

# Urban Communities

The Urban Communities chapter brings together the major elements that combine to make a community whole: housing, business centers, and human services. By merging these elements into one chapter, King County emphasizes the importance each plays as part of a livable community.

The chapter first defines the Urban Growth Area, where most growth will occur, and major land uses within it. The chapter then provides the framework to guide the development of new urban communities and redevelopment of existing communities within the unincorporated portion of the Urban Growth Area.

---

---

# I. Urban Land Use

---

---

## A. Urban Communities

The challenge for King County and its residents is to create urban communities that provide the places and choices for people and how they want to live, as well as respond to the cultural and economic diversity of our communities. Urban areas need more than physical infrastructure. They also need a broad range of amenities and human services that make them attractive and safe places to work and live, while protecting our physical environment and maintaining the quality of life we all value.

**U-101 Development within the Urban Growth Area should create and maintain safe, healthy and diverse communities. These communities should contain a range of affordable housing and employment opportunities, school and recreational facilities and should be designed to protect the natural environment and significant cultural resources.**

### 1. 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, King County and other counties in the state will:

- Limit sprawling development;
- Reduce costs by encouraging concentrated development;
- Improve the efficiency of human services, utilities and transportation;
- Protect the Rural Area and Resource Lands;
- Enhance open space; and
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change and adapt its effects.

The Urban Growth Area (UGA) for King County is designated on the official Land Use Map adopted with this plan. The Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) provide the framework that the Metropolitan King County Council used when adopting the UGA as part of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan.

The UGA includes all cities within the county including the cities in the Rural City Urban Growth Area, the cities' annexation areas, and land within the unincorporated part of the county characterized by urban-type growth. The UGA also includes the Bear Creek Urban Planned Developments east of Redmond.

See Chapter 3, Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, for additional policy guidance on growth within the rural cities annexation areas.

King County's total UGA covers 460 square miles, less than one-quarter of the county's total area of 2,134 square miles. Cities comprise most of the land mass of the UGA, at 387 square miles; the unincorporated portion of the UGA is now about 73 square miles, according to the 2006 King County Annual Growth Report.

- U-102      The Urban Growth Area designations shown on the official Land Use Map includes enough land to provide the capacity to accommodate growth expected over the period 2001-2022. These lands should include only those lands that meet the following criteria:**
- a.    Are characterized by urban development which 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;**
  - b.    Do not extend beyond natural boundaries, such as watersheds, which impede provision of urban services;**
  - c.    Respect topographical features that form a natural edge such as rivers and ridge lines;**
  - d.    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;**
  - e.    Are included within the Bear Creek Urban Planned Development (UPD) sites; and**
  - f.    Are not rural land or unincorporated agricultural or forestry lands designated through the Countywide Planning Policies Plan process.**

- U-103      Parcels which are split by the Urban Growth Area boundary line should be redesignated to either all urban or all rural unless the parcel is split to recognize environmentally sensitive features, or the requirements of interlocal agreements or King County plans.**

Some cities that border the Urban Growth Area operate parks in the Rural Area. These parks may have been acquired by the city through a direct purchase or through a transfer agreement with King County. Cities can continue to operate parks in the Rural Area consistent with rural development standards. In specific circumstances, cities can request that these parks be redesignated to urban to allow future annexation by the city.

- U-104** Rural properties that are immediately adjacent to a city and are planned or designated for park purposes by that city may be redesignated to urban when the city has committed to designate the property in perpetuity in a form satisfactory to the King County Council for park purposes and:
- a. The property is no more than 30 acres in size and was acquired by the city prior to 1994; or
  - b. The property is no more than 30 acres in size and receives county support through a park or recreation facility transfer agreement between King County and a city; or
  - c. The property is or was formerly a King County park and is being or has been transferred to a city.

- U-105** Existing or proposed churches in the Rural Area may be included within the Urban Growth Area when all of the following criteria are met:
- a. The church property must have an interior lot line as defined by 21A.06.730 that is adjacent to the original Urban Growth Area boundary as established by the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan, excluding the Rural City Urban Growth Areas and excluding UGA boundaries established through the 4 to 1 Program; and
  - b. The church property shall not be adjacent to an Agricultural Production District or the Forest Production District; and
  - c. Sewer service is required once the property is included in the UGA; and
  - d. Direct vehicular access to a principal arterial road is required; and
  - e. The church property shall be included in the Potential Annexation Area of the appropriate city at the same time it is included in the UGA.

- U-106** Except for the Blakely Ridge and Redmond Ridge Fully Contained Communities designations, no new Fully Contained Communities shall be approved in King County.

## **2. Growth in Cities and Urban Centers and the Promotion of Public Health for All**

The King County Comprehensive Plan directly affects land use planning decisions only in unincorporated King County. The cities, however, contain most of the county's economic base and much of its urban population and provide urban services to adjacent unincorporated areas. In addition, many public services vital to urban growth are provided to unincorporated areas by independent special purpose districts. The Countywide Planning Policies guide the development of urban centers, which are located in

cities and should accommodate concentrations of housing and employment. The significant role of the cities and districts, therefore, must be recognized in county decision-making and through future planning efforts.

Focusing development in urban areas can have a positive effect on public health while also addressing climate change. The percentage of King County residents who are overweight or obese has risen rapidly since the late 1980s. With obesity comes increased risk for diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Evidence suggests one major reason for rising obesity is the lack of physical activity. Growth patterns in suburban areas, which discourage walking and promote a reliance on private auto use, have contributed to this public health problem. Communities that feature many land uses, higher housing density, sidewalks and street connections and nearby services encourage physical activity such as walking and bicycling.

While creating communities that have a positive effect on public health we are also creating communities that will have a positive effect on climate change. When people replace their auto trips with 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 auto trips are being replaced with more walking, biking and transit.

- U-107        Most population and employment growth should locate in the contiguous Urban Growth Area in western King County, especially in cities and their Potential Annexation Areas.**
  
- U-108        King County supports land use and zoning actions that promote public health by increasing opportunities for every resident to be more physically active. Land use and zoning actions include: concentrating growth into the Urban Area, promoting urban centers, allowing mixed-use developments, and adding pedestrian linkages.**
  
- U-109        King County supports the development of Urban Centers to meet the region's needs for housing, jobs, services, culture and recreation and to promote health. Strategies may include exploring opportunities for Joint Development or Transit Oriented Development, siting civic uses in mixed-use areas, and leveraging or utilizing existing county assets in urban centers.**
  
- U-110        King County should concentrate facilities and services within the Urban Growth Area to make it a desirable place to live and work, to increase the opportunities for**

**walking and biking within the community, to more efficiently use existing infrastructure capacity and to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure maintenance.**

**U-111 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.**

**U-112 Development standards for urban areas should emphasize ways to allow maximum permitted densities and uses of urban land while not compromising the function of critical environmental areas. Mitigating measures should serve multiple purposes, such as drainage control, groundwater recharge, stream protection, air quality, open space preservation, cultural and historic resource protection and landscaping preservation. When technically feasible, standards should be simple and measurable, so they can be implemented without lengthy review processes.**

As global warming occurs, there is a greater likelihood that the frequency of hazardous heat islands in urban areas will increase. The term “heat island” refers to urban air and surface temperatures that are higher than the nearby Rural Areas. Heat islands form as cities replace natural land cover with pavement, buildings, and other infrastructure. The heat island effect can be reduced by requiring cool roofs, cool pavements, and vegetation.

**U-113 King County will work with cities, the community, and developers to design communities and development projects that employ techniques that reduce heat absorption throughout the community and the region.**

### **3. Urban Growth Area Targets**

The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) require the county and its cities to plan for future household and employment growth target ranges for each jurisdiction. In 1994, the Growth Management Planning Council adopted household and job targets for each jurisdiction to distribute the expected growth.

Growth target ranges represent jurisdictions' policy choices regarding the amount of growth they intend to accommodate. King County and its cities have also developed targets for employment to foster a local balance between population and employment. The countywide and unincorporated King County's household growth target and employment targets are contained in the CPPs.

In November 2002, a new set of household and job growth targets were established to guide growth for the period 2001-2022. Each urban jurisdiction including unincorporated King County was assigned a growth target based on land capacity and other factors. The complete table of city growth targets, "Adopted 22-Year Household Growth Targets," is included in this chapter to provide the regional context for the unincorporated area targets.

- U-114        Land use policies and regulations shall accommodate a growth target of approximately 13,400 households and approximately 7,900 jobs by 2022, established in the Countywide Planning Policies for the unincorporated portion of the Urban Growth Area.**
  
- U-115        King County shall provide adequate land capacity for residential, commercial and industrial growth in the urban unincorporated area. This land capacity shall include both redevelopment opportunities as well as opportunities for development on vacant lands.**
  
- U-116        King County shall use household and employment targets to implement the comprehensive plan in urban communities. The targets allocated to subareas of unincorporated King County will be monitored and may be refined through future planning that includes communities, affected cities and service providers.**

The following table, "Household Growth Targets by Sub-region" establishes a breakdown by subarea of the new unincorporated King County household targets for the Urban Growth Area. The targets in this table reflect annexations and incorporations that have occurred since the adoption of this plan in 1994. The table further provides guidance for transfer of portions of growth targets into cities when annexation takes place in the future. Although they may be refined through future planning with affected communities and adjacent cities, these ranges are intended to be used as a guide for future planning of land uses and decisions on services and infrastructure.

