



PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

Skyway-West Hill
Land Use Subarea Plan

Department of Local Services – Permitting Division

July 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, King County staff began working cross-departmentally and with a broad set of community stakeholders to direct future land use planning for the urban unincorporated community of Skyway-West Hill. The scope and timeline for this planning process was established through the 2018 amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan (Ordinance 18810).

The following Community Vision Statement was developed based on input gathered from multiple meetings and discussions with area residents.

Skyway-West Hill's residential neighborhoods and commercial centers are vibrant and walkable places where people from diverse backgrounds can live, work, play, and thrive.

The comments were also adapted to create a Plan Purpose Statement to communicate what the community wants this Plan to accomplish.

Reflect the community's desire for development and economic growth that enriches its cultural diversity.

The combination of Community Vision and Plan Purpose resulted in the overarching principle for the Plan, from which the policies are developed and against which they are measured.

King County will encourage equitable development by promoting access to a variety of housing choices, incentivizing the creation of public amenities, addressing displacement risk, encouraging economic opportunity, enriching the community's diverse physical and cultural assets, and cultivating neighborhood character.

The Plan includes 16 subarea plan policies, 12 land use map amendments, and 6 action items, grouped in [Residential](#), [Commercial and Industrial](#), and [Community Character](#) subject areas. Some key actions that reflect the community's priorities include:

- Creation of an Equitable Housing Development Program that will require affordable units to be included in new residential developments and provide opportunities for the construction of additional units.
- Requiring that [Residential](#) and [Cultural](#) Displacement be considered wherever development occurs, evaluating its effect on housing, including manufactured home parks, and ensuring that smaller-scale and community-appropriate businesses are encouraged and culturally relevant assets are identified and supported.
- Creation of a [Community-Desired Amenities incentive program](#) to encourage the private provision of community-identified priorities such as a community center, public plazas, or pedestrian infrastructure.

- [Expansion of the Skyway Business District](#) and addition of pedestrian-oriented development standards in the [Skyway](#), [Martin Luther King Jr. Way S](#), and [Rainier Ave South Business Districts](#) to expand economic opportunity and create more accessible, attractive commercial districts.

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CHAPTER 1 – PURPOSE, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND VISION

Why we plan

A neighborhood’s built environment – the location, variety, and accessibility of places to live, work, shop, learn, be outdoors, and gather as a community – shapes the lives of the people who live there and its distinctive sense of place. Land use is a key Determinant of Equity, affecting people’s ability to access the resources they need to succeed. The County’s *Determinants of Equity* report notes that “land use can serve as either an asset or a barrier to prospering in King County.”¹ The ultimate goal of this Plan is to improve the built environment in a way that makes real, equitable improvements to the quality of life and health of residents of Skyway-West Hill.

In 2015 King County began the process of updating its subarea plans, which had been mostly unchanged since the late 1980s and early 1990s.² The County envisioned the Community Service Area Land Use Subarea Plans ("Land Use Plans") as providing a vehicle for King County to collaborate with residents of unincorporated areas, including Skyway-West Hill. This Plan, like other land use plans, evaluates current land uses, zoning, and demographics and builds on the community’s priorities to establish a land use vision and supporting policies for the following 20 years.

Planning History

Prior to adoption of the West Hill Community Plan in 1993, Skyway-West Hill did not have a local community plan.³ The West Hill Community Plan addressed a broad range of issues like community services, infill development, affordable housing, and beautification of the business district. Except for zoning updates to implement the Growth Management Act in the 1990s, this plan was never updated or amended. Between 2008 and 2012, community volunteers and local nonprofit groups undertook several visioning and goal-setting exercises related to neighborhood and commercial revitalization. Community planning documents that resulted from these grassroots efforts included the Skyway Park Community Vision (2008), the Community Agenda for Revitalization (2009), and a Community Center Visioning Process (2012).

¹ [King County Determinants of Equity Baseline Project](#), 97

² King County had a community planning program that occurred during two periods, between 1973 and 1984 to implement the 1964 Comprehensive Plan and between 1985 and 1994 to implement the 1985 Comprehensive Plan. Since then, there have only been minor updates to community plans and these were processed through updates to the Comprehensive Plan. After two decades, King County decided to reinstate its long-range planning for unincorporated rural and urban local communities in 2015 and launched a Community Service Area subarea planning program.

³ Adopted via Ordinance 11166

In 2014 and 2015, King County Motions 14221 and 14351 called for a comprehensive update of the West Hill Community Plan. Around this time, the County was providing technical assistance to a community planning effort led by Skyway Solutions, a community development nonprofit organization, to update elements of the West Hill Community Plan. This planning effort resulted in the development of a local action plan called the Skyway-West Hill Action Plan (SWAP), which the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan proposed to be an addendum to the West Hill Community Plan. Given the creation of the County’s subarea planning program in 2015 and the need to comprehensively review and update the West Hill Community Plan, the County did not adopt the Skyway-West Hill Action Plan. Instead, the 2016 King County Comprehensive Plan directed the County to work with the community to review the Skyway-West Hill Action Plan and to update the West Hill Community Plan within the context of the new subarea planning program, the result of which is this Land Use Plan.

Community Engagement

In October 2018, at the beginning of the development of this Plan, the County held a community forum to begin to gather input from the community. Based on feedback from that meeting, the Plan’s public engagement process was restructured and extended to ensure the participation of the most diverse cross-section of the community possible. The public engagement process would eventually include 22 stakeholder interviews, four focus groups, an on-line survey, and a second community forum. Planning staff also attended multiple community group meetings and held open office hours at the Skyway-Water and Sewer District’s offices. Several common themes emerged through these conversations with the community. These themes have been incorporated into the Community’s Vision Statement and the Plan’s Guiding Principles. This statement and principles, in turn, informed land use and zoning changes and a set of Action Items. A more complete summary of the engagement process is included in Appendix E.

Plan Structure

The foundation of this Land Use Plan is the Community Vision. The Plan Purpose is to realize the Vision Statement by following the Guiding Principles:

- The **Community Vision** is a statement of Skyway-West Hill residents’ desired future for their community.
- The **Plan Purpose** establishes the role of the Plan in achieving the Community Vision.
- The **Guiding Principles** are the values that inform the Plan’s policies, Land Use Map Amendments, and Action Items.

To achieve the Community Vision, this Plan includes a set of policies, land use map amendments, and action items related to housing, commercial and industrial areas, and community character that are based on the guiding principles:

- **Policies** establish the County’s land use approach and priorities.
- **Land Use Map Amendments** make changes to the County’s Land use and zoning maps that are supported by policy from this Land Use Plan or other existing County plans. Map amendments can change the allowed use (for example, from residential to commercial) and the allowed density (for example, from medium to high density) on a property, or add special conditions to the way the land can be used (for example, requiring a certain number of units built in a development be affordable at County-determined levels, or that development be pedestrian-oriented).
- **Action Items** establish the scope of additional work the County will do to implement a policy. Action Items identify the County team that will undertake the work and establish a deadline by which the work must be transmitted to the King County Council.

Vision and Principles

The Community Vision, Plan Purpose, and Guiding Principles were developed based on the collective input from the community gathered at multiple focus groups, one-on-one interviews, forums, and other public engagement events.

Community Vision

Skyway-West Hill's residential neighborhoods and commercial centers are vibrant and walkable places where people from diverse backgrounds can live, work, play, and thrive.

Plan Purpose

Reflect the community's desire for equitable development and economic growth that enriches its cultural diversity.

Guiding Principles

The Community Vision and Plan Purpose are achieved through the following guiding principles:

- King County will encourage equitable development by promoting access to a variety of housing choices, incentivizing the creation of public amenities, addressing displacement risk, encouraging economic opportunity, and cultivating neighborhood character.
- The community will inform how the County develops land use regulations and will ensure that the Skyway-West Hill Land Use Plan and its associated land use changes incorporate equity values.
- The character of the community's residential neighborhoods will be respected.
- New residential development will be encouraged along major corridors, on transit routes, and near commercial centers.
- The development of community-desired amenities will be promoted, and the community's diverse physical and cultural assets will be enriched.
- Existing affordable housing will be protected and the creation of new affordable housing will be encouraged.
- Commercial areas will be sustainable, vibrant, walkable, and provide opportunities for local businesses to succeed.

CHAPTER 2 – COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Geography

Skyway-West Hill is located within the urban growth area of unincorporated King County. The area is approximately 3.2 square miles in size with a population of 18,365 people, making it the County's fourth most populous urban unincorporated area, after Fairwood, East Federal Way, and North Highline. The community is comprised of the neighborhoods of Bryn Mawr, Campbell Hill, Earlington, Hill Top, Lakeridge, Panorama Hill, Skycrest, and Skyway. Skyway-West Hill is situated near the south end of Lake Washington and bordered by the City of Seattle to the north, the City of Renton to the south and east, the City of Tukwila to the west (See Appendix A).

Government

King County serves as the local government for Skyway-West Hill and administers a range of services and programs for area residents. These include direct service programs such as road services, surface water management, animal control, code enforcement, and building permits in addition to countywide services such as public transit. King County also develops functional plans, capital improvement plans, and the County budget that affect Skyway-West Hill.⁴ These services and plans are not reflected in this Land Use Plan, other than components that directly relate to land use and zoning. Related non-land use issues may be considered through these other County plans and programs.

Population⁵

Since 2000, Skyway-West Hill has experienced significant and diverse growth. In that time, the total population of the subarea has increased by 31 percent to over 18,000 residents. Skyway-West Hill is one of three communities in King County in which people of color constitute a majority of the population (along with the cities of SeaTac and Tukwila). Skyway-West Hill has the fourth-highest proportion of Asian residents (33 percent, the majority of whom are Vietnamese) of any community in Washington. White residents represent 29 percent of the community (the lowest percentage of any community in King County), African-Americans represent 24 percent (the highest percentage of any census-designated place in Washington) and Hispanic/Latino residents represent 10 percent.

Skyway-West Hill has the highest percentage of people who speak an Asian language at home (28 percent) and among the lowest rates of English spoken at home (57 percent) of any community in the state. In 2017, approximately 43 percent of the community spoke a language other than English

⁴ Functional plans are detailed plans for facilities and services, actions plans, and programs for other governmental activities.

⁵ Data is taken from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

at home. The predominant languages spoken in Skyway-West Hill today are Vietnamese, Tagalog, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and various African languages, in addition to English.

The median household income in Skyway-West Hill is \$65,906, more than 20 percent lower than the County-wide median. An estimated 2,840 individuals (15.5 percent) in Skyway-West Hill lived below the poverty line in 2017, more than five percentage points higher than King County overall (10.2 percent). Over 30 percent of children under 18 years of age live below the poverty line in Skyway-West Hill, nearly triple the rate of the County overall (12.3 percent).

CHAPTER 3 – LAND USE PLAN

Housing⁶

Housing Land Use in Skyway-West Hill⁷

Skyway-West Hill is predominantly designated for medium- to high-density residential development, with over 91 percent of the total area of Skyway-West Hill designated for these uses (See Appendix A). The typical land use pattern in Skyway-West Hill’s neighborhoods is single-family detached residential, with many blocks containing a variety of housing types and densities, including attached townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, apartments, and multi-story construction. The existing housing stock in these areas is relatively affordable because of its size and age.

Approximately one-third of the housing units in the community are higher density, multi-family units, including apartments, mobile homes, and townhouses. These developments are found throughout the subarea, with the majority concentrated along major corridors and near the commercial centers. These areas have capacity for additional growth under existing zoning, and they help provide a variety of housing choices at multiple levels of affordability.

The King County Code includes two development conditions⁸ related to housing in Skyway-West Hill: WH P-04 (West Hill Area Design Standards), which was adopted as part of the 1994 West Hill Community Plan and reinforces four policies from the plan aimed at protecting natural features, views, neighborhood character, a gridded street network, and street trees, and SO-130 (Residential Infill Standards), which focuses on residential infill and consolidation of parcels.

Housing Statistics

There are approximately 7,000 housing units in Skyway-West Hill. In line with the subarea’s predominantly low- and medium-density residential land use designations, over two-thirds of residents live in single-family detached houses. The housing stock in Skyway-West Hill is generally older than King County as a whole; the nearly 75 percent of units are at least 40 years old. Home

⁶ Data is taken from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates unless otherwise noted.

⁷ Land use in unincorporated areas of King County, such as Skyway-West Hill, is governed by the King County Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan sets broad, countywide policies about land use and designates land for particular uses through the Land Use Map. The King County Code, which includes development regulations, implements those policies.

