater management in the Rural Area.**

F-463 **King County should work with regional partners to identify locations for stormwater parks, focusing first on communities with the most polluted water that lack easy access to green space.**

F-464 **King County shall identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote state-of-the art stormwater management techniques.**

F-465 **King County shall work with jurisdictions to ensure that storm and surface water management facilities are transferred from King County to the local jurisdiction that annexes or incorporates that portion of King County.**

G. Floodplain Management

Both the Washington State Growth Management Act and Title 86 of the Revised Code of Washington require interlocal coordination for effective flood hazard management. Counties are directed to prepare comprehensive flood hazard management plans with participation of the cities. Flooding is a regional issue impacting public safety, regional economic centers, Agricultural Production Districts, transportation corridors, and public and private properties. As such, King County is a regional service provider for floodplain management.

F-466 **King County shall participate with cities to prepare, update, and implement comprehensive flood hazard management plans that meet or exceed standards established by the National Flood Insurance Program and Washington State Flood Control statutes.**

F-467 **King County shall include equity and racial and social justice principles in updating and implementing the King County Flood Management Plan and when assessing flood risks, evaluating impacts of risk reduction actions, and working in partnership with the most impacted communities to develop and prioritize future actions.**

F-468 **King County shall maintain a regional flood warning program in King County.**

F-469 **King County should continue to assess and revise current flood warning phases based on the most current data on hydrology and climate change projections and modify the King County Flood Warning Program, as needed, to reflect these revised flood phases.**

F-470 **King County should assess the most appropriate level of service for flood risk reduction along river segments based on existing and predicted development density, land use, and hydrologic conditions, inclusive of climate change impacts.**

F-471 **King County shall review available information on the potential impacts of climate change and other natural hazards on flooding conditions, and consider those potential impacts when updating the flood risk reduction policies and capital improvement projects for the King County Flood Management Plan.**

King County works with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct and maintain flood levees along the Lower Green River. Under Public Law 84-99, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is authorized to provide emergency assistance to cost share and construct levee repairs following a flood disaster. However, eligibility for this cost-sharing program requires that levee sponsors (often local jurisdictions) comply with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Law 84-99 program standards as outlined in the Rehabilitation and Inspection Program.

An Interim Policy for Determining Eligibility Status of Flood Risk Management Projects was issued in 2014 and its primary effect was that vegetation no longer served as a criterion for determining a levee's eligibility for the Public Law 84-99 program. So long as vegetation in the vicinity of Public Law 84-99 levees is maintained by local sponsors to support levee inspections, the national levee vegetation standards for risk reduction no longer affect the eligibility of King County's levees.

The Green River System Wide Improvement Framework Vegetation Plan provides recommendations for vegetation planting and maintenance practices, in the vicinity of levees and floodwalls enrolled within the Public Law 84-99 program. These recommendations acknowledge that, while vegetation may pose a risk in some situations, King County has found through many years of experience that vegetation can be incorporated into levee designs and, when properly maintained, contributes to the resiliency of the levee system. King County believes that bioengineered techniques provide a stronger, more sustainable levee and revetment system that will reduce long-term maintenance and repair and contribute toward the recovery of endangered species.

F-472 **King County shall participate in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Law 84-99 Program on a case-by-case basis, provided that compliance with the National Marine Fisheries Services Biological Opinion on the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Flood Insurance Program standards for levee vegetation, and cost-effective maintenance and repair of levees.**

F-473 **King County shall maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program by:**

a. Assessing the projects and programmatic actions recommended in the King County Flood Management Plan for compliance with the Biological Opinion prepared for the Program; and

b. Making necessary amendments to the Plan and its implementing development regulations.

F-474 **King County shall work cooperatively with Indian tribes, the King County Flood Control District, cities, and other partners to implement the integrated approaches to floodplain management outlined in the Flood Management Plan, or successor plans, to protect public safety, prevent property damage, and help protect the greater King County economy, consistent with the Growth Management Act. Actions should advance King County's equity and racial and social justice goals, promote resiliency to the potential impacts of climate change, and provide multiple benefits for the residents of King County.**

F-475 **Consistent with guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, King County's flood risk reduction strategies should focus first on risk avoidance, followed by actions intended to reduce vulnerability in at-risk areas. New levees and other flood facilities should be the last rather than the first line of defense.**

F-476 **King County shall continue to encourage the purchase of flood insurance to owners and tenants of properties located within flood hazard areas, including those properties located behind accredited levees, to protect the value of the properties, and to reduce the economic vulnerability from flood events, and shall, where feasible, participate in programs that keep flood insurance rates as low as possible for community members.**

F-477 **King County should continue to discourage new development in mapped flood hazard areas.**

F-478 **King County should seek to site new critical public facilities outside of the 500-year floodplain (except for water-dependent facilities, such as wastewater treatment facilities and associated conveyance infrastructure).**

Levee setbacks (moving levees away from the river channel) can provide a higher level of risk reduction, reduce future maintenance costs, enhance habitat, and provide open space benefits. However, levee setbacks require purchase of additional right-of-way and, in some cases, relocation of homes and businesses, which is more costly in urban areas. The County has purchased homes and relocated residents from high-hazard residential areas along the Tolt, Raging, Snoqualmie, Middle Green, and Cedar Rivers.

F-479 **King County should work with cities, businesses, and landowners to evaluate the alternatives for levee setbacks that would provide a higher level of risk reduction, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and enhance habitat while promoting long-term economic resilience and vitality.**

H. Water Supply

King County is not a water utility that provides potable water to residents and businesses in the region. The County serves a role in the coordination of water resources and growth and regional protection and management of water resources. This includes protection of the quantity and quality of groundwater and commitment to regional water strategies through such efforts as regional water supply planning and climate change mitigation and adaptation. It carries out this role through planning, permit issuance, and regulatory oversight.

The Utilities Technical Review Committee ensures that water system and water supply planning by water utilities in King County meet the requirements of the Growth

Management Act and other applicable statutory requirements, and determines consistency with the King County Comprehensive Plan.

Water utility service areas in King County are described in Coordinated Water System Plans developed under the Public Water System Coordination Act (Chapter 70.116 Revised Code of Washington) and individual water system plans developed under State Board of Health rules adopted under Chapter 43.20 Revised Code of Washington. Coordinated Water System Plans describe future service areas for water utilities within which they are provided the exclusive right to serve future customers and are to include the means for meeting those needs in the most efficient manner possible. Other service providers may serve within the future service area of a designated water utility if the designated water utility is unable to provide service in a timely and reasonable manner.

Washington State laws encourage the development and use of recycled water, require consideration of recycled water in wastewater planning, and recognize the importance of recycled water as a strategy for water resource management statewide (Chapters 90.46, 90.48, and 90.82 Revised Code of Washington). Recycled water is an important mechanism for improving water quality and reducing discharge of treated wastewater into Puget Sound and other sensitive areas. Safely reusing non-potable water within a building requires sufficient plan review and system inspection capacity.

1. Regional Water Supply Planning

F-480 **King County should support coordination of regional water supply planning, sale of excess water supplies among municipalities in the region, water quality programs, and water conservation, reuse, and recycled water programs. This regional planning should support King County's goals of focusing growth in the Urban Growth Area and ensuring water availability for resource lands.**

F-481 **King County should support initiation of a water planning process for the development of a regional or subregional water plan. The County shall work in concert with Indian tribes, water utilities, state agencies, and other key partners.**

F-482 **King County recognizes that a regional water planning process should be a collaborative process. King County's objectives for the process and a resulting plan are that it:**

- **a. Be consistent with, and support, growth management objectives and decisions made by local and regional jurisdictions under the Growth Management Act;**
- **b. Address the need for sufficient in-stream flows to achieve salmon recovery objectives of the approved regional recovery plan for species listed under the Endangered Species Act, and recognize Indian tribal water rights;**
- **c. Be consistent with and support the approved water quality and quantity strategies adopted by the region, local governments, and other responsible entities (such as water utilities) in compliance with federal requirements under the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and other authorities relevant to water quantity and quality;**
- **d. Include provisions for the efficient use of water, including recycled water;**
- **e. Consider the impacts of climate change on water demand and supply;**
- **f. Address the water needs of other specific sectors of the local economy, including agriculture and other industries with significant water uses;**
- **g. Include, to the extent possible, assigned accountability for implementing conservation and developing new supplies and related infrastructure; and**
- **h. Identify, and develop a strategy for, any legislative changes necessary or desirable to implement the plan.**

2. Potable Water Systems

Potable water is provided by Group A public water systems having 15 or more connections, Group B public water systems having two to 15 connections, and individual private wells serving one connection. The type of water system required for new development will depend upon whether a proposed development is within an approved service area of an existing public water system, and is or is not able to provide an adequate water supply as required under Revised Code of Washington 19.27.097 and 58.17.110. Exempt wells refer to wells that do not require obtaining a water right permit from the state for withdrawal of water. These exempt wells are subject to all other rules and regulations of the water code other than the requirement to get a permit from the state to withdraw water. Issuance of a building permit or subdivision approval that is interconnected with a permit-exempt well requires the following measures: (a) a fee of five hundred dollars; (b) maximum average withdrawal of groundwater in an amount not exceeding 950 gallons per day per connection and not exceeding 5,000 gallons per day per well; (c) curtailment of withdrawal of groundwater to an amount not exceeding 350 gallons per day per connection for indoor use only upon issuance of a drought emergency order; (d) outdoor use limited to watering of a lawn or noncommercial garden not exceeding one-half acre in area; and (e) management of stormwater runoff on-site to the extent feasible to maximize infiltration, including use of low impact development techniques.

F-483 **Water utilities that obtain water from, or distribute water in unincorporated King County, and water utilities formed as special purpose districts under Title 57 Revised Code of Washington are required to submit water system plans to the County for review and approval and shall describe in their plans how they intend to meet their duty to provide service within their retail service areas, and generally how they plan to meet water service needs in their future service.**

F-484 **In both the Urban Growth Area and Rural Area of King County, all new construction and all new subdivisions shall be served by an existing Group A public water system, except in the circumstance when no Group A public water system can provide service in a timely and reasonable manner per Revised Code of Washington 70.116.060 and 43.20.260 or when no existing system is willing and able to provide safe and reliable potable water with reasonable economy and efficiency per Revised Code of Washington 19.27.097.**

F-485 **In the Urban Growth Area, individual private wells for single detached residences are not allowed unless requiring connection would deny all reasonable use of the property. In that case, the well would be allowed only as an interim facility until service by a public water system can be provided.**

F-486 **In the Urban Growth Area, if an existing Group A water provider cannot provide direct or indirect service to new development under Policy F-482, a new public water system may be established if it is owned or operated by the following, in order of preference:**

- **a. By a satellite management agency approved by the State Department of Health under contract with the Group A system in whose service area the system is located, provided that the existing Group A water system remains responsible for meeting the duty to serve the new system under Revised Code of Washington 43.20.260; or**
- **b. By a satellite management agency approved by both the State Department of Health and King County.**

F-487 **All new public water systems shall connect to the Group A water system in whose service area the new system is located when direct service becomes available. Such a connection shall be made by the homeowner or association in a timely and reasonable manner.**

F-488 **In the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, King County land use and water service decisions should support the long-term integrity of Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands ecosystems. If an existing Group A water provider cannot provide direct or indirect service to new development per the exceptions in Policy F-484, a new public water system may be established if it is owned or operated by the following, in order of preference:**

- **a. By a satellite management agency approved by the state Department of Health under contract with the Group A system in whose service area the system is located, provided that the existing Group A water system remains responsible for meeting the duty to serve the new system under Revised Code of Washington 43.20.260;**
- **b. By a satellite management agency or an existing Group B system approved by both the State Department of Health and King County; or**
- **c. By the owners of the lots, which are provided water by a new Group A or B system if not within the service area of an existing Group A system or not within the area covered by a satellite management agency. Approval for any such system shall be conditioned for future ownership or management by a satellite management agency, when such service becomes available, and for periodic review of system operations, as required by Revised Code of Washington 70.119A.060(2).**

F-489 **In the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands, if water service cannot be obtained by the options provided in Policy F-486, then use of private wells or rainwater catchment may be allowed.**

The State Department of Ecology has determined that the rivers and streams in the major river basins in King County have no water available for further consumptive appropriation without harmfully impacting instream values. The State has closed those basins to the issuance of new water rights and has directed that the natural interrelationships between surface and ground waters should be considered in future water allocation decisions to avoid adverse impacts to instream flows. The installation and use of wells that are exempt from the Department of Ecology's water rights permitting process may further harm those rivers and streams when the wells are withdrawing groundwater that is directly connected to the water in the stream. The installation of new exempt wells may also create health and safety problems by interfering with the water supplied by existing wells, and by creating more holes in the ground that can lead to contamination of entire aquifers.

F-490 **New subdivisions with more than six single detached residential lots on Vashon-Maury Island and in basins with closed streams in the Rural Area (as defined in the Washington Administrative Code may not be served by a potable water system using an exempt well, or a combination of multiple exempt wells. Exempt wells are allowed only in the Rural Area and only under the following circumstances:**

- **a. One exempt well per subdivision or short subdivision or the minimum number needed to meet the water flow requirements for the subdivision or short subdivision;**
- **b. Individual private wells used in a subdivision or short subdivision when all lots in the subdivision or short subdivision are twenty acres in area or larger; and**
- **c. New developments in the Rural Area served by one or more exempt wells shall not exceed one-half acre of irrigation of land area.**

F-491 **King County shall work with water service providers, the State Department of Ecology, and the State Department of Health to ensure groundwater use and to meet the County's obligation to protect groundwater quality and quantity in the Rural Area, while supporting uses of groundwater that meet public health, resource protection, land use planning, and fish recovery objectives and obligations.**

F-492 **King County shall encourage the adoption of state or local laws and codes to limit the construction of new exempt wells, and shall encourage abandoning existing exempt wells, within water utility service areas and promote the safe and timely decommissioning of wells no longer in service.**

3. Water Use Efficiency, Planning, and Management

Water utilities serving unincorporated King County or otherwise subject to the planning requirements of King County Code Chapter 13.24 are required to include elements related to recycled water, water use efficiency, and water conservation in the plans as may be called for under state law, the King County Code, or the King County Comprehensive Plan. Water purveyors are encouraged to include conservation and reuse measures, where applicable, as well as development of new sources to support planned land use with reliable service at a reasonable cost.

The Reclaimed Water Act of Washington State (Revised Code of Washington 90.46) recognizes the value of recycled water in the process to better manage, protect, and conserve water resources. In addition, measures to increase water conservation and

expand the use of recycled water for non-potable uses throughout the county are important elements in preparing for potential climate change impacts and addressing water as a recognized limiting factor for Puget Sound and salmon recovery efforts. The King County Code also directs County programs to act as a clearinghouse for data related to groundwater quality and quantity to facilitate implementation by King County and others of the groundwater management plans that have been developed for major portions of King County.

Under Revised Code of Washington 43.20.310, larger water systems that serve more than 1,000 connections will be required to address the impacts of climate change in future water system plans. These large water systems will be required to include a climate resilience element in plans initiated after June 30, 2025. This new plan element must 1) determine the types of extreme weather events that would significantly challenge the system and build scenarios to identify potential impact, 2) identify critical assets and steps necessary to protect the system from the weather events on the systems operations, and 3) describe the costs and benefits of system's risk reduction strategies and capital project needs.

Chapters 19.27, 58.17, 90.03, and 90.94 Revised Code of Washington clarify the steps building permit and subdivision applicants must take to establish that water is "legally available" when proposing to obtain water from a new permit-exempt well.

In King County, the requirements most directly affect development in the Rural Area and on Natural Resource Lands where new development may not be served by public water systems, and applicants are proposing to use permit-exempt wells for a source of water supply. King County has a prioritization for water use that intends to limit permit-exempt wells and requires new development to be connected to Group A water systems. Consistent with the water law requirements, King County permitting processes ensure that the hierarchy of water service is fully implemented with the Comprehensive Plan policies and the King County Code. Additionally, King County has participated in the Washington State Department of Ecology's Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee process.

F-493 **King County shall partner with utilities to publicize water conservation and encourage best management practices that conserve potable water supply through measures that include use of alternative supplies such as recycled water.**

F-494 **Water system plans for large purveyors shall include an evaluation of recycled water use opportunities.**

F-495 **King County shall encourage local developers with new projects in unincorporated King County to use recycled water for non-potable purposes when recycled water is available for use.**

F-496 **The Utilities Technical Review Committee shall work with state agencies, water utilities, and other parties to develop any necessary rules, policies, or checklists to provide clear information and guidance as to the county's expectations for its reviews.**

F-497 **In reviewing proposals for modified and expanded service area boundaries for municipal water suppliers, as defined under Chapter 90.03 Revised Code of Washington, the Utilities Technical Review Committee shall consider:**

a. Compliance by the water system with its water system comprehensive plan, including water conservation elements;
b. Whether it can meet its duty to provide service within its service area, as required under Chapter 43.20 Revised Code of Washington; and
c. Consistency with the service provisions of any applicable Coordinated Water System Plan, as adopted in King County Code Chapter 13.28.

F-498 **King County shall not approve a water system plan with a proposed retail service area where the water system is unable to provide timely and reasonable service for one or more of the reasons identified in Revised Code of Washington 43.20.260. King County accepts and encourages timely and reasonable service by a water utility within its service area through the provision of satellite or remote ownership or management of facilities that are not physically connected with the water utility's other facilities. This does not preclude a modified or expanded service area boundary for the water system to correct problems and provide reliable potable water service to existing water users within the proposed modified service area. The Utilities Technical Review Committee is responsible for making determinations of timely and reasonable service, as provided for under Chapter 70A.100 Revised Code of Washington and King County Code Chapters 13.24 and 13.28.**

4. Resource Management and Protection

Water system reservoirs and watersheds often serve a number of functions including open space, recreation, forestry, and resource management. The primary purpose of reservoirs and watersheds is to provide and protect supplies of potable drinking water.

F-499 **Public drinking water system surface water reservoirs and their watersheds should:**

a. Be managed primarily for the protection of drinking water; and
b. Allow for multiple uses, including recreation, when such uses do not jeopardize drinking water quality standards and public watersheds are managed to protect downstream fish and agriculture resources.

F-500 **Groundwater-based public water supplies should be protected by preventing land uses that may adversely affect groundwater quality or quantity to the extent that the supply might be jeopardized. The County shall protect the quality and quantity of groundwater used as water supplies through implementation of Policies E-445 through E-451 where applicable.**

I. Energy

King County's economy and quality of life depend on readily available, affordable, clean energy resources. Energy systems provide important public services, and their implementation must be coordinated with land use planning. The sustainable development and efficient use of energy resources can ensure their continued availability while minimizing long-term costs, risks, and impacts to public health and safety, air and water quality, and essential public infrastructure and services.

To help mitigate global climate impacts resulting from human energy use, King County is planning its energy uses in ways that will improve energy efficiency; increase production and use of renewable energy; reduce risk to public health, safety, critical services, and the environment; and reduce the release of greenhouse gases and emissions. This includes rigorous and transparent review and regulation of fossil fuel facilities.

Various local, state, and federal agencies regulate energy providers in King County. Gas and electric utility resource and conservation plans are approved by the utilities and other agencies through a public process. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission reviews and accepts plans of investor-owned electric and gas utilities, the Seattle City Council approves the plans of Seattle City Light, and Snohomish Public Utility District is governed by a utility board. Electric and gas utilities operate in King County under franchises with the County for use of the public right-of-way. The Utilities and Transportation Commission also defines the costs that investor-owned utilities can recover, approves rates, sets service standards, and resolves customer complaints.

1. Consistency with Land Use Plans

F-501 **King County should work to ensure that energy providers' resource and facility plans be consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan and provide for a reliable source of energy in the event of natural disaster or other potential threats of disruption to service.**

F-502 **King County should coordinate public road construction and maintenance projects with utility construction and maintenance.**

F-503 **King County should support the expansion of renewable energy resources through development regulations and active incentive programs when the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs.**

F-504 **Results from an equity impact review shall be used as an important consideration to identify impacts and opportunities of new electric transmission lines in regional utility corridors and of new, modified, or expanded gas or hazardous liquid transmission pipelines, fossil fuel facilities, hydroelectric generation facilities, and nonhydroelectric generation facilities. The County's equity and racial and social justice principles should be used to improve residents' access to the determinants of equity.**

2. Energy Efficiency, Conservation, and Alternative Energy Sources

King County has a continued commitment to energy efficiency, conservation, use and production of renewable resources, and quality enforcement of the energy code. King County's current energy use patterns and energy supplies could be modified and improved to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, conserve non-renewable resources important to future generations, and limit the growth in energy costs.

F-505 **All King County departments and divisions shall use the Strategic Climate Action Plan, or successor plans, as the basis for strategic energy planning and direction, including development and adoption of strategic energy management, efficiency, and conservation programs in their operations.**

F-506 **King County shall plan for further reduction in its energy use from government operations by setting near- and long-term energy use and fossil fuel use reduction targets, consistent with its long-term goals of working to continuously reduce operating costs and environmental impacts, maximizing energy efficiency and minimizing waste.**

F-507 **King County shall maximize the capture, use and marketing of renewable energy at its wastewater treatment plants and Cedar Hills Landfill, to the extent feasible and consistent with other County goals, and pursue other renewable energy generation projects where cost-effective.**

F-508 **King County shall provide leadership in, and foster the development and increased use of, clean, renewable, and alternative fuel and energy technologies, such as anaerobic digestion and co-digestion of organic material to create energy sources that result in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use, with a particular emphasis on creating renewable natural gas.**

F-509 **Consistent with Ordinance 18106, King County Metro Transit shall make carbon offsets or environmental attributes available for purchase by individuals, public entities, and private entities, if doing so is likely to be financially beneficial to the department. Revenue from the sale of carbon offsets or environmental attributes shall be used by the department solely for the purposes of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through mobility services or investments that reduce greenhouse emissions from transit operations.**

F-510 **King County shall prioritize efficient energy consumption and conservation and maximize production and use of renewable natural gas, electricity, and heat, while ensuring that land use decisions regarding siting of renewable energy facilities consider potential impacts to open space, agriculture, and housing needs.**

F-511 **King County shall support the conversion of renewable resources and service by-products to energy for beneficial use. King County shall claim and/or generate economic benefit for any and all renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction attributes resulting from renewable energy generation.**

F-512 **King County should encourage its energy utilities to provide energy efficiency services, renewable energy options, and fossil fuel use reduction strategies to all their customers. Additionally, the County should encourage the state and energy utilities to mitigate the environmental and greenhouse gas emissions impacts of energy and, as conservation and no- and low-carbon sources demonstrate capacity to address energy needs, phase out existing coal and other fossil fuel-based power plants, and replace such facilities with resource efficiency and renewable generation sources.**

F-513 **King County should benchmark all applicable County buildings as a basis for measuring energy efficiency improvements, using the Environmental Protection Agency Portfolio Manager Tool, where applicable.**

F-514 **King County should purchase only certified energy-efficient appliances and office equipment (such as ENERGY-STAR labeled equipment) when available for specific equipment and shall require consideration of energy efficiency and life-cycle costs in all procurement decisions as an element of determining the lowest responsive bids.**

F-515 **King County shall use its Resource Life Cycle Cost Assessment calculator to evaluate all capital projects that involve equipment that use energy to determine if the operations and maintenance cost savings over the life of the project's assets exceed the implementation costs, taking into account all identified costs associated with energy efficiency and renewable energy.**

District energy systems provide space and water heating and/or cooling to multiple buildings, through pipes originating from a central heating or cooling source – generally a central energy plant. Centralizing the generation of heat and/or cooling through a district plant and/or delivering energy content to multiple facilities through a distribution network can eliminate the need for equipment in each individual building.

District heating and cooling plants can be constructed with energy efficiency in mind. Central plants that provide combined heat and power can offer increases in energy efficiency compared to on-site heat generation in individual buildings, by sharing heating and cooling resources, and can be an effective method of cutting carbon emissions.

Technologies used to generate energy from wastewater are emerging, and offer the potential to achieve environmental and economic benefits through the recovery of resources from wastewater. King County government is unique in that it also has the ability to serve as a district heat supplier through the potential for buildings to utilize the energy value of the warmer-than-ambient water in the County's almost 400 miles of wastewater conveyance.

F-516 **King County should pursue district energy opportunities, such as combined heat and power and wastewater heat extraction, to maximize resource recovery efforts, in ways that can offer economic and environmental benefits to the County and community at large.**

F-517 King County should support new energy resources and technologies that reduce energy use, support a resilient electrical grid, decarbonize energy sources, and electrify energy use in the building and transportation sectors. In supporting these efforts, King County should:

- **a. Allow for siting of green energy and distributed energy resources, while considering appropriate use of land and associated impacts, including protection of designated Natural Resource Lands and open spaces;**
- **b. Accommodate the use of green energy and distributed energy resources, such as microgrids, in new and redeveloped properties;**
- **c. Reduce barriers to new and upgraded substations, transmission facilities, and the distribution system, for infrastructure that is needed to achieve County greenhouse gas reductions targets;**
- **d. Encourage and support the integration of new technologies and fuel sources;**
- **e. Minimize negative impacts on and maximize benefits for frontline communities resulting from related projects;**
- **f. Support equitable engagement strategies during project planning to actively solicit public participation and input from impacted frontline communities;**
- **g. Support equitable opportunities for frontline communities to participate in distributed energy resources;**
- **h. Focus especially on areas that are subject to frequent power outages;**
- **i. Partner with first responders to ensure adequate safety measures are in place for people and the environment;**
- **j. Support efforts by utilities and other entities to advance these outcomes; and**
- **k. Review and update development regulations periodically to ensure that they appropriately support new energy resources and technologies and mitigate for associated impacts.**

The moderate climate of the Puget Sound region provides an opportunity for significant use of solar energy. Relatively low heating and cooling needs in much of the county allow for the potential for passive and active solar technologies to meet heating and cooling needs with proper building design. Similarly, the mild climate and available solar energy allows for growing of food year-round, potentially decreasing the use of fossil fuels for a portion of residents' food needs. This opportunity for local investments in passive and active solar design and local food production can only be realized if building and neighborhood site design provides for solar orientation and through the development of regulations to protect solar access.

Current regulations do not typically take into account solar orientation or solar access protection from development on neighboring properties. Building height and building setback allowances, road access requirements, and protections for critical areas, stormwater, and native vegetation, may limit suitable locations for providing solar access. Requirements to create and maintain view corridors may or may not provide solar gain. To protect solar access, landowners or developers enter into voluntary solar easements. As an alternative, some municipalities have incorporated measures to protect solar access in their comprehensive plans and development regulations. King County continues to evaluate and implement best practices in this area in support of the County's larger sustainability goals.

F-518 **King County should encourage:**
- **a. Use of solar energy;**
- **b. Siting of roads, lots, landscaping and buildings for improved solar orientation;**
- **c. Use of passive solar design and active solar technologies;**
- **d. Protection of solar access; and**
- **e. Pursuit and allocation of outside funding to support access to solar energy for frontline communities.**

F-519 **King County should consider passive and active solar energy collection systems in all new facility designs and major rehabilitations. Solar electric generation systems interconnected with local utilities should be employed where cost-benefit analysis shows net benefits, considering emergency power potential and capitalizing on utility net metering and power production credit programs.**

3. Electric Utilities

The four-state 2021 Northwest Power Plan by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council provides a blueprint for the development of electricity resources in the region. Bonneville Power Administration and other federal agencies, the region's utilities, state and local government, private businesses, and the people of the Northwest all participate in implementing the council's goals. Electric utilities serving unincorporated King County include Bonneville Power Administration and Tanner Electric Cooperative. Puget Sound Energy provides both electricity and natural gas service.

A number of significant events in the past years have influenced the electric power business in King County's power markets. These include:

1) Ongoing very large expenditures by hydropower utilities (notably Bonneville Power Administration) to mitigate salmon habitat losses caused by dams;

2) The recognition of human-caused climate change, driven mostly by carbon dioxide release – a significant portion of which can be attributed to electric power generation; and

3) The passage of the Energy Independence Act in Chapter 19.285 Revised Code of Washington, requiring utilities to acquire an increasing portion of their electric supplies from qualified renewable resources (a renewable resource portfolio standard).

Hydropower is the largest single source of existing electrical power, with the county's major electric resources located outside King County. These include the Grand Coulee, North Bonneville, and Ross Dams. No new large-dam sites are available in the region, making hydropower a very small part of any new regional power-generating resources.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licenses such projects, but in doing so must consider existing plans and policies of public and private jurisdictions. While power generation benefits the public, care must be taken to ensure that small hydroelectric projects are constructed in an environmentally sound manner, directing new, small hydropower facilities, for example, to streams that do not have anadromous fish. Construction and operation must also be consistent with the intended functions and uses of forestlands, where most small hydroelectric projects are located.

The 2021 Northwest Power Plan indicates no significant addition of hydropower resources is projected. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council plan also identifies Protected Areas that protect some streams and wildlife habitats from hydroelectric development where such development would have major negative impacts that could not be reversed. In these areas, the Northwest Power and

Conservation Council finds that mitigation techniques cannot assure that all adverse impacts of hydroelectric development on these fish and wildlife populations will be mitigated; that even small hydroelectric projects may have unacceptable individual and cumulative impacts on these resources; and protecting these resources and habitats from hydroelectric development is consistent with an adequate, efficient, economical, and reliable power supply.