**HOUSEHOLD GROWTH TARGETS BY SUB-REGION**

Unincorporated King County, 2001-2022

Adopted Household Growth Target 2001-2022

Sub-Region	Unincorporated King County			Cities' Targets	Sub-Region Totals
	Total	In designated Potential Annexation Areas	Outside PAAs		
East King County	<b>6,801</b>	2,702	4,099 *	40,844	47,645
South King County	<b>4,935</b>	4,343	592	37,420	42,355
Sea-Shore (North Highline)	<b>1,670</b>	0	1,670	54,699	56,369
Rural Cities ** (Expansion area)	<b>0</b>	0	0 **	5,563	5,563
<b>Urban Area Total</b>	<b>13,406</b>	7,045	6,361	138,526	151,932
Rural Area Total	6,000	***		0	6,000
King County Total	19,406			138,526	157,932

**NOTES:**

\* The 4,099 target outside East County PAAs consists of the Bear Creek UPD/FCC.

\*\* Rural-city target numbers include their unincorporated expansion areas.

\*\*\* Targets apply to Urban areas only. The rural area does not have a growth target.

Growth in rural areas is forecast to be 6,000 households or 4% of countywide total growth.

Source: Growth Management Planning Council Motion 02-2, November 2002

Adopted 22-year Household Growth Targets					
King County and its Cities, 2001 - 2022					
Household Growth Target to be accommodated by local jurisdiction plans and regulations					
<i>Between January 2001 and 2022</i>					
	A	B	C	D	E
	1990	Original 1992-	2000	Adopted H'hold	PAA H'hold
Jurisdiction	Households	2012	Households	Target 2001-2022	Target
		Growth Target			
Algona	587	404	845	298	
Auburn	13,357	8,088	16,108	6,003	815
Beaux Arts	119	0	121	3	
Bellevue	35,756	8,727	45,836	10,117	178
Black Diamond	541	1,624	1,456	1,099	
Bothell	4,807	1,951	6,401	1,751	584
Burien	12,000	1,796	13,399	1,552	
Carnation *	439	404	636	246	
Clyde Hill	1,063	12	1,054	21	
Covington	3,400	1,493	4,398	1,373	
Des Moines	7,054	2,154	11,337	1,576	2
Duvall *	946	1,661	1,596	1,037	
Enumclaw *	2,936	2,425	4,317	1,927	
Federal Way	25,705	15,239	31,437	6,188	1,161
Hunts Point	187	4	165	1	
Issaquah	3,170	3,380	4,840	3,993	802
Kenmore	n.a.	n.a.	7,307	2,325	
Kent	16,246	9,075	31,113	4,284	546
Kirkland	17,211	5,837	20,736	5,480	747
Lake Forest Park	1,488	451	5,029	538	
Maple Valley	2,250	1,539	4,809	300	
Medina	1,129	17	1,111	31	
Mercer Island	8,007	1,122	8,437	1,437	
Milton	266	29	339	50	33
Newcastle	2,000	833	3,028	863	1
Normandy Park	2,570	135	2,609	100	
North Bend *	1,044	1,527	1,841	636	
Pacific	1,707	1,212	1,992	721	39
Redmond	14,153	11,617	19,102	9,083	390
Renton	18,219	8,960	21,708	6,198	1,739
Sammamish	n.a.	n.a.	11,131	3,842	
Seattle	236,702	53,877	258,499	51,510	
SeaTac	9,611	5,525	9,708	4,478	0
Shoreline	n.a.	2,559	20,716	2,651	
Skykomish	103	27	104	20	
Snoqualmie *	611	2,784	632	1,697	
Tukwila	5,639	5,388	7,186	3,200	8
Woodinville	3,000	1,797	3,512	1,869	
Yarrow Point	371	18	379	28	
<b>City Total:</b>	<b>454,400</b>	<b>163,683</b>	<b>584,974</b>	<b>138,526</b>	<b>7,045</b>
<b>Unincorp. KC:</b>	<b>123,400</b>	<b>33,501</b>	<b>125,942</b>	<b>19,406</b>	<b>6,361</b>

- urban	123,400	26,501	79,042	<b>13,406</b>	6,361	
- rural **	38,000	7,000	46,900	<b>6,000</b>	<i>n.a.</i>	
<b>Urban Area Total:</b>	577,800	190,184	664,016	<b>151,932</b>	<i>n.a.</i>	
<b>King County Total</b>	615,800	197,184	710,916	<b>157,932</b>	<i>n.a.</i>	

**NOTES:** Column D indicates the approximate number of households each jurisdiction is expected to accommodate during the 22-year period 2001-2022. These growth targets were adopted by the King County Growth Management Planning Council in 2002, and amended in 2004. The targets replace the earlier 1992-2012 numbers which are shown as Column B. Column E shows the unincorporated household targets associated with designated Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) of selected cities. \* Targets of five rural cities include surrounding growth areas. \*\* Rural-designated areas do not have a target. They are expected to grow by no more than 6,000 households during the 22-year period.

## **B. Residential Land Use**

Housing is the major use of urban land in King County, occupying well over half of the county's developed land area. This plan supports the creation of a full range of housing choices for county residents.

**U-117 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 should have a variety of housing types and prices, including mobile home parks, multifamily development, townhouses and small-lot, single-family development.**

### **1. Residential Densities**

The density of eight homes per acre expressed below is a long-term goal and would be an average density of single-family and multifamily developments. Single-family homes will continue to account for most of the land area used for new development in the county. This plan proposes ways to develop single-family homes more efficiently so that urban land is used more efficiently, homes are affordable, more housing choices are available and densities are adequate to allow for transit services. Housing at higher densities can promote public health by creating urban communities that support public transportation and nearby services and thereby increase opportunities for walking or biking.

**U-118 King County shall seek to achieve through future planning efforts over the next twenty years, an average zoning density of at least seven to eight homes per acre in the Urban Growth Area through a mix of densities and housing types. A lower density zone may be used to recognize existing subdivisions with little or no opportunity for infill or redevelopment.**

**U-119 King County should apply the urban residential, low land use designation: to protect floodplains, critical aquifer recharge areas, high function wetlands and unstable slopes from degradation, and link these environmental features into a network of open space, fish and wildlife habitat and urban separators. The residential density for land so designated should be maintained at one unit per acre, provided that 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-120 Multifamily housing in the Urban Growth Area should be sited as follows:**  
**a. In or next to unincorporated activity centers or next to community or**

- neighborhood business centers;
- b. In mixed-use developments in centers and activity areas; and
- c. On small, scattered parcels integrated into existing urban residential areas. New multifamily housing should be built to the scale and design of the existing community or neighborhood, while contributing to an area-wide density that supports transit and allows for a range of housing choices. Over time, zoning should encourage a larger proportion of multifamily housing to be located on small scattered sites rather than on larger sites.

**U-121** Land zoned for multifamily uses should be converted to nonresidential zone categories only after new multifamily sites are identified and rezoned to replace the multifamily housing capacity lost due to the conversion.

## **2. Minimum Density**

In accordance with Countywide Planning Policy LU-66(b), King County has included a minimum density requirement in its zoning regulations for all new urban residential development with a zoned density of four or more homes per acre.

**U-122** King County should apply minimum density requirements to all urban residential zones of four or more homes per acre, except under limited circumstances such as the:

- a. Presence of significant physical constraints, or
- b. Implementation of standards applied to a property through a property-specific development condition, special district overlay, or subarea plan.

## **3. Increases of Zoning Density**

While King County supports higher densities in the urban areas, increased densities that would be incompatible with existing neighborhoods or cause significant impacts on roads, services and the environment are discouraged. The following policies will guide decisions on application of densities and proposed rezones.

**U-123** Requests for increases in density of urban residential property zoned for one dwelling unit per acre must include a demonstration that the property does not meet the criteria of Policy U-119.

- U-124** King County shall not approve proposed zoning changes to increase density within the Urban Area unless:
- a. The development will be compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood;
  - b. Urban public facilities and services are adequate, consistent with adopted levels of service and meet GMA concurrency requirements, including King County transportation concurrency standards;
  - c. The proposed density change will not increase unmitigated adverse impacts on environmentally critical areas, either on site or in the vicinity of the proposed development;
  - d. The proposed density increase will be consistent with or contribute to achieving the goals and policies of this comprehensive plan, and subarea plan, if applicable; and
  - e. The proposal is consistent with the adopted city comprehensive plan for the Potential Annexation Area where the rezone is located if the proposed density exceeds eight dwelling units per acre. If the city is not planning for urban densities and efficient land use patterns consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies, then this paragraph shall not apply.
- U-125** King County, when evaluating rezone requests for increases in density, shall notify adjacent cities, special purpose districts and local providers of urban utility services and should work with these service providers on issues raised by the proposal.
- U-126** King County shall not support requests for residential density increases on lands located within the outer boundaries of the Noise Remedy Area as identified by Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Development in the Urban Growth Area at a higher density than normally permitted by zoning will be allowed in exchange for public amenities such as low-income housing, preservation of designated historic features or extra energy conservation measures, or through the transfer of development rights from other parts of the county.

