

RURAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



THE MISSION

The mission of the Rural Economic Strategies is to advance the long term economic viability of the rural area, with an emphasis on local farming and forestry, consistent with the character of rural King County.



**Prepared by the King County
Office of Business Relations and Economic Development
December 2005**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Tables.....	II
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	i
List of the Rural Economic Strategies and Action Items.....	v
RURAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES REPORT.....	1
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
A. Background and Creation of the Rural Economic Strategies.....	1
B. Development of the Strategies.....	2
C. Mission and Comprehensive Plan.....	5
D. What Has Been Accomplished to Date.....	8
E. Implementation of the Strategies and Action Items.....	11
Chapter 2: Rural Economic Cluster Profiles and Strategies.....	13
A. The Agriculture Cluster.....	14
B. Forestry Cluster.....	23
C. Home-Based Business Economic Cluster.....	28
D. Tourism and Recreation Cluster.....	32
E. Rural Towns and Neighborhood Centers Economic Cluster.....	38
F. Rural Cities Economic Cluster.....	42
Chapter 3: Rural Economic Strategies and Action Items – Comprehensive List.....	45
Chapter 4: A Profile of the Rural Economy.....	54
A. History of Rural King County.....	54
B. Economic Profile of Rural King County.....	56
C. Commercial and Industrial Land Inventory.....	71

Table of Tables

Table 1: Rural Economic Strategies Mission.....	ii
Table 2: What the Rural Economic Strategies Do	2
Table 3: Stakeholder Groups Consulted	4
Table 4: Rural Economic Strategies Mission.....	5
Table 5: Requirements of Comprehensive Plan Policy R-107.....	8
Table 6: Population for Unincorporated King County, 1980-2004	56
Table 7: Housing Types for Unincorporated King County and the Rural Cities; 2003.....	58
Table 8: Percent Distribution of Housing Types, 2003.....	58
Table 9: Covered Employment Rural King County, 2003.....	60
Table 10: Percent Distribution of Covered Employment by Location, 2003.....	61
Table 11: Percent of Covered Employment by Sector, 2003	61
Table 12: Median Household and Family Income and Per Capita Income, 1999	63
Table 13: Comparison of Median Household and Family Income, 1999	63
Table 14: Farms by Size in King County, 2002.....	65
Table 15: Value of Agricultural Products Sold, 2002.....	65
Table 16: Value of All Livestock, Poultry, and Related Products Sold; 2002.....	66
Table 17: Size of Cropland Harvested, King County, 2002.....	66
Table 18: Sales from Milk, Other Dairy Products, Cattle and Calves, 2002	67
Table 19: Special Income Sources for Local Farms, 2002	67
Table 20: Timber Harvest by Ownership Class, King County, 2000-2002	68
Table 21: Timber Harvest by Ownership Class and Species, 2002	69
Table 22: Private Sand and Gravel Operators / Permit Holders	70
Table 23: Nonmetallic Mining Operations, 2001.....	71
Table 24: Land Available for Development in Rural Cities, September, 2002	72
Table 25: Net Acres Available for Development in Rural Cities, By City, September, 2002.....	74
Table 26: Developed and Undeveloped Zoned Commercial / Industrial Acreage, 2005	76

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Rural Economic Strategies is to advance the long term economic viability of the people who live and work in the rural areas, while maintaining the unique character that is rural King County. This Report is the culmination of a comprehensive twelve-month public process involving rural residents, farmers, foresters, business owners, and rural stakeholder groups. The ideas, suggestions, and recommendations presented by rural stakeholders at public and stakeholder group meetings and through personal conversations, emails, letters, and phone calls, as well as their response to the Public Review Draft form the foundation for the Report. The amount of public involvement and the strength and enthusiasm of interest in a continuing dialogue has been remarkable. The strategies presented in this Report are based on their input. These strategies, together with specific action items, are intended to engage rural residents and stakeholders organizations in partnerships, projects, and programs to promote economic vitality. The partnerships and projects forged this year with the Vashon Forest Stewards, Puget Poultry of Washington, the City of Skykomish, and the Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association, to name a few, demonstrate the county's commitment to implementing the Strategies and Action Items.

