



CHAPTER ((11)) 12 **IMPLEMENTATION, AMENDMENTS ((&)) AND EVALUATION**

The comprehensive plan policies, development regulations and countywide policy framework have been adopted to achieve the county and region's growth management objectives. This chapter describes the tools, processes and procedures used to implement, amend and review the Comprehensive Plan.

The chapter explains the relationship between planning and zoning, lists the incentives programs, identifies actions that will be undertaken between major updates to implement or refine provisions within the Plan, and outlines and distinguishes between annual update cycles and four year cycle amendments.

I. Regulations

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.

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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. Create public and private benefits worth their cost;**
- i. Be coordinated with timely provision of necessary public facilities and services;**
- j. Encourage creativity and diversity in meeting county goals and policies;**
- k. Be coordinated with cities, special purpose districts and other public agencies to promote compatible development standards throughout King County;**
- l. Be responsive, understandable and accessible to the public;**
- m. Provide effective public notice and reasonable opportunities for the public (especially those directly affected) to be heard and to influence decisions;**
- n. 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);**
- o. Treat all members of the public equally regardless of race, culture or class and base regulatory decisions wholly on the applicable criteria and code requirements, including the county Equity and Social Justice goals;**

- p. **Make development requirements readily accessible to the public through up-to-date codes, technical assistance materials and other relevant documents; and**
- q. **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.**

King County wishes to create an equitable relationship with all its residents who own or control potential development or redevelopment of property with critical or significant resource areas. King County provides options that offer property-specific technical assistance and tailored applications of critical areas regulations through Rural Stewardship, Forest Stewardship, and Farm Management Plans. By participating in these programs, property owners may qualify for state tax programs that will reduce the assessed value of their property. However, it is the property owner's choice to participate in these programs.

I-102 King County property owners are entitled to have their property assessed at the true and fair value of real property for taxation purposes so that those portions of the property that are not developed or redeveloped due to physical or environmental constraints shall be assessed to reflect the presence of such constraints. Property appraisals shall be consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan, development regulations, zoning, and any other governmental policies or practices in effect at the time of appraisal that affect the use of property, as well as physical and environmental influences as required by RCW 84.40.030.

II. Comprehensive Plan Amendments

In the process of implementing the comprehensive plan, there may be a need for amendments to address emerging land use and regulatory issues. The county has established the comprehensive plan amendment process to enable individual residents, businesses, community groups, cities, county departments and others to propose changes to existing comprehensive plan policies and development regulations. This process provides for continuous and systematic review of comprehensive plan policies and development regulations in response to changing conditions and circumstances impacting growth and development throughout King County.

The comprehensive plan amendment process includes an annual cycle and a four-year cycle. The annual cycle generally is limited to those amendments that propose technical changes. The four-year cycle is designed to address amendments that propose substantive changes. This amendment process, based on a defined cycle, provides the measure of certainty and predictability necessary to allow for new land use initiatives to work. By

allowing annual amendments, 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 dialogue.

King County has established a docket process to facilitate public involvement and participation in the comprehensive plan amendment process in accordance with RCW 36.70A.470. Parties interested in proposing changes to existing comprehensive plan policies, development regulations, land use designations, zoning, or other components of the plan can obtain and complete a docket form outlining the proposed amendment.

Docket forms are available via the King County Web site_ ((at:

~~http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/growth/CompPlan/amend/docket.aspx.))~~