⁸ Development conditions, which include Special district overlays and p-suffixes, may waive, modify, and substitute the range of permitted uses and development standards established in K.C.C. Title 21A for any use in the underlying zone.

prices for owner occupied units in the area are well below countywide prices, with average home sale prices in 2016 more than \$100,000 lower than the countywide average. The differential in price is even greater for multifamily units, with condos and apartments selling for about \$200,000 less than the countywide average. Mobile homes make up a higher percentage of housing in this area than countywide, and traditionally provide an affordable source of housing.

There are 624 units of rental housing affordable to income-qualified households in Skyway-West Hill:

Property	Address	Units	Population Served	Eligible Income (Family of Four) ⁹
Arbor Woods	6230 S. 129 th St.	27	50% Area Median Income (AMI)	\$55,156
Aspen Ridge	12601 68 th Ave S	87	80% AMI	\$88,250
Creston Point	13445 Martin Luther King Jr Way S	476	60% AMI	\$66,187
Crestwood Place	10500 51 st Ave S	26	80% AMI	\$88,250

Community Priorities and Plan Approach

A high percentage of Skyway-West Hill residents (73 percent of renters with incomes below 80 percent of Area Median Income)¹⁰ are cost burdened (pay more than 30 percent of their income in rent), which is reflected in the community’s concern about the affordability and availability of housing. Many residents consider the area’s stock of affordable housing to be an asset and were supportive of the protection and creation of affordable housing.

The community also identified increasing the number of residential and mixed-use buildings in Skyway-West Hill’s commercial centers as a priority, which is reflected in **Policy SWH-1. Land Use Map Amendments 6, 9, and 12** increase densities in areas near commercial centers and transit corridors, which will provide more opportunities to live and work in the community. Such activity is a prime opportunity to encourage the creation of affordable housing units through policies such as inclusionary zoning, a right-of-return program, or a no net loss of affordable housing requirement. Supported by **Policies SWH-4 and SWH-5, SWH Action 1** establishes an Equitable Housing Development Program that will be informed by engagement with the community and include strategies to retain and create affordable housing when new development occurs, including the redevelopment of existing manufactured home communities, which are the focus of **Policy SWH-6**.

⁹ In 2018, Area Median Income in King County for a family of four was \$110,312.50 ([King County Housing Authority](#)).

¹⁰ 2011-2015 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy, Department of Housing and Urban Development

Many residents also expressed an interest in ensuring that new development is compatible with the look and feel of their neighborhoods. **SWH Action 2**, which implements **Policy SWH-2**, will update the County’s permitting process to encourage new development in medium-density residential areas to be in character with the surrounding neighborhood. **SWH Action 3** will initiate a review of dimensional standards, including building height, setbacks, and lot coverage requirements, and make recommendations to maintain and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods.

Policies, Land Use Map Amendments, and Action Items

Housing Policies

- SHW-1** King County should support increased residential density in areas along major transit corridors and near commercial centers and retain existing land use patterns in other residential neighborhoods.

- SWH-2** King County should encourage new development in medium-density residential neighborhoods to be compatible with the surrounding area.

- SWH-3** King County should retain the zoning of existing multifamily areas to continue to promote access to diverse housing choices.

- SWH-4** King County shall establish an Equitable Housing Development Program that includes strategies for addressing the supply of affordable housing within Unincorporated King County with funding and policies specific to Skyway-West Hill.

- SWH-5** King County shall evaluate and address residential displacement impacts when evaluating large development proposals.

- SWH-5** King County shall support the preservation of existing manufactured home communities and require that any proposal to redevelop an existing manufactured home community include evaluation and mitigation of residential displacement impacts.

Housing Land Use Map Amendments

Map Amendment #1 - Repeal P-Suffix Condition WH-P04 (West Hill Area Design Standards): Repeal WH-P04, which was established to reinforce policies from the 1994 West Hill Community Plan, which this Plan replaces. Existing development regulations already implement many of WH-

P04’s urban design goals. **SWH Action Items 2 and 3** address other neighborhood character concerns.

Map Amendment #2 - Repeal Special District Overlay SO-130 (Residential Infill Standards): Repeal SO-130, which established development conditions, such as parcel consolidation, which have been an obstacle to desirable development in the area.

Map Amendment #3 - 116th Place South, Renton Avenue South, and 74th Lane South Land Use¹¹ Technical Changes: Land use designation change from “cb” to “uh” to create consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning map. This will not change the current development standards or allowed uses on the affected parcels.

Land Use Map Amendment Abbreviations	
Land Use Designation	
“cb”	Community Business Center
“co”	Commercial Outside of Center
“nb”	Neighborhood Business Center
“uh”	Urban Residential, High Density
“um”	Urban Residential, Medium Density
Zoning	
CB	Community Business
NB	Neighborhood Business
-P	P-Suffix Development Condition
R-6	Residential, 6 Units per Acre
R-12	Residential, 12 Units per Acre
R-18	Residential, 18 Units per Acre
R-24	Residential, 24 Units per Acre
R-48	Residential, 48 Units per Acre
-SO	Special District Overlay

Map Amendment #6 - 78th Avenue South and Renton Avenue South Increase Residential Density: Land use designation change from “um” to “uh” and zoning from R-6-P and R-12 parcels to R-18. These changes will encourage higher-density residential development adjacent to the Skyway Business District, Dimmitt Middle School, Skyway Library, Metro bus stops, and other urban-scale services. This amendment includes a development condition that will require that 10 percent of newly constructed dwelling units will be reserved for households at 70 percent of King County area median income.

Map Amendment #9 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way South Increase in Residential Density and Mixed-Use Special District Overlay: Zoning change from R-24 to R-48 to create additional residential density along State Highway 900 and require that development facing Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. be mixed-use. This amendment includes a development condition that will require 10 percent of newly constructed dwelling units will be reserved for households at 70 percent of King County area median income.

¹¹ This Map Amendment is supported by existing King County Comprehensive Plan Policies U-160 and U-161.

Map Amendment #10 - Development Condition to Protect Mobile Home Parks: Restriction on use of properties with existing mobile home and recreational vehicle (RV) parks. Any redevelopment of a mobile home park would require compliance with the Equitable Housing Development Program.

Map Amendment #12 - 87th Avenue South Increase Residential Density: Land use designation change from “um” to “uh” and zoning change from R-6-P to R-18 to allow higher-density residential development adjacent to the Rainier Avenue Business District. This amendment includes a development condition that will require 10 percent of newly constructed dwelling units to be reserved for households at 70 percent of King County area median income.

Action Items

SWH Action 1 - Equitable Housing Development Program

- *Deliverable:* King County shall create an Equitable Housing Development Program to evaluate and address the impacts of large developments on affordable housing, including redevelopment of existing manufactured home communities. With a strong equity lens, this program will focus on retaining and creating affordable housing and will consider options such as: identifying thresholds for mandatory inclusionary housing, assessing preservation goals for the mobile home parks in Skyway-West Hill, creating an affordable housing fee in-lieu program, establishing residential community benefit agreements, developing relocation assistance requirements, and creating a right to return program for displaced residents. The program will be informed by engagement with the community to identify key assets impacted by proposed developments, as well as community-supported mitigations. The program will be informed by best available practices, tools, and research.
- *Deadline:* A study outlining recommended components of the program and accompanying resolution shall be transmitted to the Council by September 30, 2021.
- *Lead and support agencies:* The Permitting Division of the Department of Local Services, in coordination with the Department of Community and Human Services and the Regional Planning team in the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget.

SWH Action 2 - Update Permit Process to Support Compatible Development

- *Deliverable:* King County shall update its permit processes to encourage compatibility in medium-density residential neighborhoods between new developments and existing structures. Compatibility considerations shall include heights, set-backs from streets and adjacent properties, parking, accessory buildings, and landscaping.
- *Deadline:* Implementation of these changes should begin by October 31, 2021.

- *Lead and support agencies:* The Permitting Division of the Department of Local Services.

SWH Action 3 - Dimensional Standards Review

- *Deliverable:* King County shall review and recommend dimensional regulations, including building height, setbacks, and lot coverage standards to maintain and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods.
- *Deadline:* A recommended ordinance should be transmitted to the Council by October 31, 2021.
- *Lead and support agencies:* The Permitting Division of the Department of Local Services.

Commercial and Industrial

Commercial and Industrial Land Use within Skyway-West Hill

There are approximately 1,700 jobs within Skyway-West Hill's commercial and industrial centers, where residents shop, work, eat and gather: Skyway Business District along Renton Avenue, two smaller centers on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainier Avenue South, and industrially-zoned properties south of Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and west of 68th Avenue South.

Skyway Business District

The Skyway Business District is the largest commercial district in the community and is comprised of northern and southern nodes. The Business District is spread over 37 acres and includes Skyway Library, a large grocery store, restaurants, churches, and retail establishments. There is significant potential for growth, commercial and mixed-use infill development, and redevelopment within the Skyway Business District. Public investments such as the new King County library on Renton Avenue South and a future bus rapid transit route will continue to make the Skyway Business District a prime location for increased commercial development. There is one development condition within Skyway-West Hill that applies to the Skyway Business District, SO-050, which encourages pedestrian-oriented development.

Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainier Avenue South Business Districts

There are two other concentrations of business activity in this community, both designated as Neighborhood Business Centers in the Comprehensive Plan. The first is on Martin Luther King Jr. Way South between 60th and 64th Avenue South, and the second is on Rainier Avenue South between South 114th and South 117th Street.

Industrial Areas

The area of industrial land located south of Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and west of 68th Avenue South is home to several small to medium-sized manufacturing firms. As the sole

industrial-zoned area in Skyway-West Hill where manufacturing, warehousing, and related land uses can be sited, this group of parcels serves as an asset to local economic sectors.

Community Priorities and Plan Approach

Residents of Skyway-West Hill overwhelmingly want to see new and better development in Skyway’s commercial districts. Residents identified the need to revitalize the commercial districts by encouraging development of vacant parcels and improving the aesthetic quality of the area and expressed a desire to see new businesses such as restaurants, a grocery store, a pharmacy, retail, and health care providers locate in the area. Residents also noted the poor pedestrian infrastructure in the community and expressed a desire for more and better-quality sidewalks in the commercial districts. **Policies SWH-8 and SWH-12** reinforce this vision, while **Land Use Map Amendment 4** expands the Skyway Business District to increase opportunities for commercial development and **Land Use Map Amendments 7 and 8** add a pedestrian-oriented development condition to the Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainier Avenue South Business Districts to ensure that new development contributes to the “walkability” of the neighborhoods. Increased residential development over time, supported by density increases in **Land Use Map Amendments 9 and 12**, will strengthen the local market for these centers, creating a larger built-in customer base that will help these commercial areas thrive.

There is also community interest in increasing the number smaller-scale commercial opportunities within the Skyway Business District. **SWH Action Item 4** will create a Small-Scale Commercial and Business Retention Incentive Program, which will encourage opportunities for smaller-scale commercial development and support existing local and locally-owned businesses.

The community conveyed a sentiment that the number and density of marijuana-related businesses within Skyway-West Hill was out of proportion with the population and the community’s desired vision for their commercial areas. **Land Use Map Amendment 11**¹² proposes to limit the total number of marijuana retailers within the Skyway-West Hill subarea, while allowing existing marijuana retailers to continue to operate.¹³

¹² Note: Map Amendment 11 is shown in a separate document - the Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Zoning Map Amendments Document – as Map Amendment 8. The rationale for including it in the separate document is that there are three marijuana-related map amendments in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, and they are therefore presented and consolidated in one location.

¹³ Existing marijuana retailers would become legal nonconforming uses. A legal nonconforming use is a use established in conformance with King County’s rules and regulations in effect at the time that have since changed.

Policies, Land Use Map Amendments, and Action Items

Commercial and Industrial Policies

Skyway Business District

- SWH 7** King County shall retain the Community Business Center designation for the Skyway Business District to protect opportunities for commercial activity and encourage siting of new businesses.
- SWH 8** King County shall extend the Community Business Center designation to parcels adjacent to the Skyway Business District to increase commercial capacity and create a more vibrant business district.
- SWH 9** King County should support and incentivize opportunities for smaller-scale commercial development.
- SWH 10** King County shall retain, and expand where appropriate, development conditions that support pedestrian-oriented commercial development within the Skyway Business District.

Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainier Avenue South Business Districts

- SWH 11** King County shall zone the Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainier Avenue South commercial areas as Neighborhood Business Centers.
- SWH 12** King County shall require additional standards for commercial development in the Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainier Avenue South Neighborhood Business Centers to improve the pedestrian environment as redevelopment occurs.

Industrial Areas

- SWH 13** King County should retain the zoning of existing industrial areas to support employment opportunities and local economic activity.

Commercial Land Use Map Amendments

Map Amendment #4 - Renton Avenue South Community Business Zoning Expansion: Change the zoning from R-24 and R-48 to CB-SO. This will expand opportunities for commercial and mixed-use development in the Skyway Business District.

Map Amendment #5 - North of Renton Avenue middle of 12700 Block Land Use Technical Change:

Change land use designation from “uh” to “cb” to create consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning map. This will not change the current development standards or allowed uses on the affected parcels.

Map Amendment #7 - Rainier Avenue South Neighborhood Business Designation and Commercial Design Standards: Change the land use designation and zoning from “co” to “nb” and CB to NB, respectively. NB supports smaller-scale commercial development for a limited surrounding area, which is more appropriate for this business district. Includes development standards to ensure that new development within the commercial district is pedestrian-oriented.

Map Amendment #8 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way

South Neighborhood Business Designation and Commercial Design Standards: Changes the land use designations from “co” and “uh” to “nb”, and zoning classifications CB and R-24 to NB, respectively. NB supports smaller-scale commercial development for a limited surrounding area, which is more appropriate for this business district. Includes development standards to ensure that new development within the commercial district is pedestrian-oriented.

Map Amendment #11 - Creation of a Special District Overlay Capping Marijuana Retail Stores:

Limits the total number of marijuana retail stores within the Skyway-West Hill subarea.

Action Items

SWH Action 4 - Small-Scale Commercial Incentives

- *Deliverable:* King County shall create incentives within the Skyway Business District to support opportunities for smaller-scale commercial development and support locally-owned and culturally significant businesses. These incentives may include flexible application of development regulations, expedited permit review, or reduced permit fees.
- *Deadline:* A proposed ordinance creating this incentive program shall be transmitted to the Council by March 1, 2022.
- *Lead and support agencies:* The Permitting Division of the Department of Local Services.

Land Use Map Amendment Abbreviations	
Land Use Designation	
“cb”	Community Business Center
“co”	Commercial Outside of Center
“nb”	Neighborhood Business Center
“uh”	Urban Residential, High Density
“um”	Urban Residential, Medium Density
Zoning	
CB	Community Business
NB	Neighborhood Business
-P	P-Suffix Development Condition
R-6	Residential, 6 Units per Acre
R-12	Residential, 12 Units per Acre
R-18	Residential, 18 Units per Acre
R-24	Residential, 24 Units per Acre
R-48	Residential, 48 Units per Acre
-SO	Special District Overlay

Community Character

Community character is the special combination of tangible and intangible elements that make up a community's identity and contribute to its distinctive sense of place.¹⁴ Public institutions such as parks and libraries are naturally reflective of the community's priorities in the way they are utilized by residents, such as what events are held, what classes are offered, and what books are checked out. Other public and private spaces like plazas or culturally important businesses also give a community a special sense of place. But cultural assets that are not necessarily tied to a single location also contribute to community character: daily social interactions with neighbors, events and festivals, and public art also make people feel connected to their neighborhood. Land use regulations can support the preservation and promotion of these different aspects of community character.

Parks

Skyway-West Hill contains approximately 27 acres of public parkland within its boundaries. Of this, 23 acres are developed (Skyway Park) and 4 acres are undeveloped with no amenities (Bryn Mawr Park). The 2008 visioning process for Skyway Park identified it as a key asset for overall community revitalization. Currently, Skyway Park hosts Little League and youth football games as well as community events like the Skyway Community Festival. The County included a capital project in Skyway Park in its 2019-2020 Biennial Budget, dedicating \$500,000 toward planning, design, engineering, permitting and construction of proposed park improvements including a new mini open play soccer arena, a larger playground, the addition of adult fitness equipment, upgraded fencing, lighting, restrooms, ADA access, repurposing poorly draining ballfields to a grassy meadow, and creating a new pedestrian entryway.

Other nearby parks in Seattle (Lakeridge Park and Deadhorse Canyon), Tukwila (Fort Dent Park), and Renton (Gene Coulon Park) provide open space, playfields and other recreational opportunities for Skyway-West Hill residents. Public schools (Bryn Mawr, Campbell Hill, and Lakeridge Elementary Schools and Dimmitt Middle School) also offer sports fields and facilities used by residents but are not classified as public parks.

Privately owned and semipublic recreation and open space are also important contributors to the area's greenspace network, offering amenities like plazas, playgrounds, picnic tables, dog-walking areas, and swimming pools to residents. Many churches and religious organizations also provide similar amenities and gathering spaces on their property.

¹⁴ [How Do You Define Community Character?](#), Gary Pivo

Library

Skyway-West Hill has been served by the King County Library System (KCLS) since 1953, when the Skyway Branch Library Board and its 2,000 volumes opened to the public in the back room of a local bakery on Renton Avenue.¹⁵ In 1970, a new 5,200 square foot Skyway Library opened with space to double the volumes available and included a meeting room. In 2004, a new Skyway Library was proposed as part of a successful \$172 million KCLS bond measure. Construction began in 2014, and in 2016 the \$8.3 million, 8,000 square foot facility, which includes eco-friendly building features, a plaza that is used for community events and farmers markets, a table made from an airplane wing in a nod to the community’s historical connection with the aviation industry, and Skystones, a public art piece, opened to the public.¹⁶ Skyway Library has collections in Chinese, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The library has become an important community centerpiece of the Skyway Business District.

Community Priorities and Plan Approach

Residents of Skyway-West Hill consistently expressed a desire for more community amenities and concern that development pressure would put the community’s cultural assets at risk. The desired amenities generally fell into two categories:

- Public infrastructure such as sidewalks, streetlights, public meeting spaces, plazas, and parks, open space, and trails from which to enjoy the neighborhood’s superior views; and
- Cultural assets, which provide value to the community and may be provided by the public, private, or non-profit sectors, such as a community center, childcare facilities, healthcare providers, and business incubators. Cultural assets may also include public art, cultural facilities, or events such as festivals or publicly celebrated holidays.

Policies SWH-14 and SWH-15 recognize that new development presents both a strategic opportunity to facilitate the creation or enhancement of community amenities and a potential risk to existing cultural assets. These policies also recognize that public engagement is crucial to identifying both the community’s preferred amenities and important cultural assets. **SWH Action 5** creates a Community-Desired Amenity Program, which will provide incentives to developers and property owners in exchange for the voluntary preservation or provision of community-identified and preferred amenities and assets.

¹⁵ [Skyway Library, King County Library System](#)

¹⁶ [King County Library System Capital Bond Report](#)

Policies, Land Use Map Amendments, and Action Items

Community Character Policies

- SWH 14** King County should support and incentivize the provision of on-site and off-site community-desired amenities when new development occurs near commercial centers, frequent transit corridors, and parks and trails.
- SWH 15** During permit and project review, King County should involve the community to identify important existing cultural assets impacted by the proposal and, if identified, work with the community to preserve, where possible, or mitigate the loss of these assets.

Action Items

SWH Action 5 - Community-Desired Amenities Incentives

- *Deliverable:* King County should create a Community-Desired Amenity Program to provide bonuses to developers and property owners in exchange for the voluntary preservation or provision of cultural assets and community amenities in Skyway-West Hill. Assets and amenities may include, but are not limited to: affordable housing units, community-identified cultural spaces, community green spaces or viewpoint plazas, connected pedestrian networks, streetlights, child-care facilities, a community center, public meeting spaces, farmers markets, arts facilities or programs, and business incubators. Bonuses may include increases in density or deviations from certain development standards, including but not limited to: height, parking requirements, setbacks, receipt of in-lieu funds, and commercial floor area mix. The program will be informed by engagement with the community and may coordinate with the County’s existing Transfer of Development Rights program, Residential Density Incentive program, and other development incentive programs.
- *Deadline:* A proposed ordinance creating this program shall be transmitted to the Council by January 31, 2022.
- *Lead and support agencies:* The Permitting Division of the Department of Local Services, in coordination with the Department of Community and Human Services and the Regional Planning team in the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget.

SWH Action 6 - Support Joint Planning Agreement with Renton¹⁷

- *Deliverable:* King County should engage with the City of Renton and seek to develop a Joint Planning Agreement or similar that supports compatible development patterns and design of adjacent neighborhoods.

¹⁷ Supported by King County Comprehensive Plan Policy U-208

- *Deadline:* Development of this agreement should begin by December 1, 2020.
- *Lead and support agencies:* The Regional Planning team in the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget and the Permitting Division of the Department of Local Services.