Background

The rural unincorporated area of King County provides a diversity of lifestyle choices and employment opportunities for county residents, contains farms and forests that help sustain natural resource lands, and provides the basis for maintaining and expanding the urban / rural interface so important to all county residents. The preservation of these rural lands, so close to the major urban center of the Pacific Northwest creates fantastic opportunities for the urban / rural interface by providing programs, such as farmers markets that offer quality, fresh local produce. Along with preservation the challenge is to support the long term economic viability of those who work and live on these rural resource lands.

In King County, as well as the entire Puget Sound region, agriculture and forestry are in the midst of significant changes. Agriculture is moving away from the large dairy farms of the past to smaller farms growing a diversity of crops to meet changing market demands. Over the past few decades, the acreage in large private timber production has declined in the rural area and is now found only in the Forest Production District. Forestland in the rural area has been subdivided and sold as rural residential lots. Agriculture is slowly making a comeback in the county, with sales increasing from \$99 million in 1997 to \$120 million in 2002. With support, small-scale forestry may be able to see a similar increase. The King County Comprehensive Plan discusses in detail the importance of farm and forestlands to the County and establishes a number of policies to protect and enhance these land uses. The third natural resource sector in King County is mineral resources and mining and information on this sector is found in Chapter 4 of the Report.

Another important element of economic life in rural King County is home-based businesses upon which many rural residents rely for a living wage. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of home occupations, home industries, and other small businesses that provide services to rural residents and have long been part of the rural character in unincorporated King County (Policy R-106). In 2003 and 2004, several significant regulatory changes were made, in part to address Policy R-106. These changes dealt with increasing the diversity of products sold

in the rural area, eliminating barriers to business cooperatives, diversifying permitted economic activities, and reducing the burden of regulations on the agriculture and forestry economic clusters. These changes are detailed further in the Report, with additional discussion related to implementation of Policy R-106 in the Home-Based Business Economic Cluster section.

Another key to rural economic health are the commercial and industrial businesses found in the rural cities, towns, and neighborhood centers. These businesses provide retail shopping, services, and jobs for rural residents. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the rural cities, unincorporated rural towns, and the small neighborhood centers as these entities “contribute to the variety in development patterns and housing choices and provide employment opportunities, retail shopping, and other services to nearby residents”

Comprehensive Plan Policy R-107 directs that the Rural Economic Strategies Report create partnerships and implement projects and programs that provide opportunities to enhance rural economic health while minimizing obstacles. This Report focuses on the six economic clusters critical to the long term economic viability of rural unincorporated King County. These economic clusters are agriculture, forestry, home-based business, tourism and recreation, the rural towns and commercial neighborhood centers, and the rural cities. This Report discusses each of these economic clusters and examines the market, infrastructure, and regulatory factors that drive the opportunities and / or raise constraints to the economic viability of the clusters. Comments received at the public and stakeholder meetings, and on the Public Review Draft Report, as well as input from rural residents, farmers, foresters, business persons, and rural stakeholder organizations form the basis for the Rural Economic Strategies and Action Items. The Strategies and Action Items have all been evaluated based on compliance with the Rural Economic Strategies mission, stated below, the King County Comprehensive Plan, and Countywide Planning Policies.

The Mission

The mission and guidance statements for the rural economic strategies are in Table 1: Rural Economic Strategies Mission.