Electrical utilities supplying King County are required by Washington State law to plan for their electric power resources in an integrated resource planning process very similar to the process used for the 2021 Northwest Power Plan. These are required by state law to regularly assess their power needs, supply strategies, and impacts using Integrated Resource Plans.

F-520 **To address the cumulative effects of multiple energy facilities, King County should continue to participate in the state and federal processes for licensing, authorizing, or certifying, and any such renewals, of existing and proposed power generation projects within King County. King County's review of individual projects in the state and federal processes should consider consistency with designated land uses and environmental protection goals. Specifically, power generation projects should:**

- **a. Have climate change impacts considered and mitigated to the greatest extent practical;**
- **b. Be consistent with, and preferably directly incorporated in, utility integrated Resource Plans;**
- **c. Use renewable resources to the greatest extent practical;**
- **d. Include public engagement;**
- **e. Not significantly interfere with commercial forestry operations;**
- **f. Be located and operated in a manner such that impacts to salmonid fish and wildlife are minimized;**
- **g. Avoid unstable and erosion-prone areas;**
- **h. Include performance bonding to fund erosion control;**
- **i. Provide full mitigation for construction and operation impacts;**
- **j. Avoid, to the extent feasible, diminishing scenic values;**
- **k. Incorporate adequate public safety measures; and**
- **l. In the case of hydropower, not be located within a Protected Area as designated by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.**

F-521 **King County should work with utilities to identify and preserve corridors, consistent with the Growth Management Act goal of focusing growth within the Urban Growth Area, to accommodate future electric power transmission and distribution lines. Corridor designation should include:**

- **a. Identification of appropriate shared uses and recognition of the values provided by nonutility uses, such as recreation;**
- **b. Recognition of county roads as utility corridors; and**
- **c. Evaluation of proposed facility plans on a system-wide basis, rather than project-by-project.**

F-522 **When new, expanded, or upgraded transmission is required, use of existing corridors that have above-ground utilities should be evaluated first. King County should facilitate appropriate corridor sharing among different utility types and owners.**

F-523 **New electrical distribution lines should be installed underground where reasonably feasible and not a health or safety concern.**

4. Natural Gas

King County works to reduce fossil fuel natural gas use in the built environment through a combination of energy use reduction, the use of renewable natural gas, and conversion to high-efficiency heating systems (such as heat pumps) that use electricity. Many homes and businesses in King County do not have the choice of natural gas, even within the Urban Growth Area.

King County has by far the largest resource of biologically produced methane in the region, from its wastewater treatment facilities and its solid waste landfills. King County should continue to develop and promote the development of biologically derived sources of fuel gas (renewable natural gas), research technologies and opportunities to utilize low methane concentration gas from closed landfills for beneficial uses, and support the efficient marketing and use of such gas. Any renewable energy production associated with methane or biologically derived materials should consider other potential uses of relevant resources, such as the use of edible food to reduce hunger.

Because methane gas can serve as a greenhouse gas-reducing substitute for fossil fuel natural gas, and become a feedstock for aviation fuels, maritime fuels, the generation of green hydrogen and for other beneficial purposes to help de-carbonize various industries, several of the energy policies in this subsection relate to this energy source.

F-524 **King County should work to remove barriers to the availability and efficient use of renewable natural gas.**

5. Natural Gas Distribution Systems

Natural gas pipelines fall into two major categories: gas transmission lines that transport natural gas from production fields to distribution companies, and distribution systems that deliver natural gas from transmission pipelines to retail customers. Distribution systems for transporting natural gas are fundamentally different from transmission gas pipelines and should be regulated based on their design, use, and location.

Gas distribution systems consist of the pipelines that deliver natural gas to end users together with intermediate supply lines. The distribution system is constructed incrementally, with the addition of new segments and the upgrading of existing lines occurring in numerous small projects. The distribution system is a network that is primarily located in road rights-of-way, where service is available. Distribution companies are subject to the comprehensive safety regulations administered by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission under state law and regulations and by the United States Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety under federal law and regulations. The rates and services of investor-owned utilities also are subject to comprehensive regulation by the Utilities and Transportation Commission under state law and regulations.

F-525 **King County shall use the franchise agreements process to require gas distribution utilities comply with county, state, and federal safety and health regulations.**

F-526 **In the interest of safety and reliability of the natural gas distribution pipeline systems, the County should take steps to protect and preserve the signs that mark pipelines.**

F-527 **Structures designed for human occupancy should not be located within gas distribution pipeline rights-of-way and should be set back from the pipeline to protect public health, safety, and property. No structures shall be located over the pipeline.**

6. Hazardous Liquid and Gas Transmission Pipelines

Part of the fossil fuel system is the movement of hazardous liquid and gas by transmission pipelines. Hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines, as defined by Revised Code of Washington 81.88.010 and Washington Administrative Code 480-93-005, respectively, provide a vital service of transporting hazardous materials from one location to another. Long-distance transmission pipelines move a variety of hazardous materials, including crude oil, petroleum products, natural gas, and hazardous liquids such as anhydrous ammonia. Pipeline rupture or failure can result in release of these materials, which are highly flammable, explosive, or toxic. The policies in this chapter identify public values and goals to ensure that the transmission of hazardous materials by pipeline address public health and safety.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regulates the location, construction, and operational conditions of interstate natural gas pipelines through its certification process. The state and federal government regulate the location, construction, and operational conditions of hazardous liquid and intrastate gas pipelines through the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council. In its review of pipeline applications, however, the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council must determine whether the pipelines are consistent with County land use plans and zoning codes. Thus, King County's authority to regulate the location of pipelines is through the comprehensive plan and development regulations.

F-528 **King County recognizes that federal and state regulatory programs govern the design, construction, and operation of hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines. King County's land use designations, zoning classifications, and development regulations should be focused on increasing safety and reducing environmental impacts of transmission pipelines regulated by the federal and state government. King County shall actively engage in federal and state review processes to identify local impacts and risks and advocate for safety and environmental protections.**

F-529 **Any new, modified, or expanded hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines proposed for construction in King County shall meet the County's development regulations, including but not limited to, King County's zoning code, building code, grading code, and shoreline management code. Proposals for modifications, such as regular maintenance or changes required to address hazards or comply with federal or state safety requirements, shall be clearly distinguished from proposals to modify or expand facility capacity or uses.**

King County anticipates that few new hazardous liquid or gas transmission pipelines will be constructed in the near future. However, as existing pipelines age and the relationship between resources, refineries, and markets changes over time, new pipelines will need to be constructed. Hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines are best constructed away from locations where large numbers of people assemble. King County recognizes that under some circumstances new gas transmission pipelines may need to locate in densely populated areas as the only practical alternative to meet the demand for service.

F-530 **New hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines should be located away from high-density residential zones, unincorporated activity centers, neighborhood business centers, community business centers, office parks, sports fields, schools and daycare centers, or other land uses where large numbers of people would assemble.**

F-531 **Hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines should not be located in areas susceptible to soil disturbance or liquefaction or in aquifer recharge areas. When it is impractical to avoid such areas, special engineering precautions should be taken to protect public health, safety, and welfare.**

F-532 **Structures designed for human occupancy should not be located within hazardous liquid or gas transmission pipeline rights-of-way and should be set back from the pipeline to protect public health, safety and property. No structures shall be located over the pipeline. Land uses shall be restricted within hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipeline rights-of-way. Passive recreational uses, such as hiking trails, may be allowed if the risk to life and property is assessed and determined to be minimal.**

F-533 **In the interest of safety and reliability of the hazardous liquid and natural gas interstate transmission pipeline systems, the County should take steps to protect and preserve the signs that mark pipelines.**

7. Crude Oil Transport by Rail, Truck and Vessel

Part of the fossil fuel system is the transport of crude oil by rail, truck, and vessel. King County and local governments across the United States are facing rapid and significant increases in train traffic carrying crude oil.

Oil trains travel through densely populated areas of King County and pass through a century-old tunnel under downtown Seattle. Many of the trains carry highly volatile Bakken crude oil, creating risks for catastrophic explosions and loss of life and property in the event of a derailment. The passage of mile-long unit trains delay traffic and emergency vehicle access at numerous at-grade crossing.

Oil train routes cross numerous rivers, streams, and aquifers and trace the Puget Sound shoreline, putting aquatic resources and Endangered Species Act-listed salmon at risk. Despite facing impacts and risks from oil transport by rail and burdens for emergency planning and response, local governments like King County have almost no authority to require disclosure of hazards, establish safety standards for trains passing through their jurisdiction, or require railroads and shipper to pay for mitigation of impacts.

King County Office of Emergency Management acts as a regional convener of public and private emergency management entities to plan for, mitigate, and respond to oil train spills and explosions. Additionally, King County convenes and leads a coalition of Indian tribal, state, and local leaders known as the Safe Energy Leadership Alliance to advocate for assessment of the full costs and risks of oil and coal transport and coal export on our regional, local and Indian tribal economies, environment, health, and cultural resources.

F-534 **King County shall convene local emergency managers, first responders, railroads, and others to prepare for and mitigate the increasing risk of oil spills, fire, and explosions posed by oil transport by rail, truck, and vessel. This work should consider potential risks from related fossil fuel facilities.**

F-535 **King County should advocate for environmental reviews of proposed oil terminals and other related fossil fuel facilities in Washington State to assess and mitigate for area-wide, cumulative risks and impacts to public safety, infrastructure, traffic, health, water supplies, and aquatic resources from increased oil transport by rail, truck, and vessel.**

F-536 **King County should collaborate with Indian tribal and local governments to jointly advocate for stronger federal and state disclosure requirements for hazardous materials being transported by rail, safety requirements and speed limits for tank cars, minimum liability coverage for railroads and oil shippers, and financial support for increased local emergency planning and response to oil spills, fires, and explosions.**

F-537 **King County land use policies, development regulations, and permitting and environmental review processes related to fossil fuel facilities shall be designed to:**

a. Protect public health, safety, and welfare;
b. Mitigate and prepare for disasters;
c. Protect and preserve natural systems;
d. Manage impacts on public services and infrastructure; and
e. Reduce impacts of climate change.

F-538 **When reviewing proposals for new, modified or expanded fossil fuel facilities, King County shall require comprehensive environmental assessment, and early and continuous public notice and comment opportunities. King County shall only approve proposals for new, modified, or expanded facilities when:**

a. The proposed facility can confine or mitigate all operational impacts;
b. The facility can adequately mitigate conflicts with adjacent land uses;
c. The full scope of environmental impacts, including life cycle greenhouse gas emissions and public health, have been evaluated and appropriately conditioned or mitigated as necessary, consistent with the County's substantive State Environmental Policy Act authority;
d. The applicant can comply with applicable federal and state regulations, including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act;
e. The applicant has demonstrated early, meaningful, and robust consultation with Indian tribes, the public, and surrounding property owners to assess impacts to Indian tribal treaty-protected cultural and fisheries resources; and
f. Risks to public health and public safety can be mitigated.

F-539 **King County shall require local distribution companies that convey fossil fuels in King County to prepare and submit a greenhouse gas impact analysis when applying for a new utility franchise agreement or an extension or renewal of an existing utility franchise agreement.**

J. Telecommunications

Various companies provide telecommunications services throughout unincorporated King County, including voice, data, and video on various mediums such as wire, fiber optic, or radio wave. Effective telecommunications services promote and enhance individual information exchange, contribute to a robust regional economy, and afford numerous public services, including delivery of emergency services, education, and opportunities for community involvement.

Telecommunication networks are privately owned, publicly regulated entities that are driven by market forces more than statutory requirements. The County has limited regulatory control of telecommunication service providers, except in rights-of-way and associated franchise agreements with those companies that help ensure technical quality, protect customer rights, and support public services.

Telecommunications systems will need to grow to continue to support government, business, resident, education, health, service sector, and mobile communication needs, as well as to respond to new technologies. Telecommunication technologies change rapidly and will continue to change during the horizon of this plan. The future telecommunication system will build off of the existing telecommunication infrastructure, while utilizing an expanded range of radio frequencies transmitted through antennas to improve capacity and access.

Telecommunications services are regulated by several entities, including the Federal Communications Commission and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. King County has some regulatory authority over telecommunications services through franchises and the development approval process.

F-540 **King County shall encourage telecommunication services to mitigate the transportation impact of development and growth, including greenhouse gas emissions.**

F-541 **King County should encourage 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.**

F-542 **Telecommunication companies and the County should coordinate activities when facilities are being installed or road construction projects are scheduled.**

F-543 **King County regulations should encourage telecommunication service providers to plan and provide for uninterrupted service during natural disasters.**

F-544 **Collocation of telecommunication facilities is encouraged to reduce the unnecessary proliferation of individual, single-user towers. Collocation shall be required unless an applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County that collocation on an existing tower is not feasible and not consistent with service quality and access.**

F-545 **Although visual impacts are always an important consideration in the decision to approve or deny a proposal, King County shall give greater weight to the visual impacts of telecommunication facilities proposed to be located on residentially zoned lands or in the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands. In addition, the visual impacts of proposals for an individual tower with a single user shall be given greater weight than proposals to collocate facilities.**

F-546 **King County considers the placement of telecommunication facilities within street rights-of-way as the preferred alternative to the construction of facilities on private property. Regulatory standards shall require placement in street rights-of-way, especially within residential neighborhoods and the Rural Area, unless such a location is not feasible or not consistent with service quality and access.**

1. Cable Services

King County regulates companies using County rights-of-way for providing cable television services to customers in unincorporated areas via franchise agreements. As of 2023, King County has franchise agreements with two cable companies, Comcast and WAVE Broadband.

F-547 **Cable companies should provide services that meet the cable-related needs and interests of all segments of the community, taking into account the cost of meeting such needs and interests.**

F-548 **King County should encourage cable companies to take proactive steps to ensure that there is widespread availability of and equitable access to cable service. Cable companies should ensure information is culturally appropriate and made available to county residents, especially households at or below 80 percent of area median income and/or that speak languages other than English.**

F-549 **Long-term cable planning should support:**

a. A high-capacity, state-of-the-art system;
b Installation and activation of two-way capacity;
c. Interconnection of cable systems to other communications systems; and
d. Open systems, usable by many, for a variety of purposes.

F-550 **Public uses of the cable system should be expanded as the system is upgraded.**

2. Internet Access

Increased high-speed (or broadband) internet access and rapidly changing technologies provide opportunities for alternative work environments and lifestyles. In King County and nationwide, people without broadband internet service are at a growing disadvantage when it comes to education, health care, access to government services, the job market, and civic and cultural engagement. Equal access to technology can help improve the quality of everyone's life.

In 2020, the King County Broadband Access Study was completed, which evaluated the availability and accessibility of broadband internet services for King County residents. The study:

1. Assessed the broadband infrastructure and services available and accessible to the community;

2. Identified unserved locations (a location that does not have a broadband connection available) and underserved populations (residents who have broadband service available to them, but they cannot afford to buy it, or they have some other barrier to using broadband, such as lack of digital literacy or lack of access to broadband-enabled devices); and

3. Included data collection, analysis, findings, and recommended solutions across multiple demographics.

King County is exploring and implementing actions to enable expansion of internet and broadband access to more county residents. For example, King County's Institutional Network (I-Net) provides broadband to eligible government agencies such as schools, libraries, courts, public safety groups, and public health facilities. King County's Institutional Network (I-Net) has over 2,000 miles of fiber installed, connecting to approximately 300 public facilities. I-Net is expanding access to broadband to ensure all nonprofits, community, and educational organizations have the information technology capacity needed to deliver government services to effectively serve all communities so they can have full participation in society, democracy, and the economy. Focusing on advancing Best Start for Kids and healthier communities, I-Net also continues working with nonprofits, government, and educational institutions to

bring "last mile" connectivity, which typically refers to the final leg of infrastructure connecting the provider's network to a home or building and which continues to be a barrier to broader broadband access.

In addition, the County understands the importance of state and other local organizations and their initiatives to expand broadband access within King County. The County is creating partnerships with these entities to help make high-speed broadband a reality for everyone in King County.

F-551 **King County shall support opportunities to increase access to broadband internet services where needs are greatest, prioritizing areas where there are educational and economic needs. Examples of these opportunities may include expanding the I-Net network, pursuing grant funding to support infrastructure investments, partnering with service providers to expand coverage, considering fiber optic cable installation in trail corridors, and marketing to underserved communities.**

F-552 **King County should increase wireless capabilities at County-owned facilities and sites, such as County parks, for public access.**

F-553 **King County should encourage public and private organizations to create wireless internet access for the public, including in community centers, social service agencies, community health clinics, libraries, schools, and other buildings that serve households at or below 80 percent of area median income.**



CHAPTER 10

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

I. Introduction

A. The State of the Economy

King County's labor market and economy are the largest and most diverse in Washington State. Sectors with the highest employment in King County include: agriculture; manufacturing; construction; retail; trade and transportation; utilities; professional and business services; information, education, and health services; and leisure and hospitality.

Within the unincorporated jurisdiction are three broad geographies, designated by King County under the Growth Management Act and the Comprehensive Plan:

- Urban unincorporated areas;
- The Rural Area; and
- Natural Resource Lands.

Covering only 45 square miles, urban unincorporated King County contains about half of the unincorporated population with a number of residential communities and a small number of business centers. Communities within the urban unincorporated area include North Highline, Skyway-West Hill, Fairwood, East Renton, and Lakeland South/East Federal Way.

The largest job sector within the urban unincorporated geography is services, followed by education and government. Other large job sectors include construction and resources, wholesale-transportation, retail, and manufacturing. While much of the urban unincorporated area is residential, its residents and the people working in the urban unincorporated job centers make up a skilled labor force.

The Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands play a significant role in helping the county maintain a diversity of economic sectors, thus contributing to the county's overall economic health. Evaluation and discussion of the rural economy includes the Rural Area, Natural Resource Lands, and the Cities in the Rural Area, which include Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall, Enumclaw, North Bend, Snoqualmie, and Skykomish.

B. General Policies

King County provides infrastructure, business, and workforce development services as part of its regional responsibilities. King County also partners with business; economic development, workforce development, community-based, industry trade, and labor organizations; boards and commissions; and other jurisdictions to support and grow the regional economy.

According to the United States Department of Labor, in 2021, women, on average, are paid 84 percent of what men are paid for working full-time, year-round. This wage gap persists across races and ethnicities. This gap is worsened when considering "job segregation," or overrepresentation or underrepresentation of women and people of color in certain occupations and sectors of the economy. The Department of Labor further reports that:

- Women must complete at least one additional educational degree to earn as much as men with less education;
- The wage gap is larger for mothers and results in employment-related losses of more than $295,000 over a lifetime; and

- Discrimination remains a likely leading cause of the gender wage gap. The federal government has recovered over $20 million in monetary relief for women who have experienced pay discrimination in the workplace just between 2022 and 2024.

ED-101 **King County shall support sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic development throughout the county.**

ED-102 **King County shall prioritize equity and racial and social justice in all economic development policies and programs.**

ED-103 **King County shall engage with the public to inform County economic development plans, policies, and programs. This includes fostering opportunities for the public, especially communities with limited access to economic opportunity and those with the highest needs, to be involved in associated decision-making.**

ED-104 **King County shall focus significant economic growth in the Urban Growth Area, concentrated in cities and in a network of regionally designated growth centers, and shall focus rural economic development on sustaining and enhancing prosperous and successful rural and resource-based businesses, and on encouraging new businesses that support and are compatible with the rural economy, particularly in Rural Towns.**

ED-105 **King County policies, programs, and strategies shall recognize the importance of and focus on growing new businesses, such as start-up companies and small local businesses, and expanding existing businesses in industries that create middle-wage jobs and share the County's values of racial equity, environmental sustainability, and workers' rights.**

ED-106 **King County's plans, policies, programs, and strategies shall recognize the role and importance of small businesses and locally owned businesses in fostering community stability and creating opportunity in historically underrepresented and underinvested communities.**

ED-107 **King County shall take actions that support diversified employment opportunities toward providing a continuum of skills in support of middle-wage jobs. King County shall direct resources to reduce inequities and build economic resiliency for those communities most negatively impacted by asset poverty, beyond income or wages.**

ED-108 **King County shall protect the natural environment as a key economic asset and should support businesses that can be developed in environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient ways.**

ED-109 **King County shall promote expanded cultural opportunities for its residents and visitors to enhance the region's quality of life and economic vitality.**

ED-110 **King County should partner with other counties, regional entities, and the state to devise and implement economic development policies, programs, and strategies to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and equitable growth throughout the Puget Sound region.**

ED-111 **King County should partner with other jurisdictions, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, the Port of Seattle, and others, to develop and implement policies, programs, and strategies that set the general framework for economic development within the county.**

ED-112 **Within the unincorporated areas, King County should partner and engage with Indian tribes, businesses, chambers, farms, the Agriculture and Rural Forest Commissions, cities, and residents, to develop and implement policies, programs, and strategies that promote sustainable, inclusive, and equitable local economic development.**

ED-113 **King County shall prioritize funding for community and economic development projects that:**

a. Benefit households at or below 80 percent area median income;
b. Create equitable opportunities for economic prosperity, good health, safety, and connection to community;
c. Reflect an equitable countywide distribution of funding; and
d. Meet the needs of historically underinvested communities facing economic pressures and disparate heath and economic outcomes.

II. Business Development

To support business development, King County's policies, plans, programs, and strategies should support a business-friendly climate that is conducive to the domestic and global competitive environment.

Homegrown businesses are those that started in the region. Homegrown, small to medium-size businesses create the majority of new jobs in a local economy. Businesses that export their products and services outside King County bring income into the county and generally pay better than jobs that are dependent on the local economy. These businesses can help support the county's local economy.

The county's leading export sectors are:

- Information services, led by the software development industry.
- Manufacturing, led by the aerospace industry.
- Business services, such as banking, insurance, accounting, legal, architectural, engineering, research and development, and computer services industries.

King County has also identified the creative sector as a critical segment of the regional economy that requires additional support and renewed focus. King County's creative sector includes, but is not limited to, the film, music, arts and culture, festival, and events, videogaming, and fashion industries. These industries are predominantly driven by small businesses, entrepreneurs, and gig workers. Supporting creative sector development that is compatible with surrounding land uses contributes to the region's regional reputation, drives tourism, and creates a desirable environment for business development of other sectors.

A. Working Collaboratively in the Region

King County partners with the Puget Sound Regional Council's Central Puget Sound Economic Development District Board; Greater Seattle Partners; King County Associate Development Organization; Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County; other economic development organizations and local jurisdictions in the region, to grow and sustain regional economic vitality and global competitiveness.

ED-201 **King County shall partner with Indian tribes, federal, state, and city governments, economic development organizations, schools, educational and research institutions, the private sector, and other organizations to foster innovative and sustainable business development and job creation.**

ED-202 **King County shall prioritize support for the aerospace, green economy, creative economy, and information technology clusters; agriculture and forestry clusters; and emerging sectors that offer the best opportunities for business development, job creation, and economic growth.**

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

ED-204 **King County shall encourage redevelopment of and reinvestment in industrial and manufacturing properties by collaborating with other jurisdictions and the private sector to remove, revise, or streamline regulatory or other redevelopment barriers without compromising environmental standards or quality. This includes assessment and/or remediation of contaminated properties.**

ED-205 **King County shall promote and help position small and mid-size businesses to gain greater participation in the supply chains of large businesses and the military located in the region.**

ED-206 **King County shall provide opportunities for small businesses to compete for and obtain contracts on County-funded construction, consulting, and goods and services projects. King County shall also collaborate with other jurisdictions to promote public-contracting opportunities for small businesses and to develop and maintain common standards, a common application, and a common directory for small contractors and suppliers seeking contracts on publicly funded projects.**

ED-207 **King County shall assist businesses, property owners, and other jurisdictions in preserving and enhancing historic properties, including historic business districts, through incentives and economic development measures. County programs and incentives for land and resource preservation and economic development shall support and be coordinated with preservation of historic properties.**

ED-208 **King County shall foster the development and use of public/private partnerships to implement economic development projects and programs. At a minimum, these projects shall demonstrate that they:**

- **a. Cannot be accomplished solely by either sector and would be greatly enhanced by working together;**
- **b. Have an experienced and proven private partner(s);**
- **c. Do not unduly enrich the private partner(s);**
- **d. Provide tangible and measurable public benefits in terms of tax and other revenue, construction and permanent jobs, livable wages with benefits and a wage-progression strategy, and public amenities; and**
- **e. Share decision-making power with and spread benefits to community groups.**

ED-209 **King County should support programs and strategies to expand international trade, including those that:**

- **a. Promote, market, and position the county for increased export and import, and foreign investment opportunities;**

b. Promote the health and viability of the region's export and import gateways through active collaboration with the Northwest Seaport Alliance and the Port of Seattle;
c. Provide technical assistance, training, and opportunities for local firms wishing to export; and
d. Partner with regional trade groups to promote assistance, opportunities and partnerships to connect current and potential exporters with international markets.

ED-210 King County shall seek to support business programs and strategies that contribute to a more circular economy to reduce demand for materials; keep materials in use as long as possible; regenerate natural systems by reusing waste products, materials, or byproducts of manufacturing; promote recycling; or otherwise improve processes to be more efficient.

ED-211 King County should support programs and strategies to preserve and plan for an adequate supply of industrial and commercial land capacity, including but not limited to:
a. Participating in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Industrial Lands Analysis;
b. Actively applying for federal, state, and other resources to help defray the costs of assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of private and/or public brownfields;
c. Promoting the redevelopment and infill of industrial and commercial areas and exploring the feasibility of using incentives to achieve this goal; and
d. Preventing the encroachment of nonindustrial uses on industrially zoned land and the rezoning of industrial land to other uses.

ED-212 King County shall encourage and support community-based and community-led efforts to develop and retain existing small and local businesses. These efforts may include:
a. Implementing the Contracting Opportunities Program in historically underinvested communities;
b. Ensuring public investment decisions protect culturally significant economic assets and community anchors; and
c. Engaging communities directly affected by economic development activities in planning, decision making, and implementation.

ED-213 King County should help stabilize and prevent the displacement of small or culturally or ethnically diverse businesses and business clusters during periods of growth, contraction, and redevelopment.

ED-214 King County shall perform outreach about the existing King County priority hire program to increase residents' connections to economic opportunities and to aid in anti-displacement efforts.

ED-215 King County shall coordinate with a broad range of partners, organizations, businesses, and public sector agencies to support the development of business innovation districts and other community stabilization initiatives to help prevent the displacement of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; immigrants; refugees; LGBTQIA+ people; and households at or below 80 percent of area median income.

III. Workforce Development

King County provides programs and participates in partnerships to address the new and ongoing regional workforce opportunities and challenges. The current economy has created more opportunity, and yet there is an increasing divide between those who are benefitting from a strong economy and those who are not. For this reason, King County has an even greater need to ensure all residents have access to information about local workforce development programs and opportunities, especially for those residents who are not benefitting equitably from the strong economy.

Meeting these challenges successfully requires the County to continue and to strengthen strategies and working relationships across sectors and among business, government, labor, communities, advocacy organizations, education and training institutions, and human services providers.

King County's Green Jobs Strategy emphasizes connecting frontline communities to middle-wage employment opportunities to build a skilled and diverse workforce across the career spectrum. The County utilizes its resource network to promote and meaningfully connect local workers to middle-wage jobs by developing high-quality workforce partnerships to diversify and add climate-informed skills building into existing sectors such as construction, transportation, manufacturing, professional services, and technology, while preparing for the clean energy future. The Strategy emphasizes integrating workforce development into County climate and clean energy initiatives, while collaborating with regional partners to grow green jobs through sectors essential to clean energy deployment. The Strategy outlines the recipe for high-road workforce partnerships based on building trusted relationships with job seekers, connecting to partners providing skills training and industry-recognized credentials, and clear employment on-ramps developed with employers and labor partners.