APPENDIX A – MAPS

Figure 1 - King County Community Service Areas

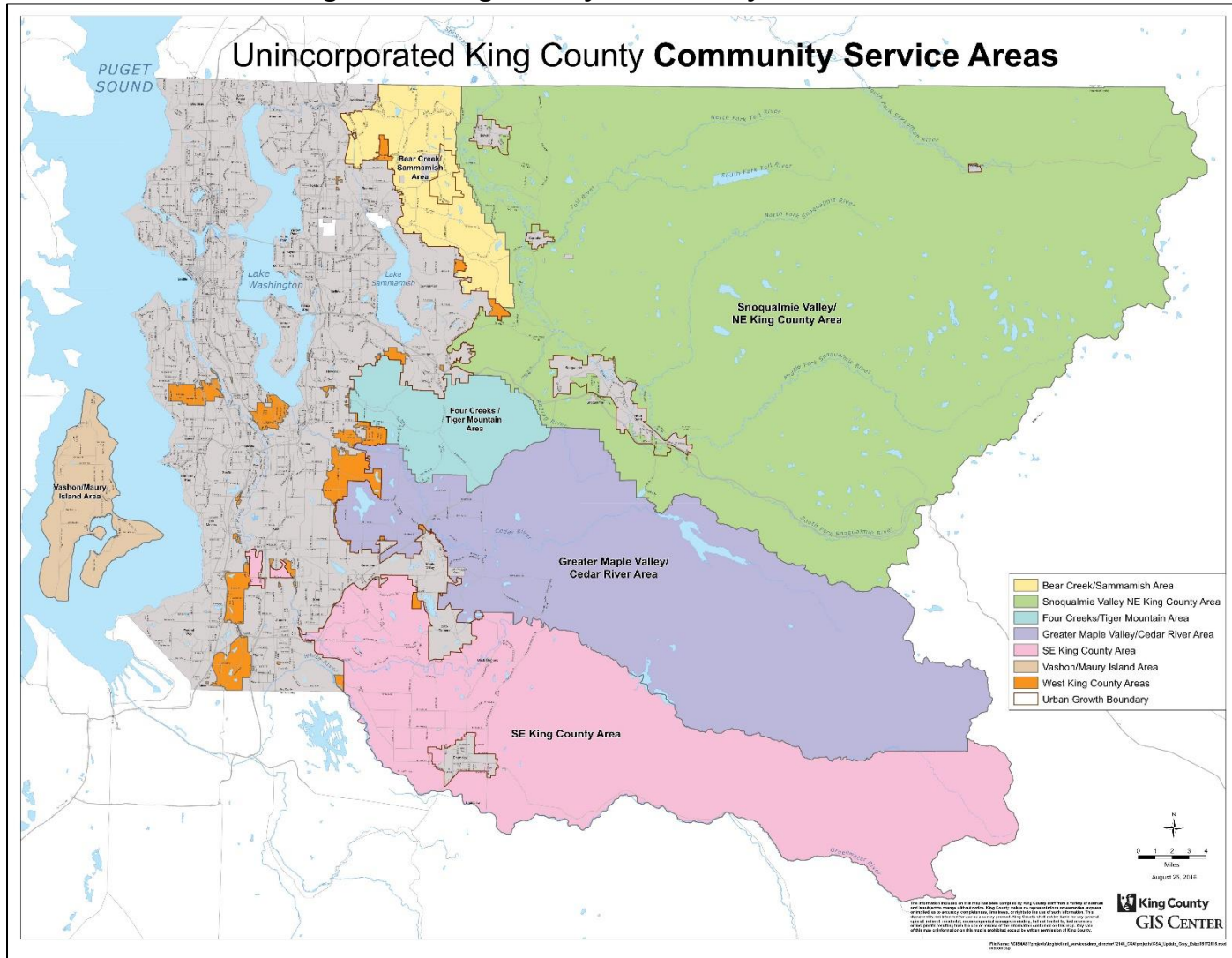


Figure 2 - Existing Land Uses

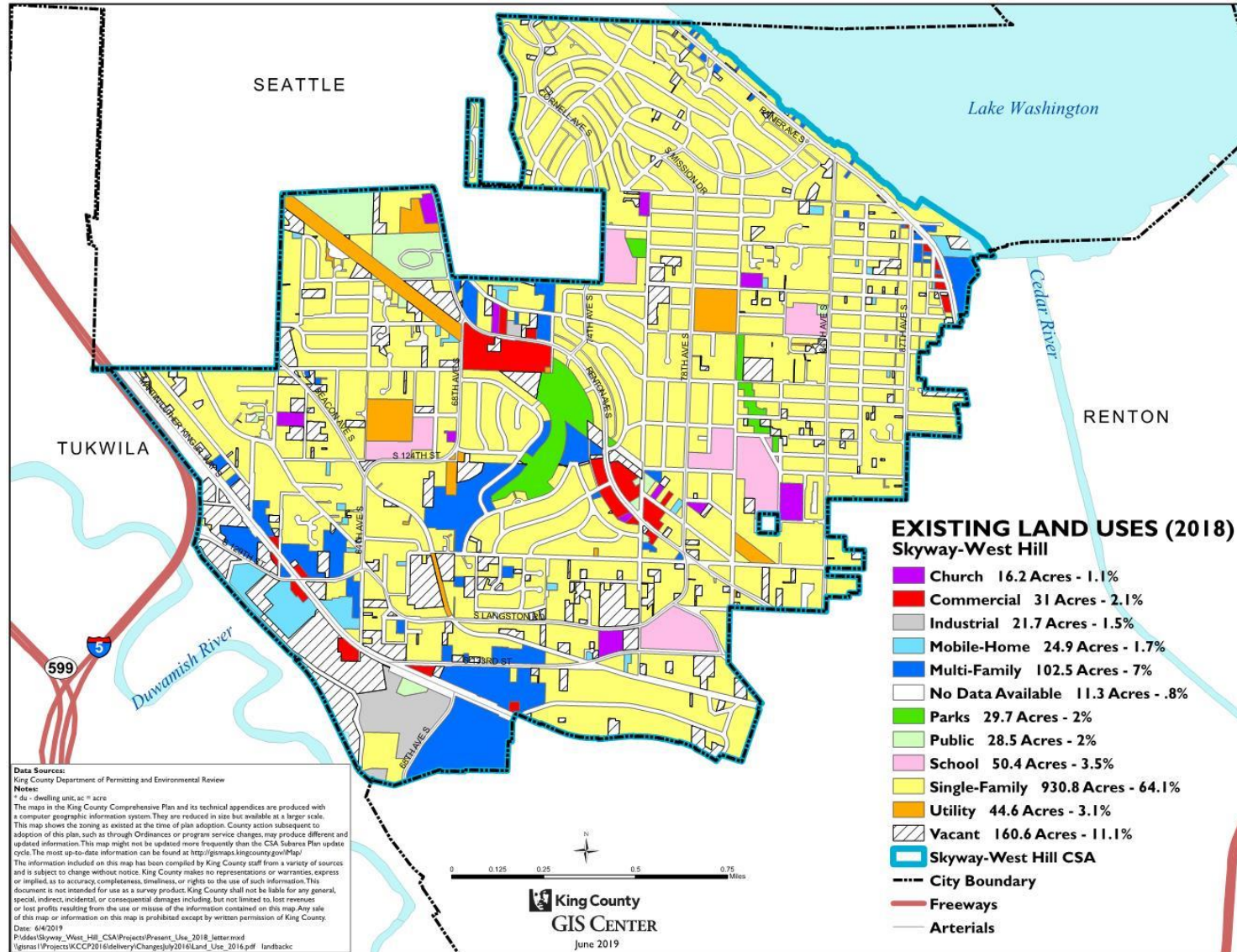


Figure 3 - King County Comprehensive Plan Land Use

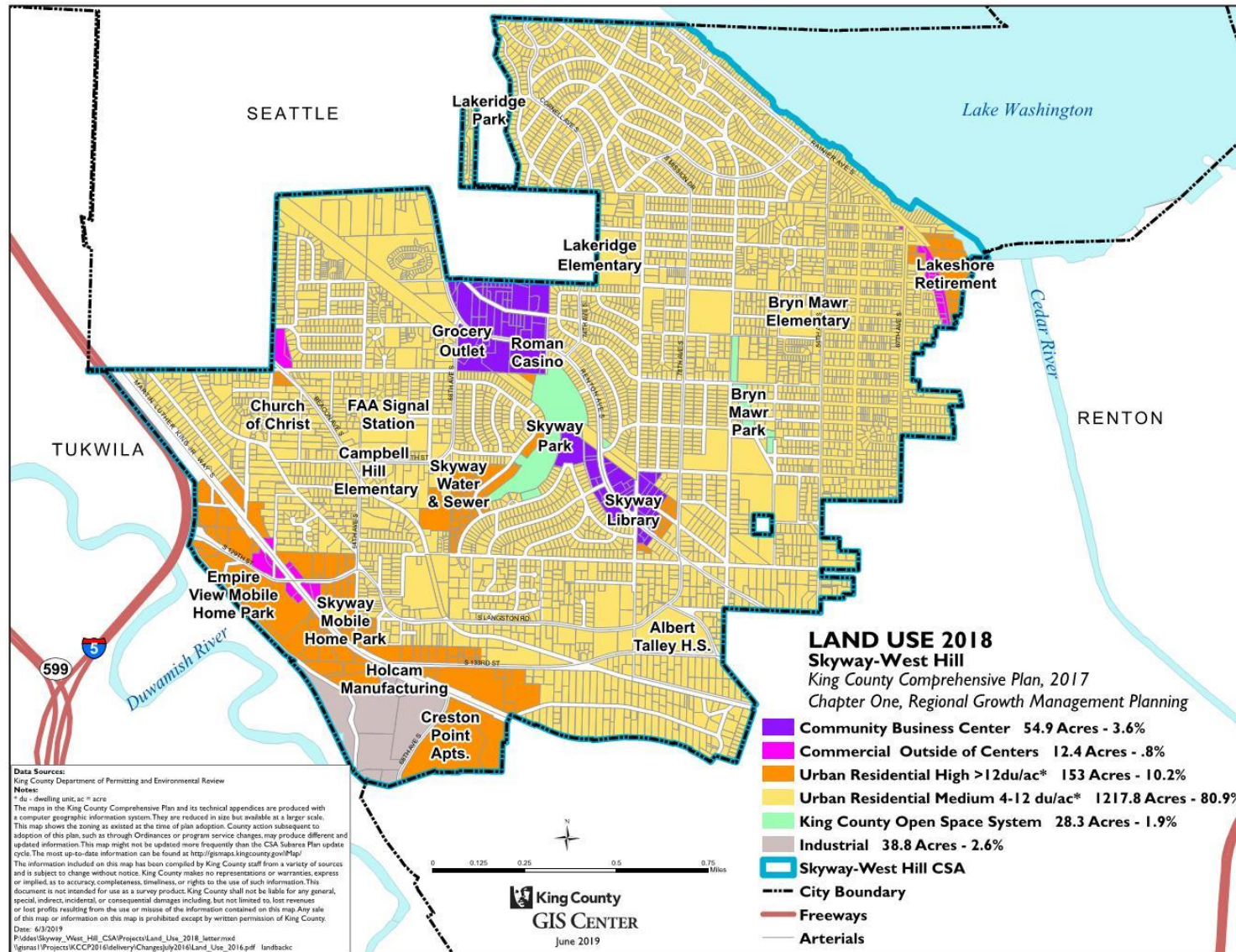
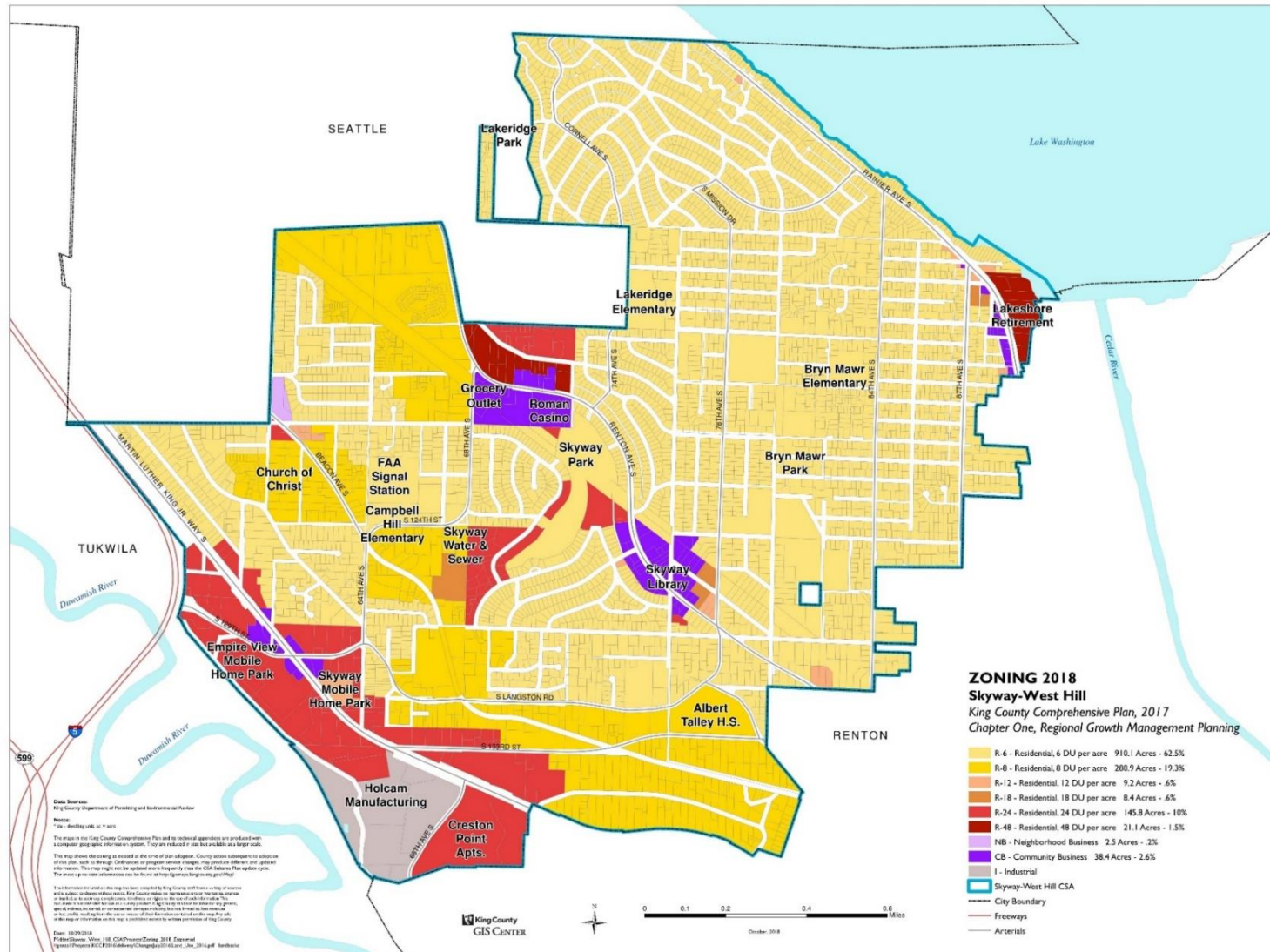


