**2015** Annual Update

**King County** 

# **Department** of Assessments Strategic Plan

Lloyd Hara, King County Assessor

### Introduction

In 2010, the Metropolitan King County Council adopted a new "King County Strategic Plan," outlining a new vision, guiding principles, and goals for King County government. As a separately elected official, the King County Assessor, Lloyd Hara, strongly supports this plan and its motto of "Working Together for One King County."

Assessor Hara has developed a separate strategic plan for his Office, outlined in this document, to align with the broader King County Strategic Plan and chart a path forward for the Assessor's Office to ensure that the agency is meeting its obligations to the community in the most innovative and effective way.

In the spirit of the "Working Together for One King County" motto, Assessor Hara has chosen to use the broader King County Strategic Plan as a template for the Assessor's Office Strategic Plan to provide as much uniformity and consistency as possible between the strategic plans. Therefore, where appropriate, the Assessor's Strategic Plan will use a format similar to that of the King County Strategic Plan.

### **Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles**

#### These are from the King County Strategic Plan:

#### **Vision Statement**

King County: a diverse and dynamic community with a healthy economy and environment where all people and businesses have the opportunity to thrive.

#### **Mission Statement**

King County government provides fiscally responsible, quality-driven local and regional services for healthy, safe, and vibrant communities.

## These are additional vision, mission, and guiding principles for the King County Department of Assessments:

#### **Vision Statement**

Setting values, serving the community and pursuing excellence.

#### **Mission Statement**

We will be the nation's best county Department of Assessments. We'll accomplish this by being people-focused and striving to be efficient and innovative in setting fair and equitable property values to fund vital community services.

### **Guiding Principles/Values**

### The following guiding principles are values that reflect our beliefs about the roles and responsibilities of ourselves, our department, and our county government:

**Collaborative** – We work together effectively within the organization and in collaboration with other governments, private entities and community partners.

**Employee Focused** – We create a work environment that allows employees to do the best job they can by providing necessary tools and training. Our goal is for our employees to have a high level of satisfaction with the work they do, and be recognized for their contributions. We celebrate individual and collective success. We are recognized as an employer of choice.

**Customer Service-Oriented** – We listen and respond to our customers in a culturally responsive way and prioritize their satisfaction as we do our work. We listen so we can better understand the needs of our customers and stakeholders. We treat our customers and stakeholders with respect.

**Results-Focused** – We establish community driven goals, measure our performance, and report to the public on our success in meeting those goals. We take smart risks and are self-motivating.

**Accountable** – We are responsive and transparent to the public in our roles, functions and actions as individuals and as a government. We seek to contribute to the good of the department and the county as a whole.

**Innovative and Effective** – We are creative, learn from experience and results, and seek out new and innovative ways to solve problems and serve the public. We use good judgment in performing our duties. We identify root causes and develop solutions for problems. We are active and consistent learners, always striving to improve ourselves. We aim to keep things simple and minimize complexity.

**Professional** – We uphold the high standards, skills, competence, and integrity of our profession. We want to be recognized as the best at what we do. We stay calm and maintain our poise no matter what the situation. We are not disagreeable when we disagree with others. We help our colleagues and share solutions and information.

**Fair and Just** – We serve all residents of King County by promoting fairness and opportunity and eliminating inequities. We treat all people with respect. We question actions that are not consistent with our values.

### **Goals and Strategies**

The goals and strategies in this strategic plan are the framework that will guide the King County Assessor's Office in the years to come.

This strategic plan includes two types of goals: (1) "what" goals that articulate what the King County Assessor intends to accomplish or services the agency intends to provide, and; (2) "how" goals that articulate how the King County Assessor's Office intends to conduct its work.

In general, "what" goals relate to the services provided to the public (such as fair and uniform property assessments), and the "how" goals speak to the internal aspects of services (such as cost-efficiency).