- I-201 The amendment process shall provide continuing review and evaluation of comprehensive plan policies and development regulations.**
- I-202 Through the amendment process, King County Comprehensive Plan policies and supporting development regulations shall be subject to review, evaluation, and amendment according to an annual cycle and a four-year cycle in accordance with RCW 36.70A.130 (1) and (2).**
- I-203 Except as otherwise provided in this policy, the annual cycle shall not consider proposed amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan that require substantive changes to comprehensive plan policies and development regulations or that alter the Urban Growth Area ((UGA)) Boundary. Substantive amendments and changes to the ((UGA)) Urban Growth Area Boundary may be considered in the annual amendment cycle only if the proposed amendments are necessary for the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species, or to implement:**
- a. A proposal for a Four-to-One project; or**
 - b. An amendment regarding the provision of wastewater services to a Rural Town. Such amendments shall be limited to policy amendments and adjustments to the boundaries of the Rural Town as needed to implement a preferred option identified in a Rural Town wastewater treatment study.~~((Changes related to a mining site conversion demonstration project. The demonstration project shall evaluate and address:~~
 - 1. ~~potential options for the use of a reclaimed mine site, including the feasibility of residential use and/or long-term forestry on the demonstration project site;~~**
 - 2. ~~the impacts to carbon sequestration as a result of reforestation, and for residential use, the impacts to carbon sequestration when~~****

~~implementing modified standards for lot clustering or transfer of development rights;~~

- ~~3. the need for a site design that compatibly integrates any proposed residential development on the demonstration project site with uses occurring on the adjacent rural or forest production district lands, especially if the proposed residential development utilizes modified standards for lot clustering and/or transfer of development rights;~~
- ~~4. the levels and standards for reclamation of mining sites that are appropriate to their use either for long-term forestry and/or for residential development; and~~
- ~~5. the need to ensure that the demonstration project provides an overall public benefit by providing permanent protection, as designated park or open space, of lands in the vicinity of the demonstration project site that form the headwaters of critical, high valued habitat areas; or that remove the development potential from nonconforming legal parcels in the forest production district; or that provide linkages with other forest production district lands.))~~

I-204 The four-year cycle shall consider proposed amendments that could be considered in the annual cycle and also those outside the scope of the annual cycle, proposed amendments relating to substantive changes to comprehensive plan policies and development regulations, and proposals to alter the ((UGA)) Urban Growth Area Boundary in accordance with applicable provisions of Countywide Planning Policies.

I-205 In accordance with RCW 36.70A.140 and the State Environmental Policy Act, as applicable, King County shall ensure public participation in the amendment process for comprehensive plan policies and development regulations. King County shall disseminate information regarding public involvement in the comprehensive plan amendment 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 amendment process on the Internet or through other methods.

The following policies guide the preparation of amendments and their review by King County.

I-207 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. All proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments should include the following analysis:

- a. **Rationale:** a detailed statement of what is proposed to be changed and why;
- b. **Effect:** a statement detailing the anticipated outcome of the change on the: geographic area affected, populations affected, and environment;
- c. **Compliance:** a statement confirming compliance with the:
 1. Growth Management Act, including statutory references where applicable;
 2. Countywide Planning Policies, including policy references where applicable;
 3. King County Strategic Plan, including policy, objective or strategy references where applicable; and
- d. **Public Review:** an indication that the proposed policy amendment was included in the executive's public review draft or a statement of the public review process used to solicit comments on the proposal.

I-208 Proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan policies should be accompanied by any changes to development regulations, modifications to capital improvement programs, subarea, neighborhood, and functional plans required for implementation so that regulations will be consistent with the plan.

~~((A financial analysis is critical to all subarea and functional plans in order to evaluate the resources required and the time frame necessary for full implementation. Plan alternatives and costs should be clearly understood and plans should be financially achievable.))~~

I-209 (Moved to RP-116)

III. Review and Evaluation

In accordance with the Growth Management Act (~~((GMA))~~), King County and its cities work together to monitor the Countywide Planning Policies and their respective comprehensive plans. Past programs have included the *Annual Growth Report* and the *King County Benchmark Program*. ~~((employ an established review and evaluation program through the *King County Benchmark Program*, as provided by the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The purpose of the program is to determine whether the county and its cities 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.~~

In partnership with the *King County Growth Report*, the *King County Buildable Lands Report* and supplementary monitoring of the King County Comprehensive Plan, the King County Benchmark Program collects and reviews 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;~~
- ~~Economic development; and~~
- Environmental quality.))