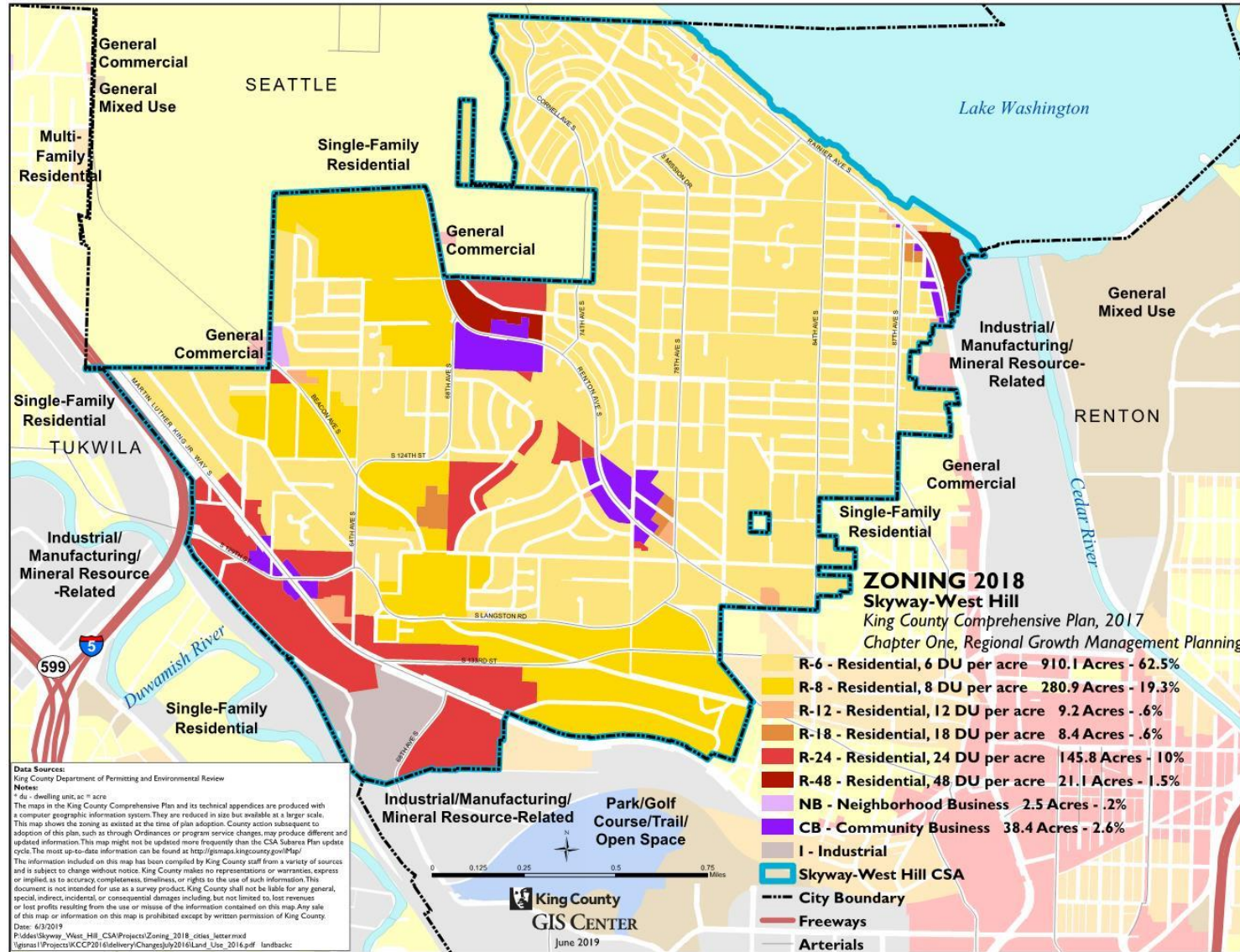
Figure 4 - Zoning Map



Land Use Designation	Number of Parcels	Acres	Percentage of Area
Community Business Center	97	55	3.6%
Commercial Outside of Centers	29	12	0.8%
Industrial	7	39	2.6%
King County Open Space	9	28	1.9%
Urban Residential Medium (4-12 dwelling units/acre)	4,776	1,218	80.9%
Urban Residential High (12+ dwelling units/acre)	130	153	10.2%

Zoning	Number of Parcels	Acres	Percentage of Area
R-6 (6 units/acre)	4,161	910	62.5%
R-8 (8 units/acre)	594	281	19.3%
R-12 (12 units/acre)	27	9	0.6%
R-18 (18 units/acre)	13	8	0.6%
R-24 (24 units/acre)	136	146	10%
R-48 (48 units/acre)	26	21	1.5%
Neighborhood Business	2	3	0.2%
Community Business	83	38	2.6%
Industrial	7	39	2.7%

Figure 6 - Land Use in Adjacent Cities



APPENDIX B – COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Community History

The commonly used names of "Skyway," "West Hill," and "Bryn Mawr" (Welsh for "big hill") are likely derived from the area's position on a prominent ridge west of Lake Washington and the City of Renton. The Skyway-West Hill area was settled in the 1870's as farmland, pastures, orchards and ranches, and in the 1880s a community began to develop around Taylor Mill and other saw mills using the area's advantageous location on Lake Washington. The arrival of the Seattle and Rainier Beach Railway streetcar line made the Bryn Mawr area increasingly accessible to prospective residents and spurred additional residential development. The trip between Seattle and Renton took two hours and cost 25 cents.

However, the area did not begin to develop into a full-fledged residential community until the 1940's, when local land developers began platting and building modest single-family homes attractive to employees of Boeing's aircraft plant in Renton. Development increased at a rapid pace after World War II when an influx of soldiers and their families returned to the area. According to U.S. Census estimates, approximately 3,500 housing units were constructed between 1940 and 1970. The available supply of modest, affordable homes and land, as well as its convenient location to Seattle and Lake Washington, made it a desirable place for soldiers and others to settle.

Potential Annexation Area

Washington's Growth Management Act identifies cities as the most appropriate unit of local government to provide urban governmental services.¹⁸ Cities are afforded greater taxing authority than counties to plan and deliver urban services such as sewer, economic development, and non-motorized transportation. Additionally, King County's Countywide Planning Policies encourage the annexation of unincorporated lands that are already urbanized. Skyway-West Hill is one of the largest of more than 60 unincorporated areas called Potential Annexation Areas that are affiliated with 19 different cities in King County. These are defined areas inside the urban growth area and designated through the Countywide Planning Policies where most of unincorporated King County's population and employment growth is expected to locate. King County serves as both a regional government working with cities to facilitate the eventual annexation of Potential Annexation Areas as well as a local government providing essential programs and services to existing residents. This unique and pivotal role in planning the future of Potential Annexation Areas one reason King County restructured its subarea planning program in 2018 to require that a CSA Subarea Plan be prepared for each of the five largest remaining Potential Annexation Areas.

The Skyway-West Hill area has been a part of the City of Renton's Potential Annexation Area since 2005. The King County and City of Renton Comprehensive Plans each contain maps that designate

¹⁸ RCW 36.70A.110(4)

the Potential Annexation Area boundary and outline various policies related to growth, annexations, and intergovernmental cooperation. Using data from the King County Buildable Lands Report, the Countywide Planning Policies allocate housing and employment growth targets to Renton and its Potential Annexation Areas. The 2031 growth targets for Renton's Potential Annexation Areas (which includes Skyway-West Hill and other unincorporated areas) are 3,895 new housing units and 470 new jobs. Upon annexation, the land use and employment targets for the Potential Annexation Area will be added to the City of Renton's targets.

As of 2019, the City of Renton has not adopted a new timeline for annexation of the West Hill Potential Annexation Area, and has no immediate plans to move forward with annexation. The most recent question of annexation came up for a public vote in November 2012 when approximately 56 percent of the community voted not to annex to the City of Renton, leaving the area in unincorporated King County for the immediate future, subject to all of the county's land use and zoning regulations. One benefit of heightened long-range planning in the Potential Annexation Areas is to ensure that City and County development standards are generally compatible and in place to guide land development prior to when annexation may occur.

Critical Areas and Geology

Skyway-West Hill has relatively few undisturbed natural areas or inventoried critical areas. There are, however, several large parcels with significant amounts of natural vegetation, including King County's undeveloped Bryn Mawr Park. The 1990 version of the King County Sensitive Areas Map Folio identified sensitive areas that include steep slopes, landslide, seismic, and erosion hazards and several small, unclassified streams. More recent mapping of potential landslide hazards and other features further defined the locations and extents of some critical areas. These critical areas are primarily associated with hillsides and ravines that surround the community and further bisect West Hill into its identifiable neighborhoods. Topography of the area ranges from lowlands at the Lake Washington shoreline and Duwamish River near the southwestern boundary, to a ridge with an elevation of nearly 500 feet near the Skyway Business District.

Lake Washington is an important natural feature and three of the unclassified streams in the area flow into the lake, including Taylor Creek that meanders through Skyway Park. The eastern half of Skyway-West Hill generally lies within the Cedar River Basin and the remaining portion is within the Green River Basin.

Geologically, the area is underlain at depth by folded and faulted bedrock consisting of relatively impermeable sandstone, shale and coal-bearing strata of the Puget Group, which is locally overlain by varying thicknesses of glacial and interglacial strata. Soils in the area are generally within the Alderwood association and found extensively on upland and terrace areas of West Hill. They are moderately well-drained, undulating to hilly soils that have dense, very slowly permeable glacial till at a depth of 20 to 40 inches. They are well suited to pasture and timber production but are poorly

suited to cultivated crops. Limitations for home building sites are moderate to slight on most of this association. The Alderwood association soils (AgB and AgD) in this area are rated “severe” in their limitations for septic systems. This is due to the very slow permeability in the underlying soils. Environmental factors considered for the effectiveness of septic systems include soil quality, soil depth, proximity to surface or groundwater, and topography.

These same soils, and the glacial strata underlying them, are found in areas that host many of the geologic hazards mapped in the area, including both deep-seated and shallow landslide hazards, erosion hazards, and some of the steep slope hazard areas. Seismic hazards (as defined in King County Code Title 21A, Chapter 6) are most common in areas where foundation soils might liquefy during an earthquake, which are generally limited to low-lying areas on floodplains, near bodies of water, and in areas of historic non-structural fill. These conditions are rare in Skyway-West Hill, implying that there are fewer seismic hazard areas in this community than in others.

Transportation

Roads

Skyway-West Hill has nearly 57 miles of road, 53.5 of which are planned and maintained by the King County Department of Local Services/Road Services Division, which supports a variety of motorized and non-motorized travel options. The remaining roads are maintained by the Washington State Department of Transportation (1.47 miles of MLK Jr. Way S/SR 900 and 0.31 miles of Interstate 5), and private landowners (1.6 miles).

King County’s Arterial Functional Classification Map identifies two principal arterials (MLK Jr. Way South and Rainier Avenue South), one minor arterial (Renton Avenue South), and multiple collector arterials in Skyway-West Hill. Below is a brief overview of the three roadways classified as either a principal or minor arterial:

- MLK Jr. Way South/SR-900 - This four-lane state highway runs along the southern boundary of Skyway-West Hill, extending approximately 1.5 miles from I-5 to the City of Renton. A substantial portion of the existing multi-family housing in the community and the majority of land zoned for high-density residential are in close proximity to SR-900.
- Rainier Avenue South - This is a multi-lane principal arterial along Lake Washington with bike lanes and parking lanes for adjacent residences. It provides access to the Renton Airport area and downtown Renton to the southeast and to the Rainier Beach area to the northwest.
- Renton Avenue South - This is a 1.5-mile long minor arterial serving both through and local traffic. It functions as a type of “Main Street” for the community, providing direct access to the Skyway Business District. Sidewalks are constructed along most of the road’s length in Skyway-West Hill.

The Transportation Needs Report (TNR)¹⁹ is a comprehensive list of road-related capital improvements needed to support the County’s envisioned land uses in unincorporated King County. It is a 20-year needs list (distinct from the six-year Capital Improvement Program) developed and managed by the Department of Local Services, Road Services Division. The 2016 Transportation Needs Report identifies 24 specific projects in Skyway-West Hill - 20 roadside, two traffic control device, one drainage, and one slope stabilization project. Combined, these projects have an estimated cost of more than \$30 million. Currently, one of these projects, currently in the Final Design phase, is included in the Road Services Division Capital Improvement Plan – Renton Avenue sidewalks Phase III, which will construct a sidewalk on the west side of Renton Avenue S between 68th Avenue S and S 112th Street, a paved walking surface on the east side of Renton Avenue between 68th Avenue S and S 116th Place, and bicycle lanes on each side of Renton Avenue within the project area. All other projects in the TNR are unfunded and project scopes are preliminary. If funding for a project is secured in the future, more comprehensive scoping, design, and public engagement efforts will take place.