- U-127** Density incentives should encourage private developers to: provide innovative affordable housing, significant open space, trails and parks; use the Transfer of Development Rights Program; locate development close to transit;

**participate in historic preservation; and include energy conservation measures exceeding state requirements.**

#### **4. Mixed-Used 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 near by. They can help to build a sense of community, as neighboring merchants and residents get to know each other. Mixed use is traditional in older downtowns and commercial areas, where offices and retail typically occupy the first floor and residences are upstairs. Mixed-use developments can promote public health and help provide mitigation for climate change by providing opportunities for people to walk or bicycle to retail and public services. People are more likely to walk to their destination if the distance is less than one-half mile or to bike if the distance is less than two miles. 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 auto they will be shorter than if the uses had been separated.

**U-128 King County supports mixed-use developments in community and neighborhood business centers, the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, and in areas designated commercial outside of centers.**

**U-129 Design features of mixed-use developments should include the following:**

- a. Integration of the retail and/or office uses and residential units within the same building or on the same parcel;**
- b. Ground level spaces built to accommodate retail and office uses;**
- c. Off-street parking behind or to the side of the buildings, or enclosed within buildings; and**
- d. Opportunities to have safe, accessible pedestrian connections and bicycle facilities within the development and to adjacent residential developments.**

**U-130 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, the initial review of the development should be through a process that ensures an integrated design.**

**U-131 In a mixed-use development, incentives such as increases in residential**

**density or floor area ratio should be used to encourage the inclusion of public gathering spaces in the site design.**

## **5. Urban Residential Neighborhood Design and Infill/Redevelopment**

King County residents can enjoy their urban neighborhoods both for their unique character and for the amenities they provide. Outdoor spaces need to be 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 and, in some cases, reduce development costs. Neighborhood shopping, libraries, larger parks, high schools and public golf courses are examples of uses that provide amenities for nearby residents. Small retail establishments integrated into residential development (e.g., a laundromat or video rental store) can provide convenient services and help residents reduce automobile trips. 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 a normal day's activities.

**U-132 King County encourages innovative, quality infill development and redevelopment in existing urban areas. A variety of regulatory, incentive and program strategies could be considered, including:**

- a. Special development standards for infill sites;**
- b. Assembly and resale of sites to providers of affordable housing;**
- c. Impact mitigation fee structures that favor infill developments;**
- d. Greater regulatory flexibility in allowing standards to be met using innovative techniques; and**
- e. Joint public/private loan guarantee pools.**

**U-133 Single-family detached homes, townhomes, duplexes and apartments shall be allowed in all urban residential zones, provided that:**

- a. Apartments shall not be allowed in the R-1 zone unless fifty percent or more of the site is environmentally constrained; and**
- b. Apartments in R-1, R-4, R-6 and R-8 shall not be developed at densities in excess of 18 units per acre in the net buildable area.**

**U-134 Urban residential neighborhood design should preserve historic and natural characteristics and neighborhood identity, while providing privacy, community**

**space, and safety and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.**

- U-135      Site planning tools, such as clustering, shall be permitted in order to allow preservation or utilization of unique natural features within a development.**
  
- U-136      New urban residential developments should provide recreational space, community facilities and neighborhood circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists to increase opportunities for physical activity.**
  
- U-137      Residential developments should provide a variety of housing types and lot patterns through lot clustering, flexible setback requirements and mixed attached and detached housing.**
  
- U-138      Nonresidential uses, such as schools, religious facilities, libraries and small-scale retail and personal services, should be integrated into urban residential neighborhoods to create viable neighborhoods with reduced dependence on the automobile. 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.**

Multifamily residential development is important to King County's housing supply because it uses land and energy efficiently and provides opportunities for affordable rental and ownership housing. Multifamily development is defined as one building that contains two or more separate dwelling units. Multifamily developments can be apartments, duplexes, or townhouses.

- U-139      Multifamily residential development should provide common and private open space, variation in facades and other building design features which may include varying window treatments, building colors and materials, and light fixtures that will give a residential scale and identity to multifamily development.**

Generally, larger parcels of buildable vacant land in the Urban Growth Area have been preferred for development. Development of these large parcels, especially for attached units at higher densities, often provoked concerns about compatibility due to their scale and design.

As larger vacant lots become increasingly scarce, attention will turn more and more towards smaller vacant lots often located within built neighborhoods (i.e., infill) and to redevelopment. Residential

development proposals on small lots and redevelopment often can be an unobtrusive and desirable means of increasing density within existing neighborhoods. Infill development and redevelopment are necessary to achieve growth management objectives such as maximizing the efficient use of land and increasing the variety of housing choices and prices.

**U-140 King County should support infill and redevelopment proposals that serve to improve the overall character of existing communities or neighborhoods.**

## **6. Residential Site Improvement Standards and Public Services**

The following policies govern King County land use regulations and functional plans that contain improvement standards for the review of proposed rezones, residential subdivisions, short subdivisions, multifamily buildings and construction permits.

**U-141 Residential developments within the Urban Growth Area, including mobile home parks, shall provide the following improvements:**

- a. Paved streets (and alleys if appropriate), curbs and sidewalks, and internal walkways when appropriate;**
- b. Adequate parking and consideration of access to bus service and passenger facilities;**
- c. Street lighting and street trees;**
- d. Stormwater control;**
- e. Public water supply;**
- f. Public sewers; and**
- g. Landscaping around the perimeter and parking areas of multifamily developments.**

**U-142 Common facilities such as recreation space, internal walkways that provide convenient and safe inter- and intra-connectivity, roads, parking, solid waste and recycling areas should be included in multifamily developments.**

Neighborhood recreation space and parks are important amenities for residents. The higher the density, the more essential such amenities become to a desirable living environment. If the site of a proposed development is large enough, a park site dedication or private park site can be required as a condition of a rezone, subdivision or site plan approval.

**U-143 Recreation space based on the size of the developments shall be provided on**

**site, except that in limited cases, fee payments for local level park and outdoor recreation needs may be accepted by King County.**

**U-144 Recreation spaces located within a residential development, except those for elderly or other special needs populations, shall include a child's play area.**

**U-145 Recreation spaces located in residential developments in the Urban Area should include amenities such as play equipment, open grassy areas, barbecues, benches, trails and picnic tables.**

### **C. Commercial Land Use**

The Countywide Planning Policies call for a significant share of new jobs and housing to occur within cities and in urban centers, which are areas of concentrated employment and housing. The designated urban centers are to accommodate 15,000 jobs within a one-half-mile radius of a major transit stop, an average employment density of 50 jobs per gross acre and an average of 15 housing units per gross acre. All of the urban centers are in cities.

In addition to the urban centers, cities and unincorporated urban King County have existing intensive industrial, commercial and residential areas that will continue to grow and provide employment, services, shopping and housing opportunities, but not at the same level as urban centers. Three categories of centers are established for urban unincorporated areas of King County. Higher density, more-concentrated developed industrial and commercial areas are classified as unincorporated activity centers. Midrange centers are called community business centers and smaller, local centers are called neighborhood business centers. The locations of these centers are shown on the Urban Centers map at the end of this chapter. This plan also recognizes existing commercial and industrial development that is outside of unincorporated activity centers, community business centers and neighborhood business centers.

**U-146 Business/office park developments should be located in or adjacent to an unincorporated activity center. They may serve as a transition between office/retail areas and residential areas. They should be designed to take advantage of on-site or nearby structured parking and/or bus service and passenger facilities should be compatible with the objective of higher employment densities.**

**U-147 New commercial and office development shall locate in designated**

**unincorporated activity centers, community and neighborhood business centers, and in areas designated commercial outside of centers.**

Warehouse-style retail businesses, large retail complexes, stadiums, large churches and colleges are examples of land uses that serve as destinations from throughout the region. Such uses require a full range of urban services including transit, substantial parking, and access to arterials and freeways, and therefore should locate in the urban area where these services are available. In addition, these land uses have traffic and impervious surface impacts that are inappropriate for the Rural Area.

**U-148        New facilities and businesses that draw from throughout the region, such as large retail uses, large public assembly facilities and institutions of higher education should locate in the Urban Area.**

**1.        Unincorporated Activity Centers**

Unincorporated activity centers are the primary locations for commercial and industrial development in urban unincorporated King County. Currently, White Center is the only designated unincorporated activity center, as other such centers are now parts of cities. The *White Center Community Action Plan* establishes the size and mix of uses allowed in the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center.

**U-149        Unincorporated activity centers in urban areas should provide employment, housing, shopping, services and leisure-time amenities to meet the needs of the regional 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. Multifamily 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. Farmer's Markets**

**U-150        Within unincorporated activity centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Urban Residential with a density of twelve to forty-eight dwelling units per acre; Community Business; Neighborhood Business; Office and Industrial.**

**U-151** King County may designate new unincorporated activity centers or expand existing unincorporated activity centers only through a subarea planning process which should address:

- a. The relationship of the entire center to its surrounding uses;
- b. Availability of supporting public services;
- c. The function of the center to other centers in the sub-region;
- d. The need for additional commercial and industrial development;
- e. The size and boundaries of the center; and
- f. Zoning.

**U-152** The size, uses and boundaries of unincorporated activity centers should be consistent with the following criteria:

- a. More than forty acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally critical areas;
- b. Retail space based on the amount of residential development planned for the surrounding area to provide for community and regional shopping needs; and
- c. Retail space should not exceed sixty acres and 600,000 square feet unless it is served by direct freeway access by a principal or minor arterial and is well served by transit.