#### The "what we deliver" goals are:

- Fair and Accurate Property Assessments
- Accurate and Timely Levy Rates and Tax Roll
- Understandable and Accessible Property and Assessment Information

#### The "how we deliver" goals are:

- Service Excellence. Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.
- Financial Stewardship. Exercise sound financial management.
- **Public Engagement.** Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.
- **Quality Workforce.** Develop and empower the Assessor's Office's most valuable asset, its employees.
- **Innovative and Effective Operations.** Establish a culture of continuous improvement that promotes and encourages innovation.

Each of these goals is supported by objectives and strategies that articulate the courses of action for achieving the overall goals. These objectives and strategies are the Assessor's Office action plan. This Strategic Plan also includes a measurement framework that establishes accountability and tracks performance to ensure that the strategic plan generates concrete results.

### "What We Deliver" Goals

#### **Property Assessments**

Fair and Accurate Property Assessments

- **1**. Produce property assessments that meet statutory requirements and are within the industry recommended range for the Measure of Central Tendency and Dispersion
- 2. Maintain a high appeal sustainability rate, measured as a high level of appealed value upheld
- 3. Manage fair and accessible exemption programs
- 4. Promote complete and accurate reporting of personal property

#### Levy Rates and Tax Roll

Accurate and Timely Levy Rates and Tax Roll

- 1. Create and maintain an accurate and timely tax roll
- 2. Provide accurate tax levy rates

#### **Property Assessments**

Understandable and Accessible Property and Assessment Information

- 1. Produce accurate, understandable and accessible information for the public
- 2. Produce an accurate accounting of property characteristics
- 3. Produce and distribute accurate revaluation notices
- 4. Produce accurate maps and legal descriptions

### "How We Deliver" Goals

#### Service Excellence

Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.

- 1. Improve customer satisfaction with the King County Assessor's Office
- 2. Streamline the process for filing an appeal of a property valuation
- 3. Improve alignment of the "Assess to Collect" functions
- 4. Increase access to Assessor's Office services and information
- 5. Support Assessor's Office community service projects (ex, Day of Caring)

#### **Financial Stewardship**

Exercise sound financial management.

- 1. Make efficient use of tax dollars in operating the Assessor's Office
- 2. Secure new revenue streams for technology and to off-set the cost of handling appeals of commercial property assessments
- 3. Fair and equitable application of state law

### "How We Deliver" Goals (continued)

#### **Public Engagement**

Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves, and empowers people and communities.

- 1. Expand opportunities to seek input, listen, and respond to residents
- 2. Improve public awareness of what the King County Assessor does, and how the property tax system works in King County (and Washington State)
- 3. Enhance Intern Partnerships

#### **Quality Workforce**

Develop and empower the Assessor's Office's most valuable asset, its employees.

- 1. Attract and recruit a talented workforce
- 2. Develop and retain quality employees
- 3. Utilize employees in an efficient, effective, and productive manner

#### Innovative and Effective Operations.

Establish a culture of continuous improvement that promotes and encourages innovation.

- 1. Implement a Quality Management program
- 2. Re-engineer and improve business processes
- 3. Increase staff mobility to enable more field time for appraisers
- 4. Migration to server computing platform
- 5. Develop enhanced appraisal model
- 6. Promote ethical standards throughout the organization
- 7. Maintain an effective, up-to-date Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP)