Transit

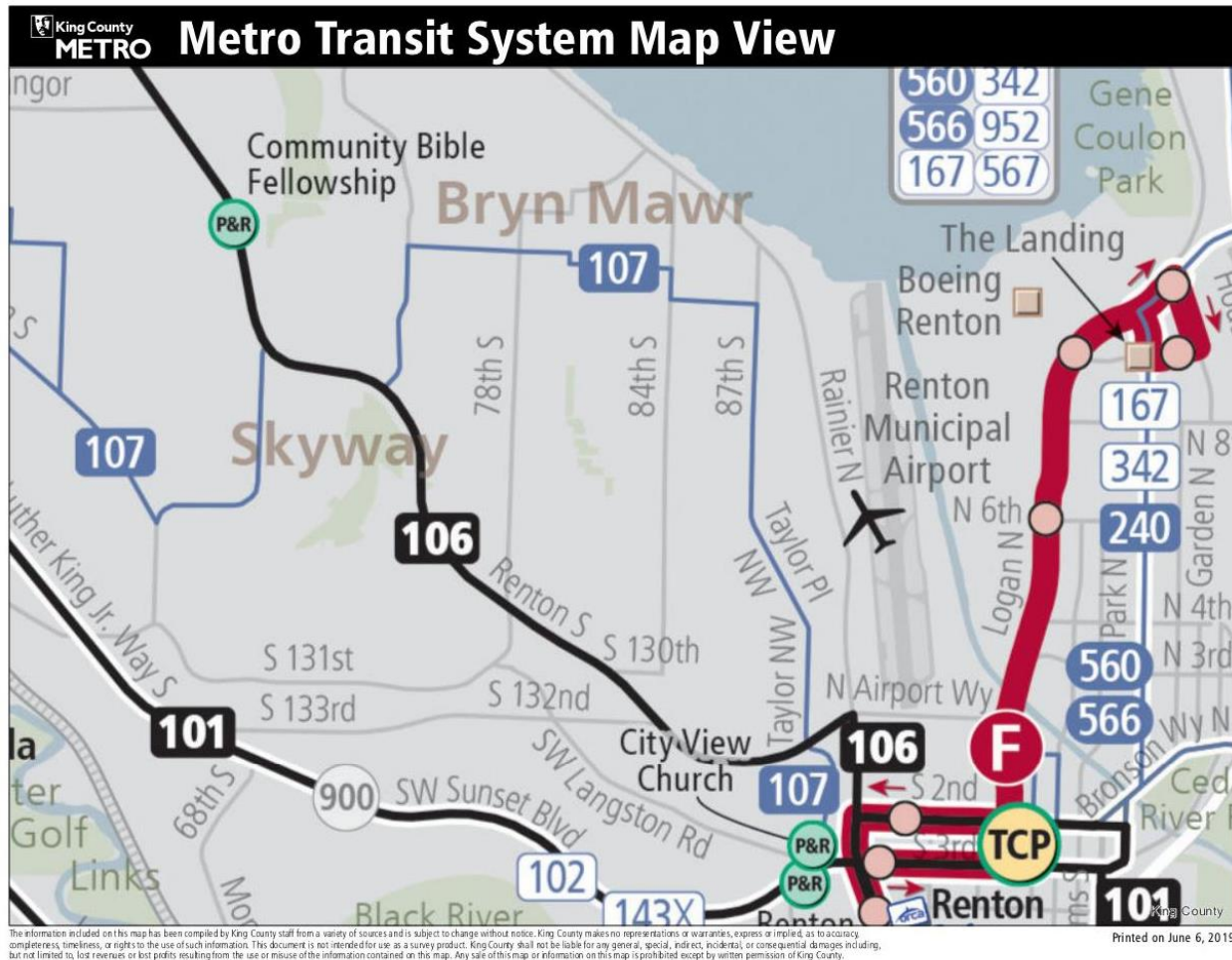
Skyway-West Hill is served by the following Metro Transit Routes:

Route #	Route	Weekday Frequency	Weekend Frequency
101	Renton Transit Center to Downtown Seattle (via MLK Jr. Way S)	Every 15 Minutes (6:30 AM – 6:20 PM) Every 20-30 Minutes (5:15 AM – 6:20 AM, 6:20 PM – 9:20 PM)	Every 30-60 Minutes (6:20 AM – 9:50 PM)
102	Fairwood to Downtown Seattle (via Renton Transit Center and MLK Jr. Way S)	Every 15-30 Minutes to Downtown Seattle (5:00 AM – 8:00 AM) Every 15-20 Minutes to Fairwood (3:20 PM – 5:45 PM)	No Weekend Service
106	Renton Transit Center to Downtown Seattle (via Renton Avenue)	Every 15-30 Minutes (4:50 AM – 1:30 AM)	Every 15 Minutes (7:30 AM – 8:00 PM) Every 30-60 Minutes (6:00 AM – 7:30 AM, 8:00 PM – 1:30 AM)
107	Renton Transit Center to Beacon Hill (via 87 th Ave S, S 114 th St, Renton Ave S, and Beacon Ave S)	Every 15-30 Minutes (5:30 AM – 6:30 PM) Every 30-45 Minutes (6:30 PM – 1:10 AM)	Every 30–60 Minutes (5:45 AM – 1:10 AM)

¹⁹ [2016 Transportation Needs Report](#)

Within Skyway-West Hill, Routes 101 and 102 make north and south-bound stops along MLK Jr. way S at 68th Ave S and S 129th Street (both within the MLK Jr. Way S Commercial District) before running limited-stop express to downtown Seattle going northbound, terminating at the Washington State Convention Center. Going southbound, both routes run local and terminate at the Renton Transit Center (Route 101) and Fairwood Center (Route 102).

Running northbound from its terminus at Renton Transit Center, Route 106 makes numerous stops along Renton Ave S, serving the southern portion of the Skyway Business District (including the Skyway Library) and connecting riders to the Rainier Beach, Othello, Columbia City, and Mount Baker Link Light Rail stations before terminating at the International District/Chinatown station. From Renton Transit Center, Route 107 runs north along 87th Avenue South, 1-2 blocks to the west of the Rainer Avenue Commercial District. From there the route runs west and south to Renton Avenue S, serving the northern portion of the Renton Avenue Commercial District, runs south on 68th Avenue South, and runs north again on Beacon Avenue South before leaving Skyway-West Hill and connecting riders with the Rainier Beach and Beacon Hill Link Light Rail stations.



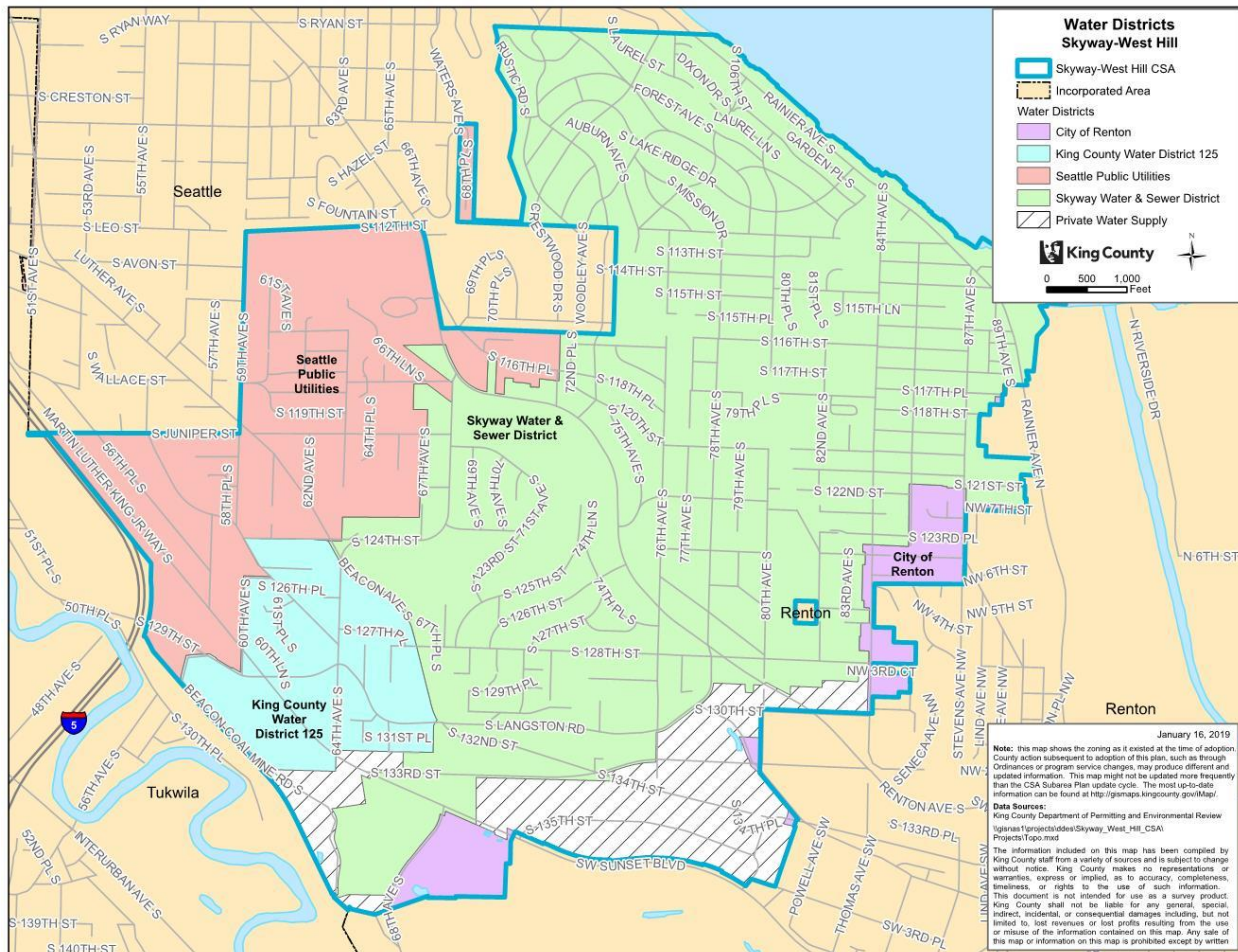
A portion of Skyway-West Hill is served by Via to Transit, a new app-based on-demand service from King County Metro that will connect riders to the Rainier Beach Link Light Rail station and stops along the 106 and 107 bus lines for the cost of a regular bus ride.

Metro’s RapidRide F provides bus rapid transit service running into Renton from Tukwila, along the southern edge of the Skyway-West Hill community. METRO CONNECTS, Metro’s long-range plan, anticipates an additional RapidRide line traveling along Renton Avenue S through the middle of the Skyway-West Hill community to open by 2040.