**U-153** Design features of unincorporated activity centers should include the following:

- a. Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes with access to each major destination including schools, community centers and commercial areas;
- b. Buildings close to sidewalks to promote walking and access to transit;
- c. Compact design with close grouping of compatible uses;
- d. Off-street parking in multistory structures 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, landscaping and traffic control;
- i. Screening of unsightly views, such as heavy machinery, outdoor storage areas, loading docks and parking areas from the view of adjacent uses and from arterials; and

- j. **Signs should be regulated to reduce glare and other adverse visual impacts on nearby residences, without limiting their potential contribution to the color and character of the center.**

**U-154**      **Development within the designated White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, as shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, shall be in accordance with the White Center Community Action Plan.**

**U-155**      **The White Center Community Action Plan establishes the following zoning as appropriate within the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center: Urban Residential with a density of twelve to forty-eight dwelling units per acre, Neighborhood Business, Community Business, Office and Industrial.**

**U-156**      **In the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, existing Industrial uses should be zoned and regulated to preserve their use into the future. Conversion of industrial properties to other uses shall be strictly limited.**

White Center was selected as one of three case study areas for further study as part of the King County Land Use Transportation Air Quality and Health project, now known as HealthScape. Information from the study will show which types of changes in the urban form of the area or in the transportation system will lead to an increase in public health. These results should be used to guide development in the White Center area and to prioritize capital expenditures. Additionally, the redevelopment of Park Lake Homes was selected as a demonstration project for low-impact development in the county.

**U-157**      **In the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, new major residential developments should include low-impact design features and should promote public health by increasing opportunities for physical activity in daily life. The development should include: safe walkways and bicycle lanes with access to commercial areas, schools, and community facilities; trails; and pocket parks.**

## **2. Community Business Centers**

Community business centers are primarily retail developments designed to serve a nearby market area of 15,000 to 40,000 people. Community business centers should be sited so they do not adversely affect other centers and are easily accessible by automobile or public transportation. Community business centers should be designed to be compatible with adjacent residential uses, and should promote pedestrian and bicycle access.

- U-158** Community business centers in the urban areas should provide primarily shopping and personal services for nearby residents. Offices and multifamily housing are also encouraged. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be excluded. Community business centers should include the following mix of uses:
- a. Retail stores and services;
  - b. Professional offices;
  - c. Community and human services;
  - d. Multifamily housing as part of a mixed-use development, with residential densities of at least 12 units per acre when well served by transit;
  - e. fruit and produce stands or small outlets offering locally produced value-added food product, such as cheese, meats, preserves.
- U-159** Designated community business centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Expansion of existing or designation of new community business centers shall be permitted only through a subarea planning process. Redevelopment of existing community business centers is encouraged.
- U-160** Within community business centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business, Community Business and Office.
- U-161** The specific size and boundaries of community business centers should be consistent with the criteria listed below.
- a. More than ten acres and up to 40 acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally 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. Must be located at the intersection of two principal or minor arterials.
- U-162** Design features of community business centers should include the following:
- a. Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes;
  - b. Close grouping of stores;
  - c. Off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings, or enclosed within

- buildings;
- d. **Public art;**
- e. **Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings and established character;**
- f. **Landscaping, which may include planters and street trees;**
- g. **Appropriate signage;**
- h. **Public seating areas; and**
- i. **Architectural features which provide variation between buildings or contiguous storefronts.**

### **3. 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.

**U-163 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 excluded.**

**Neighborhood business centers should include the following mix of uses:**

- a. **Retail stores and services;**
- b. **Professional offices;**
- c. **Multifamily housing as part of a mixed-use development with residential densities up to 12 units per acre when convenient to a minor arterial. Higher densities are appropriate when the center is a walkable community, convenient to a principal arterial or well-served by transit; and**
- d. **Farmers' Markets.**

**U-164 Designated neighborhood business centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Expansion of existing or the designation of new neighborhood business centers shall only be permitted through a subarea planning process. Redevelopment of existing neighborhood business centers is encouraged.**

**U-165 Within neighborhood business centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business and Office.**

- U-166**      **The specific size and boundaries of neighborhood business centers should be consistent with the criteria listed below.**
- a. Ten acres or less in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally sensitive features;
  - b. Designed to provide convenience shopping for a market population of 8,000 to 15,000 people;
  - c. Located on a minor arterial with adequate traffic capacity;
  - d. Serviced by intersections free of traffic congestion caused by topography or poor road design; and
  - e. Located one to three miles from another neighborhood business center.

- U-167**      **Design features of neighborhood business centers should include the following:**
- a. Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes;
  - b. Close grouping of stores;
  - c. Off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings, or enclosed within buildings;
  - d. Public art;
  - e. Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings or established character;
  - f. Landscaping, which may include planters and street trees;
  - g. Appropriate signage;
  - h. Public seating areas; and
  - i. Architectural features which provide variation between buildings or contiguous storefronts.

#### **4. Commercial Development Outside of Centers**

The Commercial Outside of Center (CO) Land Use designation recognizes commercial uses predating this plan that were located outside a designated center. The CO designation is also appropriate as a transitional designation within certain potential annexation areas. In these areas, the county will utilize the memorandum of understanding and applicable comprehensive plan policies to determine the appropriate zoning to implement this transitional designation.

- U-168**      **Stand-alone commercial developments legally established outside designated centers in the Urban Growth Area may be recognized with the CO designation and appropriate commercial zoning. When more detailed 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-169** The CO designation may 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 in order 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 planning process with the city is completed.

## **5. Commercial Site Improvement Standards and Public Services**

The following policy governs King County land use regulations and functional plans that contain improvement standards for the review of proposed rezones and commercial construction permits.

**U-170** Commercial, retail and industrial developments should foster community, create enjoyable outdoor areas and balance needs of automobile movement with pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety. Commercial and industrial developments shall provide the following improvements:

- a. Paved streets;**
- b. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes in commercial and retail areas;**
- c. Adequate parking for employees and business users;**
- d. Landscaping along or within streets, sidewalks and parking areas to provide an attractive appearance;**
- e. Adequate stormwater control, including curbs, gutters and stormwater retention facilities;**
- f. Public water supply;**
- g. Public sewers; and**
- h. Controlled traffic access to arterials and intersections.**

## **6. 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 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-171**      **Within the UGA but outside unincorporated activity centers, properties with existing industrial uses shall be protected. The county may use tools such as special district overlays to identify them for property owners and residents of surrounding neighborhoods.**
  
- U-172**      **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-173**      **Small amounts of retail and service uses in industrial areas may be allowed for convenience to employees and users.**
  
- U-174**      **King County, in collaboration with cities and the development community, should create and fund a process to clean up and reclaim polluted industrial areas in order to expand the land available for industrial development.**

### **D. Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) and Fully Contained Communities (FCCs)**

Within the designated UGA, development of large land ownerships may offer the public and the property owner opportunities to realize mutual benefits when such development is coordinated through the review process as an Urban Planned Development (UPD). Possible public benefits include greater preservation of public open space, proponent contributions to major capital improvement needs, diversity in housing types and affordability, and the establishment of the specific range and intensity of uses for the entire Urban Planned Development. A property owner and the public could benefit from the efficiency of combined hearings and land use decision making, as well as the establishment of comprehensive and consistently applied project-wide mitigations guiding the review of subsequent land use approvals.

- U-175**      **Sites for potential Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) may be designated within the established Urban Growth Area to realize mutual benefits for the public and the**

**property owner. Two UPD areas have been designated by the county: the Bear Creek UPD area, comprised of Redmond Ridge (formerly known as Northridge) UPD, Trilogy at Redmond Ridge (formerly known as Blakely Ridge) UPD, and the proposed Redmond Ridge East UPD; and Cougar Mountain Village UPD. Future UPD sites in the Urban Growth Area shall be designated through a subarea planning process, or through a comprehensive plan amendment initiated by the property owner.**

- U-176 The creation of Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) is intended to serve as a model for achieving a mix of uses, appropriate development patterns, and high quality design as well as providing for public benefits which shall include:**
- a. Open space and critical areas protection;**
  - b. Diversity in housing types and affordability;**
  - c. Quality site design; and**
  - d. Transit and nonmotorized transportation opportunities.**

The Bear Creek UPD area was first designated for urban development in 1989 in the Bear Creek Community Plan. The urban designation of this area under the GMA was established in the Countywide Planning Policies in 1992 and affirmed in 1994. The Bear Creek UPD area was included in the Urban Growth Area designated in the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan. Since the adoption of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, both Redmond Ridge and Trilogy have been approved as Urban Planned Developments and King County has entered into development agreements governing the development of these sites. The legality of these development approvals was challenged and these legal challenges have been rejected. Therefore, these sites will be, and are being, developed at urban densities.

Through the adoption of the King County Comprehensive Plan 2000 Update, King County reaffirmed its urban designation of the Bear Creek UPD area. In addition to the reasons that led the county (and the region) to originally include this area within the county's UGA, when the county adopted the 2000 update, it noted that: two sites within this area had been approved for urban development after the adoption of the original GMA comprehensive plan; significant infrastructure improvements had been made at these sites; and the ultimate development of these sites was proceeding in accordance with issued permit approvals. The existence of these urban improvements further supported a conclusion that this area is characterized by urban growth within the meaning of the GMA and was therefore appropriately included within the county's UGA.

