



Rural Lifestyles

Objective:

Preserve the unique character of our rural communities in collaboration with rural residents

Strategy:

Promote policies and programs that sustain rural lifestyles

Why is this strategy important?

King County is a diverse area, with different needs in our different communities. Sustaining rural lifestyles and unique rural communities is important to maintaining the strong diversity of King County. Policies and programs that sustain rural lifestyles increase opportunities for rural King County residents to:

- Learn about County regional and local services.
- Know who to contact in the county via primary point of contact or specific department.
- Become knowledgeable about county policies, projects and programs that support the rural lifestyle.

Additionally, rural residents should have opportunities to provide meaningful input into decisions that affect their communities, via widely advertised annual Community Service Area (CSA) meetings and other departmental meetings that focus on specific rural or CSA issues and development of new programs or services that will impact them.

How is our performance?

In 2011, King County established seven Community Service Areas in order to improve service delivery in the unincorporated area. A primary point of contact, familiar with the geographic area, local concerns and issues, as well as area organizations, was assigned for each of the six areas.

King County staff have worked collaboratively to improve services for rural residents, particularly agricultural permitting and rural economic development projects. In addition, King County maintains a Community Engagement Grant Program, with the first round of grants to be awarded in late 2012. The program leverages community funds with small grants to realize local projects that offer unincorporated area residents opportunities to improve their communities in small, but important ways.

As the urban unincorporated areas become part of cities, King County is evolving from being a provider of both urban and rural services to one that is focused on the rural area. Protecting rural lands and communities in King County is a major principle of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

The plan outlines King County's approach to conserving rural and natural resource lands, supporting rural communities and their heritage, and supporting agriculture, forestry, and mining economies. The plan includes policies that foster the rural economy by recognizing how the rural area can benefit all county residents.

How is our performance?

You can attend county meetings scheduled in your area related to issues that you are interested in or the annual CSA-wide meetings where you will be able to meet with representatives from the Council and Executive's office, as well the opportunity to meet with county staff within the various departments.

Moving forward

King County will develop CSA Work Plans to provide information to rural residents about on-going services, county programs and projects for each CSA, along with direct contact information for the service or project. In the longer term, King County will hold meetings where proposed department projects that impact the individual CSAs can be developed and addressed prior to budget development.

Related Links

[King County Community Service Areas](#)