Table 1: Rural Economic Strategies Mission

<p>The mission of the Rural Economic Strategies is to advance the long term economic viability of the rural area, with an emphasis on local farming and forestry, consistent with the character of rural King County.</p> <p>Based on input from the rural community, the Rural Economic Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize the opportunities, constraints, and role of small scale farming and forestry;• Recognize the importance of home-based businesses for individuals and families living in the rural area;• Encourage recreation and tourism opportunities suitable to the area in which proposed;• Encourage businesses that support the rural economy to locate in existing rural cities, towns, and neighborhood centers; and• Ensure the goals, policies, and implementation strategies are compatible with the lifestyles and character found in the distinct communities of rural King County.
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Methodology

The King County Office of Economic Development and Business Relations, hereafter referred to as BRED, led the development of the Rural Economic Strategies. In cooperation with the Department of Development and Environmental Services, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, the Department of Transportation, and the Executive's Office, BRED initiated conversations with rural residents and stakeholders to explore the opportunities and needs of the rural communities. An inventory of existing economic data on the rural area was compiled and is included in this Report.

The county held public meetings throughout rural King County to solicit comments and recommendations from rural residents and stakeholders. The county also met with many rural stakeholder groups, including the Agriculture Commission, the Rural Forestry Commission, the four rural Unincorporated Area Councils, the rural cities, chambers of commerce, and other rural organizations. The ideas, suggestions, and recommendations from the public meetings and stakeholder meetings form the basis of this Report. The strength and enthusiasm of this input led to the recommendation that development and implementation of the Rural Economic Strategies should continue into 2006 and beyond as a dynamic, evolving program that responds to the changing needs of the rural area. The Strategies and Action Items are intended to engage rural residents, stakeholders, and communities in partnerships, projects, and programs with the county which will allow the rural economy to prosper, without sacrificing the character or quality of life of rural King County.

Implementation

Implementation of this Report will include the continuation of several partnerships, projects, and programs that were initiated in 2005. Rural stakeholder groups such as the Agriculture and Rural Forestry Commissions recommended potential partnerships, projects, and programs that county staff explored. BRED and the county departments and divisions evaluated these opportunities and determined that several were too valuable to the rural area to wait until the Report was finished, thus implementation was initiated in 2005. The completed partnerships and projects are summarized below.

- **Get Fresh Week** – To support the State of Washington Farmers Market Week, Executive Sims declared Get Fresh Week in August with the Slogan: “The Time is Ripe to Eat Local.” BRED coordinated this effort with the KC Agriculture Program, Puget Sound Fresh, Cascade Harvest Coalition, the Executive's office, and other partners.
- **Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour** – BRED, in coordination with 4Culture helped sponsor this year's WSU Extension's Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour. Historic agricultural information was added to the tour guide and several agricultural heritage sites were added to the tours.
- **Skykomish Vision 2010 Plan** – BRED, at the invitation of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Skykomish, participated in the public meetings held this past spring and summer to develop a vision for Skykomish.
- **Vashon Forest Stewards** – BRED secured three cargo containers to serve as a lumber drying kiln and storage for equipment and tools. BRED also connected this group with the

Highline Community College Small Business Development Center to help develop business and marketing plans for their value-added wood products.

- **Infrastructure Improvement Application** – BRED coordinated and submitted a \$3 million infrastructure improvement grant to the federal Economic Development Administration on behalf of the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie and the Snoqualmie Tribe. This application has passed the first recommendation threshold, and if funded, the collective projects would create over 2,000 new jobs for rural residents in the Snoqualmie Valley over the next eight years.

The county initiated implementation of several ongoing projects that will be continued in 2006.