Since the county considered and adopted the 2000 update, significant development within the Bear Creek UPD area has taken place. The UPD permits approved by the county required the construction of infrastructure needed to support urban development of the Bear Creek UPD area. Those infrastructure

improvements have now been completed or are under construction. This includes sanitary sewer trunk lines and pump stations; water trunk lines, pump stations, and storage facilities; stormwater collection, detention, treatment and discharge facilities; other utilities; a park and open space system linked by trails; and required road improvements. In addition, King County has granted final plat approval for lots for more than 2,100 of the dwelling units approved by the Redmond Ridge and Trilogy UPD permits and more than 1,600 of those dwelling units have been built, are under construction, or have been permitted. Furthermore, major community facilities and services such as the 18-hole golf course and clubhouse, the Redmond Ridge Community Center, and the retail center and grocery store have been completed or are under construction. All of these developments support the conclusion that the Redmond Ridge and Trilogy UPD sites are now fully characterized by and irrevocably committed to urban growth, and the county therefore reaffirms its urban designation of the Bear Creek UPD area.

The urban designation of the Bear Creek area includes one portion of the original urban area that has not yet been approved for development. However, this area, now referred to as Redmond Ridge East, is the subject of pending applications for approval of a UPD permit and an FCC permit. Those permits would authorize the urban development of Redmond Ridge East. Redmond Ridge East would be served by the urban infrastructure that has already been constructed to serve the Redmond Ridge and Trilogy UPD sites. The county reaffirms its urban designation of the Redmond Ridge East for the following reasons: this site has always been treated by King County as part of the Bear Creek UPD urban area; this site is adjacent to the urban development that has already occurred and that will continue to occur at Trilogy and Redmond Ridge; this site is located in relationship to the rest of the Bear Creek UPD area so as to be appropriate for urban growth; and this site is an area that will be served by existing urban public facilities and services that have been provided in accordance with Trilogy and Redmond Ridge UPD permit requirements.

The Growth Management Act allows counties to establish a process, as part of the UGA designation, for reviewing proposals to authorize new Fully Contained Communities (FCC). Criteria for approval of FCCs are contained in RCW 36.70A.350. If a county establishes in its comprehensive plan a process for authorizing FCCs, it must adopt procedures for approving FCCs in its development regulations. King County has established a new fully contained community, consisting of the Bear Creek UPD area.

**U-177      King County has established a new Fully Contained Community. One area is designated through this plan shown on the Land Use Map as a Fully Contained Community: the Bear Creek UPD area comprised of Trilogy at Redmond Ridge, Redmond Ridge, and Redmond Ridge East Urban Planned Development sites. Nothing in these policies shall affect the continued validity of the approved Urban Planned Development permits for either of these sites. This FCC designation may be**

implemented by separate or coordinated FCC permits.

**U-178** The population, household, and employment growth targets and allocations for the county's UGA in this plan include the Bear Creek UPD area. Accordingly, the requirements in RCW 36.70A.350(2) that the county reserve a portion of the 20-year population projection for allocation to new Fully Contained Communities has been satisfied.

**U-179** The review and approval process for a Fully Contained Community (FCC) permit shall be the same as that for an Urban Planned Development (UPD) permit, except the following additional criteria shall be met, pursuant to the provisions of RCW 36.70A.350:

- a. New infrastructure (including transportation and utilities infrastructure) is provided for and impact fees are established and imposed on the FCC consistent with the requirements of RCW 82.02.050;
- b. Transit-oriented site planning and traffic demand management programs are implemented in the FCC. Pedestrian, bicycle, and high occupancy vehicle facilities are given high priority in design and management of the FCC;
- c. Buffers are provided between the FCC and adjacent non-FCC areas. Perimeter buffers located within the perimeter boundaries of the FCC delineated boundaries, consisting of either landscaped areas with native vegetation or natural areas, shall be provided and maintained to reduce impacts on adjacent lands;
- d. A mix of uses is provided to offer jobs, housing, and services to the residents of the new FCC. No particular percentage formula for the mix of uses should be required. Instead, the mix of uses for a FCC should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, in light of the geography, market demand area, demographics, transportation patterns, and other relevant factors affecting the proposed FCC. Service uses in the FCC may also serve residents outside the FCC, where appropriate;
- e. Affordable housing is provided within the new FCC for a broad range of income levels, including housing affordable by households with income levels below and near the medium income for King County;
- f. Environmental protection has been addressed and provided for in the new FCC, at levels at least equivalent to those imposed by adopted King County environmental regulations;
- g. Development regulations are established to ensure urban growth will not occur in

adjacent nonurban areas. Such regulations shall include but are not limited to rural zoning of adjacent Rural Areas, FCC permit conditions requiring sizing of FCC water and sewer systems so as to ensure urban growth will not occur in adjacent nonurban areas; and/or FCC permit conditions prohibiting connection by property owners in the adjacent Rural Area (except public school sites) to the FCC sewer and water mains or lines;

- h. Provision is made to mitigate impacts of the FCC on designated agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resource lands; and
- i. The plan for the new FCC is consistent with the development regulations established for the protection of critical areas by King County pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170.

For purposes of evaluating a FCC permit the following direction is provided: The term "fully contained" is not intended to prohibit all interaction between a FCC and adjacent lands but to limit impacts on adjacent lands and contain them within the development site as much as possible. "Fully contained" should be achieved through the imposition of development conditions that limit impacts on adjacent and nearby lands and do not increase pressures on adjacent lands for urban development. "Fully contained" is not intended to mandate that all utilities and public service needed by an urban population both start and end within the property (since sewer, water, power, and roads, are of such a nature that the origin and/or outfall cannot reasonable both exist within the property boundaries), but that the costs and provisions for those utilities and public services that are generated primarily by the FCC (schools, police, parks, employment, retail needs) be reasonably accommodated within its boundaries and not increase pressure for more urban development on adjacent properties.

## **E. Urban Separators and the Four-to-One Program**

The Countywide Planning Policies call for the county and cities to implement urban separators. Different from the Rural Area and 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 environmentally 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 mapped on the Land Use 2008 map in Chapter 1.

**U-180** 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. These urban corridors should include and link parks and other lands that contain significant environmentally sensitive features, provide wildlife habitat or critical resource protection, contain defining physical features, or contain historic resources. The residential density for land so designated should be maintained at one unit per acre, provided that lands that are sending sites under the Transfer of Density Program may transfer density at a rate of at least four units per acre.

**U-181** King County should actively pursue designating urban separators in the unincorporated area and work with the cities to establish permanent urban separators within the unincorporated area that link with and enhance King County's urban separator corridors.

**U-182** 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 regulatory measures.

While urban separators complement the regional open space system by helping to define urban communities, the King County Four-to-One Program provides an opportunity to add land to the regional open space system through the dedication of permanent open space. The purpose of the program is to create a contiguous band of open space, running north and south along the main Urban Growth Area Boundary. Changes to the UGA through this program are processed as Land Use Amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan, subject to the provisions in K.C.C. chapter 20.18.

**U-183** Through the Four-to-One Program, King County shall actively pursue dedication of open space along the original Urban Growth Area line adopted in the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan. Through this program, one acre of Rural Area land may be added to the Urban Growth Area in exchange for a dedication to King County of four acres of permanent open space.

- U-184** King County shall evaluate Four-to-One proposals for both quality of open space and feasibility of urban development. The highest-quality proposals shall be recommended for adoption as amendments to the Urban Growth Area. Lands preserved as open space shall retain their Rural Area designations and should generally be configured in such a way as to connect with open space on adjacent properties.
- U-185** King County shall use the following criteria for evaluating open space in Four-to-One proposals:
- a. Quality of fish and wildlife habitat areas;
  - b. Connections to regional open space systems;
  - c. Protection of wetlands, stream corridors, ground water and water bodies;
  - d. Unique natural, biological, cultural, historical, or archeological features; and
  - e. Size of proposed open space dedication and connection to other open space dedications along the Urban Growth Area line.
- U-186** King County shall preserve the open space acquired through this program primarily as natural areas, passive recreation sites or resource lands for farming or forestry. King County may allow the following additional uses only if located on a small portion of the open space, provided that these uses are found to be compatible with the site's natural open space values and functions such as those listed in the preceding policy:
- a. Trails;
  - b. Natural-appearing stormwater facilities;
  - c. Compensatory mitigation of wetland losses on the urban designated portion of the project, consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan and the Critical Area Ordinance; and
  - d. Active recreation uses not to exceed five percent of the total open space area. Support services and facilities for the active recreation uses may locate within the active recreation area only, and shall not exceed five percent of the active recreation area. An active recreation area shall not be used to satisfy the active recreation requirements for the urban designated portion of the project as required by K.C.C. Title 21A.
- U-187** Land added to the Urban Growth Area under the Four-to-One Program shall have a minimum density of four dwellings per acre and shall be physically contiguous to the original Urban Growth Area, unless there are limitations due to the presence of

critical areas, and shall be able to be served by sewers and other efficient urban services and facilities; provided that such sewer and other urban services and facilities shall be provided directly from the urban area and shall not cross the open space or rural area. In some cases, lands must meet affordable housing requirements under this program. The total area added to the Urban Growth Area as a result of this policy shall not exceed 4,000 acres.