ED-301 **King County should support workforce development programs that are integrated with the County's overall economic strategies, including but not limited to:**

- **a. Apprenticeship opportunities, such as priority hire, on County public works projects to ensure a continual pipeline of skilled, local construction trades workers and to encourage middle-wage job opportunities; and**
- **b. Providing frontline communities accessible training and skill building for jobs that support a middle wage, particularly for green jobs and identified high growth sectors .**

ED-302 **King County shall emphasize the needs and opportunities for communities with the highest unemployment rates in the region, including the potential for development of training opportunities in these areas. King County should support the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County to coordinate and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs to meet the needs of workers and employers.**

ED-303 **King County policies, programs, strategies, and partnerships shall recognize the importance of worker training and retraining, especially for workers in low-wage and low-barrier industries and communities with the highest unemployment rates, to provide the skilled workers needed by local businesses and industry. King County shall support and partner with other jurisdictions, educational institutions, and industry to promote programs that align with community needs, such as:**

- **a. Programs that retrain dislocated workers for jobs in growing industries;**
- **b. Training for jobs in growing industries that require post-technical or post-secondary training and credentials and provide a career pathway to self-sufficiency;**
- **c. Programs that facilitate employer involvement in hiring workers with limited experience and skills and provide successful strategies for skills training, job placement, and worker retention;**
- **d. Programs that reduce recidivism by helping residents exiting the criminal legal system gain access to training and employment services;**
- **e. Alignment of housing and employment systems to ensure people who are experiencing homelessness have access to both housing and employment opportunities;**
- **f. Food-related, creative economy, and green technology workforce development activities and opportunities;**
- **g. School-to-work programs and effective alternatives for out-of-school youth to provide a clear pathway to self-sufficiency through career options and applied learning opportunities;**
- **h. Summer youth employment programs for historically underserved youth;**
- **i. Access to alternative modes of transportation by providing transportation information, income-based discount programs such as ORCA LIFT, and services to jobseekers and workers;**
- **j. Access to childcare by increasing the availability and affordability of quality childcare for low-income families;**
- **k. Initiatives aimed at facilitating skills training and on-ramps to middle-wage employment for frontline communities connected to identified high growth industry sectors as outlined in King County's Green Jobs Strategy; and**
- **l. Connecting veterans with targeted programs and resources to achieve and sustain their career goals or transition into the civilian workforce.**

ED-304 **King County shall help promote and develop opportunities for communities that speak languages other than English, including:**

- **a. Partnering and investing in community organizations that represent linguistically diverse populations;**
- **b. Improving translation and interpretation services;**
- **c. Partnering with employers to promote the hiring of people that speak languages other than English; and**
- **d. Partnering with regional educational institutions to develop methods for recertification for limited English proficiency professionals with credentials from other countries, and partnering with community organizations to promote and increase access to recertification programs.**

ED-305 **King County shall work with regional workforce development organizations and regional educational institutions, especially community colleges, to promote greater alignment between educational programs and workforce needs.**

ED-306 **King County should support programs and projects that provide apprenticeship and employment training in the building trades through affordable housing development. King County should explore ways to partner with nonprofit housing developers in offering pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and employment training opportunities.**

IV. Infrastructure Development

Adequate and well-maintained public infrastructure is crucial to a strong economy and attracting new industry and economic development. Basic public services that maintain a high quality of life in an area support employment growth and increased productivity, and influence business location decisions.

ED-401 **King County shall support and partner on programs and strategies to maintain existing infrastructure and construct new infrastructure and facilities (including, but not limited to, transportation, utilities, schools, information, communications, and an adequate supply of housing), prioritizing historically underinvested areas, and as necessary to accommodate current and future economic demand, in locations and at a size and scale that is consistent with other policies in the Comprehensive Plan.**

ED-402 **King County shall partner to support programs, and infrastructure, including electrification, to facilitate the efficient movement of freight and to promote global competitiveness for business and industry.**

ED-403 **King County shall partner, where feasible, with Indian tribes, cities, and organizations to develop targeted economic development strategies to promote development and redevelopment in areas that can accommodate growth.**

ED-404 **King County should use planning initiatives, zoning, incentives, partnerships, or other measures to capitalize on the economic benefit of infrastructure projects in locations and at a size and scale that is consistent with other policies in the Comprehensive Plan.**

ED-405 **King County should support programs and partnerships to facilitate the development of adequate technology infrastructure, to meet growing technological demand, and to ensure high-quality infrastructure for the regional economy.**

V. Sustainable Economic Development

King County seeks to become a model sustainable community that balances urban growth with natural resource protection while addressing climate change. Sustainable economic development aims to achieve this goal by addressing the environmental impacts of the built environment in which people live and work. Sustainable economic development is implemented through planning, design, and construction methods, including green building and low impact development that promotes environmental quality, economic vitality, and healthy communities.

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

ED-501 **King County should encourage, support, and promote the application of sustainable economic development practices in all private sector development within the county, through adopting development codes that support green building and partnering with other cities and the private sector to foster sustainable development.**

VI. The Rural Economy

Within unincorporated rural King County, economic activities include, but are not limited to, farming, livestock raising, equestrian uses, forestry, resource value-added businesses, and home-based businesses. The Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center land use designation provides for a limited array of goods and services to local rural residents on a small scale. Rural Towns provide a wider range of goods, services, and jobs for rural residents, including retail, restaurants, and services. Natural Resource Lands support the long-term commercial aspects of agriculture and forestry and potential resource value-added products.

The County also recognizes that the land areas, economies, and natural beauty of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands benefit all county residents. The agriculture sector provides a high-quality and reliable local food source to restaurants, institutions, farmers markets, and individual consumers. The Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands provide many diverse recreation and tourism opportunities, including scenic vistas; trails for hiking, bicycling, off-road, and equestrian use; open space and wildlife habitat; and working farms and forest lands, all within a short distance from urban centers.

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

The ability to bring rural, agricultural, forestry, and value-added products into the urban area and the ability of urban residents to utilize the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands for education, open space, scenic vistas, and a diversity of outdoor recreation options encourage the urban/rural interdependence and linkage, thus enhancing the county's economy.

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

ED-602 **King County should identify and implement rural economic development strategies that reflect the evolving nature of the rural economy, while protecting the traditional rural economic clusters.**

- **a. King County recognizes the value of the agriculture and forestry clusters for both their economic contribution and for their natural, educational, and recreational benefits to the county as a whole. The County shall work with the Agriculture Commission, Rural Forest Commission, and other related organizations on strategies and programs to strengthen and enhance the economic viability of these clusters and the evolving value-added industry that helps sustain the county's legacy of raising crops and livestock and managing and harvesting forestlands.**
- **b. King County recognizes the value of home-based business, recreation and tourism, and commercial and industrial clusters for their ability to provide job opportunities in the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, and help sustain the rural economic base. The County shall continue to work with chambers of commerce and other organizations that support these rural businesses to help ensure the continued viability and economic health of new and existing businesses in these clusters.**
- **c. King County recognizes the importance of the equestrian cluster for its diversity of business and recreation-related operations that combine to provide jobs and income opportunities within the rural economy. The County shall continue to work with equestrian-related organizations on business and recreation aspects of the equestrian cluster and with organizations that represent the various trail user groups to help ensure the continued viability and economic health of equestrian and related recreation businesses.**
- **d. As a means and in support of protecting rural character and Natural Resource Lands, King County recognizes the value of the partnership with Cities in the Rural Area to act as local urban centers for employment and centers of commerce that provides goods and services for the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands. The County shall work with the cities and other organizations to support economic development for Cities in the Rural Area, at a size and scale consistent with the Growth Management Act.**
- **e. King County is committed to ensuring that all economic development, including the provision of infrastructure, within the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands shall be compatible with the surrounding rural character, be of an appropriate size and scale, and protect the natural environment.**
- **f. King County shall continue to support and partner on programs and incentives to ensure the economic vitality of rural historic resources to help maintain the character of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands.**
- **g. King County shall explore opportunities to support agricultural tourism and value-added program(s) related to the production of food, flowers, and specialty beverages (including beer, distilled beverages, and wine) in the county. Partnership venues should be educational and include information on the diversity of products available in the county and the importance of buying local, should seek to unify regional tourism efforts, and should encourage development of new markets for agricultural products and value-added goods.**
- **h. King County shall continue to review existing and proposed regulations to ensure they are relevant and effective in accommodating the differing needs and emerging trends of the compatible businesses that comprise the rural economy.**

i. **King County should continue to identify the infrastructure needs of the rural economic clusters, including transportation, drainage, and information technology needs, and provide support for these needs, including identification of other funding sources.**
j. **King County should continue to identify and encourage businesses to take advantage of incentives and technical assistance programs that promote economic viability of existing and new businesses in the Rural Area and Natural Resources Lands, particularly in the Agricultural and Forest Production Districts.**

ED-603 **King County shall partner with organizations that support programs and strategies that strengthen the interdependence and linkage between the rural, resource-based, and urban economies.**

ED-604 **King County shall encourage economic development of the local food system. The County shall seek funding to analyze barriers to growing the local food economy; make food system infrastructure improvements, including related to commercial kitchens, storage, aggregation and packing, and meat processing; and increase access to farmland.**



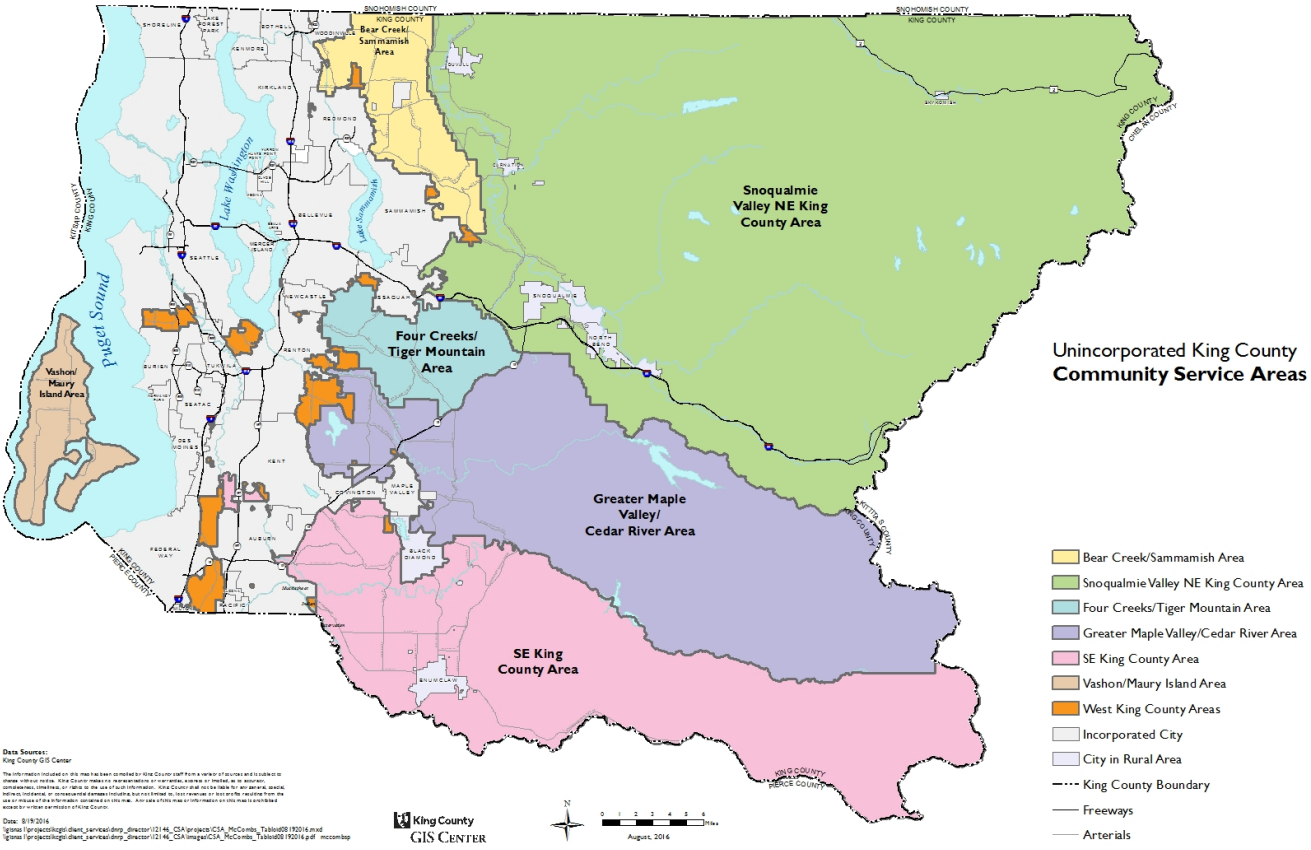
CHAPTER 11

SUBAREA PLANNING

I. Subarea Planning Framework

A. Introduction

The geographical boundaries of the County's seven Community Service Areas is used as the framework for creation and amendment of subarea plans. Subarea plans will be developed for the six rural Community Service Areas, and for the five remaining large urban unincorporated Potential Annexation Areas. The focus of subarea plans will be on locally specific issues in these subarea geographies.



While there are differences among the Community Service Areas in terms of their boundaries, range of land uses, annexation issues, and more, using these geographies ensures the entire unincorporated portion of the County receives locally focused planning on a regular cycle. This includes development of each subarea plan. Each plan will establish a community vision statement, guiding principles, and policies focused on addressing each community's needs and priorities. The plans will be developed using information such as population changes, employment targets, and similar demographic and socioeconomic indicators. Each plan will also establish performance measures to monitor the implementation of the plan.

The high-level review along with more detailed land use planning will be guided by a series of considerations such as community interest, funding, and new development. Equity and racial and social justice principles will also play a particularly key role during subarea plan development and public engagement activities. The County will use the tools and resources developed by the Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice to

develop the scope of work and the plans so that Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; households at or below 80 percent of area median income; and people speaking languages other than English are offered equitable and culturally appropriate opportunities to work with the County throughout the planning process.

Subarea plans are developed in close coordination between the community and County staff to ensure clearer expectations on how and whether community recommendations in a subarea plan are feasible for implementation and within what type of timeframe. This type of coordination, supported by the financial analysis noted in the following policy, is critical to all subarea plans to evaluate the resources required and the timeframe necessary for full implementation. Plan alternatives and costs should be clearly understood and plans should be financially achievable.

CP-100 **King County shall implement a subarea planning program. This program shall include the following components for the development and implementation of each subarea plan:**

- **a. A subarea plan developed and adopted for each of the six rural Community Service Areas and five large urban Potential Annexation Areas, streamlined to be focused on locally specific policies that address long-range community needs, include modifying the land use designations and zoning classifications in the urban area to meaningfully and substantially increase residential density in order to accelerate housing production, and consider land use tools to help plan for and accommodate housing needs for all income levels;**
- **b. A consideration of the financial costs and public benefits of the proposed subarea plan prior to adoption to ensure that implementation can be appropriately prioritized;**
- **c. A list of services, programs, facilities, and capital improvements, updated on an ongoing basis, that are identified by the community for each geography, known as a community needs list, to implement the vision and policies in the subarea plan and other County plans and to build on the strengths and assets of the community;**
- **d. Dedicated resources toward implementation of the subarea plans and community needs lists in coordination with each community so the highest priorities are addressed where the needs are greatest;**
- **e. Implementation of each subarea plan and community needs list monitored on an ongoing basis via established performance metrics;**
- **f. Community engagement for development, review, amendment, adoption, and implementation of each subarea plan using the Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice's equity toolkit and centering engagement with historically underrepresented groups; and**
- **g. The King County Council shall have an established role in the subarea planning process, including in the development, review, amendment, adoption, and monitoring the implementation of each subarea plan and community needs list.**

B. Planning Schedule

Below is the schedule for subarea planning using the Community Service Area geography. The anticipated duration of each subarea planning process will be three years, which includes time for community engagement, plan development, and Council review and adoption.

Schedule of Subarea Plans

Planning	Transmittal	Adoption	Geography	Other Planning
2024-2026	June 2026	June 2027	Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River CSA	
2025-2027	June 2027	June 2028	Fairwood Potential Annexation Area (PAA)	
2026-2028	June 2028	June 2029		Potential Midpoint Comprehensive Plan Update
2028-2030	June 2030	June 2031	Bear Creek/Sammamish CSA	Potential update for "Implementation Progress Report Work Plan"
2029-2031	June 2031	June 2032	Southeast King County CSA	
2031-2033	June 2033	June 2034		10-year Comprehensive Plan Update
2033-2035	June 2035	June 2036	Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain CSA	
2034-2036	June 2036	June 2037	East Renton PAA	
2035-2037	June 2037	June 2038	Federal Way PAA	
2036-2038	June 2038	June 2039		Potential Midpoint Comprehensive Plan Update
TBD[1]		TBD	Vashon-Maury Island CSA	
TBD[1]		TBD	Skyway-West Hill PAA	
TBD[1]		TBD	North Highline PAA	
TBD[1]		TBD	Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King CSA	

Note: Planning for each geography is anticipated to take two years, beginning in July of the first year and ending in June two years later. Council adoption anticipated to occur in June of the following year.

1. The Vashon-Maury Island, Skyway-West Hill, North Highline, and Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County subarea plans have been adopted and will be updated following completion of the other Subarea Plans. The timelines for these updates will be determined in future updates to the King County Comprehensive Plan.

The schedule above ensures that subarea plan goals and objectives are up-to-date and relevant based on current and future needs. Within this larger structure, if a property owner has an interest in a land use change outside of this planning cycle, they are able to use the existing land use processes. Property owners can submit for a Site Specific Land Use Amendment or Zone Reclassification, per King County Code 20.18.050 and Chapter 20.20, respectively. Following the completion of the first subarea planning cycle, the subarea planning schedule for developing and adopting updates to the subarea plans moving forward will be reviewed as part of the next midpoint or 10-year Comprehensive Plan update. This review will include evaluation of whether the subarea plan update schedule and process can be condensed from its current planning cycle.

C. Subarea Planning History

Between 1973 and 1994 King County prepared community plans for 12 areas of unincorporated King County. The first generation of community plans, from 1973 to 1984, were used to implement the County's 1964 Comprehensive Plan, and consisted of detailed land use policies, area zoning, and lists of capital projects (primarily roads and parks) for each planning area. The second generation of community plans, from 1985 to 1994, implemented many concepts of the 1985 King County Comprehensive Plan (for example low-density zoning for the Rural Area, Natural Resource Lands and areas with critical areas, higher urban residential densities, and development guidelines for major urban activity centers such as Kenmore) that were carried over to the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan.

Under King County's pre-Growth Management Act planning system, if a community plan conflicted with the comprehensive plan, the community plan governed. Under the Growth Management Act, subarea plans (Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.080 are required to be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan spelled out the relationship between the comprehensive plan and community plans and directed the County to review community plans and repeal or revise them to eliminate conflicts. The County reviewed the community plans adopted between 1973 and 1994 and determined that, while most community plans' policies are redundant (or, in a few cases, in conflict with the 1994 Comprehensive Plan), some are area-specific or issue specific and should be readopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following table illustrates how the Community Service Area geography aligns with the former Community Planning Area geography; this is provided to identify how the existing policies are re-assigned into the current geographic structure.

Community Service Area	*Includes parts of the following former* **Community Planning Areas**
Bear Creek / Sammamish Area	Bear Creek, Northshore, East Sammamish
Four Creeks / Tiger Mountain Area	Tahoma Raven Heights, Snoqualmie
Greater Maple Valley / Cedar River Area	Tahoma Raven Heights, Soos Creek, East King County, Snoqualmie
Southeast King County Area	Enumclaw, Tahoma Raven Heights, East King County, Soos Creek
Snoqualmie Valley / NE King County Area	Snoqualmie, East King County, East Sammamish
Vashon - Maury Island	Vashon
West King County Areas *(unincorp. urban)*	Portions of 10 Community Planning Areas

Although none of the community plans are still in effect, in many cases the published plan documents contain valuable historical information about King County's communities and other information that provides background for the policies listed below and for the portions of the local pre-Growth Management Act area zoning that remain in effect.

The following sections of this chapter will be updated to reflect the subarea plans as they are adopted. The subarea plans that have been adopted under the new subarea planning framework include: the Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Subarea Plan, the Skyway-West Hill Community Service Area Subarea Plan, the North Highline Community Service Area Subarea Plan, and the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan.

II. Bear Creek / Sammamish

The Bear Creek/Sammamish Community Service Area consists of portions of the following former Community Planning Areas: Bear Creek, Northshore and East Sammamish. Large sections of this area have been annexed into the cities of Bothell and Redmond and have incorporated into the cities of Kenmore, Sammamish and Woodinville. The Urban Planned Developments east of the City of Redmond were controlled through development agreements; however, those agreements were expiring and, in 2020, King County established land use and zoning for these areas. King County will not permit additional similar urban-scale development outside the Urban Growth Area. The policies listed below pertain to areas within the Community Service Area that are still within unincorporated King County.

In 2014, the estimated population in the Bear Creek/Sammamish CSA was 44,000. Of this total, 9,000 people were estimated to live in the Redmond Ridge Urban Planned Development and 34,900 people were estimated to live in the CSA rural portion. In 2010, there were a total of 15,850 housing units in the CSA. Of this total, 3,540 were in the Redmond Ridge Urban Planned Development and 12,300 were in the CSA rural portion.

A. Background

Bear Creek. The Bear Creek Community Plan became effective in February 1989, and directed most forecast growth into a concentrated area near the City of Redmond Watershed, first referred to as the "Novelty Hill Master Planned Developments." The rest of the Bear Creek Plateau was designated for a mixture of suburban and rural residential development. The 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan redesignated most of the planning area as Rural Area. In 1995, some of the Bear Creek Community Plan's policies relating to the Novelty Hill Master Planned Developments (MPDs) were amended by Ordinance 11954. Also, the 1994 Comprehensive Plan refers to MPDs as Urban Planned Developments.

After the 1994 Comprehensive Plan's urban designation of the Urban Planned Developments sites was appealed and remanded to the county, the sites in question were redesignated for Fully Contained Communities as defined in the Growth Management Act, as well as Urban Planned Developments. The readopted policies for the most part address Novelty Hill and some area-specific transportation and trail issues.

East Sammamish. The East Sammamish Community Plan was adopted in December 1992. The East Sammamish Community Plan Update became effective in June 1993. Most of the planning area was designated for urban development, but important Rural Areas included Happy Valley, Grand Ridge and the eastern edge of the Sammamish Plateau. For the most part, the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan reaffirmed the land use designations of the East Sammamish Community Plan Update. The major changes from the community plan occasioned by the 1994 Comprehensive Plan were replacement of the "urban reserve" approach to growth phasing with the service and finance strategy outlined in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan and the designation of a portion of Grand Ridge for urban growth.

Northshore. The first "Northshore Communities Development Plan" began in 1972-1973 and was adopted in August 1977. Almost immediately the Northshore Community Plan Revision Committee was established, and the "Revised Northshore Community Plan" was adopted in 1981.

The latest Northshore Community Plan Update began in July 1988 and was adopted in February 1993. During 1993, the newly incorporated City of Woodinville assumed jurisdiction within its territory. Portions of the planning area have been annexed by Bothell, Kirkland and Redmond. Kenmore, a significant unincorporated activity center, became a city in August 1998.

B. Bear Creek Policies

CP-101 **To provide a range of housing opportunities and accommodate a fair share of growth in Bear Creek, the Novelty Hill subarea should be designated an urban planned development (UPD) and fully contained community (FCC). This designation will be implemented by urban planned development. (BC-3)**

CP-102 **Urban planned development will be permitted in the Novelty Hill subarea only when the following planning policies are met:**

- **a. To protect existing wetlands, streams and wildlife habitat, urban planned development shall be consistent with the intent of King County ordinances, King County Comprehensive Plan policies, and sensitive areas regulations. The design of the proposed development shall protect and preserve existing wetlands, streams and wildlife habitat by several methods including (but not limited to) minimizing alterations to the natural drainage features, maintaining water quality, preserving storage capacity, providing undisturbed unique/outstanding wetlands and undisturbed or enhanced buffers, restricting the number of stream crossings, and minimizing erosion and sedimentation. To achieve the intent of this policy it may be necessary to exceed the requirements of the King County wetland guidelines.**
- **b. A master drainage plan for the Novelty Hill subarea shall be approved by King County.**
- **c. New development adjacent to a unique/outstanding or significant wetland should preserve or enhance the wetland and provide an undisturbed buffer around the wetland adequate to protect its natural functions. Encroachments into significant wetlands may be allowed when no feasible alternative exists and enhancements are provided to replace the lost wetland functions; and**
- **d. Groundwater recharge areas should be identified and protected to ensure that groundwater resources are protected from potential pollution.**
- **e. To ensure that the existing road system in both King County and Redmond is not adversely affected, on-site and off-site traffic impacts shall be mitigated consistent with the Integrated Transportation Program (K.C.C. chapter 14.65).**
- **f. A project environmental impact statement (EIS) shall be required for all property proposed for urban planned development within the Urban Planned Development area. The project EIS shall address the full range of public services necessary to serve urban development on Novelty Hill. The EIS shall include the cost of these services, the financial responsibility of the developer(s) and affected jurisdictions, and the method of phasing development to coincide with availability of these public services.**

g. **Since the remainder of residential land in Bear Creek will either be recognized as existing one-acre neighborhoods or designated as Rural Areas, all improvements to public facilities, including but not limited to road construction and sewers, shall be financed by the Urban Planned Development developers provided the impacts are the result of UPD developments or according to a fair-share formula agreed to by affected parties.**
h. **A full range of housing densities, types and prices including housing for low-, moderate-, and medium-income groups shall be included in the Urban Planned Development. The mix of single-family and multifamily housing in the Urban Planned Developments shall approximate the existing county housing stock mix.**
i. **Urban planned development shall maintain and keep open for public use identified major equestrian and hiking trails.**
j. **Urban planned development shall provide active recreation facilities that adequately serve the needs of future residents and employees.**
k. **Urban planned development shall provide a minimum of 25% open space in addition to the preservation of all surveyed wetlands.**
l. **The Novelty Hill urban planned development area shall contain an urban activity center, which includes a commercial center to provide for the everyday shopping needs of the planned Urban Planned Development population.**
m. **The activity center shall also contain a business park of sufficient size to provide a diversity of employment opportunities and a balance of jobs and households for the Urban Planned Development area.**
n. **In order to preserve opportunities for a variety of employment types in the business park areas, retail development in freestanding buildings should be excluded. Up to 10% of gross floor area in business park buildings may be planned for retail uses, such as restaurants and business services, to serve business park employees.**
o. **Development conditions for the shopping and business park areas should encourage high quality development and site design.**

The area will revert to rural if UPD development is denied or not pursued. If the UPD area reverts to rural, the zoning shall be RA-5. (BC-4)

CP-103 **Sewer facilities necessary to serve urban planned development on Novelty Hill are planned, designed and constructed to serve only such development and are prohibited from serving nearby surrounding low-density urban and Rural Areas. Proposals to extend sewer service or expand urban development outside the Novelty Hill subarea are not appropriate and are inconsistent with the purpose of the King County Comprehensive Plan. (BC-5)**

CP-104 **The Novelty Hill urban planned development or fully contained community shall contain a commercial area of sufficient size to serve the future residents and employees. (BC-17)**

CP-105 **The natural drainage systems of Bear, Evans, and Patterson Creeks should be restored, maintained, and enhanced to protect water quality, preserve existing aquatic habitat, reduce public costs, and prevent environmental degradation. Public improvements and private developments should not alter natural drainage systems without mitigating measures which eliminate increased risk of flooding and erosion, negative impacts on water quality, and loss on aquatic or riparian habitat. (BC-32)**

CP-106 **An undisturbed corridor wide enough to maintain the natural biological and hydrological functions of streams should be preserved in all new development in the Bear Creek Planning Area. (BC-34)**

CP-107 **Bear, Evans, and Patterson Creeks and their tributaries should be protected from grazing animal access in order to: 1) reduce water quality degradation from animal wastes, 2) reduce bank collapse due to trampling, and 3) allow shading vegetation to reestablish along stream banks. (BC-35)**

CP-108 **Streams channeled in the Bear, Evans, and Patterson Creek drainages should not be placed in culverts unless absolutely necessary for property access. To reduce disruption to streams and their banks, bridges should be used for stream crossings, and crossings should serve several properties. When culverts are required, oversized culverts with gravel bottoms that maintain the channels' width and grade should be used. (BC-38)**

CP-109 **New development should rehabilitate degraded stream channels and banks in the Bear, Evans, and Patterson Creek drainages to prevent further erosion and water quality problems. Where conditions permit, the banks and channels should be restored to a natural state. (BC-39)**

CP-110 **Unique or significant wildlife should be identified and preserved. Development plans should identify significant wildlife habitat and should locate buildings, roads, and other features on less sensitive portions of the site. These considerations may result in a reduction in density from that otherwise allowed by zoning. (BC-40)**

CP-111 **The Bear and Evans Creeks' watersheds have been designated as critical areas for protection of the aquatic resources and human health. The following surface water management activities should be promoted.**

- **a. Appropriate and reasoned changes in land use policies and regulations may be evaluated during the preparation of the Bear/Evans Creeks Basin Plan.**
- **b. Ensure adequate field inspection of land development activities.**
- **c. Implement a public information program to promote water resources and stream channel protection.**
- **d. The Bear and Evans Creeks Basin Plan shall develop recommendations for water quality monitoring and recommended methods for citizen input and evaluation to assess the success of the county's policies and regulations pertaining to this planning area. (BC-41)**

CP-112 **Mitigation of traffic impacts to the City of Redmond arterial system will be accomplished through the interlocal agreement process. The Avondale arterial corridor study recommendations shall be used as a basis for traffic mitigation requirements for both city and county development affecting the corridor.**

- **a. Mitigation shall preserve the operational integrity of the corridor and maintain existing local access. The primary arterial corridor between the Novelty Hill urban area and SR-520 should be located and designed to encourage transit and ride-sharing alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel.**
- **b. Transportation planning of new facilities and management of the transportation system should be coordinated with current and forecast needs of the East Sammamish and Northshore planning areas, adjacent areas of Snohomish County, and with the cities of Redmond and Kirkland, and should be a cooperative effort of the affected jurisdictions. Phasing of Bear Creek and Redmond development should be strongly linked to the provision of adequate transportation facilities and travel demand management programs. (BC-45A)**

CP-113 **Establishment of new rights-of-way and acquisition of additional right-of-way in existing corridors should emphasize protection of natural systems and adequate buffering of existing and potential residential development. (BC-47)**

CP-114 **Road improvements in Cottage Lake, Ring Hill, Ames Lake, Union Hill, and the Rural Areas should incorporate design features such as grass lined swales to minimize surface water disruption and to protect and enhance water quality. (BC-49)**