### **2014 Key Indicators of Success**

#### Property Assessments

Fair and Accurate Property Assessments

Objective	Measure	Target		Status
Produce property assessments that are within the industry recommended range for the Measure of Central Tendency and Dispersion	Mean/Median COD (coefficients of dispersion), sales ratio	Catagory   Assessment Level (Sales Ratios)   Measures of Uniformity   Coefficients of Dispersion:   Residential   Homogeneous areas (newer)   Heterogeneous areas (mixed and older)   Heterogeneous areas (older)   Income Producing Commercial (active markets)   Commercial (depressed markets)   Vancant Land   Price Related Differential   (Source - 2014 Area Reports)	Value   .90 to 1.10   5.0 to 10.0   5.0 to 15.0   5.0 to 20.0   5.0 to 25.0   5.0 to 25.0   98 to 1.03	Met Residential targets for COD and Sales Ratio in 2014 Met Commerical targets for COD and Sales Ratio in 2014
<b>Objective</b> Appeal Rate	Measure Percent of sustained assessments appealed annually	Target Percent of total ap value upheld for b commercial and re 96% for comme 94% for residen	oth esidential: ercial Itial	Status 2013 - 96% for Commercial 2013 - 93% for Residential

### Department of Assessments

These indicators were selected by DOA staff as "Key Indicators" because they are critical to the overall success of our department. Together they provide a snapshot of our efforts to meet our obligations to the community in the most innovative and effective way.



**Target Met** 

Target Mostly or Nearly Met (within 10% of target)





#### **Property Assessments** Accurate, Understandable and Accessible Property and Assessment Information Measure Target **Status Objective** Percent of survey Complete baseline survey in Produce accurate, respondents that 2012. understandable and accessible information feel the website is understandable and Target - 80% of respondents for the public provides useful agree information

(Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey) 2014 - affirmative

response (4 or 5)

under target at 67%

2014 - neutral plus affirmative

response (3,4,5)

at 88%

### **2014 Key Indicators of Success**

#### Service Excellence

Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.

<b>Objective</b> Improve customer satasfaction with the King County Assessor's Office	Measure Precent of resident survey respondents who do not believe property values established by the King County Assessor	Target Complete baseline survey in 2012. Target - 10% or less of survey respondents are dissatisfied	Status 2014 - affirmative response (1 or 2) over target
	King County Assessor		over target
	are fair	(Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey)	at 28%

#### Public Engagement

Promote robust public engagement that informs, involves and empowers people and communities

<b>Objective</b> Improve public awareness of what the King County Assessor does, and how the property tax system works in King County (and Washington State)	Measure Percent of resident survey respondents who know the Assessor's role and are aware of the budget-based system	Target Complete baseline survey in 2012. Target - 10% of respondents in 2013, a 5% increase annually after 2013 (Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey)	Status 2014 - Met Target with 48%
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#### **Quality Workforce**

Develop and empower King County government's most valuable assest, our employees

<b>Objective</b> Utilize employees in an efficent, effective and productive manner	Measure Percent of employees who feel that they have the	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012.	Status
	opportunity to make suggestions to improve operations and the work of the Assessor's Office	Target - 90% of respondents agree (Source- 2014 Employee Engagement Survey)	2014 - affirmative response (4 or 5) under target at 56% 2014 - neutral plus affirmative response (3,4,5) at 84% Employee Strategic Advisory Commitee implemented, holding meetings and making suggestions to management.

## 2014 Facts & Figures

more than 690,000 parcels valued each year

### \$386 Billion

Total Property Value in King County

### **4** Million

website page views per month

more than **19,000** senior citizen property tax exemptions

> **213** full time employees

### **Tracking the Plan - 2014 Metrics Tracking**

The table below provides strategic plan metric results for 2014.

Targets highlighted in green are those in which the target was met; those in purple are targets partially met or underway; those in red are unmet targets.