Water and Sewer

Water

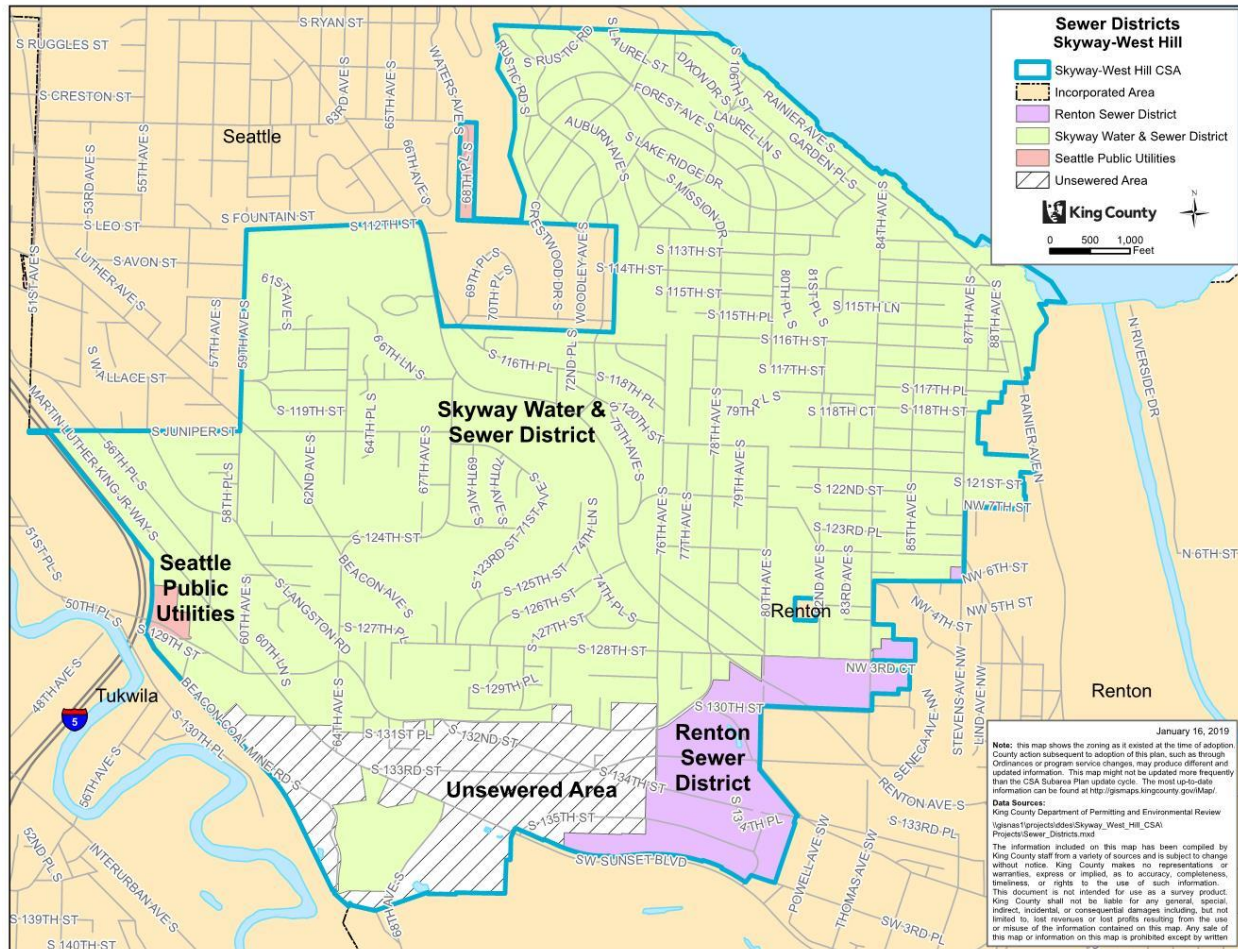
Figure 7: Water District



Seattle Public Utilities, the Skyway Water and Sewer District, and King County Water District #125 provide public water to most of the area (Map 1). A small portion of the area is served by private water supply (such as wells) and the City of Renton. It is expected that these utilities have adequate capacity to meet growth as required by state and local laws. Most of the community lies within the water service area of the Skyway Water and Sewer District, a special purpose district. The District, which sources its water from the Cascade Water Alliance (Seattle Public Utilities), the City of Renton, and District-owned wells, has an estimated 3,350 water customers.

Sewer

Figure 8: Sewer Districts



Most of unincorporated Skyway-West Hill is within the sewer service area of the Skyway Water and Sewer District, which serves approximately 4,000 customers. The District is one of 34 local sewer utilities countywide that have agreements with King County’s Wastewater Treatment Division to accept and treat their locally collected wastewater. Small pockets in the northwest and southeast parts of skyway-West Hill are located in the sewer service area of Seattle Public Utilities and the City of Renton. Depending on location and flow, sewage collected by these public sewer providers is treated at either King County’s South Treatment Plant in Renton or West Point Treatment Plant near Ballard.

Although all properties in the Skyway-West Hill area are within a local sewer service area, as of 2017, approximately 590 parcels have private, on-site septic systems. Most parcels with on-site septic systems are clustered in the south and southeast sections of Skyway-West Hill. This area has poor soils, high groundwater, and many of the systems are aging. For these and other reasons, Public Health-Seattle & King County (the agency with on-site septic system oversight) primarily works with property owners on on-site septic system repair and maintenance permits. According to King

County Comprehensive Plan policy, parcels with on-site septic systems inside the Urban Growth Area are required to connect to a public sewer before new subdivision or development permits can be issued, except under certain limited circumstances.

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY

A Community Center Feasibility Study is being prepared by King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks. This study will be included as an appendix to the Skyway West Hill Land Use Plan.

APPENDIX D – SKYWAY-WEST HILL SERVICE DELIVERY COMPARISON AND EQUITY ANALYSIS

A third party consultant reviewed the draft plan and land use and zoning map amendments using the King County Equity Analysis framework. In the Public Review Draft, this study is provided as a separate attachment to the Skyway West Hill Land Use Plan. Revisions to the analysis and Plan will be made based on the feedback gathered as part of the public comment period.

APPENDIX E – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS

Community Outreach and Engagement

In 1993, prior to adoption of King County’s first Comprehensive Plan under the Growth Management Act, King County adopted the West Hill Community Plan. The Community Plan, along with the Comprehensive Plan, guided development in the community over the last 25 years.

In 2015, community stakeholders and the public developed the Skyway-West Hill Action Plan to help implement the 1993 Community Plan. Given the reinstatement of the County’s subarea planning program and the need to comprehensively review and update the Community Plan, the County did not adopt the proposed Action Plan; instead, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan directed the County to work with the community to review the land use components of the Action Plan and the Community Plan within the context of the subarea planning program.

Beginning in the summer of 2018, King County engaged with the public, including residents and key stakeholders such as business owners and non-profits, to identify land use issues in the community and update the Community Plan to reflect current needs and the current planning framework. This process was informed by the land use components of the 2015 Action Plan, and included community forums, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, participation at community events, and digital engagement.

Outreach efforts for this Skyway-West Hill Land Use Plan was more extensive than previous efforts, and focused on hearing from a wide variety of residents and stakeholders with an intentional focus on inclusion of marginalized communities and communities of color to more closely align with the current demographics of the area.

Community engagement related to the subarea plan were led by communications staff from the Director’s Office of the Department of Local Services (DLS) in concert with subarea planning staff from the Permitting Division. Outreach efforts, each discussed in more detail below, consisted of community stakeholder interviews with 22 leaders from different segments of the community, 4 focus groups engaging 62 residents, and three large community meetings. In addition to these primary outreach efforts, planning and outreach staff provided periodic briefings to both the West Hill Community Association (WHCA) and Skyway Solutions throughout the process and conducted two on-line and paper surveys that garnered 97 individual respondents.

Stakeholder Interviews

In order to develop a framework for focus groups and the public meetings, DLS community relations and planning staff conducted interviews with 22 community leaders. These community stakeholders were identified by soliciting names from community groups, seeking participants at

local meetings, advertising through King County’s Unincorporated Area News and Next Door social media platform, and word-of-mouth. In addition, Councilmember Gossett’s staff was asked for additional outreach recommendations during monthly meetings at which the team shared updates on plan development and community issues.

Each of the participants in the interviews were asked a set of six questions, and offered the opportunity to provide additional comments. The list of questions, interview participants, and the unattributed comments are attached to this report as Appendix XX. In reviewing the substance of the interviews, the following key themes emerged that influenced how DLS staff structured the Focus Groups and ongoing outreach with the community.

Gentrification and Displacement. Uncontrolled gentrification and displacement of communities and businesses that have deep roots in Skyway/West Hill was the biggest theme that emerged from the interviews. The majority of respondents saw this as a critical challenge facing the community, and overwhelmingly expressed concerns about it. Many respondents see it as an issue facing both the commercial and residential districts. Many respondents had examples of people they knew who had left the community, and they shared thoughtful ideas about how to fight displacement including requiring more of developers, building more affordable housing, and placing limits on the size/scale of new houses. One resident pointed out that it was not their job to come up with strategies to fight displacement, it was the County’s job.

Pros and Cons of New Development. While the majority of interview participants were deeply concerned about development pressure on the community and its possible deleterious effects, they also overwhelmingly wanted to see new and better development come to the commercial districts of Skyway. A number of respondents talked about the need to revitalize the commercial districts. Among the most mentioned types of new businesses that community members would like to see are:

- Restaurants and Nightlife
- Grocery Store
- Community Center
- Child Care
- Pharmacy
- Retail (Several respondents pointed out that Skyway residents shop in Renton)
- Health Care Facility/Doctors/Dentists

Affordable Housing. The majority of respondents felt that more affordable housing is a component of fighting displacement, and were generally supportive of more affordable housing. However, support depended to a degree on how “affordable housing” is defined. Several participants

expressed concerns about the effect of large scale affordable housing developments on communities, in terms of losing existing market-rate affordable housing stock and tax revenue. Generally, those with concerns favored strategies that would preserve the existing stock of market-rate housing that is affordable to low-income members of the community, rather than investing in new large-scale government or non-profit sponsored housing.

Community Investments. All participants in the interview process understood that the Skyway/West Hill Sub-Area Plan is a land-use plan, but DLS staff asked them what other community amenities they felt were critical to improving the community, with the goal of identifying possible areas for investment by the county or as mitigation from developers. While the responses ranged widely, there were some common threads through many of the interviews.

- ***Sidewalks and Walkability.*** A majority of respondents commented on the poor pedestrian infrastructure in the community and the need for more and better sidewalks in the commercial districts, on main arterials like Martin Luther King Drive, and in some of the school zones.
- ***Community Center.*** A community center for Skyway/West Hill has been a long articulated need by the community and groups representing residents. A feasibility study of a Skyway/West Hill community center is attached to this Plan as Appendix XX.
- ***Open Space and Recreation.*** Many respondents expressed concerns about the limited amount of recreation and open space in the community. There were many comments that the County needs to improve access to Skyway Park, which is poorly accessed from Renton Ave, the main arterial running through the heart of the community.

Community Outreach/Focus Group Suggestions. Overall respondents supported the idea of engaging community members in smaller groups, focusing on more specific issues. While there was a wide range of suggestions on how to approach the focus groups following are the ones that were most common:

- ***Geographic Focus Groups.*** Organize groups based on geographic areas of Skyway.
- ***Demographic Focus Groups.*** Organize groups based on the various Skyway/West Hill demographic groups.
- ***Community Organizations as Focus Groups.*** Use the many non-profits that the County works with regularly as focus groups.
- ***Engage Youth.*** Find ways to engage youth in the focus group process.
- ***Provide Food.*** Many interview participants felt that we would have better luck getting community members to participate if we provided a meal.

Focus Groups/Briefings. DLS conducted four focus groups with segments of the Skyway/West Hill Community. These were informed by many of the comments the team received during the

stakeholder interview process. The team tried to gain input from geographic communities in Skyway/West Hill (e.g. MLK Corridor, Business District), specific demographics within the community (e.g. the Creston Point focus group had outreach to the Somali community and translation services were provided at the meeting); and outreach to community groups (West Hill Community Association and Skyway Solutions). Additionally, a group of youth from Creston Point participated in the focus group discussing the MLK corridor and all focus group participants were provided dinner. Following is a brief overview of themes that emerged from each focus group.

- ***West Hill Community Association Board Meeting, February 13, 2019.*** DLS staff met with the Board and provided them with an overview of the overall approach for the focus groups and solicited input from the Board.
- ***Skyway Solutions Board Meeting.*** DLS staff scheduled a briefing for the Skyway Solutions Board members on the focus groups, similar to the one given to the WHCA, however it was impacted by the heavy February snow storm, and subsequently by changes in leadership at Skyway Solutions.
- ***Scenic View Focus Group, February 20, 2019.*** This meeting was held at Bryn Mawr United Methodist Church, and was attended by 12 residents in the area that had private views or were concerned about the preservation of private views, with members of both the Skyway Solutions and WHCA boards represented.
 - **Define Scenic Views.** The group felt strongly that “views” are those sweeping territorial views of major physical features of the region (e.g. Mount Rainier, Cascades, and Lake Washington). Views of importance to this group were both public views from parks or road right-of-way and private views from residences.
 - **Importance of Scenic Views.** These views enhance the community and property values of residents. The construction of newer, larger, “boxier,” homes has impacted private views and are out of scale with the community. Views are a defining feature of Skyway/West Hill.
 - **Important Public Views.** The group identified a range of public spaces that have significant views, and emphasized that some roads in the community have significant views that should be protected.
 - **Protecting Views.** The group generally supported protecting both public and private views, and had a discussion about how to achieve that goal, whether to accomplish it through outright regulation of views or through design standards. For some participants the real concern was new development that was out of scale with the surrounding structures, rather than protecting views just for the sake of protecting views.
- ***Commercial District Focus Group, March 12, 2019.*** This meeting was held at the Fire District 20 Administration Building, and was attended by 13 local business owners and members of the community interested in revitalizing the commercial districts within Skyway/West Hill.