Buildable Lands Program

Section 36.70A.215 of the Growth Management Act, commonly called Buildable Lands, requires six western Washington counties including King, and their cities, to evaluate their capacity to accommodate forecasted growth of housing units and jobs. ((While these past efforts are not currently in use, King County does still develop the Buildable Lands Report, and released the most recent version in 2014.)) The purpose of the program is to determine whether the county and its cities 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. Objectives relating to this review and evaluation include:

- Determining whether a county and its cities 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;
- Determining the actual density of housing constructed within the ((UGA)) 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 ((UGA)) 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 twenty-year planning period used in the ((most recently)) 2012 adopted comprehensive plan; and

- Adopting and implementing 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.

In collaboration with its cities, King County prepared Buildable Lands Reports in 2002, 2007 and 2014, to implement this portion of the Growth Management Act.

Conclusions of 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report

The King County Buildable Lands Report – 2014 reported on development densities and capacity as required by the Growth Management Act. The Report concluded that King County does have sufficient capacity to accommodate forecasted housing-unit and job growth through 2031 and beyond. Under existing comprehensive plans and zoning, the county’s Urban Growth Area has a generous surplus of planned capacity: more than double the housing target through 2031 and 160% of the jobs target. Almost all of this development capacity is contained within the county’s 39 cities. Unincorporated King County within the Urban Growth Area has sufficient capacity for its residential target, but technically has a slight shortfall of capacity for job growth.

Under the Growth Management Act, VISION 2040 and the Countywide Planning Policies, cities are designated and intended to accommodate almost all employment growth. Prior to planning under the Growth Management Act, unincorporated King County absorbed a large share of the county’s residential and job growth. Since beginning to plan under the Growth Management Act, the county’s growth has shifted almost entirely into the cities. However, a commensurate share of urban unincorporated growth targets did not shift into cities. Annexations transferred more capacity than target into the annexing cities, leaving residual unincorporated targets that are out of balance with actual capacity. Bearing in mind that the Urban Growth Area as a whole does have sufficient capacity for commercial and industrial growth, the small shortfall in urban unincorporated King County is a technical issue that will be addressed as further annexations occur. No action need be taken now, as urban unincorporated areas undergo transition into cities.

- I-301 Monitor and benchmark the progress of the Countywide Planning Policies and King County Comprehensive Plan toward achieving their objectives, inclusive of those relating to the environment, development patterns, housing, the economy, transportation, and the provision of public services. Use results of such monitoring to encourage implementation actions and inform policy revisions as appropriate to achieve the planning objectives found within the Countywide Planning Policies and King County Comprehensive Plan.**

IV. Land Use Designations and Zoning Classifications and ((/)) Codes

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 table below:

Comprehensive Plan Land Uses	Zoning*
Unincorporated Activity Center : White Center	R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, O, I
Community Business Center	NB, CB, O
Neighborhood Business Center	NB, O
Commercial Outside of Centers	NB, CB, RB, O, I - this is the range of existing zoning in place when the comprehensive plan was adopted
Urban Planned Development	R-1, R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, RB, O, I
Urban Residential, High	R-18, R-24, R-48
Urban Residential, Medium	R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12
Urban Residential, Low	R-1
((Rural City)) Urban Growth Areas for Cities in Rural Area	UR The following two zones were in place in the North Bend ((UGA)) Urban Growth Area when the comprehensive plan was adopted in 1994: I, RB
Rural Town	R-1, R-4, R-6, R-8, R-12, R-18, R-24, R-48, NB, CB, RB, O, I
Rural Neighborhood Commercial Center	NB
Rural Area	RA-2.5, RA-5, RA-10, RA-20
Industrial	I
Forestry	F, M
Agriculture	A
Mining	M
Greenbelt/Urban Separator	R-1
King County Open Space System	All zones
Other Parks/Wilderness	All zones