Objective	tive Measure Target		Status	
Produce property	Mean/Median COD (coefficients	Catagory	Value	
assessments that are within	. ,	Assessment Level (Sales Ratios)	.90 to 1.10	
the industry recommended		Measures of Uniformity		
range for the Measure of Central Tendency and		Coefficients of Dispersion:		Met Residential targets for COD and Sales Ratio
Dispersion		Residential Homogeneous areas	5.0 to 10.0	in 2014
		(newer) Heterogeneous areas (mixed and older)	5.0 to 15.0	
		(mixed and older) Heterogeneous areas (older)	5.0 to 20.0	
		Income Producing Commercial (active markets)	5.0 to 15.0	Met Commerical targets for COD and
		Commercial (depressed markets)	5.0 to 25.0	Sales Ratio in 2014
		Vancant Land	5.0 to 25.0	
		Price Related Differential (Source - 2014 Area Reports)	.98 to 1.03	
<b>Objective</b> Appeal Rate	Measure Percent of sustained assessments appealed annually	Target Percent of total appealed both commercial and resid	•	Status
		96% for commercial 94% for residential		2013 - 96% for Commercial
		(Source- DOA Weekly Appeal Rep	orts)	2013 - 93% for Residential
<b>Objective</b> Manage fair and	Measure Percent of eligible property	<b>Target</b> Create quality managemen system in 2012	nt review	Status
accessible exemption programs	owners who apply for exemptions			Exemption program was subject of LOB Lean effort; Resulting IT Conceptual Review Project denied. Will propose again in next biennial budget
<b>Objective</b> Promote complete and accurate reporting of personal property	<b>Measure</b> Percent increase in number of reporting accounts	<b>Target</b> Increase new accounts yea	r after year	Status

What We Deliver: Le Accurate and Timely Levy	vy Rates and Tax Roll Rates and Tax Roll		
<b>Objective</b> Create and maintain accurate and timely tax roll	<b>Measure</b> Tax roll provided to Treasury within specified time period	<b>Target</b> Last week of January to facilitate development of tax bills	Status Met Target
<b>Objective</b> Create and maintain accurate and timely tax roll	Measure Mathematical accuracy	<b>Target</b> 99.9% accurate as measured by annual individual taxing district report from Treasury	Status Met Target

What We Deliver: Pr Accurate, Understandable	operty Assessments and Accessible Property and Ass	sessment Information	
<b>Objective</b> Produce accurate, understandable and accessible information for the public	Measure Percent of survey respondents that feel the website is understandable and provides useful information	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012 Target - 80% of respondents agree (Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey)	Status 2014 - affirmative response (4 or 5) under target at 67% 2014 - neutral plus affirmative response (3,4,5) at 88%
<b>Objective</b> Produce a thorough and accurate accounting of property characteristics	<b>Measure</b> Performance of the Physical Inspection Quality Management Checklists	<b>Target</b> Lean Event to provide measurable elements	Status Follow up on Lean Event in 2015
<b>Objective</b> Produce and distribute accurate revaluation notices	Measure Percent of notices with correct mailing information	<b>Target</b> 95% of notices meet "1st Pass Read" standard at mail vendor (Source- Mail Vendor Report)	Status Met Target

How We Deliver: Ser Establish a culture of cust		that are responsive to community needs	
<b>Objective</b> Improve customer satisfaction with the King County Assessor's Office	Measure Precent of resident survey respondents who feel that County Assessor employees are courteous, polite and helpful	TargetComplete baseline survey in 2012Target - 70% of survey respondents agree(Source- King County Customer Satisfaction Survey)	<b>Status</b> New survey to occur in 2015
<b>Objective</b> Improve customer satisfaction with the King County Assessor's Office	Measure Precent of resident survey respondents who feel that County Assessor employees are helpful when solving problems	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012 Target - 70% of survey respondents agree (Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey)	Status 2014 - affirmative response (4 or 5) under target at 35% 2014 - neutral plus affirmative response (3,4,5) at 68%
<b>Objective</b> Improve customer satisfaction with the King County Assessor's Office	Measure Percent of survey respondents who are dissatisfied with the Assessor's Offce.	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012 Target - 10% or less of survey respon- dents are dissatisfied (Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey)	Status 2014 - affirmative response (1 or 2) over target at 28%
<b>Objective</b> Streamline the process for filing an appeal of a property valuation	<b>Measure</b> Number of steps needed to file an appeal	<b>Target</b> Complete process mapping in 2012 Implement revised online process	Status The online appeals process went live in 2013
<b>Objective</b> Increase access to Assessor's Office services and information	<b>Measure</b> Percent of informational pieces translated into other languages	<b>Target</b> 50% of existing content by third quarter, 2013	Status Underway - Chinese, Korean, Russian, Span- ish, Vietnamese, Khmer, Somali Translated ads will appear on Metro buses in 2015 Translation of personal property information in 2015