CP-115 **196th Avenue Northeast ("Red Brick Road") between Union Hill Road and Redmond-Fall City Road (SR-202) is a historic road and should be preserved by restoring its brick surface, limiting vehicular loads and speeds, and prohibiting access to commercially-zoned properties to the west. Access to these properties should be provided by other existing roads and by a new north-south road connecting Union Hill Road and 185th/187th Avenues Northeast. (BC-50)**

CP-116 **Park-and-ride and park-and-pool lots should be developed in Redmond, Cottage Lake, Ring Hill, Ames Lake, and Union Hill to provide focal points for transit and ride sharing. Park-and-pool lots should be located in Rural Areas along major commuting corridors such as SR-202, Redmond-Fall City Road, Novelty Hill Road, and Woodinville Duvall Road. (BC-52)**

CP-117 **The Northwest Gas Pipeline and Puget Sound Power Line should be established as regional trails in Bear Creek to tie in with other planning areas and to connect with the King County Tolt Pipeline Trail and the Snoqualmie Valley Trail. (BC-61)**

CP-118 **When the development of property occurs in Bear Creek, adequate rights-of-way should be provided for trail use. Trails should connect to existing and proposed schools, parks, riding stables, and recreation areas. (BC-62)**

C. East Sammamish Policies

CP-119 **For all new development, increased standards for retention/detention, water quality facilities, and monitoring shall be considered, adopted and implemented as appropriate within the areas identified in surface water management basin planning and reconnaissance study areas. (NE-1)**

CP-120 **As new roads are built and existing roads widened, special consideration shall be taken to create or retain the aesthetic character of the area through the use of vegetated buffers that utilize native vegetation. (NE-3)**

CP-121 **Control mechanisms equal to or more effective than those adopted by Ordinance 9365 limiting or removing phosphorus and other non-point source pollutants from water bodies should be established and implemented as special requirements in area-specific basins plans to provide added protection to streams, lakes, wetlands. The Lake Sammamish Water Quality Management Project Report and, upon their adoption, the Issaquah Creek and East Lake Sammamish Basin and Non-point Source Control Plan, the Pine Lake Management Plan and the Beaver Lake Management Plan recommendations should be implemented to protect water bodies from non-point source pollution. (NE-7)**

CP-122 **Development shall protect wildlife through site design and landscaping. New development within or adjacent to the wildlife habitat network should incorporate design techniques that protect and enhance wildlife habitat values. (NE-10)**

CP-123 **All golf course proposals shall be carefully evaluated for their impacts on surface and groundwater quality, sensitive areas, and fish and wildlife resources and habitat. (NE-11)**

CP-124 **Water used for irrigating golf courses should come from nonpotable water sources wherever possible. Use of natural surface water sources, such as streams, should be avoided due to impacts on fish and other wildlife habitat. A water conservation plan shall be submitted with golf course applications which should address measures such as the use of drought-tolerant plant species. (NE-12)**

CP-125 **The Patterson Creek Basin currently provides highly-productive aquatic habitat. Urban development within this basin should be conditioned to protect this resource by minimizing site disturbance, impervious surfaces and disturbances of wetlands and streams. (No Community Plan Policy Number)**

CP-126 **The Northwest Pipeline office and maintenance shop is an existing use and is recognized by this plan as providing a needed service to the area. This 6.5 acre site may redevelop for pipeline utility and/or school bus base uses exclusive of major maintenance functions that are compatible with the surrounding rural development and agricultural uses. The existing construction and trade, trucking and courier service, and heavy equipment and truck repair uses on the site are recognized as legal nonconforming uses and allowed to continue in their current footprint and at their current intensity. Redesignation of additional properties in the immediate vicinity of Northwest Pipeline for manufacturing park uses or other urban uses shall not be permitted. (CI-13)**

CP-127 **New developments should be designed and constructed with an internal road system which includes a Neighborhood Collector linking with existing or planned adjacent developments, creating a complete Neighborhood Collector circulation system and such linkage should be designed to ensure safety of local streets. Through traffic on local access streets should be discouraged. (T-9)**

CP-128 **Metropolitan King County Government should establish park-and-ride facilities in the East Sammamish Community Planning area. Park-and-ride facilities should be built along 228th Avenue and/or adjacent to I-90 and SR-202. The park-and-ride lots should be sited adjacent to and connect with existing or proposed community or neighborhood centers or within the employment center located around the intersection of E. Lake Sammamish Parkway and SE 56th Street. Establishment of a site near, but to the north of, I-90 should be high priority response to current and anticipated I-90 access problems. (T-13)**

CP-129 **Consistent with the King County Open Space Plan, the county shall encourage establishment of an open space system in East Sammamish and give priority to protecting recreational, cultural and natural and sensitive areas such as shorelines, aquifer recharge areas, wildlife habitat, historic properties, archaeological sites, scenic vistas and community separators or greenbelts. The county may require lot clustering within or adjacent to open space areas; linkages between open spaces and may provide density bonuses or incentives to developers who preserve significant open space or establish trails beyond usually applied mitigation. (P-11)**

CP-130 **Urban separators should be established to provide visual relief from continuous development, provide important linkages for wildlife habitat, and maintain a visual separation between distinct communities. (P-17)**

CP-131 **There are areas within the urban separators that are especially suitable for trail connections for recreational use by present and anticipated population. King County should develop a trail and/or parks system utilizing the preserved open space within the urban separators. (P-18)**

CP-132 **When the development of properties occurs in the East Sammamish planning area, public access or easements should be required to complete the development of a local trail system for those areas where existing trails have historically been used by the public, or where the King County Open Space Plan identifies proposed trail alignment for regional and local trails. The Parks Division shall review the application during the development review process. (P-23)**

D. Northshore Policies

CP-133 **The north and east slopes of Norway Hill have an established neighborhood character and limited future development potential. They are, therefore, designated low density urban, 1 home per acre. King County recognizes that extensive steep slopes and erosive soils at the top of Norway Hill (above the 300-foot elevation mark) warrant lower residential densities. (E-10)**

CP-134 **The undeveloped area to the south of Metro's Brickyard Park and Ride lot should retain its office-only designation in recognition of its proximity to a major transportation corridor and the need for increased employment opportunity in proximity to planned high-density residential areas. (E-13)**

CP-135 **King County, Snohomish County, the City of Bothell, and the City of Woodinville should work on specific areas of mutual concern, such as the Swamp Creek and Daniels Creek drainage basins, the SR-527 transportation corridor, the proposed regional facilities of the University of Washington, and the future expansion of the City of Bothell. (E-25)**

CP-136 **Significant vegetation is a diminishing resource in the Northshore community. Significant vegetation contributes significantly to environmental quality, neighborhood character, and the quality of life in Northshore. All new residential development shall retain significant existing vegetation. Native vegetation should be utilized wherever possible. (R-17)**

CP-137 **New development must provide pedestrian connections to off-site facilities such as existing trails, walkways, community facilities and services, transit, schools and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Pedestrian links should be provided internally in all new residential development. Bicycle and equestrian links should be provided where possible. (R-19)**

CP-138 **King County recognizes the importance of existing mobile home parks in providing affordable housing options. Mobile home parks outside of the Woodinville and Kenmore commercial core areas are designated for mobile home park uses, and shall be zoned appropriately.**

- **a. King County shall continue to examine the feasibility of funding and developing a replacement mobile home park in north King County for displaced mobile homes on county-owned or privately owned sites.**
- **b. King County should develop interlocal agreements with the cities of Bothell, Redmond, Kirkland, Woodinville and Kenmore for joint development of replacement parks to accommodate mobile home owners if they are displaced from mobile home parks within cities. (R-21)**

CP-139 **Roadway improvements addressing the transportation needs in the Sammamish Valley from the South Woodinville bypass to Northeast 124th Street should carefully preserve the rural character of the valley as indicated by this and other adopted land use plans. Incorporating roadway design characteristics, such as tree windbreaks and shoulders instead of curb and gutter, will enhance this rural atmosphere. Access from adjacent properties to the proposed Willows Road extension shall be discouraged. Where access is necessary from adjacent properties, access shall be consolidated. (T-11)**

CP-140 **Transportation projects in Northshore should incorporate bicycle friendly design, utilizing a variety of design techniques appropriate to the particular project and right-of-way characteristics, including, but not limited to, bicycle lanes, wide outside travel lanes, paved shoulders, bicycle sensitive signal detectors, and appropriate signing. Existing bicycle facilities should be preserved or enhanced when general road improvements are made. Secure parking for bicycles should be provided at activity centers throughout Northshore. (T-33)**

CP-141 **Pedestrian and bicycle linkages are encouraged and should be planned. There should also be a link for equestrian uses from Hollywood Hill and NE 171st Street to the Sammamish River trail in the vicinity of the South Woodinville CBD bypass. (W-14)**

CP-142 **Protection of natural vegetation coverage at levels sufficient to moderate surface water runoff and erosion and to protect the integrity of stream channels should be required through special zoning requirements, critical drainage basin requirements, or countywide ordinance. When revegetation is required, appropriate native vegetation should be used. (NR-4)**

CP-143 **Unique geologic conditions in Northshore have resulted in hillsides that have a high risk of large scale erosion. Increased on-site retention/detention requirements in areas drainage over steep and erosive slopes should be adopted and implemented as special zoning requirements. (NR-9)**

CP-144 **A community-wide trail system for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists should be developed. This trail system should connect regional trails with local trails and walkways. (P-6)**

CP-145 **When the development of properties occurs in the Northshore Planning Area, public access or easements should be required to complete the development of a local trail system. Adequate right-of-way should be provided for trail use. To ensure that the provision of trail corridor right-of-way does not result in a reduction in the number of permitted building lots, the area within the trail right-of-way, not otherwise credited as part of a road right-of-way dedication, should also be credited toward the lot area of any proposed development. Trails should connect to existing and proposed schools, parks, riding stables, recreation areas and neighborhoods. (P9)**

CP146 **King County should work closely with other jurisdictions and public agencies to seek appropriate trail links between elements of the open space system including, but not limited to the Burke-Gilman trail, Sammamish River trail, and the Tolt Pipeline Trail. (P10)**

CP-147 **Existing public access points to the Sammamish River should be maintained and additional access points acquired and developed to ensure the use of this river as trail corridor and fishing area. (P-11)**

III. Four Creeks / Tiger Mountain

A. Background

The Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain Community Service Area consists of portions of the following former Community Planning Areas: Newcastle, Tahoma Raven Heights, East Sammamish and Snoqualmie. A large portion of the area incorporated as the City of Newcastle and annexed in to the City of Issaquah. The Klahanie Annexation expanded the City of Sammamish in 2016.

In 2014, the estimated population in the Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain CSA was approximately 13,000. In 2010, there were 4,870 housing units in the CSA.

The Newcastle Community Plan commenced in 1978 and was adopted in May 1983. The final adopted plan designated three sites for Master Planned Developments (MPDs), but stipulated that only two MPDs could occur without an update of the community plan. One MPD was approved by the county in the late 1980s. Bellevue annexed Factoria and Newport Hills in 1993 and the City of Newcastle was incorporated in 1994, so the noncity portion of the planning area's population fell 13 percent between 1990 and 1994 even though the whole planning area was forecasted to grow almost 18 percent between 1994 and 2010. The planning area also included some

areas designated Rural Area by either the 1985 or 1994 King County Comprehensive Plans.

B. Newcastle Policies

CP-201 **King County supports the nomination of the Odd Fellows Cemetery and counterbalance right-of-way to the National and State Registers of Historic Places. (N-33)**

CP-202 **Limit grazing animal access to May Creek and its tributaries in order to 1) reduce water quality degradation from animal wastes, 2) reduce bank collapse due to animals' hooves, and 3) allow shading vegetation to reestablish along stream banks. (N-41)**

CP-203 **May Creek is acknowledged as a regional asset and should be protected. Thus, King County shall not increase zoning density on lands that drain into May Creek (i.e. the May Valley Basin) without first determining and implementing stormwater runoff mitigation necessary to control flooding and siltation in May Creek.**

IV. Greater Maple Valley / Cedar River

The Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River Community Service Area encompasses portions of the following former Community Planning Areas: Soos Creek, Tahoma Raven Heights, Snoqualmie and East King County.

In 2014, the estimated population in the Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River CSA was approximately 17,000. In 2010, there were 6,700 housing units in the CSA.

A. Background

The first Soos Creek Plateau Communities Plan (SCCP) commenced during the fall of 1975, and was adopted in November 1979. The process was controversial, partly because Soos Creek served as a laboratory for several emerging planning concepts, including a Rural Area land use designation implemented with zoning limiting residential density to one home per five acres.

The Soos Creek Community Plan Update commenced in March 1988 and was adopted in December 1991. In 1995 the City of Kent initiated annexation of a very large area between it and Lake Meridian, intended to encompass most of its Potential Annexation Area (PAA) within the planning area. The cities of Maple Valley and Covington have commenced operating and assumed jurisdiction within their territories. The Panther Lake annexation to the City of Kent occurred in 2010.

The Tahoma/Raven Heights Communities Plan (T/RH) commenced in August 1979 and was adopted in October 1984. T/RH continued to apply the Growth Reserve and Rural Area designations and zoning that emerged during the Soos Creek planning process. The planning area is mostly unincorporated Rural Area or Forest Production District. In the years prior to the Growth Management Act (GMA) the City of Black Diamond completed one large annexation. A final Urban Growth Area for Black Diamond was adopted as part of amendments following the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan.

The planning area was affected by the incorporation of the City of Maple Valley in 1997. The city includes most of the Urban Growth Area in the planning area.

In response to data and recommendations emerging while the Soos Creek Basin Plan was being prepared, interim five acre zoning was applied to portions of the Jenkins and Covington Creek watersheds in July 1989. An update to the plan covering about one-fifth of the planning area was initiated in March 1991, and adopted in December 1991. The area zoning was changed in some cases, but this action was based on the 1985 King County Comprehensive Plan and applicable basin plan policies, and did not result in any changes to the 1984 plan's policies.

B. Soos Creek Policies

CP-301 **The continued viability and health of the Soos Creek planning area's stream systems and the fisheries resources dependent upon them should be assured through zoning, special zoning conditions and development regulations. The intent of this policy is to control densities along stream corridors identified by the Soos Creek Basin Plan. This policy will be implemented through the Area Zoning by placing rural and urban densities within 1/4-mile of significant stream systems identified as Types 1, 2, and 3 waters according to the Sensitive Areas Ordinance. (NR-1)**

CP-302 **Lot coverage limitations for building shall be applied in all stream corridors in urban designated areas of the Soos Creek basin and classified R-1, urban stream protection special district overlay. Total impervious surface should not exceed 8%, and total clearing of forested vegetation should not exceed 30%. Reforestation to achieve sites that are 70% forested should be required. (NR-1A)**

CP-303 **New development should rehabilitate degraded wetlands and stream channels and banks in the Soos Creek planning area's drainage's to prevent further erosion and water quality problems. These areas include, but are not limited to, May Creek, Garrison Creek, Molasses Creek and Olsen Creek. Where conditions permit, the banks and channels should be restored to a natural state. Where it has been determined that additional standards may be appropriate to control volume, these should be required for new development. (NR-3)**

CP-304 **Within the Soos Creek basin, bare ground associated with clearing, grading, utility installation, building construction, and other development activity should be covered or revegetated between October 1 and March 31 each year. Earth-moving and land-clearing activity should not occur during this period within the Soos Creek basin except for regular maintenance of public facilities and public agency response to emergencies that threaten the public health, safety and welfare. Landscaping of single-family residences, existing permitted commercial forestry and mining activities and development sites with approved and constructed drainage facilities that infiltrate 100 percent of stormwater runoff should be exempt from these restrictions. (NR-8)**

CP-305 **For new subdivisions in the Soos Creek basin Rural Area, a minimum of 20% of the property should be retained as a separate tract of undisturbed indigenous vegetation. (NR-9)**

CP-306 **All development within 660 feet of the top of the Cedar River Valley and the Green River Valley walls, particularly along the bluffs south and west of the Lea Hill plateau and within the Lake Heights area, should be conditioned to avoid adverse impacts on the environment and risks to life and property. (NR-14)**

CP-307 **The Soos Creek Community Plan recognizes the importance of existing mobile home parks in providing affordable housing options. Mobile home parks in the urban areas of Soos Creek are designated for ~~mobile~~ home park uses, and should be zoned appropriately. King County should continue to examine the feasibility of funding and developing a replacement mobile home park in south King County for displaced mobile homes on county-owned or privately-owned sites. King County should develop intergovernmental agreements with the cities of Renton, Kent and Auburn for joint development of replacement parks to accommodate mobile home owners if they are displaced from mobile home parks within cities. (R-23)**

CP-308 **Significant vegetation is a diminishing resource in the Soos Creek community. Significant vegetation contributes significantly to environmental quality, neighborhood character, and the quality of life in Soos Creek. All new residential development shall retain significant existing vegetation. Native vegetation should be utilized wherever possible. (R-33)**

CP-309 **Multifamily zoned land should not be converted to institutional and commercial/office uses within the Soos Creek Planning Area. (C-5)**

CP-310 **Equestrian crossings of arterials should be permitted only where they do not greatly disrupt traffic. Where possible, these crossings should be combined with pedestrian and bicycle crossings. There should be no at grade equestrian crossings of SR-516, except at Lake Meridian. (T-29)**

CP-311 **Crest Airpark is an important local facility and should continue operation at current levels of use. (F-15)**

CP-312 **Because of noise and public safety concerns, low-density, single-family development should be the primary land use allowed within Crest Airpark's north flight path within 1/2-mile of the airport runway. (F-16)**

CP-313 **All new subdivisions within 1/4-mile of Crest Airpark should include a covenant. The covenant should state that the property owner and/or resident recognize the existence of Crest Airpark, its value to the community, and the noise and public safety aspects of living in proximity to the airpark. (F-17)**

CP-314 **The operation of Pacific Raceway is expected to continue indefinitely. The area authorized for racetrack use shall be confined to maximize protection of Soosette Creek and its riparian area. Any future consideration of permits for its operation should be consistent with the spirit and intent of the 1991 rules and conditions which regulate operation of the facility. (F-18)**

CP-315 **King County should give high priority to expanding the Big Soos Creek trail by linking the City of Covington to the south and Fairwood Center to the north to the existing trail system. (P-15)**

CP-316 **King County should give high priority to linking the Green River and Cedar River corridors. (P-16)**

CP-317 **King County should coordinate with the City of Seattle, WSDOT, and other jurisdictions to link major elements of the open space system including the Cedar River, Lake Desire, Big Soos Creek, SR-18 and the Green River trail systems. (P-18a)**

C. Tahoma/Raven Heights Policies

CP-318 **Resource activities should be encouraged in areas where such activities are not inconsistent with a rural atmosphere. In order to ensure continued development of natural resources prior to the development of the land for other purposes, extractive industries should be allowed to locate in areas known to have deposits of minerals. Premature urban/ suburban development should not be approved which forecloses the opportunity to use the resources. (T/RH-28)**

CP-319 **The demand from surrounding land uses and densities should not exceed the capacity of the area's groundwater resources nor otherwise cause deterioration of its quality. (T/RH-45)**

CP-320 **Existing businesses which qualify as legal uses located at Highway 169 and Cedar Grove Road should be given the same land use map designation as surrounding Rural Area or Natural Resource Land properties, but recognized as Rural Businesses with neighborhood-scale business zoning. Any such development should not be expanded beyond the limits of the existing zoning of the specific parcel on which it is currently located, and if the use is abandoned the zoning should be redesignated to a Rural Area zone consistent with that applied to surrounding properties.**

CP-321 **King County supports annexation of the lands within the City of Black Diamond's Urban Growth Area subject to the requirements of the Black Diamond Urban Growth Area Agreement as adopted by Ordinance 12534. If the agreement is terminated, the affected lands under King County jurisdiction shall be treated as follows:**

a. Land within the designated Urban Growth Area shall be redesignated to Rural and reclassified to the rural zoning in place prior to the effective date of Ordinance 12534. This zoning shall continue for a period of at least five years from the date of reclassification.

b. The areas identified in the agreement as county open space shall be maintained at the rural zoning in place prior to the effective date of Ordinance 12534. This zoning shall continue for a period of at least five years after the date of termination of the agreement.

CP-322 **King County supports expansion of the network of regional trails and conservation of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas through community efforts such as the Rock Creek Valley Conservation Plan and the Friends of Rock Creek.**

CP-323 **King County supports efforts to protect and enhance open space and ensure long-term habitat health and passive recreation opportunities in the Middle Green River through community efforts such as the Middle Green River Coalition.**

V. Southeast King County

A. Background

The Southeast King County Community Service Area consists of the former Enumclaw Community Planning Area and portions of the former Tahoma Raven Heights, East King County and Soos Creek Community Planning Areas. The City of Enumclaw is located within this CSA and the City of Black Diamond is surrounded by it on three sides. The majority of this CSA is Rural Area and forested resource lands.

In 2014, the estimated population in the SE King County CSA was approximately 29.000. Of this total, 300 people were estimated to live in the Lower Green River area and 28,000 people were estimated to live in the main CSA area. In 2010, there were a total of 11,020 housing units in the CSA. Of this total, 102 were in the Lower Green River area and 10,918 were in the main CSA area.

The Enumclaw Community Plan and Area Zoning were commenced in 1986-87 and adopted in June 1990. The community plan refined boundaries between the Enumclaw Plateau's Agricultural Production District and abutting Rural Areas and Forest Production District, and designated the Urban Growth Area agreed to by King County and the City of Enumclaw. The 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan reaffirmed the Enumclaw Community Plan's land use designations.

B. Enumclaw Policies

CP-401 **All development within 660 feet of the top of the Green River valley walls should be conditioned to avoid adverse impacts on the environment and risks to life and property. (EN-12)**

CP-402 **King County should work with landowners on either side of SR-410 east of the City of Enumclaw to protect the scenic qualities of this highway corridor. (EN-22)**

CP-403 **King County should work with Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and landowners on either side of the Green River Gorge to protect the scenic qualities of the Green River Gorge conservation area. (EN-23)**

Enumclaw's expansion area, like that of other Cities in the Rural Area, is shown on the Land Use Map.

CP-404 **King County should work with the City of Enumclaw to establish an agreement guiding future annexations, including but not limited to the following elements:**

- **a. Commitment from the city to extend and maintain public services to the area, including police, fire, transportation, sewer, water, storm water management and general government services.**
- **b. Commitment from the city to provide a variety of residential development at an overall density for unconstrained land of at least four to eight units per acre.**
- **c. Commitment from the city that the extension of public services to meet the needs of future residents will maintain service levels to existing city residents.**
- **d. Commitment that the city will continue environmental protection for sensitive areas, (including but not limited to flood plains, steep slopes, wetlands, seismic and landslide hazard areas) at or above King County standards.**
- **e. Commitment from the city to use measures to buffer or protect abutting forest or agriculture resource lands.**
- **f. Commitment that the city will provide protection of historic sites and areas equal to the county's Historic Preservation Ordinance.**
- **g. Commitment by King County to consult with the city on public improvement standards, such as local road standards, drainage control requirements and transportation standards that will apply to development in expansion areas.**

h. Commitment by King County to notify the city of development proposals in the expansion area and to consult with the city to condition development approvals to mitigate adverse impacts on city services and to implement city plans, policies and standards.

i. Commitment by King County to notify the city of development proposals in an impact area, which includes all lands within a one-mile radius of the expansion area, and to consult with the city where applicable to condition development approvals to mitigate adverse impacts on city services.

j. Agreement on which jurisdiction will have responsibility for parks, roads, storm water or other public facilities after annexation. (EN-40)

CP-405 **Access to state park lands should be designed to minimize adverse traffic impacts on the Southeast Green Valley Road. (EN-56)**

CP-406 **Any expansion of aircraft runway or hangar capacity in the Enumclaw planning area should be concentrated on or near the existing Enumclaw airport. Existing legally approved landing strips associated with low-density residential developments, such as Evergreen Sky Ranch, shall not be expanded. (EN-60)**

CP-407 **Redevelopment of the Enumclaw landfill site should be subject to studies to assure public health and safety. If these studies determine that there is no threat to public health and safety the site's Rural Area designation may be changed to accommodate a public use such as a park or other facility without an amendment to the King County Comprehensive Plan. (EN-71)**

VI. Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County

A. Plan History

The history of prior plans for Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County is as follows:

- **Snoqualmie Valley Community Plan (1989).** The Snoqualmie Valley Community Plan, initiated in April 1984 and adopted in August 1989, was developed with the assistance of an advisory committee composed of local residents and property owners, in addition to representatives of the cities of Duvall, Carnation, Snoqualmie, and North Bend.[1] The Snoqualmie Valley planning area covered 400 square miles (south of Snohomish County, east of Bear Creek and East Sammamish areas, north of Tiger Mountain and Rattlesnake Ridge, and west of the Cascade Mountains). The plan was rescinded almost a decade later, in 1998, due to the passage of the Washington State Growth Management Act in the early 1990s.[2] At that time, some key policies from the 1989 plan that were consistent with the Growth Management Act were incorporated into the King County Comprehensive Plan. These policies remained in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan through 2024 but, with the adoption of the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan, they have since been removed from the chapter.

[1] Ordinance 9118
[2] Ordinance 13273

- **Fall City Subarea Plan (1999).** From August of 1998 through March of 1999, an eleven-member advisory committee of community members helped develop recommendations for the Fall City Subarea Plan, which was adopted by the County in 1999.[3] The Fall City Subarea Plan revisited land use designations, town boundaries, and Comprehensive Plan policies regarding Fall City that grew out of the 1989 Snoqualmie Valley Community Plan, which included Fall City.

- **Amendments to the Fall City Subarea Plan (2012).** The 1999 Fall City Subarea Plan was updated in 2012[4] through a planning process that involved members of the Fall City community. The Fall City Subarea Plan was repealed in 2024 and replaced by the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan, which includes the Fall City community.

In December 2024, the County adopted the Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County Subarea Plan, which replaces the policies in the 1999 Fall City Subarea Plan. The 2024 subarea plan (bound as a separate document) is adopted as an element of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

B. Vision & Guiding Principles

Community Vision Statement

Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County are characterized by strong rural communities with distinct cultures and histories, where people and businesses are thriving, the natural environment and agricultural lands are conserved and protected, farms are preserved, the community is resilient to climate change, and services and programs are accessible to residents in a way that preserves each community's unique rural character.

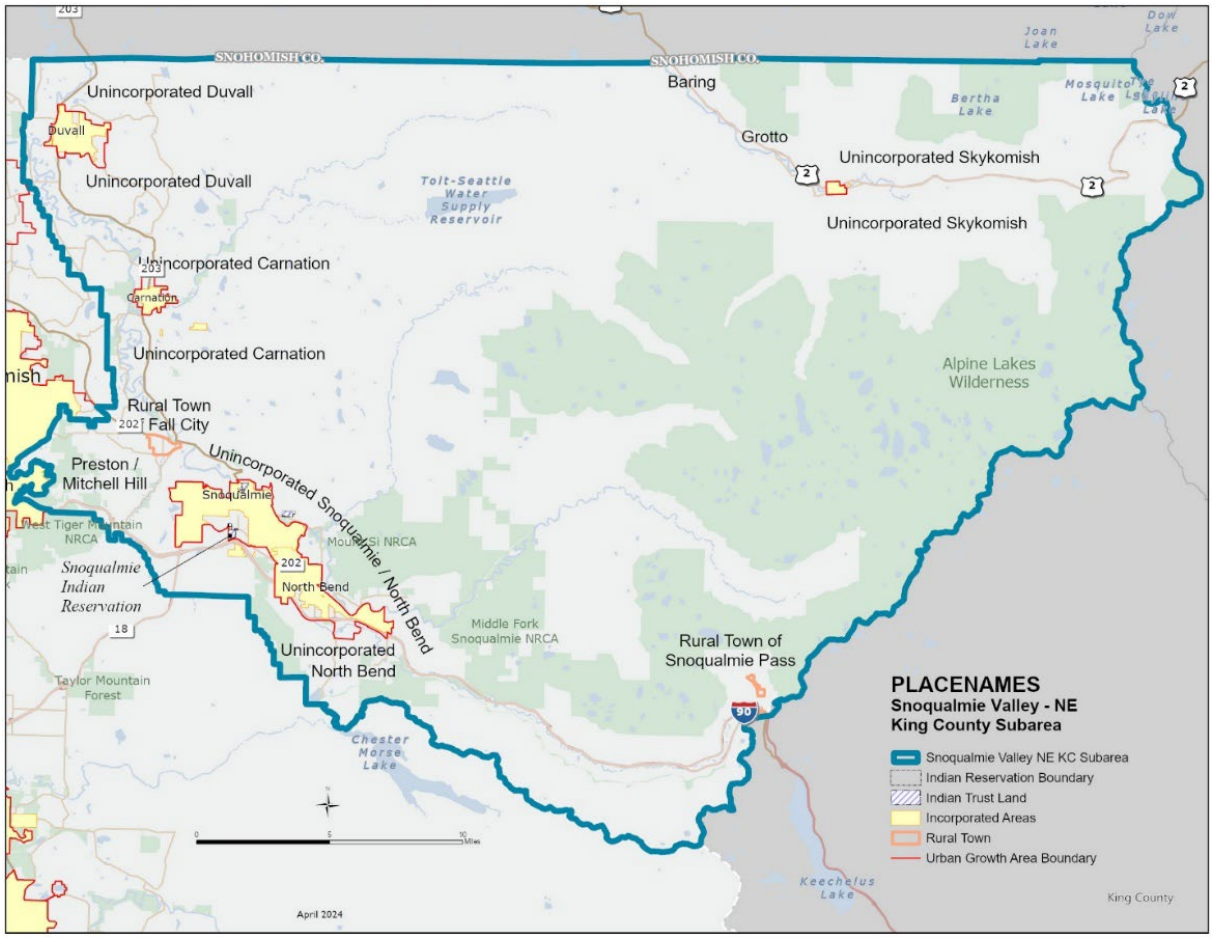
Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles support the community vision and were used by the County to inform and direct the development of the Subarea Plan. These guiding principles express the community's sentiments around a range of community issues discussed during the planning process.

a. Conserve and protect forests, rivers, lakes, and open spaces.
b. Conserve and protect the subarea's working farmlands by protecting agricultural lands and supporting local farmers, farmworkers ranchers, and growers.
c. Encourage and protect a range of housing choices for all.
d. Promote economically and environmentally sustainable local businesses and organizations across the subarea and support the business districts of the Fall City and Snoqualmie Pass Rural Towns.
e. Preserve cultural and historic resources and landmarks.
f. Enhance the relationship between King County and the Tribes by centering Tribal needs, land stewardship, and treaty rights.
g. Preserve the unique rural character across the subarea in commercial areas and residential communities in a manner that increases quality of life for residents
h. Support transit and transportation options, including active transportation and recreation, consistent with rural levels of service.
i. Support programs, organizations, and services for youths, people aged 55 years and older, veterans, and others to build community connections.