**U-188** King County shall amend the Urban Growth Area to add rural lands to the UGA consistent with Policy U-183 during the annual comprehensive plan amendment process. Open space dedication shall occur at final formal plat recording. If the applicant decides not to pursue urban development or fails to record the final plat prior to expiration of preliminary plat approval, the urban properties shall be restored to a rural designation during the next annual review of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

---

---

## **II. Potential Annexation Areas**

---

---

There are 226,300 people living in urban unincorporated King County, as reported in the 2007 Annual Growth Report. Subsequent to this report, approximately 31,000 residents have transitioned to a city through annexations to Auburn and Renton. The 2008 urban incorporated population estimated at 195,300 nears the populations of Vancouver or Tacoma, the second and third largest cities in the state. The land base in these areas is primarily residential, with limited amounts of commercial and retail development. Much of the urban unincorporated area is made up of geographically isolated islands surrounded by cities or adjacent to the urban growth boundary. Because these areas are scattered across the county, the provision of local services is costly. The lack of a substantive urban unincorporated area tax base exacerbates these difficulties, and covering the cost of serving these areas reduces the amount of revenue available for regional services and for local services in the Rural Area. Therefore, King County has a strong fiscal interest in seeing the remaining urban unincorporated areas be annexed to cities next several years.

The annexation of urban unincorporated areas is also good public policy. The State Growth Management Act and the regionally adopted Countywide Planning Policies stipulate that counties are the appropriate providers of regional services and of local services to the Rural Area. For their part, cities are the appropriate providers of local urban services to all areas within the designated urban growth boundary. This logical split of government services is in part a reflection of the greater taxing authority afforded to cities by the state Legislature. County taxing authority remains similar to what was historically adopted in the state constitution. Annexation is a means to achieve the desired governmental service and land use vision set forth in regional policy and state law.

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. King County has a long history of engaging in annexation discussions with urban unincorporated area residents. Though the county's formal role in affecting annexation is limited, in 2004 the County Council adopted Motion No. 12018, a multi-year initiative intended to accelerate the pace of the annexation of urban areas by establishing the Annexation Initiative (AI). Since the establishment of the AI, there have been seven elections for annexation or incorporation in the county resulting in four successful elections and approximately 35,000 residents transitioning to a city. Of these seven elections,

four were approved by voters with the areas annexing; one was approved by voters and subsequently rejected by the proposed annexing city; two annexation and one incorporation effort were rejected by voters. The county will continue to work collaboratively with urban unincorporated area residents and with the cities to plan for orderly and timely governance transitions.

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

**U-201 In order to meet the Growth Management Act and the regionally adopted Countywide Planning Policies goal of becoming a regional service provider for all county residents and a local service provider in the Rural Area, 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-202 To help create an environment that is supportive of annexations, King County shall work with cities and with Unincorporated Area Councils, neighborhood groups, local business organizations, public service providers and other stakeholders on annexation-related activities. King County will also seek changes at the state level that would facilitate annexation of urban unincorporated areas.**

**U-203 The Interim Potential Annexation Areas Map adopted by the Growth Management Planning Council illustrates city-designated potential annexation areas (PAAs), contested areas (where more than one city claims a PAA), 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 time frame for annexation.**

**U-204 King County shall support annexation proposals that are consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies and the Washington State Growth Management Act, and when the area proposed for annexation is wholly within the annexing city's officially adopted PAA, and is not part of a contested area.**

**U-205 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; 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-206 King County shall favor annexation over incorporation as the preferred method of governance transition. King County will not support incorporations when the proposed incorporation area is financially infeasible.**

**U-207 King County shall work with cities to jointly develop preannexation agreements to address the transition of service provision from the county to the annexing cities. The development of such agreements should include a comprehensive public involvement process. Pre-annexation 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 PAAs, 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 PAA, 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.**

As part of its annexation initiative, King County will explore new options for revenue generation to make the provision of services to urban unincorporated areas financially sustainable. If annexation is not occurring at a pace consistent with the intent of these policies, the county may consider utilizing its land use authority to encourage new development that will generate higher tax revenues.

**U-208 King County shall consider initiating new subarea planning processes for the urban unincorporated areas to assess the feasibility of allowing additional commercial, industrial and high-density residential development through the application of new zoning.**

---

---

# III. Housing

---

---

## A. Housing Choice and Opportunity Throughout King County

Adequate choices and opportunities are essential to fully address the spectrum of housing needs for all King County residents. A basic goal of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) is to encourage affordable housing. Likewise, the King County Comprehensive Plan promotes affordable housing for all county residents by supporting adequate funding, zoning, and regional cooperation to create new and diverse housing choices in communities throughout the county.

Most housing is financed by and developed in the private sector. The ability of the private sector to develop affordable housing is affected by a wide range of market forces. Local government actions such as land-use policies, development regulations and infrastructure finance also have a significant impact on housing affordability.

Public funding and incentive programs are essential to address housing needs of lower-income county residents, including people with special needs, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. The policies in this chapter address low-cost housing development, preservation and assistance programs needed to ensure safe and adequate housing for lower-income and special needs residents.

In addition, the King County Consortium represents unincorporated areas and most county cities outside of Seattle. This consortium prepares a Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan which outlines the needs, resources and housing goals to be achieved. An annual action plan details specific housing and community development objectives.

### 1. Range of Housing Choices

Interjurisdictional cooperation and public/private partnerships are needed to address the full range of critical housing needs.

**U-301 King County shall work with cities and the private sector to encourage a wide range of housing within the Urban Growth Area to meet the needs of our diverse**

**population, support economic growth, ensure an equitable and rational distribution of low-income and affordable housing throughout the county and provide housing choices for people of all income levels.**

**U-302 Through subarea and regional planning with cities, incentives programs and funding initiatives, King County shall plan for housing to meet the needs of all economic segments of the population throughout the Urban Growth Area and within Rural Towns. King County shall plan for construction or preservation of housing units affordable to households as follows:**

- 16% of housing stock should be affordable to households below 30% of the King County median income;**
- 8% of housing stock should be affordable to households between 30% and 50% of the King County median income;**
- 17% of housing stock should be affordable to households between 50% and 80% of the King County median income;**
- 20% of housing stock should be affordable to households between 80% and 120% of the King County median income; and**
- 39% of housing stock should be affordable to households above 120% of the King County median income.**

**U-303 King County should promote the preservation and development of affordable rental housing opportunities for households earning up to 90% of the King County median income by providing a range of incentives to private sector developers as well as incentives and subsidies to non-profit developers.**

**U-304 King County should promote the preservation and development of affordable ownership housing opportunities for households earning up to 115% of the King County median income by providing a range of incentives to private sector developers as well as incentives and subsidies to non-profit developers.**

Meeting these objectives will entail providing sufficient land for a variety of affordable housing such as higher-density single-family homes, multifamily properties, manufactured housing, accessory apartments and mixed-use developments.

**U-305 King County, in partnership with other jurisdictions, shall evaluate achievement of countywide and local goals for housing for all economic sectors of the population by analyzing housing indicators, adopted land use regulations, actions that encourage**

development and preservation of low and moderate-income housing and the effect of market factors on housing development. The results of this evaluation shall be used to develop new or revised policies, programs, regulations, and incentives to better meet the Countywide Planning Policies' housing goals.

- U-306** King County should work with cities to increase opportunities for affordable housing development by assuring there is sufficient land capable of being developed for multifamily housing, small lot single-family homes and townhouses, and manufactured housing parks, and other types of housing, such as accessory dwelling units, that tend to be affordable to low-, moderate- and middle-income households.
- U-307** King County shall provide opportunities for attached and detached accessory dwelling units in urban residential areas and shall encourage all jurisdictions within King County to adopt provisions to allow accessory dwelling units in their communities.
- U-308** King County shall promote development of attached accessory dwelling units in all urban residential zones. King County shall allow detached accessory dwelling units in all urban residential zones on lots greater than 5,000 square feet in size subject to compliance with supplemental parking, safety and setback requirements that may be required of the detached accessory unit.
- U-309** King County shall work with other jurisdictions to eliminate barriers for affordable and special needs housing development.
- U-310** King County should support housing development that is compatible with surrounding uses by:
- a. Providing information on potential development sites;
  - b. Funding services, amenities, infrastructure and access improvements;
  - c. Developing public financing techniques which give housing development and redevelopment in designated areas, such as urban centers, a market advantage; and
  - d. Making transit and rideshare services available.
- U-311** King County should encourage land use and investment strategies to stimulate mixed-use and mixed-income developments as a way to integrate neighborhoods and increase housing choices.