	How We Deliver: Financial Stewardship Exercise sound financial management				
<b>Objective</b> Make efficient use of tax dollars in operating the Assessor's Office	<b>Measure</b> Return on investment tracked as an aggregate total, and by functional units	<b>Target</b> Determine metric formula by 2013 Improve by an average of 2% annually over four years	Status Development of baseline data for ROI metric part of LOB process for 2014. ROI metric to be part of the next LOB budget		
<b>Objective</b> Secure new revenue streams for technology upgrades and to offset the cost of handling appeals of commercial property assessments	<b>Measure</b> Legislation approved by State Legislature and County Council	<b>Target</b> Legislation approved by 2015	Status Web advertising approved. Legislation for commercial filing fee proposed - moving forward slowly as part of the County's agenda		

<b>Objective</b> Expand opportunities to seek input, listen and	Measure Percent of citizens who feel the King County Assessor seeks	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012.	Status
respond to residents	feedback/input from customers	Target - 60% of respondents agree	2014 - affirmative response (4 or 5) under
		(Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey)	target at 33%
			2014 - neutral plus affirmative response (3,4,5) at 81%
<b>Objective</b> Expand opportunities to seek input, listen and respond to residents	<b>Measure</b> Number of community meetings. Expand number of staff involved in community meetings	<b>Target</b> Four annually	Status 10 community meetings in 2014. Continued to involve more staff in 2014, including exemptions staff.
			Plan is to continue to involve more staff in 201

	lic Engagement (continued) agement that informs, involves a	nd empowers people and communities	
<b>Objective</b> Improve public awareness of what the King County Assessor does, and how the property tax system works in King County (and WA State)	Measure Percent of resident survey respondents who know the Assessor's role and are aware of the budget-based system	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012. Target - 10% total of respondents in 2013, 5% increase annually after 2013 (Source- Online Customer Satisfaction Survey)	Status 2014 - Met Target with 48%
<b>Objective</b> Enhance communications program	Measure New communication methods	<b>Target</b> Facebook by the end of 2012, Twitter in 2014	Status Met Target; Facebook & Twitter live

<b>Objective</b> Attract and recruit a talented workforce	Measure Percent of employees who would recommend the King County Assessor's Office as a good place to work	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012. Target - 70% of respondents agree (Source- King County Employee Survey)	Status 2012 - Met Target with 72% New survey to occur in 2015
<b>Objective</b> Develop and retain quality employees	Measure Percent of employees who are satisfied with their job	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012. Target - 70% of respondents agree (Source- King County Employee Survey)	Status 2012 - Met Target with 78% New survey to occur in 2015
<b>Objective</b> Develop and retain quality employees	Measure Percent of employees who feel that employees are treated with respect	<b>Target</b> Complete baseline survey in 2012. Target - 70% of respondents agree (Source- King County Employee Survey)	Status 2012 - Met Target with 76% New survey to occur in 2015