[3] Ordinance 13875
[4] Ordinance 17485

j. Promote communities that are resilient to natural hazards and climate change, and support communities affected by related disasters.



VII. Vashon-Maury Island

A. Plan History

In 2016, the Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Subarea Plan was initiated as King County's first plan developed under its reconfigured subarea planning program. The recent history of prior Vashon-Maury Island community plans is as follows:

- **1986 Vashon Community Plan.** This Island-wide plan was adopted in 1986,[5] but was then rescinded over a decade later, in 1998,[6] due to the passage of the Washington State Growth Management Act in the early 1990s. At that time, some key policies from the 1986 plan that were consistent with the Growth Management Act were incorporated into the King County Comprehensive Plan. These policies remained in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan through 2016 but, with the adoption of the 2017 Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Subarea Plan, they have since been removed from the chapter.

[5] Ordinance 7837
[6] Ordinance 13273

- **1996 Vashon Town Plan.**[7] This plan focused on a smaller geography, the Rural Town, and was developed consistent with the Growth Management Act. The 1996 Town Plan remained active through 2017 but, with the adoption of the 2017 subarea plan, it has since been repealed.

The Island-wide 2017 Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Subarea Plan updates these prior policies and consolidates them into a single document that aims to retain community priorities while eliminating outdated and/or accomplished items. Policies and actions that are carried forward are re-assessed and re-prioritized for implementation. The 2017 subarea plan (bound as a separate document) is adopted as an element of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

B. Vision & Guiding Principles

Vashon-Maury Island Vision

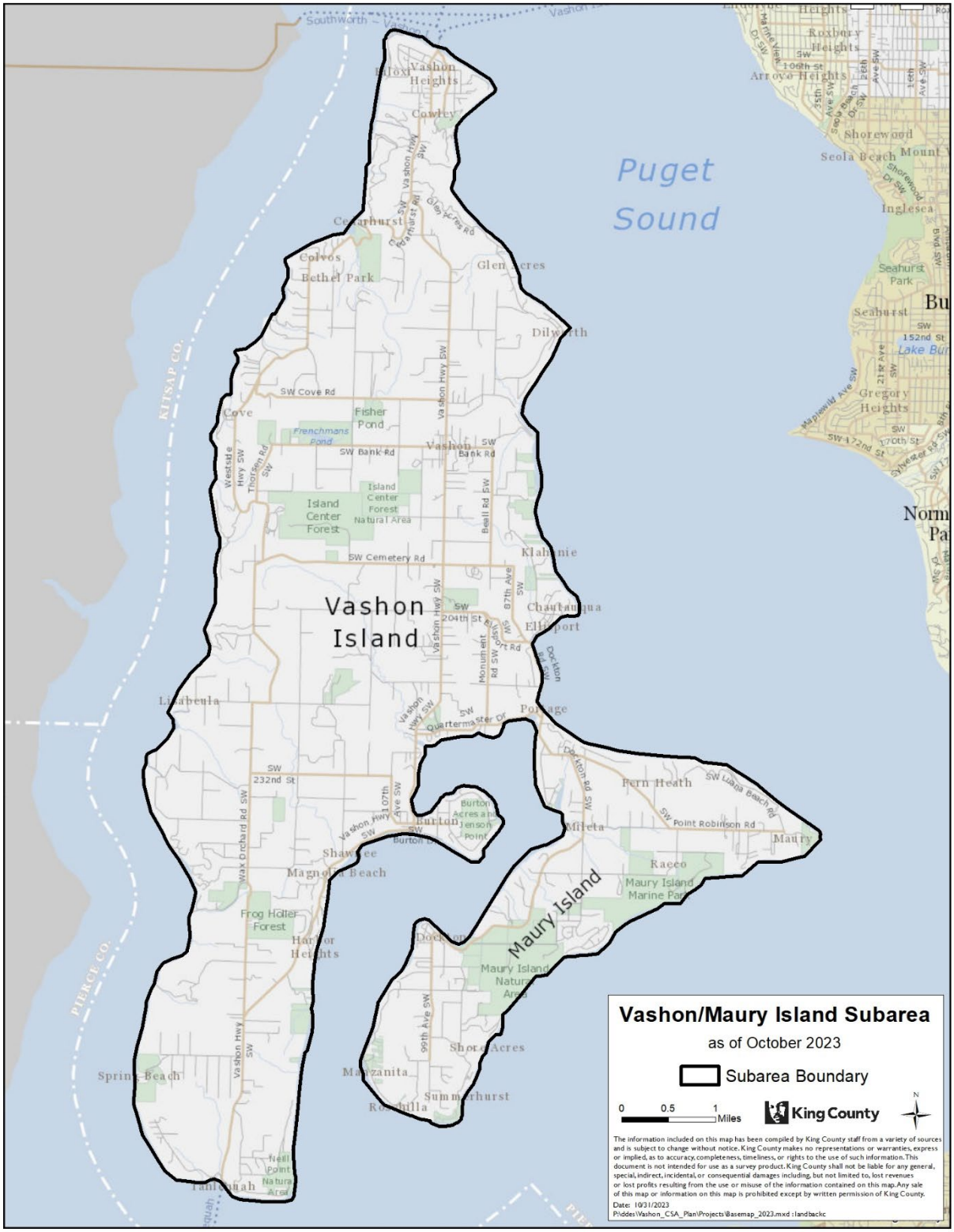
The Vashon-Maury Island Community Service Area Subarea Plan envisions a healthy, rural environment and reflects the following values identified by the community during plan development:

- Independence and self-sufficiency
- Natural environment
- Equity and diversity
- Island history
- Creativity and self-expression
- Sustainable local employment
- Community collaboration

These values are exhibited and sustained through ten guiding principles:

- Maintain the rural character of Vashon-Maury Island
- Encourage and protect the diversity of neighborhoods and affordable housing choices for all
- Guide limited growth on Vashon-Maury Island and ensure development does not over-extend basic services, public safety, and infrastructure
- Plan the Rural Town of Vashon as the mixed-use and vibrant center of the community
- Preserve and protect native habitats, groundwater, shorelines, open space and sensitive areas for present and future generations
- Protect agricultural lands and support Island farmers and growers
- Provide a balanced and integrated multimodal transportation system that reflects environmental, economic, and social considerations
- Preserve historic, archeological, and cultural resources
- Promote an environment where all people can be physically active, eat nutritious food, and live in safe and healthy places
- Support and foster a diverse, dynamic, and sustainable rural economy

[7] Ordinance 12395


Puget Sound
Vashon Island
Maury Island
Vashon Heights
Cowley
Colvos
Bethel Park
Glen Acres
Dilworth
Cove
Fisher Pond
Frenchmans Pond
Island Center Forest
Island Center Forest Natural Area
Klahanie
Chautauqua
Ellisport
Portage
Burton
Shawnee
Magnolia Beach
Frog Holler Forest
Harbor Heights
Spring Beach
Manzanita
Shorewood
Seola Beach
Inglesea
Seahurst Park
Gregory Heights
Roxbury Heights
Arroyo Heights
Pern Heath
Mireta
Raeco
Maury Island Marine Park
Maury Island Natural Area
Summerhurst
Rolling Hills
Tahlequah
Neill Point Natural Area
KITSAP CO.
PIERCE CO.
Vashon/Maury Island Subarea
as of October 2023
Subarea Boundary
0 0.5 1 Miles
King County
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The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is 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. This document is not intended for use as a survey product. 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 this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.
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VIII. West King County Area

A. Background

As noted on the Community Service Areas map at the beginning of this chapter, the West King County Area is comprised of approximately five separate major unincorporated areas within the Urban Growth Area boundary; these are all Potential Annexation Areas for several cities, including Federal Way, Seattle, and Renton. In addition, there are over *one hundred* other smaller areas that are affiliated with or adjacent to Kent, Auburn, Issaquah, Sammamish, Redmond, Kenmore, and others.

King County's approach is that all of these areas annex into the affiliated cities or, for those areas not affiliated, the most logical adjacent city. As subarea planning occurs, adjacent cities will be encouraged to participate. Policies guiding these areas are found both in Chapter 2, Urban Communities (in the Potential Annexation Area section), as well as in other annexation policies found in chapters throughout the Comprehensive Plan. For the areas at the edge of the Urban Growth Areas, policies in other parts of this chapter may be relevant since the historical Community Plans often included these edge communities. This is further described below.

The estimated population in this CSA in 2014 was approximately 113,000. The West King County CSA consists of separate unincorporated areas that were once part of larger areas with their own community plans. Today's fragmented pattern of unincorporated urban areas is the result of incorporations and piecemeal annexations since the community planning process began in the mid-1980s.

IX. East Federal Way Potential Annexation Area

Work on the Federal Way Community Plan and/or amendments occurred from 1972 to 1975, 1977 to 1980, and 1984 to 1986. Federal Way was part of the first generation of community plans in the county that were adopted separately from their implementing area zoning. After these experiences, the county decided to adopt both together to avoid going through essentially the same decisions twice for each community. The City of Federal Way incorporated in 1990, removing most of the planning area from the county's jurisdiction. None of the Federal Way Community Plan or its amendments are readopted.

X. Fairwood and East Renton Potential Annexation Areas

Fairwood and East Renton are adjacent to the City of Renton and are within the city's potential annexation area. Over the past decade, small portions (typically at the subdivision scale) have annexed to the city in a piecemeal fashion. The Fairwood area has approximately 23,000 residents. The Fairwood area was completely within the historical Soos Creek Planning Area, which is now part of both the Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River and the West King County Community Service Areas. This means that the general annexation policies in the comprehensive plan, as well as the Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River area policies are relevant to this area.

The East Renton area has approximately 6,500 residents. The East Renton area was completely part of the historical Newcastle Planning Area, which is now part of both the Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain and West King County Community Service areas. This means that the general annexation policies in the comprehensive plan, as well as the Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain area policies are relevant to this area.

XI. North Highline Potential Annexation Area

A. Plan History

The history of prior plans for the North Highline subarea is as follows:

- **1976 SeaTac Communities Plan.** The adoption of the SeaTac Communities Plan pre-dated adoption of the Growth Management Act.

- **1977 Highline Community Plan and 1981 Area Zoning.** In 1977, King County adopted the Highline Community Plan,[8] which covered a large area of then-unincorporated King County that today includes the Cities of Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, and SeaTac in addition to the currently unincorporated North Highline neighborhoods of White Center and Glendale. The plan was supplemented in 1981 by an Area Zoning Plan,[9] which implemented zoning consistent with the land use policies of the Highline Community Plan.

- **1994 White Center Community Action Plan and Area Zoning.** In 1994, King County augmented the Highline Community Plan with the adoption of the White Center Community Action Plan and Area Zoning (Action Plan),[10] a community planning document that implemented new zoning for White Center, in addition to establishing goals in the areas of health and human services, economic and community development, and environmental protection. The Action Plan was designed as a six- to ten-year plan for the area and incorporated as part of the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan.[11]

In December 2022, the County adopted the North Highline Community Service Area Subarea Plan, which replaces the policies in the 1994 White Center Community Action Plan. The 2022 subarea plan (bound as a separate document) is adopted as an element of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

B. Vision and Guiding Principles

North Highline Vision

Residing on the traditional land of the Duwamish people, North Highline celebrates its ethnic diversity, intergenerational roots, and our ongoing inclusivity of diverse families and individuals, especially those most isolated and vulnerable. We call out race and

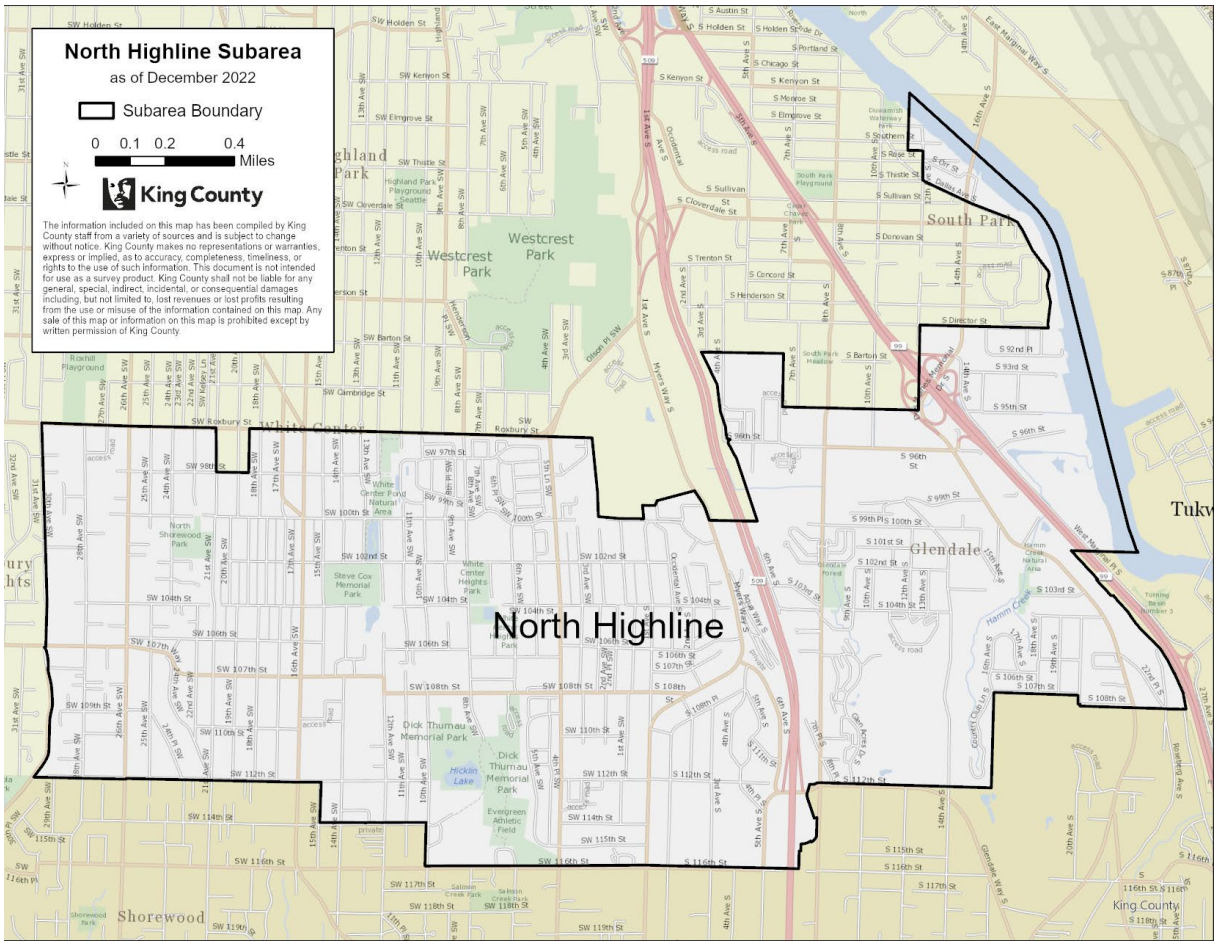
[8] Ordinance 3530
[9] Ordinance 5453
[10] Ordinance 11568
[11] Ordinance 13273 removed references to community plans, including the Highline Community Plan, which in effect repealed the Community Plan; however, the Action Plan remained active.

place-based inequities and are committed to dismantling systems of power, privilege, and racial injustice. With mutual support and respect, we value and live out our brilliance and power through community-led initiatives, creating thoughtful development without displacing longtime residents and small business owners, forming and owning the policies that impact us, and building our individual and collective wealth, health, and wellbeing.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles support the community vision and were used by the County to inform and direct the development of the Subarea Plan. The guiding principles were developed based on several years of dialogue and work with the community on the Subarea Plan, drawing from other community-led or focused efforts in North Highline. They express the community's sentiments around a range of community issues discussed during the planning process.

a. We are proud of our community and continue to share our collective history with others and to invest in this place, our home for current residents and their future generations.
b. We support community investments and programs that reduce the risks and mitigate the impacts, of residential, economic, and cultural displacement.
c. We live in thoughtfully designed housing and commercial spaces where inter-generational households and legacy businesses can stay and where affordability and ownership are realized.
d. We support a thriving and equitable economy, with racially and ethnically diverse, community-minded small business owners, entrepreneurs, and employers.
e. We support residents, especially children, youths, and young adults, with services and resources they and their families need to succeed.
f. We promote the development of community-desired amenities to improve aesthetics, enrich the community's diverse physical and cultural assets, and support gathering together as a community.
g. We support regulations and investments that result in a safe, secure, and healthy community and compatible development.
h. We support residents growing their work interests, skills, and wages.
i. We enjoy neighborhoods with accessible and safe streets, roads, and alleyways, with well-connected hiking and biking trails.
j. We can access jobs and amenities in the region and in our community without relying on automobiles.



XII. Skyway-West Hill Potential Annexation Area

A. Plan History

The history of prior plans for the subarea is as follows:

- **1994 West Hill Community Plan.** The West Hill Community Plan was adopted by King County in 1993. While prepared in conformance with the Growth Management Act it predated the adoption of the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan.

- **Community-led Skyway-West Hill Action Plan.** In 2014 and 2015, the County provided technical assistance to a community-led effort to update some elements of the Community Plan. This community-led effort resulted in the development of the Skyway-West Hill Action Plan, or SWAP. The SWAP was proposed as an addendum to the existing Community Plan as part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update, but the County ultimately did not adopt the SWAP. Instead, the County, reinitiated its Subarea Planning Program, and committed to work with the community to complete a Subarea Plan.

- **Skyway-West Hill Land Use Strategy, Phase 1 of the Skyway West Hill Subarea Plan.** As part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan update, the County adopted a Land Use Strategy, Phase 1 of the Skyway-West Hill Subarea Plan, that outlined the potential policy and implementation steps for land use development in Skyway-West Hill. The Land Use Strategy called for the County to continue working with the community to develop the Skyway-West Hill Community Service Area Subarea Plan.

In December 2022, the County adopted the Skyway-West Hill Community Service Area Subarea Plan, which replaces the West Hill Community Plan and the Land Use Strategy. The 2022 subarea plan (bound as a separate document) is adopted as an element of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

B. Vision & Guiding Principles

Skyway-West Hill Vision

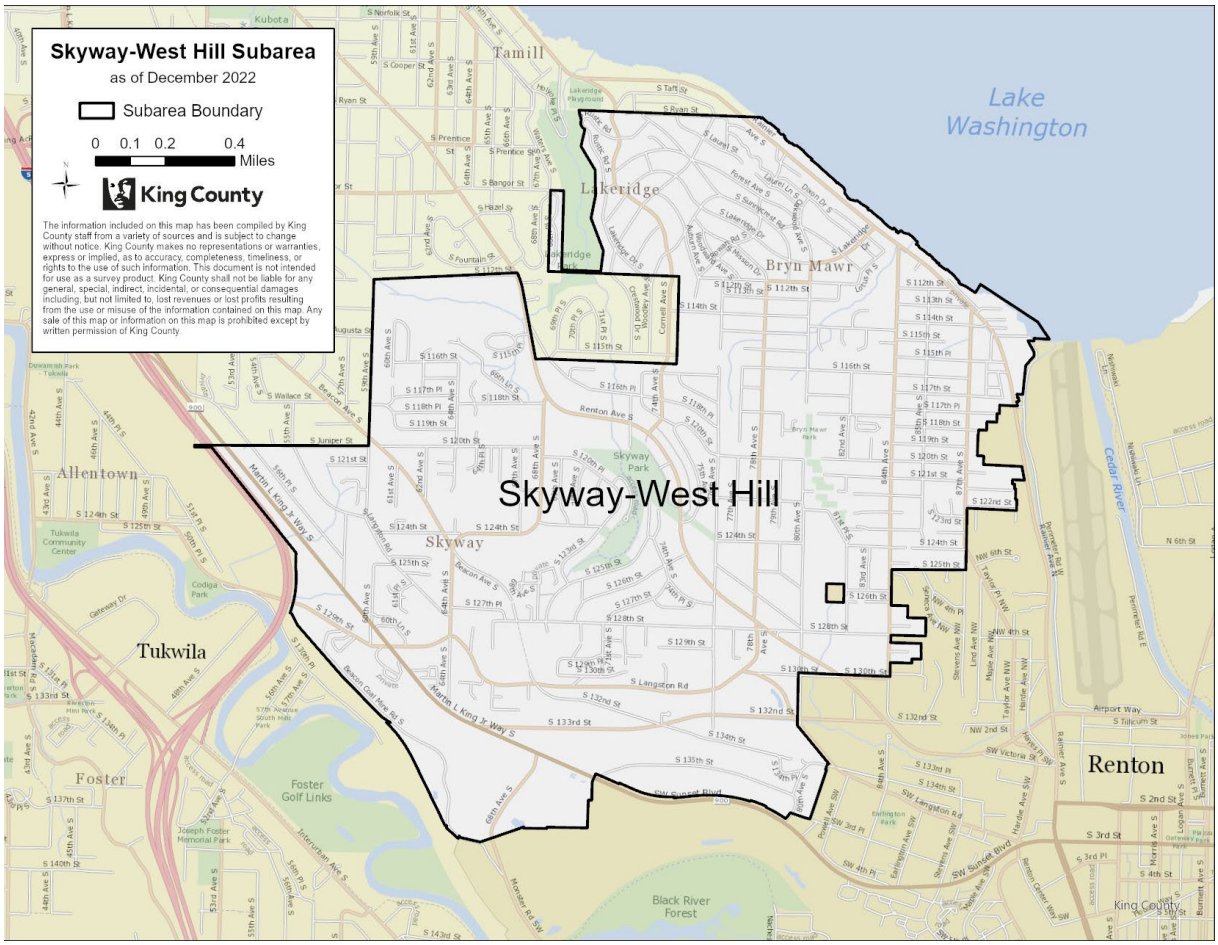
Skyway-West Hill will grow into a vibrant, walkable neighborhood where housing is affordable and local, community-based businesses are thriving. Skyway-West Hill will be an ethnically diverse and civically engaged community where the collective voice, wisdom, and expertise of its residents and business owners are vital in ongoing civic decision-making.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles support the community vision and were used by the County to inform and direct the development of the Subarea Plan. The guiding principles were developed based on several years of dialogue and work with the community on the Subarea Plan, drawing from prior community planning efforts, such as the Skyway-West Hill Action Plan, and other community conversations. They express the community's sentiments around a range of community issues discussed during the planning process.

a. Support community health by providing opportunities to access fresh foods, as well as routes and trails for walking and bicycling.
b. Create healthy connected neighborhoods where residents have safe and adequate means to connect with their neighbors, schools, community services and programs, and local businesses.
c. Encourage equitable development by promoting access to a variety of housing choices, incentivizing the creation of public amenities, addressing displacement, encouraging economic opportunity, and cultivating neighborhood character.
d. Create sustainable, vibrant, and walkable business districts that provide opportunities for local businesses to succeed and jobs for area residents.
e. Protect existing and create new affordable housing that focuses on preventing displacement and providing options and opportunities for Skyway-West Hill residents to remain in their community.
f. Ensure the community grows in a well-planned and sustainable way and that it has the resources necessary for all its residents to thrive and enjoy a high quality of life.
g. Ensure Skyway-West Hill's youth are thriving and engaged in local decision-making so they can advocate for and receive the services and resources they and their families need to succeed.
h. Promote the development of community-desired amenities and enrich the community's diverse physical and cultural assets.
i. Inform all policies, regulations, and County actions affecting Skyway-West Hill with the principles of equity and social justice.

j. Protect and enhance the existing character of the community's residential neighborhoods and enhance connections between these areas and business districts.





CHAPTER 12

IMPLEMENTATION, AMENDMENTS, & EVALUATION

I. Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The Comprehensive Plan update process includes annual, midpoint, and 10-year updates. The annual update generally is limited to those amendments that propose technical changes and adoption of subarea plans. The 10-year update is designed to address amendments that propose substantive changes. The midpoint update is an optional process that allows for consideration of a smaller range of substantive changes, if initiated by motion. This update schedule provides the measure of certainty and predictability necessary to allow for new land use initiatives to work. By allowing annual and midpoint updates, the process provides sufficient flexibility to account for technical adjustments or changed circumstances. The process requires early and continuous public involvement and necessitates meaningful public engagement.

King County has established a docket process to facilitate public involvement and participation in the Comprehensive Plan update process in accordance with Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.470. Parties interested in proposing changes to Comprehensive Plan policies, development regulations, land use designations, zoning, or other components of the Comprehensive Plan can submit a docket request outlining the proposed amendment.

I-101 **Through the update process, Comprehensive Plan policies and implementing development regulations shall be subject to continuing review, evaluation, and amendment according to the annual, midpoint, and 10-year update schedule in accordance with Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130 and the King County Code.**

I-102 **Except as provided in Policy I-103, proposed amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan, including the Land Use Map, shall be considered by the King County Council only once each calendar year in accordance with the State Growth Management Act and so that the cumulative effect of the proposals can be determined.**

I-103 **After appropriate public participation, amendments may be considered more than once each calendar year as follows:**

- **a. For initial adoption of a subarea plan;**
- **b. Adoption or amendment of the Shoreline Master Program;**
- **c. Amendment of the capital facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan that is part of the adoption or amendment of the County budget;**
- **d. To resolve an appeal of the Comprehensive Plan filed with the Growth Management Hearings Board or with the court; or**
- **e. For an emergency amendment, after public notice is provided, and the amendment follows the emergency ordinance provisions of Section 230.30 of the King County Charter.**

I-104 **Except as otherwise provided in this policy, the annual update shall not consider proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that require substantive changes to Comprehensive Plan policies or that alter the Urban Growth Area boundary. Substantive amendments may be considered in the annual update only to consider the following:**

- **a. Changes required by existing Comprehensive Plan policies;**
- **b. Changes to technical appendices and any amendments required thereby;**
- **c. Adoption of subarea plans;**
- **d. Changes required by amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies or state or federal law;**
- **e. Amendments resulting from the comprehensive plan implementation progress report required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130;**
- **f. Land Use Map or shoreline master program map amendments resulting from a site-specific application or an area zoning and land use zoning study, provided that the amendments do not require substantive change to policy language or alter the Urban Growth Area boundary, except to correct mapping errors;**
- **g. Amendments to add or remove lands from the Agricultural Production District under policy R-761 and/or R-762 for King County safety, preservation, and/or fish passage road projects that are in the adopted six-year Capital Improvement Program;**
- **h. Four-to-One proposals;**
- **i. Amendments necessary for the conservation, protection, and recovery of threatened and endangered species;**
- **j. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Work Plan to change deadlines**
- **k. Amendments related to the next long-term solid waste disposal option; or**
- **l. Amendments to update critical area policies in 2025.**

I-105 **The 10-year update shall make changes required as part of the Growth Management Act statutory update, consider proposed amendments that could be considered in the annual update, proposed amendments relating to substantive changes to Comprehensive Plan policies and proposals to alter the Urban Growth Area boundary in accordance with applicable provisions of Countywide Planning Policies.**

I-106 **The midpoint update is an optional process that allows for consideration of a smaller range of substantive policy changes and amendments to the Urban Growth Area boundary at the five-year point of the 10-year update schedule. Midpoint updates are only authorized by a motion that establishes the scope of work. Work Plan action items may be added or amended if related to a topic identified in the scope of work.**

I-107 **King County shall use equitable engagement strategies to ensure public participation in the update process for Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations, particularly from populations historically underrepresented or excluded from planning processes. King County shall disseminate information regarding public involvement in the Comprehensive Plan update process, including, but not limited to, the following: description of procedures and schedules for proposing amendments to Comprehensive Plan policies and development regulations; guidelines for participating in the docket process; public meetings to obtain comments from the public or other agencies; provision of public review documents; and dissemination of information relating to the Comprehensive Plan update process on the Internet or through other methods.**

I-108 **All Executive proposed Comprehensive Plan policy amendments shall include the following analysis:**

- **a. Rationale and effect: a detailed statement of:**
  1. **Whether the proposed change is a new policy, a substantive policy change, clarification of existing intent, or technical with no policy change intended;**
  2. **The rationale for the proposed change; and**
  3. **The anticipated outcome of the proposed change, including effects on the geographic area(s) and populations affected; and**
- **b. Implementation: a description of the anticipated implementation of the proposed change, including:**
  1. **Whether implementation of the proposed change is regulatory, programmatic, or a capital project, or a combination;**
  2. **If the change is regulatory, a description of the development regulations transmitted with the Comprehensive Plan update that implement the proposed change, in conformance with Policy I-109;**
  3. **If the change is programmatic or a capital project, whether it needs additional resources to implement the proposed change; and**
  4. **If the change is programmatic or a capital project, the anticipated timing for implementation.**

I-109 **Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan policies shall be accompanied by any changes to development regulations, when necessary to implement the policy change.**

I-110 **Adopted Comprehensive Plan policy changes shall be integrated into future regularly scheduled updates to the Capital Improvement Program, subarea plans, and functional plans, when necessary to implement the change.**

II. Review and Evaluation

King County uses performance measurement to evaluate Comprehensive Plan implementation to ensure Growth Management Act and County goals are being met, improve transparency and accountability with the public, increase use of data to support decision-making, and identify where improvements can be made.