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

	Zoning Designations	
A	Agricultural (10 or 35 acre minimum lot area)	
F	Forest (80 acre minimum lot area)	
M	Mineral	
RA	Rural Area (2.5-acre, 5-acre, 10-acre or 20-acre minimum density)	
UR	Urban Reserve	
R	Urban Residential (base density in dwelling units per acre)	
NB	Neighborhood Business	
CB	Community Business	
RB	Regional Business	
O	Office	
I	Industrial	

The Zoning Code (Title 21A) establishes precise rules for each zoning classification such as permitted residential densities and activities or allowed commercial and industrial development activities, and striving for separation between incompatible uses. This code includes standards relative to bulk (i.e. lot size and coverage, building heights and setbacks, landscape standards).

I-401 The King County Zoning Code’s zone classifications and development standards and the official zoning maps shall be consistent with the comprehensive plan and functional plans.

V. Other Implementing King County Codes

In addition to the Zoning Code, 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.

In terms of land use regulation, the most important of these other implementing codes are Land Segregation (K.C.C. Title 19A) and Shoreline Management (K.C.C. Title 25). The Land Segregation code regulates division of a parcel of land into smaller lots for transfer of ownership. The Shoreline Management code regulates the issuance of substantial development permits for lands abutting waters governed by the Washington State Shoreline Management Act.

Other development approvals include commercial or industrial construction permits. Review of land segregation, substantial development permits and other development proposals are key parts of the development process for making sure facilities and services to support potential development are adequate and for evaluating environmental impacts.

I-501 When needed infrastructure and facilities are not available in a timely manner, development approvals shall either be denied or divided into phases, or the project proponents should provide the needed facilities and infrastructure to address impacts directly attributable to their project, or as may be provided by the proponent on a voluntary basis.

I-502 King County’s permitting systems should provide for expeditious review of projects consistent with zoning and adopted policies.

- I-503 Subdivision, short subdivision and other development approvals, including those requiring detailed environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) shall be reviewed for consistency with the comprehensive plan, zoning, community, subarea plans, functional plans and capital improvement programs.
- I-504 King County shall enforce its land use and environmental regulations by pursuing code enforcement complaints ((;)) and by providing oversight during the process of site development on all sites for which it issues permits.
- I-505 King County shall develop, as a part of the buildable lands analysis, a zoning yield and housing production monitoring program to determine whether housing capacity is being lost in the context of compliance with the Endangered Species Act, and shall propose revisions to the countywide planning policies to implement such a program.

VI. 2016 Comprehensive Plan Workplan

A new feature of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan is this Workplan section. While workplan tasks have always accompanied the Comprehensive Plan as part of the adoption process by the County Council, these tasks were included with the Ordinance rather than inside of the Plan; this reduced the transparency of the work because the tasks were more difficult for the public to locate. In the 2016 Plan, these tasks will be included in the body of the document. Workplan tasks work in conjunction with the other tools discussed in this chapter such as regulations, incentive programs, and other core regional planning and implementation activities. Each workplan item includes a summary description, general timeline and anticipated outcomes are noted.

Action 1: Initiation of the Community Service Area Subarea Planning Program. Under the direction of the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review, King County is launching a new regular subarea planning program. While this is described in greater detail in Chapter 11: Community Service Area Planning, launching and operationalizing this effort will be a major activity following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Timeline: Ongoing, with each Community Service Area to be included in the planning schedule.
- Outcomes: A more rational approach for addressing planning issues rather than solely relying on the Comprehensive Plan update process. Each area will adopt a plan approximately once every seven years.
- Lead: Department of Permitting and Environmental Review.

Action 2: Develop a Plan, with the Growth Management Planning Council, To Move Remaining Unincorporated Urban Potential Annexation Areas Towards Annexation. This interjurisdictional body has authority to propose amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies and has a unique defined role related to

recommending approval or denial of urban growth area expansions. In order to move the remaining areas, which greatly range in size and complexity, towards annexation, this will be a major focus of work and will involve reconsideration of the Potential Annexation Areas map and the "Joint Planning and Annexation" section of Countywide Planning Policies.