Objective	Measure	Target	Status
Develop and retain quality employees	Percent of employees who feel their work contributes to	Complete baseline survey in 2012.	
quality employees	the success of the King County Assessor	Target - 70% of respondents agree	2012 - Met Target
		(Source- King County Employee Survey)	with 91%
			New survey to occur in 2015
Objective	Measure Training program for staff and management	Target	Status
Develop training program		Training program in place by the end of 2013	
			New online training program released in 2014
<b>Objective</b> Develop training program	Measure Percent of employees who feel they are provided with reasonable opportunities for training	Target Complete baseline survey in 2013.	Status
		Target - 80% of respondents agree	2014 - affirmative
			response (4 or 5) under
		(Source- 2014 Employee Engagement Survey)	target at 56%
			2014 - neutral plus affirmative response (3,4,5) at 78%
<b>Objective</b> Utilize employees in an efficent, effective and productive manner	Measure Percent of employees who are familiar with the Assessor's mission and goals, and how they contribute to achieving them	Target	Status
		Complete baseline survey in 2012.	-
		Target - 80% of respondents agree	2014 - affirmative response (4 or 5) under
		(Source- 2014 Employee Engagement Survey)	target at 42%
			2014 - neutral plus
			affirmative response (3,4,5) at 81%
<b>Objective</b> Utilize employees in an efficent, effective and productive manner	Measure Percent of employees who feel that they have the opportunity to make suggestions to improve operations and the work environment of the Assessor's Office	Target	Status
		Complete baseline survey in 2012.	
		Target - 90% of respondents agree	2014 - affirmative response (4 or 5) under target at 56%
		(Source- 2014 Employee Engagement Survey)	
			2014 - neutral plus affirmative response (3,4,5) at 84%
			Employee Strategic Advisory Committee implemented, holding meetings, and making suggestions to managemen

How We Deliver: Quality Workforce (continued) Develop and empower King County government's most valuable asset, our employees				
<b>Objective</b> Improve communications with employees	Measure New communication methods	<b>Target</b> Internal newsletter, Facebook by the end of 2012	Status Internal newsletter live; Facebook live Strategic Advisory Committee launched	
<b>Objective</b> Improve communcations with employees	<b>Measure</b> New Intranet portal	<b>Target</b> Implement new portal in 2013	Status New portal prepared in 2014; ready to go live in 2015	

How We Deliver: Innovative and Effective Operations Establish and promote a work environment that fosters innovation, creative problem solving and continuous improvement aimed at the most effective operation possible

<b>Objective</b> Institute a Quality Management Program	<b>Measure</b> Prepare for and apply for the Baldrige Quality Award	<b>Target</b> Complete application for 2012	Status Met Target, application submitted Plan to submit again in 2015	
<b>Objective</b> Re-engineer and improve business processes	Measure Identify business processes to be mapped	<b>Target</b> First 10% processes mapped by the end of 2013	Status Target met for processes mapped - 49 in 2014	
<b>Objective</b> Re-engineer and improve business processes	<b>Measure</b> Identify Standard Work Diagrams to be completed	<b>Target</b> 10 SWD done by the end of 2013	Status Target met in 2013	
<b>Objective</b> Increase staff mobility	Measure Mobility efficiency measure	Target Develop metric and mobility projects	Status Metric designed in 2014; Lean project has helped increase mobility; Drop-in locations launched; hybrid telecommuting offered; additional vehicles provided	

<b>Objective</b> Annually review and adjust appraisal model	Measure Test recommendations from national expert on models and procedures	<b>Target</b> Implement select pilot projects in 2013	Status Met Target - two pilot
			projects completed; 1) splining - time trend analysis, 2) geo-statistica surface analysis in rural areas
<b>Objective</b> Promote ethical standards throughout the organization	Measure Percent of employees who receive training on ethics	<b>Target</b> 100% by the end of 2013	Status Met Target - 100% in 2012; 100% in 2014
<b>Objective</b> Maintain an effective, up-to-date Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)	Measure Review COOP Plan annually for necessary revisions and exercise as necessary	<b>Target</b> Update annually	Status Met Target - COOP plan updated in 2013
<b>Objective</b> Implement the Strategic Plan	Measure Percent of "What We Deliver" and "How We Deliver" goals (numbered and lettered items in each goal section) addressed	<b>Target</b> Actions begun/taken on 75% of goals by the end of 2012	Status Met Target - 89% of goals in action