Long-term indicators provide insight into whether the goals of the Comprehensive Plan are being achieved or if revisions are needed. The framework is structured around how well the County is meeting the aspirations of the Guiding Principles policies in the Plan, as consistent with the planning goals of the Growth Management Act. The performance measures are primarily analyzed at a countywide scale, with additional geographic detail for relevant Growth Management Act geographies (incorporated cities, unincorporated urban area, the Rural Area, and Natural Resource Lands), as appropriate and feasible given the dataset used. Wherever possible, disparate impacts are also analyzed. Many of the Comprehensive Plan performance measures overlap with the Determinants of Equity indicators used for internal equity performance monitoring. Performance measure reports are issued in advance of 10-year Comprehensive Plan updates to inform the scope of work for the update.

Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130 also requires King County to provide the state a report detailing the progress achieved in implementing the Comprehensive Plan ("implementation progress report") five years after adoption of a 10-year update. The report must include information about:

- Implementation of previously adopted changes to the housing element of the Plan, and any effect those changes have had on housing affordability and availability within the jurisdiction;
- Permit processing timelines;
- Progress toward implementing any actions required to achieve reductions to meet greenhouse gas and vehicle miles traveled requirements in the Growth Management Act; and
- Identification of any outstanding actions needed to implement the previous 10-year update, such as specifically identified regulations, zoning, and/or land use changes or other legislative or administrative actions. In such cases, the County must adopt a work plan to take any necessary implementing actions identified in the report and complete all work necessary for implementation within two years of submission of the report.

Additionally, in accordance with the Growth Management Act, King County and cities work together to employ an established review and evaluation program, as provided by the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The purpose of the program is to determine whether the County and cities (1) have sufficient capacity for targeted growth and housing needs and (2) are achieving urban densities within urban growth areas by comparing growth and development assumptions, targets, housing needs, and objectives contained in the Countywide Planning Policies and the County and city comprehensive plans with actual patterns of development in the county and cities.

Additional monitoring, review, and reporting occurs under Policy H-100 to (1) ensure alignment with Countywide Planning Policies Housing Chapter goals and policies and (2) progress towards meeting countywide and jurisdictional housing growth targets, housing needs, and eliminating disparities in access to housing and neighborhood choice.

Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.215 requires six western Washington counties (including King County) and the cities in those counties to evaluate their capacity to accommodate forecasted growth of housing units and jobs within the current Urban Growth Area. Objectives relating to this review and evaluation include:

- Determining whether a county and the cities in that county are achieving urban densities within urban growth areas by comparing growth and development assumptions, targets, and objectives contained in the Countywide Planning Policies and the county and city comprehensive plans with actual growth and development in the county and cities;
- Determining whether there is sufficient suitable land to accommodate applicable countywide population projections, including evaluation of impacts of approved actions to amend the Urban Growth Area;
- Determining the actual density of housing constructed within the Urban Growth Area since the adoption of, or since the most recent evaluation of, the Comprehensive Plan;
- Determining the actual amount of land developed for commercial and industrial uses within the Urban Growth Area since the adoption of, or since the most recent evaluation of, the Comprehensive Plan;
- Reviewing commercial, industrial, and housing needs by type and density range to determine the amount of land needed for commercial, industrial, and housing for the remaining portion of the 20-year planning period used in the Comprehensive Plan; and

- Identifying measures intended to promote consistency between estimates of available land capacity, measures of actual development by type, and goals and objectives of city and county comprehensive plan policies, development regulations, and Countywide Planning Policies. Such measures include, but are not limited to, possible amendments to Countywide Planning Policies as determined necessary by the county and the cities.

To develop the Urban Growth Capacity Report and King County Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures, the County and the cities partner to review information relating to and including, but not limited to, the following:

- Urban densities;
- Remaining land capacity;
- Growth and development assumptions, targets, and objectives;
- Residential, commercial, and industrial development;
- Transportation;
- Affordable housing need and supply;
- Economic development; and
- Environmental quality.

I-201 **King County shall:**

a. Monitor, measure, assess, and report on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan toward achieving its objectives, inclusive of those relating to growth targets, the environment, development patterns, housing needs, the economy, transportation, the provision of public services, and health and social equity outcomes of residents;

b. Use results of such monitoring, measurement, assessment, and reporting to identify implementation actions and inform policy revisions, as appropriate, to achieve the planning objectives found within the Growth Management Act, Countywide Planning Policies, and Comprehensive Plan; and

c. Incorporate data on critical areas and other constrained lands into analysis on developable capacity to accommodate growth targets and housing needs.

I-202 **King County should implement a monitoring and adaptive management framework to:**

a. Evaluate the effectiveness of County policies, regulations, and programs in achieving no net loss of critical areas functions and values; and

b. Inform future regulatory updates.

III. Land Use Designations and Zoning Classifications

The application of zoning classifications on specific properties is the first step towards implementing the land use designations of the Comprehensive Plan. Boundaries between different zone classifications may follow property lines, natural features, or other dividing lines such as roads. A land use designation is implemented by one or more specific zone classification, as indicated on the following table.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations	Zoning Classifications*
Unincorporated Activity Center (ac)	R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, O, I
Community Business Center (cb)	NB, CB, O
Neighborhood Business Center (nb)	NB, O
Commercial Outside of Centers (co)	NB, CB, RB, O, - this is the range of existing zoning in place when the Comprehensive Plan was adopted
Urban Residential, High (uh)	R-18, R-24, R-48
Urban Residential, Medium (um)	R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12
Urban Residential, Low (ul)	R-1
Urban Growth Area for Cities in Rural Area (rx)	UR
Rural Town (rt)	R-1, R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, O, I
Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center (rn)	NB
Rural Area (ra)	RA-2.5, RA-5, RA-10, RA-20
Industrial (i)	I
Forestry (f)	F, M
Agriculture (ag)	A-10, A-35
Mining (m)	M
Greenbelt/Urban Separator (gb)	R-1
King County Open Space System (os)	All zones
Other Parks/Wilderness (op)	All zones

* This is the range of zoning that may be allowed within each comprehensive plan land use designation subject to Comprehensive Plan and subarea plan policies. Actual zoning on a specific property is determined through the area zoning process or through site-specific rezone application.

Abbreviation	Zoning Classifications
A	Agricultural
F	Forest
M	Mineral
RA	Rural Area
UR	Urban Reserve
R	Urban Residential
NB	Neighborhood Business
CB	Community Business
RB	Regional Business
O	Office
I	Industrial

Note: Areas without a land use designation or zoning classification include mainly railroad rights-of-way, road rights-of-way, and open water. Other such areas may relate to certain access tracts, mapping that doesn't align with current property configurations, and, less frequently, ambiguous information related to historical planning processes.

IV. Implementing King County Codes

The Comprehensive Plan guides land use over the long term by applying specific land use designations throughout the unincorporated portion of King County and by providing guidelines for implementing regulations used to evaluate specific development proposals. To ensure that these implementing regulations are effective and warrant a high degree of public trust and confidence, the regulations must be equitable, reasonable, and responsibly administered.

King County regulates land development and construction based on the Comprehensive Plan through a variety of technical code standards resulting in permits and approvals for specific projects. This includes, but is not limited to, elements of the King County Code that control development or land use activities, such as the zoning code, shoreline master program, subdivision ordinances, surface water management, and construction codes.

I-301 **King County's regulation of land use should:**

- **a. Protect public health, safety and general welfare, and property rights;**
- **b. Protect consumers from fraudulent practices in land use, land sales, and development;**
- **c. Implement and be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted land use goals, policies, and plans;**
- **d. Be expeditious, predictable, clear, straightforward, and internally consistent;**
- **e. Provide clear direction for resolution of regulatory conflict;**
- **f. Be enforceable, efficiently administered, and provide appropriate incentives and penalties;**
- **g. Be consistently and effectively enforced;**
- **h. Be coordinated with timely provision of necessary public facilities and services;**
- **i. Encourage creativity and diversity in meeting County goals and policies;**
- **j. Be coordinated with cities, special purpose districts, and other public agencies to promote compatible development standards throughout King County;**
- **k. Be responsive, understandable, and accessible to the public;**
- **l. Provide effective public notice and reasonable opportunities for the public, especially those directly affected, to be heard and to influence decisions;**
- **m. Avoid intruding on activities involving constitutionally protected freedoms of speech, petition, expression, assembly, association, and economic competition, except when essential to protect public health, safety and welfare, and then the restriction should be no broader than necessary;**
- **n. Treat all members of the public equitably. Base regulatory decisions wholly on the applicable criteria and code requirements, including application of the County's equity and racial and social justice goals;**
- **o. Make development requirements readily accessible to the public through up-to-date codes, technical assistance materials, and other relevant documents; and**
- **p. Provide for relief from existing regulations when they would deprive a property of uses allowed to similar properties with the same zoning or environmental or other constraints, and when such relief would neither endanger public health and safety nor conflict with adopted use policies. This policy is not intended for relief from rules governing the subdividing of land.**

I-302 **The King County Code's zoning classifications and development standards shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.**

I-303 **When needed infrastructure and facilities are not available in a timely manner, development approvals shall:**

- **a. Be denied;**
- **b. Divided into phases; or**
- **c. Provide the needed facilities and infrastructure to address impacts directly attributable to their project.**

I-304 **King County's permitting systems should provide for expeditious review of projects consistent with zoning and adopted policies.**

I-305 **Subdivision, short subdivision, and other development approvals, including those requiring detailed environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act, shall be reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, zoning, subarea plans, functional plans, and capital improvement programs.**

I-306 **King County shall enforce its development regulations by pursuing code enforcement complaints and by providing inspection services during the process of site development on all sites for which it issues permits.**

Siting public and private uses in communities can at times lead to concerns and objections from neighbors resulting from the real or perceived impacts of proposed uses. There is also a risk that objections to these "locally unwanted land uses" can lead to some uses becoming overly concentrated in some communities, particularly in those communities with higher populations of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color; people with low-incomes; immigrants; and refugees. In response, governments should evaluate the potential equity and racial and social justice implications, including the beneficial and adverse impacts, of policies and regulations involving such uses.

I-307 **Equity and racial and social justice principles shall be used by King County as an important consideration in developing zoning and development regulations governing public and private uses, in siting public facilities, and in evaluating land use decisions. Results from equity impact reviews shall be used where appropriate.**

V. Comprehensive Plan Work Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Work Plan identifies additional actions the County will take after adoption of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan to: (1) further implement and refine the plan, and/or (2) continue work on issues that arose during plan development but there was not sufficient time or resources to complete the work prior to adoption. The action items work in conjunction with the other implementation tools discussed in this chapter, such as regulations, incentive programs, and other core regional planning and implementation activities. Each Work Plan action item includes a summary description, general timeline, and anticipated outcomes. Completion of Work Plan actions are dependent on future grant awards and/or budget decisions. Should funding be unavailable to complete the work, the timelines and/or deliverables may need to be reassessed.

When transmitting to the Council the required report, study, ordinance, and/or motion in any of the Work Plan deliverables outlined below, the transmittal shall be electronically filed with the clerk of the Council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all Councilmembers, the Council chief of staff, and the lead staff for the committee charged with oversight of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action 1: Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Framework Update

In 2017, Motion 15014 established a Performance Measures Program for the Comprehensive Plan. The Program is intended to monitor Comprehensive Plan implementation and to help inform whether plan amendments are needed to better achieve the plan's goals, as reflected in the Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles. As established in the reporting timelines in King County Code Chapter 20.18, Program reporting occurs in advance of, and with the intent of informing, establishing the scope of work for 10-year Comprehensive Plan updates.

The Executive issued the first Performance Measures Report under the new program in 2022 via Report 2022-RPT0045. In developing the report, department staff indicated that the measures could be further refined to show a more accurate picture of plan performance. The approved framework also does not align with the current Comprehensive Plan update cycle. As required by Motion 15014, any changes to the performance measures framework must be approved via a motion that is passed by the Council.

Further, during review of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, it became clear that: 1) more frequent reporting was needed, 2) there is overlap with the Implementation Progress Report required by the Growth Management Act, and 3) more rigorous reporting for the Housing element is needed. This Action will include updates to the Performance Measures Program:

a. Address department staff-identified refinements;
b. Align the reporting with the requirements in RCW 36.70A.130 for the Housing element of the Comprehensive Plan and the monitoring requirements of the Countywide Planning Policies for housing data and implementation strategies; and
c. More frequent official reporting transmitted to Council, to be not less than every five years.

The Performance Measures report will also be completed in consultation and collaboration with the Council.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council a motion updating the Performance Measures Program Framework.
- *Timeline:* The Performance Measures Program Framework Motion should be filed with the Council by October 1, 2025. Council review, refinement, and possible approval of the Motion should be completed by January 30, 2026, to allow for completion of the next Performance Measures Report that is due by June 30, 2026, to inform scoping for the midpoint Comprehensive Plan update.
- *Lead Agency:* Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget.
- *Support Agency*: Comprehensive Planning Interdepartmental Team.

Action 2: Comprehensive Plan Public Participation Code Update

The public participation requirements for updates to the King County Comprehensive Plan and development regulations are guided by state law, adopted Comprehensive Plan policies, and King County Code Chapter 20.18. The majority of the requirements in code have not been amended since they were first adopted in 1998. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan made some code changes to align with current state law, reflect current practice, and provide clarity. However, additional work is needed to ensure the code reflects and supports equitable engagement goals and outcomes.

Equitable engagement process improvements were integrated into the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update process.

Those 2024 engagement efforts were not inconsistent with the current code; however, the code could be strengthened to further support this work in the future. Additionally, there are more opportunities to improve the engagement process to make it more equitable and more accessible to all people consistent with County's equity and racial and social justice values and goals, to include trusted messengers in the process, and to establish performance measures to ensure accountability in achieving equitable engagement. Given this, additional updates to the public participation code in Chapter 20.18 work are warranted. This work would be disingenuous without thoughtful community engagement on the changes, especially with the Equity Work Group or successor group, and communities that have been historically underrepresented. This Work Plan action directs that work to occur outside of a major Comprehensive Plan update to allow for focused engagement on these important issues.

The changes proposed are expected to lead to community engagement at a level of at least "County and Community work together" for development of midpoint and 10-year updates. The timing of the work plan action is proposed in order for the new engagement requirements to be in place prior to the start of development of the 2029 midpoint update, if it is authorized.

The current docket process is unclear. This Work Plan action will include updates to the docket process to make it more accessible to the general public, and to make it clear what will happen with docketed items during midpoint and 10-year updates.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council an ordinance updating the public participation elements of King County Code Chapter 20.18.
- *Timeline:* The ordinance should be transmitted to the Council by June 30, 2028. If there is a Comprehensive Plan midpoint update authorized at that time, the code changes should be part of the midpoint transmittal package.
- *Lead Agency:* Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget.
- *Support Agencies:* Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice, and Department of Local Services.

Action 3: Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and Community Preference Review

In 2022, the County adopted inclusionary housing regulations for Skyway-West Hill and North Highline, which included: (1) mandatory inclusionary housing in the commercial cores of both communities, (2) voluntary inclusionary housing in the remaining areas of those communities, and (3) a requirement for a community preference program for any inclusionary housing development. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan expanded the voluntary inclusionary housing provisions to other geographies (all of urban unincorporated King County and the Rural Towns of Vashon and Snoqualmie Pass).

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan Equity Work Group, as well as other public input received during development of the 2024 plan, expressed support for also expanding the mandatory inclusionary housing and community preference provisions to some or all of the new geographies that the voluntary provisions in the 2024 changes would apply to. Additional time and resources are needed to review how or if these elements could successfully be implemented in additional communities without unintended consequences.

Given this, this Work Plan action directs evaluation of whether it would be appropriate to potentially expand mandatory inclusionary housing and/or community preference regulations to the other geographies that currently have voluntary inclusionary housing, including consideration of displacement risk, market conditions, and public engagement with potentially affected communities.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and Community Preference Review report and a proposed ordinance implementing the recommendations in the report.
- *Timeline:* The Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and Community Preference Review report and ordinance, if recommended, should be filed with the Council by December 31, 2027.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Community and Human Services.
- *Support Agency*: Department of Local Services.

Action 4: Old Growth Corridors Strategies

Mature forests with broad range of native tree species and age classes – key characteristics of what are commonly referred to as "old growth" forests – provide a wealth of ecological and social benefits including, but not limited to: healthy habitat; clean and cool water; water storage to mitigate downstream flooding, providing summer flows to rivers and streams, and supplying drinking water; wildfire resilience; diversity of flora, fauna, fungal, and microbial communities; and recreation. Old growth forests in western Washington are also of enormous cultural importance to sovereign Indian tribes. In addition to providing ecological, social, and cultural benefits, mature forests in the Pacific Northwest also sequester carbon and are more resilient to the effects of climate change than younger or less diverse forests.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan includes policies directing King County to identify and implement strategies to protect forests in ways that build resilience and maximize social and ecological values while carefully considering any effects of changes to forestland management on the timber resource economy. The Plan directs King County to identify opportunities to establish and maintain large blocks of forest, particularly in upper watershed areas and along major river corridors given the importance of contiguous forest cover in these areas for preventing flooding, improving water quality, and protecting salmon and other wildlife habitat.

This work plan action directs review of scientific literature and recommendation of potential strategies and tactics to accelerate establishment of "old growth corridors" in upper watersheds and along major river corridors, especially in areas with a predominance of existing public ownership, in support of habitat for salmon and other wildlife.

This work should include identifying and analyzing: appropriate geographies; feasible programmatic and project actions King County has control to implement such as acquisitions, incentive programs, and regulatory changes; potential partnerships with Indian tribes as sovereign governments, public and private landowners, and land managers; carbon sequestration value; revenue impacts from changing forestry practices; and existing and potential funding sources. The work should also build on and align with the Mature Forests Report being developed in accordance with Motion 16437.

The approaches should promote establishment of a broad mix of native tree species and age classes, including eventual establishment of forests with old growth characteristics in areas prioritized as having high conservation value, and should consider the effect of conservation acquisitions on the viability of the timber resource economy in King County.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council an Old Growth Corridors Strategies report outlining scientific findings, geographies of relevance, and potential strategies for establishing old growth corridors, and the other information outlined above.

- *Timeline:* The Old Growth Corridors Strategies report should be transmitted to the Council by June 1, 2026.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

Action 5: Vashon-Maury Island Coastal Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Response Plan

Properties and infrastructure along the Vashon-Maury Island shoreline are potentially at risk to damage from coastal flooding, tsunamis, landslides, and sea level rise. The extent to which these hazards affect specific locations will vary depending on site-specific factors, including topography, the proximity of infrastructure to the shoreline, and the ability to implement adaptive measures in any given location. Existing studies have not gotten to this level of specificity for these hazards, however. This makes it difficult to determine where and what specific hazard mitigation approaches may be needed and how to sequence that work.

King County will conduct a detailed assessment of the Vashon-Maury Island shoreline inclusive of public and private infrastructure and natural systems to better understand which locations face a higher risk from coastal flooding, tsunamis, landslides, and sea level rise due to site constraints or other factors. Results from the study will inform long-range planning for these hazards and the development of additional actions, policies, development regulations, and/or zoning changes, as needed, to address these risks. These changes would be included in future updates of the Comprehensive Plan and/or King County Code.

The study will draw on available data and studies, as well as a new coastal storm surge model for the King County shoreline being developed by the U.S. Geological Survey (due summer 2024). The County intends to apply for grant funding to complete this work.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council the Vashon-Maury Island Coastal Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Response Plan. If policy and/or code changes are recommended by the Assessment, they should be transmitted to the Council in the next appropriate update to the Comprehensive Plan and/or the King County Code.
- *Timeline:* The Vashon-Maury Island Coastal Hazard Vulnerability Assessment and Response Plan should be transmitted to the Council by December 31, 2026.
- *Lead Agency:* Executive Climate Office.
- *Support Agencies:* Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Department of Local Services, and Public Health - Seattle & King County.

Action 6: Wildfire Risk Assessment

Large wildfires across the Pacific Northwest over the last decade, combined with recent local fires in King County and increasing concern about the impacts of climate change on wildfire potential, have contributed to a growing awareness of the need to prepare for an increased risk of wildfire in or adjacent to the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

The King County Executive issued the county's first Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy in 2022 and has since been working to develop and implement the identified actions. This includes adopting a wildfire risk policy and code changes in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. However, additional information is needed to better understand wildfire risks in unincorporated King County and whether additional regulatory measures are needed to further reduce wildfire risk. Additionally, King County partners with cities on coordinated emergency response. Where the WUI is adjacent to or crosses a border between unincorporated King County and a city, the risk is shared by both jurisdictions.

This work plan action will include completing a wildfire risk assessment for unincorporated King County to better understand where and how communities and critical infrastructure are vulnerable to wildfire; the degree to which current codes and policies address the risk; and what additional actions, policy, development regulation, or zoning changes, if any, may be needed to reduce wildfire risk. Where the WUI is adjacent to or crosses a border between unincorporated King County and a city, King County should partner with the city to share approaches, incorporate local concerns, and support consistency in wildfire risk reduction. Potential additional external partners for the study include King County fire districts, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and utilities. The results of this work will inform future updates of the Comprehensive Plan and/or King County Code. The County intends apply for grant funding to complete this work.

- *Deliverable:* The Executive should file with the Council the Wildfire Risk Assessment report. If policy and/or code changes are recommended by the report, they should be transmitted to the Council in the next appropriate update to the Comprehensive Plan and/or the King County Code.
- *Timeline:* The Wildfire Risk Assessment report should be transmitted to the Council by December 31, 2026.
- *Lead Agency:* Executive Climate Office
- *Support Agencies:* Department of Natural Resources and Parks; King County Office of Emergency Management; Department of Local Services – Permitting Division.

Action 7: Rural Economic Strategies Update

The County adopted the Rural Economic Strategies in Ordinance 17956 in 2014. Ordinance 17956 built on work that had been done in 2008 and 2012. This Work Plan action directs an update to this work, to reflect that changes in the rural economy that have occurred in the last decade, including those due to COVID-19, technological changes, creation of the Department of Local Services, and more.

This action will include:

a. Evaluation and description of implementation of the strategies adopted in Ordinance 17956;
b. Review of how the rural economy has changed since 2014, and is anticipated to change in the next two decades;
c, Policy changes made with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan;
d. Evaluation of the existing strategies at creating a sustainable and vibrant rural economy;
e. Evaluation of the housing needs for permanent and temporary farmworkers and whether the current Code meets those needs;
f. Evaluation of tourism and economic development associated with scenic, historic, and recreational resources along the designated Washington Scenic and Recreational Highways;
g. Evaluation of ways to support unique local businesses, to aid in their marketing and visibility needs;
h. Evaluation of industrial uses in the rural area and natural resource lands, including code changes that: create a definition that describes what an industrial use is; and modify use allowances so that the industrial use allowances are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
i. Recommendation of any changes to strategies, policies, or Code;
j. Potential partners for the action include cities that serve the Rural Area, chambers of commerce, community groups, the Agriculture and Rural Forest Commissions, and the community. Community engagement, at a level of "County and Community work together," will be done as part of this action.

- *Deliverable:* The Executive should file with the Council the Rural Economic Strategies report. If policy and/or code changes are recommended by the report, they should be transmitted to the Council in the next appropriate update to the Comprehensive Plan and/or the King County Code.
- *Timeline:* The Rural Economic Strategies report should be transmitted to the Council by June 30, 2028.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Local Services.
- *Support Agency:* Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

Action 8: Communication Facilities Code Update

The County regulates cellular towers and similar facilities as "minor communication facilities" under K.C.C. Title 21A. The majority of the code relating to communication facilities was written more than two decades ago, with the last substantive updates occurring in 2014. In the intervening years, technology, as well as the federal regulatory landscape, have changed. Work is therefore needed to modernize the County's communication facility regulations. This work should include:

a. Review of how federal regulations, case law, and technologies for communication facilities have changed since the communication facility standards were initially adopted in 1998, and whether additional changes are expected in the coming two decades;
b. Review of how jurisdictions within and adjacent to King County regulate communication facilities; and
c, Recommendation of any changes to the County code to align the code with federal law and with best practices.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council a Communication Facilities Code update report containing the information described above, and, if recommended by the report, an ordinance implementing the recommendations of the report.
- *Timeline:* The Communication Facilities Code update report should be transmitted to the Council by June 30, 2028.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Local Services.

Action 9: Surface Water Management Code Update

The King County Surface Water Design Manual is adopted by public rule every five years, most recently in 2021. The 2021 update did not include updates to the County's surface water management code in K.C.C. Title 9. Prior to adoption of the 2026 Surface Water Design Manual, it is necessary to update K.C.C. Title 9 to ensure consistency between the County's regulations and the Surface Water Design Manual.

This work will be done in two phases:

The first phase will include a full review of K.C.C. Title 9 to ensure that the code reflects current requirements and terminology, and that any changes necessary to align with the 2026 Surface Water Design Manual update are incorporated into the code.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council a proposed ordinance updating K.C.C. Title 9.
- *Timeline:* The proposed ordinance and report should be transmitted to the Council by April 30, 2026.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

The second phase will include a review of the Surface Water Design Manual and associated code provisions in K.C.C. Title 9 for opportunities to streamline regulations to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers and process.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council a report detailing how the surface water design manual and code provisions were evaluated and streamlined, and a proposed ordinance with any recommended changes.
- *Timeline:* The proposed ordinance and report should be transmitted to the Council by December 31, 2029.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

Action 10: Fish Passage Restoration

In March 2024, the King County Auditor's Office released an audit of King County's Fish Passage Restoration program. The audit found that the program's sequencing of low-impact projects before high-impact projects was not in alignment with the County goal of opening the best habitat as quickly as possible, and puts more impactful projects at risk if there are funding or staffing shortages later. The audit also found that the program does not consider the impact of non-county-owned barriers to fish passage when reporting the number of miles of restored habitat, thereby overstating the reported impact of the program. Work is needed to address the issues raised by the Auditor's Office.

This work should include:

a. Development of a strategic plan clarifying the goals and objectives of the Fish Passage Restoration program, in conjunction with staff working on the Clean Water Healthy Habitat initiative, and including a plan to ensure completion of habitat-focused projects if delays occur, costs increased, or funding becomes otherwise constrained and performance measures that accurately reflect program outputs and outcomes for restoring fish passage, including the impact of non-County-owned barriers on program outcomes;
b. A review and update to the Fish Passage Restoration Program's ten-year work plan to ensure it is aligned with County goals and with the goals of the strategic plan developed in accordance with subsection a.;
c. An update to the program's public-facing materials to ensure that they accurately reflect the decision-making considerations and tradeoffs involved in its workplan development and the resulting schedule of projects.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council the strategic plan, the ten-year work plan, and a summary of the changes made to public-facing materials, along with a motion accepting the plans. If policy and/or code changes are recommended by the report, they should be transmitted to the Council in the next appropriate update to the Comprehensive Plan and/or the King County Code.
- *Timeline:* The deliverables should be transmitted to the Council by March 31, 2025.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Natural Resources and Parks.
- *Support Agency:* Department of Local Services.

Action 11: Remove Barriers to Affordable Housing

The policies in Chapter 4, Housing and Human Services, support investment, collaboration, and a variety of tools to address the housing needs of King County's residents. However, nearly one-third of households in King County are currently cost-burdened, meaning that they pay over 30 percent of their income on housing costs.

Recent changes in state law have authorized the use of the Multifamily Housing Tax Exemption program in unincorporated areas. These programs allow local governments to waive property taxes for new construction, conversion, and rehabilitation of multiunit residential buildings with at least four units. Changes to the State Environmental Policy Act also allowed for additional categorical exemptions for residential infill development. In addition to these opportunities, the Housing Needs Assessment in Appendix B also identifies several key barriers to housing development, including:

a. Increased time and risk from applying for a Conditional Use Permit,
b. Delays and increased costs to comply with requirements related to the State Environmental Policy Act, and
c. Permitting timelines and staffing challenges.