- Timeline: Start following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, likely to be a two-year process.
- Outcomes: Updated Annexation Initiative that is anticipated to identify a path towards annexation for the remaining 125-plus areas.
- Lead: Office of Performance Strategy and Budget.

Action 3: Develop a Performance Measures Program for the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the program is to provide longer-term indicators to provide insight into whether the goals of the Comprehensive Plan are being achieved or if revisions are needed. Given the longer-term nature of the issues addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, this program will be implemented on a four-year cycle. Reports are to be released in the year prior to the initiation of the four-year Update in order to guide the Scoping process for the update. Additionally, the extent practicable for each dataset, indicators will be reported at the level most consistent the major geographies in the Growth Management Act and Comprehensive Plan – incorporated cities, unincorporated urban areas, rural lands, and natural resource lands.

- Timeline: Report released in 2018 to inform the 2019 Scope of Work for the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Outcomes: 2017 Framework for Program, 2018 Comprehensive Plan Performance Measures Report.
- Lead: Office of Performance Strategy and Budget.

Action 4: Review the Four To One Program. The County's Four to One Program has been very effective in implementing Growth Management Act goals to reduce sprawl and encourage retention of open space. This is done through discretionary actions by the County Council, following a proposal being submitted by a landowner(s) to the County. Over time, there have been proposals that vary from the existing parameters of the program; these have included possible development not contiguous to the original 1994 urban growth area, allowing the open space to be non-contiguous to the urban extension, and consideration of smaller parcels or parcels with multiple ownerships. Allowing these changes has potential for increasing the use of the tool, with attendant risks and benefits. With the assistance of an independent consultant with real estate and land use expertise, review the Four to One program and determine whether changes to the existing program should be implemented that will strengthen the program and improve implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Timeline: 2018; one-year process
- Outcomes: County-led and consultant supported task force, feasibility report and final report.
- Leads: Office of Performance Strategy and Budget, Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

Action 5: Implement a TDR Unincorporated Urban Receiving Area Pilot Project. The County's Transfer of Development Rights Program has been very effective in implementing Growth Management Act goals to reduce sprawl and permanently protect open space. This work plan item is to conduct a pilot project to determine the process for providing amenities to unincorporated urban TDR receiving area communities. The focus of the pilot project will be the East Renton Plateau – an area of urban unincorporated King County that has received a substantial number of TDRs. The East Renton Plateau TDR Receiving Area Pilot Project will: develop a process for engaging the community to determine the type of amenities the community desires; assess the type and amounts of funding available for providing amenities; and establish an amount of amenity funding to be provided for each TDR (both past and future TDRs).

- Timeline: Q1 2017-Q3 2018; (18-month process)
- Outcomes: Report recommending process and funding levels relative TDRs used in development projects; and potential 2020 comprehensive plan and code revisions.
- Leads: Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

VII. Incentives

To ensure that the vision, goals, objectives, and policies of this plan become a reality, it will require adjusting policy and budget priorities by King County government. It will also require individuals to reconsider their daily decisions and choices relating to the management or development of their lands, as well as 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 this plan. Incentives, like the Transfer of Development Rights Program, must encourage the types of growth and development patterns desired by King County and its residents.

- I-601 King County should develop incentives for the Unincorporated Urban ((Growth)) Area that encourage the development industry to provide a broad range of housing and business space. Incentives could include:**
- a. Identification of geographic areas with infill opportunities, granting them budget priority status and subjecting new development in these areas to more flexible standards – this should include disadvantaged areas an areas with significant concentrations of low-income or minority groups;**
 - b. Density bonuses for site designs which provide public benefits (for example, grid roads that connect with other developments and limit impacts on arterials);**
 - c. Incentives which lower financial development risk;**

- d. **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**
- e. **County capital improvement 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.**