- U-312** King County should encourage affordable housing through redevelopment of nonresidential buildings, such as schools and commercial buildings, in locations suitable for housing and in ways that preserve significant historic features where appropriate.
- U-313** King County should encourage the development and preservation of residential buildings that have shared facilities, such as single-room occupancy hotels and boarding homes, to provide opportunities for lower rents.
- U-314** King County shall provide opportunities and encourage other jurisdictions to provide opportunities for housing types that provide lower-cost ownership opportunities including manufactured housing, condominiums, townhouses and cottage-style housing.
- U-315** King County should explore adding affordable housing as a benefit criteria in the Transfer of Development Credits program, especially as the program is expanded to include incorporated areas of King County.
- U-316** All Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) and other large housing developments shall provide a mix of housing types and densities, including housing that is affordable to a range of households including low-, moderate-, and middle-income households. This mix should include housing opportunities for households with special needs, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

## **2. Ensuring and Expanding Affordable Housing Resources**

- U-317** King County should initiate and actively participate in regional solutions to critical affordable housing needs. Cities, community and housing representatives should be invited to identify and implement solutions.
- U-318** King County shall work with cities and community representatives to establish new, countywide funding sources for housing development, preservation and related services, such that each city and King County contribute on an equitable basis.
- U-319** King County shall work with other jurisdictions, housing developers, and service providers throughout the state to urge federal and state government to expand both

**capital and operating funding for low-income housing, including low-income housing for people with special needs.**

**U-320 King County should work with jurisdictions and housing providers across the state to urge state and federal governments to expand funding for direct assistance services such as rental assistance and emergency services.**

**U-321 King County shall participate in the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness to sustain and support a coordinated, regional response to homelessness that includes access to homelessness prevention services, emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent affordable housing, and appropriate support services for homeless families, single adults, and youth.**

**U-322 King County should work with local employers to develop affordable employer-assisted housing opportunities located within commuting distance of the employment site, using alternative modes of transportation.**

## **B. Affordable Housing Development**

The supply of affordable housing serving low-, moderate- and middle-income households has not kept up with the increasing demand in the Puget Sound region due to the soaring costs associated with new housing construction. In King County today, a substantial need exists for low-income rental housing and for moderately priced homes that can be purchased by first-time homebuyers.

Existing units will provide some of the affordable housing needed for low-income households in the future. However, with the projected growth in the number of low- to moderate-income households and the short supply of lower-cost housing available today, new construction must include affordable housing. Efforts to provide sufficient land and infrastructure and reduced development costs will help make new units affordable. In addition, a combination of incentives programs and funding will help keep rents affordable and expand opportunities for first-time homebuyers.

### **1. Development Incentives for Affordable Housing**

Incentives that will help developers provide low- and moderate-income housing include reduction in development costs or an expansion of the development potential on the property.

- U-323**      **Density bonuses and other incentives shall be available to both single-family and multifamily developments to promote development of affordable rental or ownership housing.**
  
- U-324**      **King County shall exempt payment of impact fees to promote development of affordable rental or ownership housing.**
  
- U-325**      **King County should explore methods to expedite plan reviews for affordable housing projects, in coordination with other incentive or subsidy programs.**
  
- U-326**      **King County shall explore coordination of incentive programs with cities to develop common program guidelines and reduce administrative costs.**
  
- U-327**      **King County should provide density bonuses in all urban residential zones for the construction of small detached single-family homes limited in size by covenant, and for new manufactured housing units.**
  
- U-328**      **King County should provide expedited building permit review for all affordable housing projects that utilize affordable housing incentive programs, subsidies, tax abatement or tax credits.**
  
- U-329**      **King County should provide reduction in parking requirements for affordable housing projects that utilize affordable housing incentive programs, subsidies, tax abatement or tax credits.**

## **2.      Housing Development Subsidies**

Federal, state and local housing programs provide vital assistance to low-income households. King County has used federal funds for housing for more than two decades, but it is not adequate for local needs. During the past five years, King County also has used local funds for development and preservation of affordable housing. As a result, residents have more housing choices. Residents who need emergency housing can stay in the community of their choice and their children can continue to attend schools. Local housing funds have also leveraged significant private investment as well as other public funding resources.

Housing for very low-income households is usually developed by private, nonprofit agencies or by public housing authorities. By using federal subsidy programs administered at the state or local level, private for-profit developers and lenders also are active in low-income housing development.

- U-330** King County shall give priority in its housing funding programs to developments that serve low-income individuals and households, secure appropriate housing options for people with special needs, prevent displacement of low-income people, or provide low-income and special needs housing along with social services.
- U-331** King County should explore increasing affordable housing opportunities, especially in areas with an existing or forecast shortage of affordable housing, through new programs, development incentives, and changes to funding program guidelines to facilitate new construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition to preserve affordable housing.
- U-332** King County should seek opportunities to fund programs and projects where county funds are matched by additional public and private loans and contributions, increasing the amount of housing that can be developed.
- U-333** King County should expand its use of surplus county-owned property and air-rights over county-owned property for affordable housing and should explore its use for other public benefits, such as human services, and consider conveyance of properties to public or nonprofit housing developers and agencies at below-market cost. Surplus county property shall be prioritized for housing development that will be consistent with the King County Consortium Consolidated Plan and the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.
- U-334** King County should support the efforts of nonprofit developers and housing agencies to increase the supply of housing for low-income households, through technical assistance and funding for capacity building, training, and predevelopment activities.
- U-335** King County should encourage and support efforts by nonprofit housing developers, housing agencies, and service providers to develop long-term nongovernment funding sources such as planned giving, endowments, and related economic development ventures.

**U-336** King County should support programs 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.

**U-337** King County should promote the incorporation of the principles of healthy communities and homes, sustainability, and greenhouse gas emissions mitigation in affordable housing development. King County should consider the degree to which affordable housing developments implement sustainable development principles as one criterion for providing subsidies to nonprofit developers and housing agencies.

### **C. Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing**

This plan calls for more residential growth by preserving existing housing stock and developing new units on vacant parcels within established neighborhoods. These locations can offer affordable housing that is close to jobs, transportation and services. Housing development can also provide welcome improvements to communities suffering from a lack of investment. However, new development in established communities may result in the loss of existing low-cost housing. For example, when existing affordable housing stock is demolished or upgraded to create market rate units, neighborhoods lose housing for its low-income residents. Low-cost housing is a community resource we should strive to preserve.

Redevelopment policies must be balanced with the need to preserve existing low-cost housing and neighborhoods. Retention of affordable housing can be encouraged through appropriate zoning and development regulations, financial incentives, rehabilitation programs, historic preservation, and acquisition strategies.

Additionally, preservation of affordable housing minimizes health and safety risks and provides residential stability. Historic features to existing buildings are also preserved. In combination, these efforts increase livability and help establish the character of existing neighborhoods.

**U-338** King County should develop and expand incentives and subsidy programs to preserve affordable housing threatened by market forces and expiring federal subsidies. Relocation assistance and replacement housing should be developed, where feasible, to help low-income households when displacement is unavoidable.

- U-339** King County should explore land use and financial incentives to preserve and improve existing housing in redeveloping areas through the use of programs such as transfer of development rights, tax credits and tax abatements for low-income housing and tax abatements and restoration loans for housing designated as a historic landmark.
- U-340** King County should assist owners of rental properties serving low- and moderate-income residents to acquire financing for building health and safety improvements in exchange for long-term agreements to maintain affordable rents.
- U-341** King County should work with financial institutions and other housing agencies to expand resources for housing rehabilitation through techniques such as reverse mortgage programs and loan pools.
- U-342** 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.
- U-343** King County shall support ongoing efforts to maintain and preserve existing mobile home parks, at an appropriate level of safety and habitability, as a source of affordable housing for low-income homeowners through zoning, funding for acquisition and rehabilitation of parks and homes.
- U-344** King County should consider the constraints of rehabilitation, legalization of accessory dwelling units, and historic preservation, so usable structures are rehabilitated to an appropriate level of safety and habitability.
- U-345** Development standards should promote lower-cost infill development such as accessory dwelling units and cottage-style housing in a manner that allows existing housing to be retained through measures such as an innovative or flexible building envelope, access and infrastructure standards.

## **D. Access to Housing**

An important goal of addressing affordable housing needs is the successful integration of housing for low-income households into the larger community. This can be accomplished by:

- Siting community facilities and affordable housing with convenient access to employment, transportation and services;
- Adopting favorable land use policies and regulations;
- Increasing housing choices for special needs residents;
- Making reasonable accommodations for people living with disabilities;
- Permitting group living situations with supportive services; and
- Establishing positive relationships with neighbors of affordable housing.

Publicly funded developments can contribute to increasing access to housing for lower-income and special needs residents through new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing.

For special needs groups, public policies favor community-based, independent living in small residences such as single-family homes or apartments. These policies are supported by the King County Fair Housing Ordinance as well as state and federal laws that prohibit housing discrimination against protected classes, including people with disabilities.