This Work Plan Action directs the evaluation of additional tools and strategies for expediting affordable housing development in unincorporated King County, including:

a. Allowing Multifamily Housing Tax Exemption program in unincorporated King County, including an analysis of:
    i. Potential program design that would incentivize affordable units;
    ii. Impacts of a tax exemption, and whether that financial impact is sustainable;
    iii. Potential program administrative needs, including monitoring, oversight, and reporting;
    iv. Ongoing program updates to ensure sufficient incentive to maximize public benefits; and
    v. Public input received during engagement on this action item.
b. Reducing permitting timelines for affordable housing development, including consideration of:
    i. Prioritizing affordable housing projects in permit review;
    ii. Providing dedicated permit review resources for County-funded affordable housing development applications;
    iii. Updating the permit application screening process;
    iv. Making code updates to reduce barriers to affordable housing development;
    v. Implementing new electronic review management software;
    vi. Seeking additional staffing; and
    vii. Seeking grant funding to provide technical assistance to applicants.
c. Reducing or waiving permit application and inspection fees for affordable housing;
d. Developing pre-approved plans for accessory dwelling units;
e. Aligning the King County Code with recent changes to the State Environmental Policy Act, including the categorical exemption for housing development; and
f. Encouraging owners of derelict and unoccupied buildings and vacant land to redevelop their property so that it does not become a health or safety concern for the neighborhood, including consideration of:
    i. Registering vacant foreclosure properties and commercial spaces;
    ii. Developing a vacant building monitoring program; and
    iii. Establishing a temporary caretaker program so that buildings remain occupied until redevelopment.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council an Expediting Affordable Housing report and, if recommended, proposed ordinance(s) implementing the recommendations in the report.
- *Timeline:* The Expediting Affordable Housing report and any implementing ordinances should be transmitted to the Council by December 31, 2027.

- *Lead Agency:* Department of Local Services.
- *Support Agencies:* Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget, and Department of Community and Human Services.

Action 12: Short-Term Rental Regulations

Short-term rentals are regulated by Chapter 64.37 RCW and are defined as a lodging use that is not a hotel or motel or bed and breakfast, in which a dwelling unit, or portion thereof, is offered or provided to a guest by a short-term rental operator for a fee for fewer than thirty consecutive nights. Short-term rental operators may need a business license through the Department of Revenue and are required to pay retail sales tax and B&O tax on rental charges, as well as lodging and convention and trade center taxes, as applicable. Additionally, state law outlines various consumer safety provisions, requires short-term rental platforms to be registered with the state, and requires liability insurance of at least $1 million to be held either by the operator or the rental platform.

Currently, the County does not regulate the short-term lodging industry beyond regulations identified in state law.

This Work Plan Action directs King County to explore whether to adopt regulations beyond state law regulating the short-term lodging tax industry. The report should include:

a. An analysis of how other jurisdictions in the state are regulating the short-term lodging industry;
b. A recommended regulatory framework, including any additional licensing requirements, unit count restrictions, owner occupation requirements, or any other recommended provisions;
c. Potential program administrative needs, including monitoring, oversight, and reporting;
d. An estimate on the impacts of the proposed regulations on the County's short-term lodging tax collection; and
e. Public input received during engagement on this action item.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council a Short-term Rental Regulations report and a proposed ordinance implementing the recommendations in the report.
- *Timeline:* The Short-term Rental Regulations report and ordinance, if recommended, should be filed with the Council by June 30, 2027.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Local Services.
- *Support Agency:* Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget.

Action 13: Vashon-Maury Island Groundwater Protection Special District Overlay

The Vashon-Maury Island Groundwater Protection Special District Overlay, known as SO-140 and codified in K.C.C. 21A.38.150, was adopted in 1997 to limit land uses that have the potential to severely contaminate groundwater supplies and to provide increased areas of permeable surface to allow for infiltration of surface water into ground resources, in light of Vashon-Maury Island's sensitive aquifer. Since the overlay's creation, King County adopted the critical aquifer recharge area (CARA) code in 2005, which includes regulations for areas that have a high susceptibility to ground water contamination. The entirety of the island is governed by this code. A comparative analysis of the overlay with K.C.C. Title 21A found several overlapping regulations and inconsistencies in the mapping of risk levels to groundwater resources. Furthermore, a review of Best Management Practices found limited risk potential in many of the uses restricted by the overlay.

No changes to the mapping were recommended as part of the Executive's proposed 2024 Comprehensive Plan. However, the Executive noted that further work is needed,

including further review of the overlay's boundaries, possible incorporation into the CARA code, and review of the CARA mapping and code.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council a Vashon-Maury Island Groundwater Protection Special District Overlay report and any recommended policy and code changes as part of the 2034 Comprehensive Plan transmittal package.
- *Timeline:* Vashon-Maury Island Groundwater Protection Special District Overlay report and ordinance, if recommended, should be filed with the Council by June 30, 2033.
- *Lead Agency: Department of Local Services.*
- *Support Agency: Department of Natural Resources and Parks.*

Action 14: Vashon-Maury Island Water System Planning / Title 13 Update

Groundwater quality and supply is one of the most important factors in planning for Vashon-Maury Island. With a sole source aquifer that relies exclusively on rainwater to replenish reserves, and provides nearly all drinking water for the island, Vashon-Maury Island is one of four areas in unincorporated King County declared a Critical Water Supply Area, a designation that triggers additional review and regulation by both King County and the Washington State Department of Ecology. The island is served by 23 Group A water purveyors, as well as over 130 smaller, privately managed Group B systems and over 1,000 private, exempt wells. King County Water District 19 is the largest purveyor on the island and encompasses the Vashon Rural Town.

To better plan for the long-term resiliency of Vashon-Maury Island's water resources and ensure equitable access to water resources, the County should update K.C.C. Title 13 to recognize the climate resilience element required by RCW 43.20.310 and require the following to be included as part of water system plans submitted to the County for approval:

a. Analysis of the anticipated impacts of climate change on Vashon-Maury Island's water supply, and actions that can be taken in the short- and long-term to increase the resilience of water systems to anticipated impacts and to mitigate associated risks to public health and safety;
b. Actions that can be taken to further encourage the use of greywater systems on the island and remove barriers to installation of such systems;
c. Analysis, using the best available scientific techniques, of whether there is sufficient groundwater capacity to support creation of additional water shares;
d. Methods to prioritize any additional water shares for culturally welcoming affordable housing; and
e. Information about the water district's efforts to collaborate with Group B water systems that share the same aquifer.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council proposed code changes to K.C.C. Title 13.
- *Timeline:* The proposed ordinance should be filed with the Council by June 30, 2026.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Local Services.
- *Support Agency:* Utilities Technical Review Committee.

Action 15: Legacy Business Program

Small businesses face many challenges, such as increased competition, technological changes, shifting consumer preferences, narrow profit margins, exposure to rent increases, encroaching gentrification, and changing labor costs. Because many of these businesses have also been family-owned for generations, they often must also grapple with the challenges of succession planning, as younger family members may gravitate

toward other career paths. A legacy business program could foster economic empowerment by encouraging patronage of participating legacy businesses.
The County will evaluate the needs of legacy businesses and ways to reduce displacement of such businesses. This work will include, analyzing existing legacy business programs, defining a legacy business (which at a minimum should include long-standing businesses that have cultural and historical significance in a community), and setting the maximum size of the business) through a community-selected community advisory committee, describing legacy businesses in unincorporated King County, and evaluating what types of assistance legacy businesses need. This could include, but is not limited to, technical assistance, financial assistance, marketing assistance, and/or a program to help legacy businesses navigate government bureaucracy.

- *Deliverables:* The Executive should file with the Council the report and, if recommended by the report, a proposed ordinance implementing the recommendations outlined in the report.
- *Timeline:* The deliverables should be transmitted to the Council by September 31, 2027.
- *Lead Agency:* Department of Local Services.

VI. Incentives

To ensure that the vision, goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan become a reality, it will require adjusting policy and budget priorities by King County government. It will require individuals to reconsider their daily decisions and choices relating to the management or development of their lands. The decisions and choices of large scale public/private partnerships during the development of major projects will be critical factors contributing to the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Incentives, such as the Transfer of Development Rights Program, must encourage the types of growth and development patterns desired by King County and its residents.

I-401 **King County should develop incentives for the Urban Growth Area that encourage the development industry to provide a broad range of housing affordable to all income levels and commercial space, including areas of the county with the most disparate outcomes in health, economic prosperity, and housing conditions, where residents may be at high risk of displacement. Incentives could include:**

a. Density bonuses and/or other regulatory flexibilities for inclusionary housing;

b. Joint development opportunities at County-owned or operated facilities, utilization of air rights on County-owned or operated facilities, and the establishment of transit-supportive design guidelines and regulations; and

c. County funding for public urban amenities, including transportation, parks, open space, cultural, and other facilities, for cities participating in the King County Transfer of Development Rights Program.


BOOKS
A room without books is like a body without a soul -Cicero
So many books, so little time -Zappa

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

A

Active Recreation
Active recreation refers to sites characterized by organized, scheduled activities, and/or a variety of recreation uses, such as highly developed athletic field complexes with lights and extensive support facilities.

Active Transportation
Active transportation means pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian travel and also includes, but is not limited to, the use of wheelchairs and personal assistive mobility devices powered by electricity that are used by persons with physical impairments, skateboards and scooters, and micromobility devices such as motorized foot scooters and electric assisted bicycles. Any moped, motorcycle, or, except as otherwise provided for in this definition, personal assistive mobility device, are considered motorized transportation.

Adaptive management
Adaptive management means modifying management actions based on ongoing monitoring and data analysis.

Agricultural activities
Except for the purposes of Chapter 6, Shorelines, agricultural activities means those agricultural uses and practices that pertain directly to the commercial production of agricultural products, including, but not limited to:

a. Tilling, discing, planting, seeding, fertilization, composting, and other soil amendments and harvesting;
b. Grazing, animal mortality management, and on-site animal waste storage, disposal, and processing;
c. Soil conservation practices including dust control, rotating and changing agricultural crops, and allowing agricultural lands to lie fallow under local, state or federal conservation programs;
d. Maintenance of farm and stock ponds, agricultural drainage, irrigation systems canals and flood control facilities;
e. Normal maintenance, operation and repair of existing serviceable equipment, structures, facilities or improved areas, including, but not limited to, fencing, farm access roads and parking; and
f. Processing, promotion, sale, storage, packaging and distribution.

(See Chapter 6, Shorelines, for agricultural activities in the shoreline jurisdiction.)

Agricultural Production Districts
The Growth Management Act requires cities and counties to designate, where appropriate, agricultural lands that are not characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products. The comprehensive plan designates Agricultural Production Districts in accordance with this requirement. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands.)

Agricultural products
Agricultural products include, but are not limited to: horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, and apiary products; livestock, livestock products, and other animal products including, but not limited to, upland finfish, dairy products, meat, poultry, and eggs; feed or forage for livestock; Christmas trees; and hybrid cottonwood and similar hardwood trees grown as crops and harvested within 20 years of planting.

Annexation
Annexation is the process of adding or incorporating an area into a city's jurisdiction.

Applicant
An applicant is a property owner, a public agency or a public or private utility that owns a right-of-way or other easement or has been adjudicated the right to such an easement under Revised Code of Washington 8.08.040, or any person or entity designated or named in writing by the property or easement owner to be the applicant, in an application for a development proposal, permit, or approval.

Area Median Income
Area median income is the midpoint income for King County, where half of the households earn more than the median, and half of the households earn less, as established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development adjusted for household size.

Area Zoning and Land Use Study
An area zoning and land use study is a study that reviews the land use designations and zoning classifications for a specified set of properties. Area zoning and land use studies are typically focused on a specific set of possible land use and zoning changes, and do not look at the larger range of issues that a subarea plan would include. Area zoning and land use studies consider specific potential changes to land use or zoning, or both, and analyze such requests based on surrounding land use and zoning, current infrastructure and potential future needs, and consistency with the King County Comprehensive Plan, Countywide Planning Policies, and the Growth Management Act.

Arterial Functional Classification
Arterial functional classification is the categorization of roadways based on their function. The degree to which a road serves movement of traffic or access to adjacent properties is the basis for its classification. Principal arterials provide for movement across large areas, serving predominantly "through traffic." Minor arterials generally serve smaller areas than principal arterials and provide greater access to abutting properties. Collector arterials serve smaller areas by "collecting" traffic from local roads and abutting properties and funneling it to the arterial network.

Asset Poverty
Asset poverty is a socioeconomic condition that describes a person or household's lack of wealth-building property, possessions, or financial holdings. It is a broader concept than poverty, which is traditionally defined based on income or wages, and can measure or describe stability or precarity amid unexpected life events.

B

Biodiversity
Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is the variety of living organisms considered at all levels, from genetic diversity through species, to higher taxonomic levels, and includes the variety of habitats, ecosystems, and landscapes in which the species are found.

Brownfields
Brownfields are defined as vacant or underdeveloped industrial/commercial sites with real or perceived contamination.

Buffer
A buffer, when referring to critical areas, is a designated area adjacent and contiguous to a critical area that is intended to protect the functions and values of the critical area and reduce impacts from adjacent land uses.

C

Capital Improvement Program
The adopted Capital Improvement Program budget allocates funds from various revenue sources to improve cultural and recreational opportunities for King County residents, build needed transportation facilities, protect the County's investment in existing buildings, protect the health of residents, enhance the management of natural resources, and provide necessary capital resources for the law, safety, and criminal legal system.

Channel Migration Zone
Channel migration zones are those areas along a river channel within which the channel can be reasonably predicted, based on best available science, to migrate over time as a result of natural and normally occurring hydrological and related processes when considered with the characteristics of the river and its surroundings. In areas located in King County's shoreline jurisdiction, the channel migration zone includes areas shown on King County's Channel Migration zone maps, including both the severe channel migration hazard area and the moderate channel migration hazard area, and areas not shown on King County's Channel Migration Zone maps but located within the floodplain.

Circular Economy
Circular economy means a system that keeps products and materials in a cycle of use for as long as possible, thereby lessening the need to extract virgin materials, like trees, metals, and oil, from the earth. Actions that promote a circular economy include recycling, reusing, repairing, and reducing.

Cities
For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the term “cities” includes incorporated towns.

Cities in the Rural Area
Cities in the Rural Area are incorporated areas substantively surrounded by the Rural Area, and whose local governments are involved in the region's planning processes on an equal legal basis with Seattle, Bellevue, and the other King County cities. The Cities in the Rural Area are Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall, Enumclaw, North Bend, Skykomish, and Snoqualmie. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands)

Clearing
Clearing includes cutting, killing, grubbing, or removing vegetation or other organic plant material by physical, mechanical, chemical, or any other similar means. For the purpose of this definition, cutting means the severing of the main trunk or stem of woody vegetation at any point.

Clustering
Clustering means development of a subdivision at the existing zoned density that reduces the size of individual lots and creates permanent open space for the preservation of critical areas or resource land for forestry or agriculture.

Community Business Centers
These are primarily retail developments designed to serve a nearby market area of 15,000 to 40,000 people. (See Chapter 2, Urban Communities.)

Community-Driven Development
Community-driven development includes equitable development actions that advance the following principles:

a. advances economic mobility and opportunity for residents;
b. prevents displacement;
c. builds upon and protects local cultural assets that anchor communities;
d. supports organizational capacity building;
e. promotes transportation mobility and connectivity; and
f. enables equitable access for all communities.

Community Service Areas
Community Services Areas refers to the geographic framework that organizes the unincorporated areas of King County into seven territories for the purposes of the Community Service Area Program. (See Chapter 11, Subarea Planning.)

Community Service Areas Program
The Community Service Areas Program is housed in the Department of Local Services. This program promotes robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities in unincorporated King County to take an active role in County decision-making related to programs, services, and capital projects within each Community Service Area.

Comprehensive Plan
The Growth Management Act requires certain cities and counties of the state to adopt comprehensive land use plans. A comprehensive plan is a generalized, coordinated land use policy statement of the governing body of a county or city that is adopted pursuant to the Growth Management Act. A comprehensive plan consists of a map or maps; descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the comprehensive plan; and a plan, scheme, or design for land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, the rural area, natural resource lands, and transportation. Optional components include elements relating to conservation, solar energy, recreation, and subarea plans.

Congestion Pricing
Congestion pricing is a strategy to manage traffic congestion by charging drivers a fee for using designated lanes or roadways during congested periods. Congestion pricing encourages drivers to use other modes of transportation, other routes, or other travel times. By removing a fraction of vehicles from the roadway during peak travel times, the transportation system operates more efficiently.

Coordinated Water System Plans
Four Critical Water Supply Service Areas have been designated in King County in accordance with the Public Water System Coordinated Act of 1977 (Chapter 70A.100 Revised Code of Washington): East King County, Skyway, South King County, and Vashon Island. The Coordinated Water System Plan for each area provides an assessment of water supply and a program to meet future demand. Planning areas, within which a water purveyor is obligated to provide service consistent with County land use plans and regulations, were assigned for major purveyors.

Countywide Planning Policies

The Countywide Planning Policies create a shared and consistent framework for growth management planning for all jurisdictions in King County in accordance with RCW 36.70A.210, which requires the legislative authority of a county to adopt a countywide planning policy in cooperation with cities located in the county. The comprehensive plan for King County and the comprehensive plans for cities and towns in King County are developed from the framework that the Countywide Planning Policies establish. The Growth Management Planning Council is the formal body charged with developing the Countywide Planning Policies. (See Chapter 1, Regional Growth Management Planning.)

Creative Economy

Creative economy means industries, artists, educators, entrepreneurs, vendors, policymakers, and funders that produce and distribute creativity- and artistic-based goods and services.

Critical Areas

Any area that is subject to natural hazards or a land feature that supports unique, fragile, or valuable natural resources including fish, wildlife, or other organisms or their habitats or such resources that carry, hold, or purify water in their natural state. "Critical area" includes the following areas:

a. Critical aquifer recharge areas;
b. Frequently flooded areas, regulated as Flood Hazard Areas;
    1. Floodplain;
    2. Special flood hazard area, as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps;
    3. Zero-rise flood fringe;
    4. Zero-rise floodway;
    5. FEMA floodway; and
    6. Channel migration zones;
c. Fish and wildlife habitat conversation areas:
    1. Aquatic areas;
    2. Riparian areas;
    3. Wildlife habitat conservation areas; and
    4. Wildlife habitat networks;
d. Geologically hazardous areas:
    1. Alluvial fan hazard areas;
    2. Channel migration zones;
    3. Coal mine hazard areas;
    4. Erosion hazard areas;
    5. Landslide hazard areas;
    6. Seismic hazard areas;
    7. Steep slope hazard areas;
    8. Tsunami hazard area; and
    9. Volcanic hazard areas; and
e. Wetlands.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat includes specific areas that possess physical or biological features, which are essential to the conservation of a listed species.

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include performing and visual arts events, programs, and facilities; public art; heritage events, programs, and facilities; Indian tribal celebrations and cultural events; and historic properties.

Cumulative Impacts
Cumulative impacts, for the purposes of Chapter 6, Shorelines, are the sum total of the current, plus any reasonably foreseeable future, disturbances to ecological functions, which can be impacted by both development subject to shoreline permits and by development that is not subject to permits.

D

Debris Flow
Debris flow means a moving mass of rock fragments, soil, and mud, with more than half of the particles being larger than sand size.

Density
Density is the quantity of structures or buildings per unit area. Density is typically expressed as housing units per acre or square mile.

Density Incentives/Bonuses
Density incentives, or density bonuses, are programs that allow more dwelling units than the number permitted on a site by zoning (sometimes referred to as "base density") in exchange for public benefits provided by the developer.

Development
For purposes of the shoreline master program, development means a use consisting of the construction or exterior alteration of structures; dredging; drilling; dumping; filling; removing sand, gravel, or minerals; bulkheading; driving of piling; placing of obstructions; or any project of a permanent or temporary nature which interferes with the normal public use of the surface of the waters overlying lands subject to any state of water level.

Development regulations
Development regulations means the controls placed on development or land uses by a county or city, including, but not limited to: zoning ordinances, critical areas ordinances, all portions of a shoreline master program other than goals and policies approved or adopted under Chapter 90.58 Revised Code of Washington, subdivision ordinances, and binding site plan ordinances together with any amendments thereto.

Displacement
Displacement means the involuntary relocation of current residents or businesses from their current or previous home, neighborhood, or community. This is a different phenomenon than when property owners voluntarily sell their interests to capture an increase in value. Physical displacement is the result of eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property, or the expiration of covenants on rent- or income-restricted housing. Economic displacement occurs when residents and businesses can no longer afford escalating costs. Cultural or ethnic displacement occurs when people choose to move because their neighbors and culturally related businesses have left the area.

Docket
A list of suggested changes to a comprehensive plan or development regulations maintained by the department.

Docket Process, The
The docket process specifies that dockets are not just to note deficiencies, but also to suggest changes and make written comments. These suggested changes are reviewed by the County and made available for review by the public. Information provided to the public includes the County's response.

Drainage Basin
A drainage basin, like a watershed, is an area that drains to a common outlet or an identifiable water body such as a river, stream, lake, or wetland. In King County, 72 drainage basins are contained within six major watersheds. These drainage basins in turn contain numerous individual water bodies with small drainages.

Dwelling unit
A dwelling unit consists of one or more rooms designed for occupancy by a person or household for living and sleeping purposes, containing kitchen facilities and rooms with internal accessibility, for use solely by the dwelling's occupants. Dwelling units include studio apartments, factory-built housing, and manufactured and mobile homes.

E

Ecological Function
An ecological function refers to physical, chemical, and biological processes or attributes at some level of biological organization. For example, the ecological functions of wetlands include food chain support, water quality maintenance, flood storage, and wildlife habitat.

Ecoregions
Ecoregions are land areas that contain a geographically unique set of species, communities, and environmental conditions.

Ecosystem
Ecosystem means the complex of a community of organisms and its environment functioning as an ecological unit.

Ecosystem-wide processes
Ecosystem-wide processes means the suite of naturally occurring physical and geologic processes of erosion, transport, and deposition; and specific chemical processes that shape landforms within a specific shoreline ecosystem and determine both the types of habitat and the associated ecological functions.

Endangered Species
Endangered species means any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range and which has been designated as such in regulations issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the state of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Endangered Species Act
The Endangered Species Act is an act that was adopted by the U.S. Congress in 1973 to provide a means to conserve ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend and to provide a program for the conservation for such endangered and threatened species.

Enhancement
For the purposes of critical area regulations, enhancement means an action that improves the processes, structures, and functions of ecosystems and habitats associated with critical areas or their buffers. (See Chapter 5, Environment).

Equitable Development
Equitable development refers to public and private investments, programs, and policies in communities characterized by high levels of chronic and recent displacement, a history of racially driven underinvestment, and populations impacted by structural racism and discrimination. This work is conducted in partnership with community members to meet the needs of the community and reduce disparities, taking into account history and current conditions, so that quality-of-life outcomes such as access to quality education, living-wage employment, healthy environment, affordable housing, and transportation are equitably distributed for the people currently living and working there, as well as for new people moving into the community.

Equitable Neighborhood
An equitable neighborhood is a neighborhood where people are healthy, safe, culturally connected, and can access resources to meet their needs. All members of the community, regardless of background, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, or abilities, can thrive in equitable neighborhoods, engage with local decisionmakers to inform how their community is served, and access opportunities such as affordable housing or homeownership, healthcare, education, and employment.

Equity Impact Review
An equity impact review is a process to identify, evaluate, and communicate the potential impact - both positive and negative - of a policy or program on equity using tools from the King County Office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice.

F

Feasible
Feasible means, for the purpose of the Shoreline Master Program, that an action, such as a development project, mitigation, or preservation requirement, meets all of the following conditions:

a. The action can be accomplished with technologies and methods that have been used in the past in similar circumstances, or studies or tests have demonstrated in similar circumstances that such approaches are currently available and likely to achieve the intended results;

b. The action provides a reasonable likelihood of achieving its intended purpose; and

c. The action does not physically preclude achieving the project's primary intended legal use.

In cases where these guidelines require certain actions unless they are infeasible, the burden of proving infeasibility is on the applicant. In determining an action's infeasibility, the reviewing agency may weigh the action's relative public costs and public benefits, considered in the short- and long-term timeframes.

FEMA floodway
A FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) floodway is the channel of the stream or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height at any point. The FEMA floodway is delineated on the Flood Insurance Rate Map, as well as on, but not limited to, King County Surface Water Design Manual major floodplain or floodway studies.

Fill
For the purposes of the Chapter 6, Shorelines, Fill means the addition of soil, sand, rock, gravel, sediment, earth retaining structure, or other material to an area waterward of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM), in wetlands, or on shorelands in a manner that raises the elevation or creates dry land.

Floodplain
Floodplain is the total area subject to inundation by the 100-year flood.

Forest practice
Forest practice is any forest practice as defined in Revised Code of Washington 76.09.020.

Forest Production Districts
The Growth Management Act requires cities and counties to designate, where appropriate, forest lands that are not characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the commercial production of timber. The Comprehensive Plan designates Forest Production Districts where the primary use should be commercial forestry. Lands within the Forest Production District remain in large parcels and in ownership conducive to forestry. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands).

Frontline Communities
Frontline communities are those that are disproportionately impacted by climate change due to existing and historical racial, social, environmental, and economic inequities, and who have limited resources and/or capacity to adapt. These populations often experience the earliest and most acute impacts of climate change, but whose experiences afford unique strengths and insights into climate resilience strategies and practices. Frontline communities include Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities; immigrants; refugees; households at or below 80 percent of area median income; communities experiencing disproportionate pollution exposure; women and gender non-conforming people; LGBTQIA+ people; people who live and/or work outside; those with existing health issues; people speaking languages other than English; and other climate-vulnerable groups.

Fully Contained Community
A fully contained community is a site-specific development project consisting of conceptual site plan(s), development standards, processing and other elements.

Functional Classification
See "Arterial Functional Classification"

Functional Planning
Functional plans are detailed King County plans for facilities and services and action plans and programs for other governmental activities. Some functional plans are operational or programmatic, which means they guide daily management decisions. Others include specific details of facility design and location and must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

G

Geotechnical Report or Geotechnical Analysis
Geotechnical report or geotechnical analysis means a scientific study or evaluation conducted by a qualified expert that includes: a description of the ground and surface hydrology and geology; the affected land form and its susceptibility to mass wasting, erosion, and other geologic hazards or processes; conclusions and recommendations regarding the effect of the proposed development on geologic conditions; the adequacy of the site to be developed; the impacts of the proposed development; alternative approaches to the proposed development; and measures to mitigate potential site-specific and cumulative geological and hydrological impacts of the proposed development, including the potential adverse impacts to adjacent and down-current properties. Geotechnical reports shall conform to accepted technical standards and must be prepared by qualified professional engineers or geologists who have professional expertise about the regional and local shoreline geology and processes.

Grading
Grading is any excavation, filling, or removal of the duff layer or any combination thereof.

Green Jobs
Living wage positions providing environmental benefits (such as clean energy deployment) in high-demand industry sectors such as construction, manufacturing, transportation, and professional services.

Groundwater Management Plans
King County has five Groundwater Management Areas for which residents and technical experts are addressing groundwater issues. For each Groundwater Management Area, a Groundwater Management Plan has been developed per Chapter 173-100 Washington Administrative Code (Chapter 90.44 Revised Code of Washington). Each Groundwater Management Plan describes the area's groundwater resource, contains a detailed exploration of groundwater protection issues, and proposes solutions to perceived threats. These plans identify Sensitive Aquifer Areas to receive a special level of protection.

Growth Management Act
In 1990 and 1991, the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Act calls for urban counties and cities in the state to develop comprehensive plans to guide growth management decisions. Amendments to the Act in 1991 require that counties, working with the cities within their boundaries, develop Countywide Planning Policies to provide a common vision of the future to serve as the framework for all comprehensive plans throughout the county. (See Chapter 1, Regional Growth Management Planning)

Growth Management Planning Council
The Growth Management Planning Council, which was established by an interlocal agreement, is a council of elected officials from Seattle, Bellevue, other King County cities, special purpose districts, the Port of Seattle, and King County. The Growth Management Planning Council is responsible for the preparation and recommendation of the Countywide Planning Policies to the Metropolitan King County Council, which then adopts the policies and sends them to the cities for ratification.

Growth Target
The Growth Management Act and the Countywide Planning Policies require King County and the cities in the county to plan for a 20-year population and employment growth target for urban areas in each jurisdiction, based on designation of the Urban Growth Area, Urban Centers, and the criteria of the Countywide Planning Policies. (See Chapter 2, Urban Communities)

H

Habitat
Habitat is the area where wildlife normally lives and grows. Habitat components include food, water, cover (security, breeding, thermal) and space.

Habitat Network
Habitat network is a system of fish and wildlife habitat that link large habitat blocks and open spaces with critical areas and their buffers, priority habitats, trails, parks, and other areas that provide for fish and wildlife through their life cycles and alleviate habitat fragmentation.

Healthy Community
Healthy community (communities) means a community that makes it easy for people to live healthy lives by encouraging a land use pattern to shorten distances between housing, workplaces, schools, and recreation so people can walk or bike more easily to them; incorporating complete pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including sidewalks and bike paths that are safely removed from vehicle traffic; providing opportunities for people to be physically active and socially engaged as part of their daily routine; including access to open space and parks; allowing people, if they choose, to age in place and remain in their community as their lifestyle changes or they face changing physical capabilities; and ensuring access to affordable and healthy food, especially fruits and vegetables.