- **Barriers to Revitalizing Commercial Districts.** The attendees identified a range of factors impacting redevelopment, but leading factors were crime or the perception of the neighborhood as being dangerous, absentee landlords who don't want to reinvest in the community, and lack of investment in the area by the County/government.
- **Commercial Design/Development.** The group was asked what design elements/street scape features strengthen or weaken the community, and there were a range of opinions. Generally, the group felt that the presence of the Sheriff's storefront and the new library strengthen the Renton Ave commercial district, that there should be more flexibility in zoning, and that mixed use development that integrates ground floor retail would be desirable. Several participants expressed an interest in seeing more corporate/well financed businesses (e.g. Starbucks, McDonalds, Walmart), while others favored smaller "mom and pop" enterprises.
- ***Martin Luther King Corridor Focus Group, March 28, 2019.*** This meeting was held at the Creston Point Apartments Community Room, and attended by 16 residents of Creston Point and surrounding mobile home parks. This group had significant participation from youth at Creston point, and from members of the Somali community. Translation services were provided, and one member of the group relied on the translator to participate.
 - ***Desired Community Features.*** Participants identified those physical features that they felt characterized a thriving/healthy community, and there was significant alignment around the need for more parks, sidewalks, lighting, places for youth, transit and police service.
 - ***Desired Businesses in the MLK Corridor.*** While there was a range of opinions about what types of businesses/uses should be fostered in the MLK corridor, there was agreements that spaces for youth were important, particularly a community center. Also, there was an interest among several participants in seeing more coffee shops, grocery stores, pharmacies, and childcare/daycare.
 - ***Housing.*** While the participants favored housing, many felt that the MLK corridor should be developed as mixed use development, and that the focus should be commercial development over housing. Residents from the mobile home parks expressed an interest in preserving the mobile home parks.

Public Meetings

First Community Open House – October 30, 2018. This was the kickoff meeting for the Skyway-West Hill Sub-Area Planning effort. Held at the Albert Talley High School in Skyway, it was attended by staff from across King County and 53 residents.

In order to ensure that attendees who spoke English as a second language could participate in the forum, DLS advertised the event in Vietnamese, Somali and Spanish and had interpreters for those

three languages on site. Staff reported that approximately nine Somali residents attended, but did not need the interpreter service; but did appreciate the effort and noted they heard about the meeting through the Somali language flyer the Department sent out to residents.

Attendees were able to circulate through several stations that highlighted geographic portions of the community that were likely to be addressed as part of the sub area planning effort. Additionally, King County Parks' staff were present with maps to indicated areas of open space and areas of possible expansion/enhancement to existing park and open space. Senior Managers from the Department of Local Service, Executive's Office and Permitting Division were also in attendance.

The format of the meeting allowed for brief overview of the planning process, and then a question and answer/public comments section. Key themes or observations that emerged from that portion of the evening were:

- A range of concerns were expressed about gentrification and displacement within the neighborhood as a consequence of the plan. Residents pointed out that the composition of the team leading the planning effort did not reflect the demographics of the community.
- Questions about the intent and scope of the planning effort. Staff pointed out that the scope of the Sub-Area plans are by definition limited to land-use issues, but indicated that the County would make an effort to capture community issues/concerns that extend beyond the mandate of the sub-area plan (e.g. the need for a community center).
- Economic development garnered support among attendees. Staff committed to share the job description for the new Economic Development position description.
- Attendees asked a range of questions about the plan and what could be required of future developers. Wondering if developers could be required to provide amenities like street trees and sidewalks; or to pay for sheriff, fire, and other services?
- A request that an equity analysis be included as part of the sub-area plan.
- Rather than questions many participants enumerated needs within the community, among these:
 - New stop signs in the area.
 - Sidewalks in areas like Preston Point
 - Economic and technical support for small businesses
 - Road Improvements
 - Public health services / clinics in this low income community

Second Community Forum – June 1, 2019. A second Community Forum was held at Dimmitt Middle School on Saturday, June 1. The timing of the meeting was set to receive feedback in preparation of the public review draft that is planned to be released on July 1, as part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update. The goal of the meeting was to share and receive feedback on the following topics:

- the proposed land use and zoning map changes included in the draft subarea land use plan,
- the community on the draft “community vision”, “plan mission statement”, and “plan guiding principles”,
- the public engagement received up to this point, and
- potential strategies to address the risk of displacement.

The format of the forum was set up so that participants could visit stations where the proposed land use and zoning amendments were grouped by geographic area and materials were shared about the changes. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts on the proposed changes. Another station was also available that presented the draft vision and guiding principles, along with a list of potential anti-displacement measures. Participants reflected on the vision, plan mission statement, and guiding principles and added dots to the anti-displacement measures as a means of expressing their support for or against.

The feedback gathered was consistent with much of what had been heard earlier, with some additional specifics because participants were able to glimpse some of what was proposed and provide direct input. Some of the major themes included:

- Regarding the Vision and Guiding Principles
 - Does a good job capturing the community’s vision
 - Should encourage walkability
 - Equity should be highlighted.
- Regarding Anti-Displacement
 - Community was in favor of implementing anti-displacement measures. Ones that were preferred include: No net loss, Inclusionary zoning, Community land trusts, Right to return policies, Community benefit agreements, Commercial displacement mitigation, and Cultural asset preservation.
 - The community expressed opposition to fee-in-lieu programs
 - The community was undecided about density bonuses.
- Regarding the proposed land use and zoning changes
 - There was general support expanding the commercial zones within the Skyway Business District with some concern over the impacts that come with new development, such as traffic and the loss of affordable commercial spaces for local business
 - The adjustment of zoning to Neighborhood Business along Martin Luther King Junior Way

South and Rainier Avenue South, along with the pedestrian orientation standards were mostly supported but there was some concern over the potential cost on the development community of having to comply with the pedestrian oriented standards.

- The community was supportive of protections for the mobile home park communities and their residents.
- Additional feedback regarding the need for improved sidewalks and streetlights was shared.
- Concern over affordable housing was shared

Surveys

Two on-line and paper surveys were conducted from September 18 through November 30, 2018 and January 15 to February 5, 2019. The survey garnered 97 individual respondents.

APPENDIX F – COMMUNITY PROFILE TABLES²⁰

	Skyway-West Hill		King County	
Population				
Total Pop. (2017)	18,400		2,118,120	
Total Pop. (2000)	14,000		1,737,000	
<i>% Increase</i>	31%		22%	

Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	5,985	32.6%	350,616	16.6%
Non-Hispanic white	5,240	28.5%	1,402,793	66.2%
Black/African-American	4,340	23.7%	130,594	6.2%
Hispanic/Latino	1,894	10.3%	200,545	9.5%
Two or more race, other	1,455	7.9%	129,688	6.1%
Native American	68	0.4%	14,276	0.7%
Pacific Islander	73	0.4%	16,522	0.8%
<i>Percent persons of color</i>	71.5%		33.8%	

Languages and Foreign-Born Population				
Foreign-born residents	6,236	34.0%	467,938	22.1%
Speak English only	9,660	56.7%	1,458,460	73.3%
Speak other language	7,380	43.3%	532,460	26.7%

Housing				
Housing Units	6,960		902,110	
Housing Tenure				
Owner occupied units	3,770	58%	488,550	57%
Renter occupied units	2,710	42%	362,520	43%
Housing by Structure Type				
Single-family	4800	69%	530,880	59%
Multifamily	1780	26%	352,430	39%
Mobile homes	370	5%	17,890	2%

²⁰ Data taken from 2012-2017 American Community Survey

	Skyway-West Hill		King County	
Median House Price				
Real Estate Sales (2016)	\$380,000		\$505,000	
Census values (2013-17)	\$331,100		\$446,400	
Houses under \$200,000	13%		10%	
Houses over \$500,000	18%		42%	

Appraised Values/Properties				
Residential	\$347,651	4,789	\$581,927	555,700
Commercial	\$1,130,000	158	\$4,070,000	40335
Condos/Apts.	\$741,831	249	\$954,381	107961

Incomes				
Household Incomes (2015)				
Hhlds. under 50% / median	2,205	37%	209,735	26%
Hhlds. 50%-80% / median	694	12%	98,095	12%
Hhlds. 80%-120%	1,155	19%	148,785	18%
Hhlds. over 120%	1,925	32%	363,035	44%
Median household income	\$65,900		\$83,570	
Persons below poverty	15.5%		10.2%	

Employment				
Total jobs (2015)	1,600		1,290,210	
Firms with employees (2012)	136		--	
Firms w/o employees (2012)	775		--	
Labor Force Participation				
In Labor Force	63%		70%	
Not in Labor Force	37%		30%	

APPENDIX G – POLICY, MAP AMENDMENT, AND ACTION ITEM SUMMARY TABLES

Map Amendments and Action Items Supported by New Subarea Policy

Subject Area	Policy	Related Map Amendments	Related Action Items
Residential	<p>SWH-1 - Support increased residential density in areas along major transit corridors and near commercial centers</p>	<p>6 - 78th Avenue South and Renton Avenue South Increase Residential Density</p> <p>9 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way South Increase in Residential Density and Mixed-Use Special District Overlay</p> <p>12 - 87th Avenue South Increase Residential Density</p>	None
	<p>SWH-2 - Encourage new development in medium-density residential neighborhoods to be compatible with surrounding area</p>	<p>2 - Repeal Special District Overlay SO-130 (Residential Infill Standards)</p>	<p>SWH Action 2 - Permit Process Updates to Support Compatible Development</p> <p>SWH Action 3 – Dimensional Standards Review</p>
	<p>SWH-3 - Retain the zoning of existing multifamily areas</p>	None	None
Affordable Housing	<p>SWH-4 - Establish an affordable housing program</p>	<p>6 - 78th Avenue South and Renton Avenue South Affordable Housing Requirement</p> <p>9 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way South Affordable Housing Requirement</p> <p>12 - 87th Avenue South Affordable Housing Requirement</p>	<p>SWH Action 1 – Equitable Housing Development Program</p>

Subject Area	Policy	Related Map Amendments	Related Action Items
	SWH-5 - Consider residential displacement risk when evaluating upzones or large development proposals	None	
	SWH-6 - Support existing manufactured home community residents through a mandatory displacement mitigation program	10 - Development Condition to Protect Mobile Home Park Residents	
Commercial & Industrial	SWH-7 - Retain Community Business Center designation for the Skyway Business District	None	None
	SWH-8 - Extend the Community Business Center designation to parcels adjacent to the Skyway Business District	4 - Renton Avenue South Community Business Zoning Expansion	None
	SWH-9 - Support and incentivize opportunities for smaller-scale commercial development	None	SWH Action 4 - Small-Scale Commercial Incentives
	SWH-10 – Retain development conditions that support pedestrian-oriented development within the Skyway Business District	None	None
	SWH-11 - Zone the Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainer Avenue South commercial areas as Neighborhood Business Centers	7 - Rainier Avenue South Neighborhood Business Designation 8 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way South Neighborhood Business Designation	None

Subject Area	Policy	Related Map Amendments	Related Action Items
	SWH-12 - Commercial development standards in the Martin Luther King Jr. Way South and Rainer Avenue South Neighborhood Business Centers to improve the pedestrian environment	7 - Rainier Avenue South Neighborhood Pedestrian-Oriented Development Standards 8 - Martin Luther King Jr. Way South Pedestrian-Oriented Development Standards	None
	SWH-13 - Retain zoning of existing industrial areas to support employment opportunities and local economic activity	None	None
Community Character	SWH-15 - Support and incentivize the provision of on-site and off-site community-desired amenities	None	SWH Action 5 - Community-Desired Amenities Incentives
	SWH-16 - Involve the community to identify important existing cultural assets impacted by development proposals	None	

Map Amendments and Action Items Supported by Existing Policy

Subject Area	Map Amendment / Action Item	Existing Supporting Policy
Residential	Map Amendment 3 - 116th Place South, Renton Avenue South, and 74th Lane South Land Use Technical Changes	King County Comprehensive Plan Policy U-160 - Designated community business centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.
Commercial	Map Amendment 5 - North of Renton Avenue middle of 12700 Block Land Use Technical Change	King County Comprehensive Plan Policy U-161 - Within community business centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business, Community Business and Office.
Community Character	Map Amendment 1 - Repeal P-Suffix Condition WH-P04 (West Hill Area Design Standards)	King County Comprehensive Plan Policy RP-115 -The subarea plans may include...b. Review and update of applicable community plan policies.

Subject Area	Map Amendment / Action Item	Existing Supporting Policy
	<p>SWH Action 6 – Support Joint Planning Agreement with Renton</p>	<p>King County Comprehensive Plan Policy U-208 - King County should engage in joint planning processes for the urban unincorporated areas with the area's designated annexation city.</p>