- U-346      King County shall promote opportunities for publicly funded housing, including housing for low-income people with special needs, by:**
- a. Adopting land use policies and regulations that treat publicly funded housing and other low-income housing the same as housing of a similar size and density;**
  - b. Adopting funding and program policies that encourage integration of assisted housing within communities and a fair distribution of publicly funded housing throughout the county. However, mandatory dispersion requirements which limit where publicly funded housing may locate, should not be applied; and**
  - c. Encouraging developers and owners of publicly funded housing units to undertake activities to establish and maintain positive relationships with neighbors.**

- U-347      King County shall make reasonable accommodations in its rules, policies, practices and services when such accommodations may be necessary to afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling.**

- U-348      King County should develop and adopt standards for publicly funded housing that will:**
- a. Increase the ability of people with special needs to visit or have physical access to housing units regardless of their residency status;**
  - b. Allow household members to age in place; and**

- c. **Include universal design principles that increase the amount of housing that is accessible and usable by all persons.**

- U-349 King County should support the ability of people, especially the elderly and persons with disabilities, to find housing opportunities that allow them to live as independently as possible in the housing and community of their choice.**
- U-350 King County shall prohibit special requirements through land-use regulations, restrictive covenants and conditional or special use permits that limit the ability of persons from protected classes (as defined in the King County Fair Housing Ordinance) to live in residences of their choice.**
- U-351 King County shall permit group living situations, including those where residents receive such supportive services as counseling, foster care or medical supervision, within a single-family house or apartment.**
- U-352 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 low- and moderate-income people and people with special needs.**
- U-353 King County should use land use planning and funding programs to help site community facilities and assisted publicly funded housing so that low- and moderate-income residents and persons with special needs have convenient access to community and transportation services.**

## **E. Reducing Development Costs**

Rising costs have contributed to increases in rents and housing prices at all price levels. These costs are associated with land acquisition, construction, financing, permit processes, roads and utilities and market demand. Although some of these cost increases fall outside the control of local governments, others are directly affected by public policy decisions. Public policies should be evaluated for implications related to the cost of housing development. Cost-saving approaches should be studied. Strategies for increasing favorable zoning, regulations and infrastructure can significantly cut housing development costs. These will help curtail rising housing costs and increase the amount of new, affordable housing units.

- U-354** King County should pursue land use policies and regulations that result in lower development costs without loss of adequate public review, environmental quality or public safety and do not reduce design quality, inhibit infrastructure financing strategies, or increase maintenance costs for public facilities.
- U-355** King County shall continue to improve development standards to allow higher densities and flexibility of housing types in all residential zones, in order to best accommodate the environmental conditions on the site and the surrounding neighborhood when planning housing developments.
- U-356** King County should encourage the use of area-wide Environmental Impact Statements when plans are developed for activity centers, areas identified for redevelopment or other neighborhoods to provide a more complete analysis of cumulative environmental impacts and reduce the time and cost of environmental review for individual developments.
- U-357** King County shall seek to minimize the time necessary to process development permits to meet affordable housing and environmental goals and community and aesthetic concerns.
- U-358** King County should encourage the formation of common development codes and standards with cities, sewer and water districts and other permitting agencies to increase predictability and reduce development costs.
- U-359** King County should develop new partnerships with public and private lending institutions to find solutions that reduce housing financing costs for both builders and consumers.

## **F. New Housing Models**

The characteristics of people seeking housing continue to change. Today, there are more single adults living alone or in shared housing than ever before. More families are single-parent households. Many households have two parents working full-time. As the population ages, more seniors will need housing.

King County can assist in the development of housing types that meet the needs of these individuals and families by funding affordable housing, revising development standards and/or expediting permit

processing. Demonstration projects can provide needed housing for low-income households and test new models for housing simultaneously.

- U-360**      **King County should assist in development of innovative, affordable demonstration projects by exploring alternative land development, flexible development standards, and construction techniques.**
  
- U-361**      **King County shall encourage new housing models by supporting projects such as owner-built housing, land trusts for rental and ownership housing, and other innovative developments.**
  
- U-362**      **Within the Urban Growth Area, King County shall promote the development and expansion of land trusts that provide affordable ownership opportunities.**
  
- U-363**      **King County should support transit-oriented development that expands housing opportunities at locations near frequent transit by engaging private and nonprofit entities in an investment/development partnership. Public transit funds should be used only when it is shown that the public transit benefit of such investment is equal to or greater than the cost. King County should support efforts to incorporate affordable housing in transit-oriented development.**
  
- U-364**      **King County should explore the feasibility of allowing five-story wood frame construction as a technique that will increase the availability of multifamily housing while lowering development costs and maintaining fire safety.**
  
- U-365**      **King County should promote cottage-style housing development that clusters a limited number of small-scale detached units around a common green space at a density level that is up to twice that allowed by base density. The general character and size of cottage-style development should be controlled in the same manner that creates compatibility with a single-family neighborhood.**
  
- U-366**      **King County should encourage development of residential communities that achieve lower prices and rents through shared common houses, open spaces and community facilities.**

## **G. Direct Assistance to Households**

In many cases, the most effective form of housing assistance is direct assistance to low- or moderate-income households. This approach is commonly used for first-time homebuyer programs, which provide reduced-rate mortgages or assistance with closing costs. These forms of assistance increase options for homebuyers and enable them to find housing they prefer. Federal programs also provide direct rental assistance to low-income households to help pay rent in public and privately owned rental housing.

### **1. Homeowner Assistance**

**U-367** King County should work with local lenders to expand assistance for first-time homebuyers, including homebuyer education and counseling, low-cost financing and assistance with down payments and closing costs.

**U-368** King County should provide financial assistance for housing rehabilitation to low-income home owners, including owners of mobile homes residing in parks, and through community-based repair programs, such as tool banks or painting programs.

### **2. Renter Assistance and Homeless Prevention**

**U-369** King County should support programs that help prevent homelessness, such as emergency rental assistance, mortgage default counseling, and improvements to emergency services referral networks.

**U-370** King County should support programs that assist low-income renters to remain in or to gain access to private market housing, such as revolving loan funds that cover utility and damage deposits, and rental assistance programs.

**U-371** King County should support programs that provide landlord-tenant counseling, workshops and mediation in landlord-tenant disputes, as well as legislation which protects the rights of tenants and landlords, such as fair rental contracts.

## **H. Balancing Jobs and Housing**

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. If a balance of job growth and housing availability is not achieved, these workers will need to live longer distances away from their jobs, thus increasing pressures upon transportation systems.

- U-372**      **King County shall work with the Growth Management Planning Council or its successor and the private sector to support development of an adequate supply of housing commensurate with job growth within the county and its cities. To attain this goal, King County shall:**
- a. Support job and household growth targets and policies established in the Countywide Planning Policies;**
  - b. Establish performance measures to gauge how jurisdictions are accommodating growth;**
  - c. Participate in buildable lands inventories, market analyses and other studies to evaluate if sufficient land capacity is available for residential development; and**
  - d. 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.**

---

---

## **IV. Sustainable Development**

---

---

It is the goal of King County to work toward a model sustainable community where both the public and private sectors seek to balance urban 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 we live and work. Sustainable development is implemented through planning, design and construction methods, including green building and low impact development (LID) that promote environmental quality, economic vitality and social benefits.

Current development practices contribute significantly to the adverse impacts buildings and associated infrastructure have on our environment. These impacts include heavy consumption of 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 involves incorporating green building and LID practices into our policies through education, incentives and regulation to help reduce these negative impacts.

Green building is defined as design, construction and operational practices that significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings through sustainable site planning, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and enhanced indoor environmental quality for occupants. One strategy of green building is LID. LID is an approach to land development that emphasizes maintaining or restoring a site's natural hydrologic function by protecting and enhancing native vegetation and soils, minimizing impervious surfaces and managing stormwater at its source.

### **A. Sustainable Development for King County Capital Improvement Projects**

The King County Green Building Initiative requires the use of sustainable development practices in all buildings the county constructs, remodels and renovates. By incorporating sustainable development practices when projects are in the planning and predesign phase, economic benefits may realized, including the reduction of operating costs, enhanced asset value, optimized building performance and a healthier workplace for its employees. The strategic energy management, efficiency and conservation program called for in F-308 will enable King County to monitor the effectiveness of sustainable development practices in improving energy efficiency.

- U-401** King County should incorporate sustainable development principles and practices into the design, construction and operation of county facilities and county-funded projects.
- U-402** 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.

## **B. Sustainable Development in the Private Sector**

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 affordability and economic development. Similarly, King County also encourages the use of low-impact site design techniques to reduce impacts to aquatic resources.

- U-403** King County should encourage, support and promote the application of sustainable development practices in all private sector development within the county. This may be accomplished through working with residential and commercial developers to reduce impervious surface areas, protect ground and surface water within a watershed, assure that habitat protection needs are incorporated into development proposals to the extent possible, incorporate greater use of green building materials and utilize systems that conserve or reuse resources, including those that use energy more efficiently. When King County provides technical assistance and incentives for the use of sustainable development practices, it shall be at no cost to any private sector development. King County shall collaborate with the private sector on potential future regulatory tools.
- U-404** King County shall identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote green building and low impact development.

## **C. Low Impact Development**

Current development practices can adversely impact water resources. Low impact development (LID) is an approach to land development that works to preserve a site's natural hydrologic functions by protecting native vegetation and soils, reducing impervious surface and managing stormwater at its source. LID techniques include retention of native vegetation, soil amendment, rainwater harvesting,

pervious pavement and bioretention. King County has been and will continue to be a leader in developing and implementing state-of-the-art stormwater management techniques including LID. LID is becoming increasingly important in meeting the challenge of protecting declining and federally protected aquatic species, meeting the requirements of the Municipal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit and in doing our part to protect and restore Puget Sound.

**U-405        King County should incorporate low impact development principles and practices into the design, construction and operation of all county facilities and county-funded projects to the fullest extent feasible.**

**U-406        King County should work with residential and commercial developers to incorporate low impact development practices that protect native vegetation and soils, facilitate reuse of resources, such as reclaimed water, reduce the carbon footprint of the project, and reduce impervious surface. When King County provides technical assistance and incentives for the use of low impact development practices, it shall be at no cost to any private sector development.**

**U-407        King County shall identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote low impact development.**