Healthy Housing
Healthy housing means housing that is sustainable and protects all residents from exposure to harmful substances and environments, reduces the risk of injury, provides opportunities for safe and convenient daily physical activity, and ensures access to healthy food and social connectivity.

Historic Properties
Historic properties include historic buildings, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes, prehistoric and historic archaeological resources, and traditional cultural places.

Historic Property, Significant
Significant historic properties are those properties that meet the criteria for designation as County landmarks and/or listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historically Underrepresented
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; households at or below 80 percent of area median income; people speaking languages other than English; women and gender nonconforming individuals; LGBTQIA+ people, and people with special housing needs.

Historically Underinvested
Historically underinvested groups or populations are communities that have experienced a long-term pattern of lacking investment in public services and amenities relative to neighboring communities or an expected standard. Historically underinvested groups often include Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities; immigrants; refugees; households at or below 80 percent of area median income; people speaking languages other than English; women and gender nonconforming individuals; LGBTQIA+ people; and people with special housing needs.

Housing Needs
Housing needs refers to the number of housing units needed in unincorporated King County by the end of the planning period to ensure sufficient and attainable housing for all households.

I

Impervious surface
Impervious surface means a nonvertical surface artificially covered or hardened so as to prevent or impede the percolation of water into the soil mantle at natural infiltration rates including, but are not limited to, roofs, swimming pools and areas that are paved, graveled, or made of packed or oiled earthen materials such as roads, walkways, or parking areas. "Impervious surface" does not include landscaping and surface water flow control and water quality treatment facilities.

Income, Extremely Low-
Extremely low-income means households earning less than or equal to 30 percent of area median income for their household size.

Income, Low-
Low-income means households earning greater than 50 percent to less than or equal to 80 percent of area median income for their household size.

Income, Moderate-
Moderate-income means households earning greater than 80 percent to less than or equal to 120 percent of area median income for their household size.

Income, Very Low-
Very low-income means households earning greater than 30 percent to less than or equal to 50 percent of area median income for their household size.

Incorporated Areas
Incorporated areas are those areas within a city or a city's jurisdiction. King County contains the entirety of 35 incorporated cities and parts of four others.

Infill
Infill means development or redevelopment on small properties or groups of properties within existing built -up areas.

J

K

L

Landfill
Landfill is a disposal site or part of a site at which refuse is deposited.

Landslide Hazard Areas
An area subject to severe risk of landslide, such as:

a. An area with a combination of:
   1. Slopes steeper than fifteen percent of inclination;
   2. Impermeable soils, such as silt and clay, frequently interbedded with granular soils, such as sand and gravel; and
   3. Springs or ground water seepage;
b. An area that has shown movement during the Holocene epoch, which is from ten thousand years ago to the present, or that is underlain by mass wastage debris from that epoch;
c. Any area potentially unstable as a result of rapid stream incision, stream bank erosion or undercutting by wave action;
d. An area that shows evidence of or is at risk from snow avalanches; or
e. An area located on an alluvial fan, presently or potentially subject to inundation by debris flows or deposition of stream-transported sediments.

Land Use Map
The land use map adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan designates the general location and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open spaces, public utilities, public facilities, and other land uses as required by the Growth Management Act. A representation of the Land Use Map is included at the end of Chapter 1, Regional Growth Management Planning.

Level of Service – Transportation
Transportation level of service is a qualitative measure describing the operational conditions of the transportation system as experienced by travelers.

LGBTQIA+
LGBTQIA+ means people that are Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus. As an evolving acronym, the plus symbol includes all other identities on the gender and sexuality spectrum not included already.

Long-term commercial significance
Long-term commercial significance is defined in Washington Administrative Code 365-190-030 to include the growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production, in consideration with the land's proximity to population areas, and the possibility of more intense uses of land. Long-term commercial significance means the land is capable of producing the specified natural resources at commercially sustainable levels for at least a twenty-year planning period, if adequately conserved. Designated mineral resource lands of long-term commercial significance may have alternative post-mining land uses, as provided by the Surface Mining Reclamation Act, comprehensive plan and development regulations, or other laws.

Low Impact Development
Low impact development is an approach to land development that works to match a site's natural hydrologic function by protecting native vegetation and soils, reducing impervious surface and managing stormwater at the source.

M

May
To guide King County, the use of the terms "shall," "should," and "may" in policies determine the level of discretion the County can exercise in making future and specific land use, budget, development regulation, and other decisions. "May" in a policy means that the action is allowed and/or it is in the County's interest to carry out the policy, but the County has total discretion in making decisions.

Middle Housing
Middle housing includes moderately scaled multiunit attached or detached housing types that are compatible in residential areas developed with predominantly single detached residences. Middle housing typically includes more housing units than single detached developments, but less than large apartment buildings. These housing types typically include, but are not limited to, duplexes, houseplexes, townhouses, courtyard buildings, cottage houses, and live-work buildings.

Middle-Wage Jobs
Jobs that can support a household or family without significant educational requirements. Given the barriers in access throughout the educational, banking, and other institutional systems, these middle-wage jobs provide key avenues for financial self-sufficiency and wealth building and play a unique role in advancing equity. Jobs in this range predominate in more locally owned, smaller- and medium-sized businesses and manufacturers, such as accountants, machinists, or technicians.

Mineral Resource Sites
The Growth Management Act requires cities and counties to designate, where appropriate, mineral resource lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the extraction of minerals. The comprehensive plan designates as Mineral Resource Sites existing, approved mineral extraction sites, and also designates as Potential Surface Mineral Resource Sites properties on which King County expects some future mines may be located. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands)

Mixed-Use
Mixed-use refers to a development with combined commercial and residential uses.

Multiunit Housing
Multiunit housing structures are those with more than one unit. Multiunit housing includes middle housing, townhouses, apartments, and condominiums.

Must
See definition for "shall"

N

Natural Area
Natural areas are properties or tracts whose primary purpose is to conserve and restore ecological value. They may not be completely natural and undisturbed but may be important in preserving rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological sites, or features of scientific, traditional, cultural, or educational value. These sites may allow public use in was that avoid and minimize harm to the ecological resources of the site to the maximum extent feasible.

Natural Resource Lands
Natural Resource Lands means lands designated under the Growth Management Act as 1) agricultural lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products; 2) forest lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of timber; or 3) mineral resource lands that have long-term significance for the extraction of minerals. This designation includes Agricultural Production Districts, Forest Production Districts, and Mineral Resource Sites. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands)

Neighborhood Business Centers
Neighborhood Business Centers are shopping areas that offer convenience goods and services to local residents. They primarily contain retail stores and offices. (See Chapter 2, Urban Communities)

Nonpoint Source Pollution
Nonpoint source pollution is pollution that enters any waters of the state from any dispersed land-based or water-based activities, including but not limited to atmosphere disposition, surface water runoff from agricultural lands, urban areas, or forest lands, subsurface or underground sources, or discharges from boats or marine vessels.

O

Open Space System, King County
King County's Open Space System includes regional parks and recreation amenities, natural areas, forests, regional and backcountry trails, and local parks in unincorporated areas. The system provides benefits to county residents including recreation, conservation of natural and working lands, flood hazard management, wildlife habitat, and connection of critical areas. (See Chapter 7, Parks, Open Space, & Cultural Resources)

Opportunity Area
An opportunity area is a location with high-quality schools, jobs, transit, access to parks, open space, clean air, water, and soil, and other key determinants of social, economic, and physical wellbeing.

P

Particulate Matter
Particulate matter is solid or aerosol particles dispersed in the air including dust, soot, and oil. The major sources are industrial activities, fugitive road dust, motor vehicle emissions, and wood smoke.

Passive Recreation
Passive recreation is characterized by low-impact, individually oriented activities such as informal play, hiking, walking, jogging, horseback riding, and biking. Capital improvements are generally minimal, such as picnic tables, park furniture, signage, grass fields or meadows, or backcountry trails.

Potential Annexation Area
A Potential Annexation Area is an area in unincorporated King County adjacent to a city that is expected to annex to the city and to which that city will be expected to provide services and utilities within the next two decades. (See Chapter 2, Urban Communities)

Precautionary Action

Precautionary action, also referred to as the "no risk approach," means in such instances where an absence of valid scientific information or incomplete scientific information relating to the county's critical areas, leading to uncertainty about whether development and land uses could lead to harm of critical areas or uncertainty about the risk to critical area function, such development and land use activities are strictly limited until the uncertainty is sufficiently resolved.

Preserve/Preservation

Preserve/preservation, as used in Chapter 2, Urban Communities, and Chapter 4, Housing & Human Services, regarding affordable housing, means the process of protecting the availability of affordable housing, especially publicly assisted affordable housing, for households at or below 120 percent of area median income when transitions from current assistance programs or affordable housing uses are planned. Preservation may occur through acquisition of the housing by a nonprofit or public agency or through funding mechanisms that include a covenant or similar legal agreement requiring that the units in the property remain affordable to a designated household income level for an extended period of time, such as 15 years, 30 years, or 50 years. (See "Rehabilitate")

Priority habitat

Priority habitat means a habitat type with unique or significant value to one or more species. An area classified and mapped as priority habitat must have one or more of the following attributes:

- Comparatively high fish or wildlife density;
- Comparatively high fish or wildlife species diversity;
- Fish spawning habitat;
- Important wildlife habitat;
- Important fish or wildlife seasonal range;
- Important fish or wildlife movement corridor;
- Rearing and foraging habitat;
- Important marine mammal haul-out;
- Refugia habitat;
- Limited availability;
- High vulnerability to habitat alteration;
- Unique or dependent species; or
- Shellfish bed.

A priority habitat may be described by a unique vegetation type or by a dominant plant species that is of primary importance to fish and wildlife (such as oak woodlands or eelgrass meadows). A priority habitat may also be described by a successional stage (such as old growth and mature forests). Alternatively, a priority habitat may consist of a specific habitat element (such as a consolidated marine/estuarine shoreline, talus slopes, caves, snags) of key value to fish and wildlife. A priority habitat may contain priority and/or nonpriority fish and wildlife. [Washington Administrative Code 173-26-020]

Priority Species

Priority species means species requiring protective measures and/or management guidelines to ensure their persistence at genetically viable population levels. Priority species are those that meet any of the criteria listed below.

a. Criterion 1. State-listed or state-proposed species. State-listed species are those native fish and wildlife species legally designated as endangered (Washington Administrative Code 220-610-010), threatened (Washington Administrative Code 220-200-100), or sensitive (Washington Administrative Code 220-200-100). State-proposed species are those fish and wildlife species that will be reviewed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for possible listing as endangered, threatened, or sensitive according to the process and criteria defined in Washington Administrative Code 220-610-110.

b. Criterion 2. Vulnerable aggregations. Vulnerable aggregations include those species or groups of animals susceptible to significant population declines, within a specific area or statewide, by virtue of their inclination to congregate. Examples include heron colonies, seabird concentrations, and marine mammal congregations.

c. Criterion 3. Species of recreational, commercial, and/or Indian tribal importance. Native and nonnative fish, shellfish, and wildlife species of recreational or commercial importance and recognized species used for tribal ceremonial and subsistence purposes that are vulnerable to habitat loss or degradation.

d. Criterion 4. Species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act as either proposed, threatened, or endangered.

Public Benefit Rating System

The Public Benefit Rating System is a current use taxation program whereby property taxes are reduced by an amount determined by a scoring system related to the numbers and quality of open space resources located on all or portions of the property.

Public Review Draft

A Public Review Draft is a draft of Executive proposed Comprehensive Plan updates, including proposed subarea plans, made available to the public for review and comment. A Public Review Draft is published prior to transmittal of proposed Comprehensive Plan updates to the Council to provide the public an opportunity to record comments before the Executive finalizes the recommended updates.

Puget Sound

Puget Sound is an estuary—a semienclosed, glacial fjord where salt water from the ocean is mixed with fresh water. Puget Sound is bordered by about 1,300 miles of shoreline with a mix of beaches, bluffs, deltas, mudflats, kelp forests and eelgrass meadows. Approximately 100 miles of this saltwater shoreline lie within King County. King County's immediate responsibilities include those portions of Puget Sound which lie within the county, roughly between Point Wells to the north and Dumas Bay to the south. King County shares responsibility for the health of the main basin of Puget Sound with its neighbors—Pierce County, Kitsap County, and Snohomish County.

Puget Sound Regional Council

The Puget Sound Regional Council is the designated metropolitan planning organization for the four-county region that includes King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties, and is responsible for regional growth management and transportation planning. The Puget Sound Regional Council's General Assembly includes mayors, county executives, and council commission members from the four counties, as well as representatives from local Indian tribes, ports, transit agencies, the State Department of Transportation, and Transportation Commission. The Puget Sound Regional Council prepared Multicounty Planning Policies for the four -county region.

Q

R

Rare Ecosystems, Habitats, and Species

Rare ecosystems, habitats, and species are those that are few in number or are poorly represented in an area. Rare species often lack the capability to resist changes in environmental conditions or lack the resilience to recover after a change. Species, habitats, and ecosystems may be rare because of the following reasons: changing natural conditions have reduced their range, abundance, or distribution; they depend on specific environmental conditions that are not commonly represented in this area (species or habitats at the edge of their range or occurring as relicts); and anthropogenic (human-related) actions have caused habitat loss or severe decreases in range or abundance.

Recycled Water (also, referred to as Reclaimed Water)

Recycled water means effluent from a wastewater treatment system that has been adequately and reliably treated, so that as a result of that treatment it is suitable for a beneficial use or a controlled use that would not otherwise occur, and is no longer considered wastewater. Recycled is also referred to as Reclaimed Water under Washington State law. Recycled water may be used for beneficial purposes such as landscape and agricultural irrigation, heating and cooling, industrial processing, and environmental enhancement or restoration of streams, wetlands, and aquifers.

Regional Wastewater Services Plan

King County adopted the Regional Wastewater Service Plan in 1999. The Regional Wastewater Services Plan outlines a number of important projects, programs, and policies for King County to implement through 2030 to continue to protect public health and water quality and ensure sufficient wastewater capacity to meet future growth needs. Regional Wastewater Services Plan policies guide the phasing and size of treatment facilities and improvements to the conveyance system, as well as improvements to control combined sewer overflows. The Regional Wastewater Services Plan also includes policies that guide the production and use of biosolids and recycled water.

Rehabilitate/Rehabilitation

Rehabilitate or rehabilitation, as used in Chapter 4, Housing & Human Services, regarding affordable housing, means as repairs, improvements, replacements, alterations, and additions to existing properties that bring them into full compliance with existing building and health codes. Rehabilitation may be minor, moderate, or substantial; or it may involve adaptive reuse from nonresidential to residential uses. Rehabilitation of housing is undertaken to improve and revitalize housing stock that is aging or in poor condition. (See “Preserve”)

Restore
Restore, for the purposes of Chapter 5, Environment, means to return land and water resources from a disturbed or altered condition to an approximation of their condition prior to disturbance or alteration. Restoration projects are conducted by public agencies through capital improvement projects and by developers as a means to mitigate adverse impacts of their proposals. (Restoration of land is not required of developers when they protect land and water resources according to King County regulation.)

Rezone
Rezoning is the term that refers to the process of individual requests and applications to change the zoning classification of land.

Riparian Area
A designated area contiguous to an aquatic area such as a stream, lake, estuary, or marine waters, that provides fish and wildlife habitat, protects adjacent aquatic fish and wildlife species and habitat, and protects water quality. Riparian areas reduce impacts from adjacent land uses through various physical, chemical, or biological processes.

Rural Area Geography (See also Rural Area Zoning)
The Rural Area refers collectively to the geography that primarily contains the following land use categories: Rural Towns, Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers, and Rural Area in unincorporated King County. The Rural Area geography also includes a limited amount of acreage with the Industrial land use designation. The Rural Area geography does not include designated Natural Resource Lands, although resource activities occur in it. The Rural Area contains very low-density residential development, commercial and industrial development, farms, forests, watersheds crucial for both fisheries and flood hazard management, mining areas and towns, historic sites and buildings, archaeological sites, and regionally important recreation areas. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands)

Rural Area Zoning
Rural Area (RA) zoning or zones refers to the Rural Area-2.5, Rural Area-5, Rural Area-10, and Rural Area-20 zoning classifications. This zoning is meant to provide an area-wide, long-term rural character and to minimize land use conflicts with nearby agricultural, forest or mineral extraction production districts. These purposes are accomplished by: 1) limiting residential densities and permitted uses to those that are compatible with rural character and nearby resource production districts and are able to be adequately supported by rural service levels; 2) allowing small-scale farming and forestry activities and tourism and recreation uses which can be supported by rural service levels and which are compatible with rural character; and 3) increasing required setbacks to minimize conflicts with adjacent agriculture, forest, or mineral zones.

Rural Character
Rural character refers to the pattern of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:

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 the Rural Area;
c. That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in the Rural Area 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.

Rural Forest Focus Areas

Rural Forest Focus Areas are designated geographic areas with Rural Area zoning that contain large contiguous blocks of rural forest. Funding, economic incentives, regulatory actions, and other strategies are enacted to maintain forest cover and the practice of sustainable forestry.

Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center is a land use designation used to recognize existing small pockets of commercial development, or in some cases, historic communities or buildings, that are too small to provide more than convenience shopping and services to surrounding residents. They generally do not have services such as water supply or sewage disposal systems any different from those serving surrounding rural residential development. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands)

Rural Towns

Rural towns (a specific land use category within the larger geography of Rural Area are unincorporated towns governed directly by King County. The purposes of Rural Town designations within the Comprehensive Plan are to recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in the Rural Area and to allow modest growth of residential and economic uses to keep them economically viable into the future. (See Chapter 3, Rural Area & Natural Resource Lands)

S

Salmonid

A member of the fish family Salmonidae. In King County, salmonid species include, but are not limited to, Chinook, Coho, chum, sockeye, and pink salmon; cutthroat, steelhead, and rainbow trout; Dolly Varden char, trout, which is a type of char; kokanee; pygmy whitefish; and mountain whitefish.

Satellite Management Agency

A satellite management agency is a large water utility hired by smaller system managers to operate and maintain the system in accordance with local, state, and federal health regulations.

Sediment Transport

Sediment transport is the process of taking soil from one place and depositing it in another via the flow of water. Deposition of the soil occurs when sediment in the water flow is more than the flow can transport.

Sensitive Species

Sensitive species means any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or significant portion of its range and which has been designated as such in regulations issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Sewer Availability

Sewer availability means the presence of sewers now or within six years through extensions included in adopted sewer comprehensive plans.

Shall
To guide King County, the use of the terms "shall," "should," and "may" in policies determine the level of discretion the County can exercise in making future and specific land use, budget, development regulation, and other decisions. "Shall" in a policy means that it is mandatory for the County to carry out the policy, even if a timeframe is not included. "Shall" is imperative and nondiscretionary--the County must make decisions based on what the policy says to do. (See definitions for "should" and "may.")

Shoreline Environment
Shoreline environment means the categories of shorelines of the state established by the King County shoreline management master program to differentiate between areas whose features imply differing objectives regarding their use and future development.

Shoreline Master Program
The Shoreline Master Program is the comprehensive use plan for a described area, and the use regulations together with maps, diagrams, charts, or other descriptive material and text, a statement of desired goals, and standards developed in accordance with the policies enunciated in Revised Code of Washington 90.58.020.

Should
To guide King County, the use of the terms "shall," "should," and "may" in policies determine the level of discretion the County can exercise in making future and specific land use, budget, development regulation, and other decisions. "Should" in a policy means noncompulsory guidance, in which cost, availability of funding, and public benefit associated with the policy's purpose are considered as part of the implementation decision; it establishes that the County has discretion in making decisions.

Significant Adverse Environmental Impact
Significant as used in State Environmental Policy Act means a reasonable likelihood of more than a moderate adverse impact on the environment. Significance involves context and intensity and does not lend itself to a formula or quantifiable text. The context may vary with the physical setting. Intensity depends on the magnitude and duration of an impact. The severity of an impact should be weighed along with the likelihood of its occurrence. An impact may be significant if its chance of occurrence is not great, but the resulting environmental impact would be severe if it occurred.

Significant vegetation removal
Significant vegetation removal means the removal or alteration of trees, shrubs, and/or ground cover by clearing, grading, cutting, burning, chemical means, or other activity that causes significant ecological impacts to functions provided by such vegetation. The removal of invasive or noxious weeds does not constitute significant vegetation removal. Tree pruning, not including tree topping, where it does not affect ecological functions, does not constitute significant vegetation removal.

Single Detached Residences
Single detached residences are individual structures, including conventional houses and manufactured homes, containing one primary dwelling unit. Attached accessory dwelling units may also be included in a single detached residence.

Special Housing Needs
Housing arrangements for populations with special physical or other needs. These populations may include seniors; people with behavioral, physical, cognitive, or developmental disabilities; and homeless individuals and families.

Species of Local Importance
Species of local importance include priority species as identified by the state of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; bird species whose populations in King County are known to have declined significantly over the past 150 years; anadromous salmonids; and aquatic species whose populations are particularly vulnerable to changes in water quality and water quantity.

Subarea Plans
A subarea plan is a detailed local land use plan that implements, is consistent with, and is an element of the Comprehensive Plan containing specific policies, guidelines and criteria adopted by the council to guide development and capital improvement decisions within specific subareas of the county. Subarea plans are used for distinct communities, specific geographic areas, or other types of districts having unified interests or similar characteristics within the county.

Subdivision
A division or redivision of land into lots, tracts, parcels, or sites for the purpose of the sale, lease, or transfer of ownership.

Sustainable economic development
Sustainable economic development means economic development that does not exceed the ability of the natural or built environments to remain healthy while sustaining growth over the long term.

Sustainable Housing
Sustainable housing includes but is not limited to housing that uses sustainable building materials and construction practices to increase energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support transit-oriented development, as well as housing that is located or built in ways that reduce climate change impacts on residents and structures.

Substantially degrade
Substantially degrade means to cause significant ecological impact.

T

Tightline
Tightlining of sewers means that a sewer line is designed and sized to only serve a particular structure.

Totalizing source meter
A totalizing source meter is a device that will measure the volume of water withdrawn from a well over time and provide a sum total of the water extracted. This type of meter is different than a meter that would measure just the instantaneous volume of water being withdrawn.

Traditional Rural Development
In King County, traditional rural land uses could include, but are not limited to: low density residential uses; small scale farming, forestry and mineral extraction; small, neighborhood religious facilities; feed and grain stores; the keeping of horses and livestock; cottage industries, crafts and trades that support the residents of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands and/or the needs of natural resource production; and public and private facilities necessary to serve rural homes such as utility installations or public schools. In general, the rural development pattern in King County has historically been comprised of houses, barns, fences, and cultivated fields, but natural features and open spaces are the predominant visual image.

Transfer of Development Rights
Transfer of development rights means the ability to transfer allowable density, in the form of permitted building lots or structures, from one property (the "sending site") to another (the "receiving site") in conjunction with conservation of all or part of the sending site as open space or working farm or forest.

Transit-Oriented Development
Transit-oriented development refers to a style of development that often includes a mix of housing, commercial space, services, and job opportunities near public transportation. These developments encourage transit use and reduce automobile dependence through thoughtful design that is sufficiently dense, prioritizes pedestrians, often reduces parking, and enhances access and mobility between residences, jobs, and services.

Transportation Concurrency Management
Transportation Concurrency Management means regulations that prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the Comprehensive Plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made "concurrent" with the development. Concurrent with development means that transportation improvements or strategies are in place at the time of development or that financial commitment is made to complete the improvements or strategies within six years. King County's Transportation Concurrency Management program establishes a process to manage new development in unincorporated King County based on transportation impacts on levels of service and the concurrency of needed improvements or actions. (See Chapter 8, Transportation)

Transportation Facilities and Services
Transportation facilities and services are elements of the transportation system that are used to provide mobility. They include roads, sidewalks, bike lanes and other facilities supporting active transportation, transit, bridges, traffic signals, ramps, buses, bus garages, park ride lots, and passenger shelters.

Transportation Needs Report
The Transportation Needs Report is a comprehensive list of County transportation needs to implement the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan. It includes transportation needs for the unincorporated King County road network. It does not include transit service or capital needs. (See Chapter 8, Transportation, and Appendix C1, Transportation Needs Report)

U

Unemployment Rate
The unemployment rate is the percentage of the civilian labor force that is unemployed and actively seeking work.

Unincorporated Activity Centers
Unincorporated Activity Centers are the primary locations for commercial and industrial development in urban unincorporated King County. (See Chapter 2, Urban Communities)

Unincorporated Areas
Unincorporated areas are those areas outside any city and under King County's jurisdiction.

Universal Design
Universal design means the design of products, buildings, and public spaces to be usable by all people with or without disabilities and which allows people to age in place in their home without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Urban Growth
Urban growth refers to residential, commercial, and industrial growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of such land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources. Urban growth typically requires urban governmental services. "Characterized by urban growth" refers to land having urban growth located on it, or to land located in relationship to an area with urban growth.

Urban Growth Area
The Growth Management Act requires King County's Comprehensive Plan to designate an Urban Growth Area, where most future urban growth and development is to occur to limit urban sprawl, enhance open space, protect the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, and more efficiently use human services, transportation, and utilities. The Comprehensive Plan designates an Urban Growth Area which includes areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period. (See Chapter 1, Regional Growth Management Planning, and Chapter 2, Urban Communities)

Urban Planned Developments
Urban Plan Developments are site specific projects consisting of conceptual site plans, development stands, processing, and other elements.

Urban Separator
Urban separators are corridors of land that define community or municipal identities and boundaries, provide visual breaks in the urban landscape, and link parks and open space within and outside the Urban Growth Area. Urban separators are planned for permanent low-residential density within the Urban Growth Area. Urban separators protect adjacent resource land, critical areas, or Rural Area and create open space corridors within and between urban areas which provide environmental, visual, recreations, and wildlife benefits.

Utilities Technical Review Committee
The Utilities Technical Review Committee is an interdepartmental committee with responsibility for ensuring that water and sewer plans comply with county and state health requirements and county land use policies. The committee reviews the plans of all water and sewer utilities that operate in unincorporated King County and then recommends the plans to King County Executive and the Metropolitan King County Council for approval.

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Water Availability
Water availability means the presence of a water source of sufficient quantity and quality with applicable water rights that can serve the projected demand for the planning horizon, as shown in water comprehensive plans approved by King County.

Water Quality
Water quality, in the context of the shoreline jurisdiction, means the physical characteristics of water within shoreline jurisdiction, including water quantity, hydrological, physical, chemical, aesthetic, recreation-related, and biological characteristics. Where used in this plan, the term water quantity refers only to development and uses regulated under this plan and affecting water quantity, such as pollution generating surfaces and stormwater handling practices. Water quantity, for purposes of this comprehensive plan, does not mean the withdrawal of ground water or diversion of surface water pursuant to Revised Code of Washington 90.03.250 through 90.03.340.

Water System Plan
Water system plans are planning documents that include water system plans as referred to in Chapter 43.20 Revised Code of Washington, comprehensive plans of water supply systems (including combined water and sewer plans) as referred to in Revised Code of Washington 57.16.010, water system plans and coordinated water system plans as referred to in Revised Code of Washington 70A.100.050, and all other water system plans, comprehensive plans and plan elements that may be required under King County Code Chapter 13.24 and the Comprehensive Plan for any special district or any other public or private entities that distribute or obtain water in unincorporated King County.

Watershed
A watershed, like a drainage basin, is an area that drains to a common outlet or an identifiable water body such as a river, stream, lake, or wetland. The six major watersheds in King County are Cedar River, Green River, Skykomish River, Snoqualmie River, White River, and the Puget Sound. These watersheds contain a total of 72 individual drainage basins. (See Chapter 5, Environment)

Wellhead Protection
Wellhead protection is a way that King County can protect its groundwater resource. This program directs purveyors to identify one, five, and 10-year time of travel to their well(s) to identify contamination sources, and to propose methods to reduce or eliminate contamination sources.

Wetland
The term wetland means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water 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. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland sites, including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, landscape amenities, or those wetlands created after July 1, 1990 that were unintentionally created as a result of the construction of a road, street, or highway. Wetlands shall include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland areas to mitigate conversion of wetlands.

Wetland Functions

The physical, biological, chemical, and geologic interactions among different components of the environment that occur within a wetland. Wetlands perform functions that are grouped into three categories: functions that improve water quality, functions that change the water regime in a watershed such as flood storage, and functions that provide habitat for plants and animals. (See Chapter 5, Environment)

Wetland Values

Values are estimates, usually subjective, of the worth, merit, quality, or importance of wetland attributes that are valuable and beneficial to society. Values vary by watershed or human community. Education, research, aesthetics, and recreation are examples of other wetland attributes that may be considered values in that they are beneficial to society.

Wildland-Urban Interface

The wildland-urban interface is the geographic area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland vegetative fuels.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

The Comprehensive Plan also includes the following detailed appendices that supplement the information found in the Plan and support compliance with the Growth Management Act.

Appendix A.	Capital Facilities and Services
Appendix B.	Housing Needs Assessment
Appendix C.	Transportation
Appendix C1.	Transportation Needs Report
Appendix C2.	Regional Trail Needs Report
Appendix D.	1994 Growth Targets and the Urban Growth Area
Appendix D1.	Growth Targets and the Urban Growth Area
Appendix E.	1994 Natural Resource Lands
Appendix F.	School Siting Task Force Report


King County