- **Poultry Processing Facilities** – BRED and KC Agriculture Program are working with Puget Poultry of Washington to develop a USDA-inspected poultry processing facility. USDA certification will enable poultry growers throughout the county to increase their markets by selling products to supermarkets and restaurants. The facility will be able to process chickens, ducks, turkeys, and rabbits.
- **Farmer Chef Connection Conference** – Continue to support this inaugural conference that will bring farmers and local chefs together to network. The conference will be held in King County in February of 2006 and will encourage the use of local farm produce by area restaurants. The conference is being modeled after the successful farmer-chef conferences in Portland, Oregon. Partners include the county, Puget Sound Fresh, KC Washington State University Extension, Washington Department of Agriculture Small Farms Program, FORKS (the Seattle Chapter of the Chefs Collaborative), and others. Following completion and evaluation of the conference, the county may seek to establish it as an annual event.
- **Grass Fed Beef & Mobile Processing Unit** – In response to a growing demand for grass fed beef locally and the need to locally process that beef, BRED and the KC Agriculture Program are exploring market opportunities and potential partnerships for a USDA-inspected local processing facility, which would allow growers to sell to supermarkets and restaurants.
- **Small Farm Expo** – BRED is working with Green River Community College and other partners to add a business development track to this KC WSU Extension small rural landowner educational event, scheduled for March 2006.
- **Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program** – BRED, the KC Roads Division, KC Parks & Recreation Division, and 4Culture, in partnership with Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association, the State, and others are working to develop a pilot project for thematic and consistent signage for parks, historical, cultural, scenic, and other sites throughout the area to enhance the tourism market in the Snoqualmie Valley.

The county will begin implementation of the Strategies and Action Items contained in this Report in 2006. A summary of the Strategies and Action Items is included in the Executive Summary with specific details presented in Chapter 3.

To track implementation of the Strategies and Action Items in this Report, the Executive will provide an annual update to the County Council, which will be made available to the public. The Annual Report will provide an update on what was accomplished the previous year and set forth new and continuing partnerships, projects, and programs to be implemented the following year.

The success of the Rural Economic Strategies effort will be determined by the implementation of the Strategies and Action Items. The partnerships, projects, and programs presented above demonstrate the county's commitment to implementation of the Strategies.

List of the Rural Economic Strategies and Action Items

Below are the Strategies and Action Items that King County will implement. The Rural Economic Strategies are identified and numbered with an "RES" for Rural Economic Strategies, followed by a letter and number to identify the classification and economic cluster of each strategy:

- **RES-G#** –General Rural Economic Strategies
- **RES-A#** – Agriculture Cluster Economic Strategies
- **RES-F#** – Forestry Cluster Economic Strategies
- **RES-H#** – Home-Based Business Cluster Economic Strategies
- **RES-T#** – Tourism and Recreation Cluster Economic Strategies
- **RES-N#** – Rural Town and Neighborhood Centers Cluster Economic Strategies
- **RES-C#** – Rural Cities Cluster Economic Strategies

A. General Rural Economic Strategies

RES-G1 Inform and Communicate with Rural Residents and Businesses.

Action Item

- Rural Resources Website

RES-G2 Provide Rural Business Assistance.

Action Items

- Rural Permit Coordinator
- Rural Business Circuit Rider
- Coordination Among County Departments
- Rural Business Review

RES-G3 Create Partnerships with Rural Communities to Promote Economic Vitality.

Action Items

- Infrastructure Improvements
- Private Development Financing
- Community Partnerships
- Vashon-Maury Island Community Council

RES-G4 Create Partnerships with the Counties of the Puget Sound Region to Promote Economic Vitality.

Action Items

- Regional Partnerships

B. Agriculture Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-A1 Promote and Enhance Agriculture Production.

Action Items

- Agriculture Commission
- Agricultural Related Non-Profit Organizations

RES-A2 Promote Programs that Educate and Encourage Urban Residents and Businesses on the Importance of Buying Local Produce.

Action Items

- Urban / Rural Interface
- “Get Fresh Week”
- Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour
- Farmer Chef Connection Conference

RES-A3 Enhance the Agricultural Market and Economic Base.

Action Items

- Poultry Processing Facilities
- Grass Fed Beef & Mobile Processing Unit
- Farmers Markets
- Commercial Kitchen
- Drainage Options
- Agriculture Related Home-Based Business Regulations

RES-A4 Provide Business Assistance to the Agriculture Industry.

Action Items

- Small Farm Expo
- Agriculture Education Programs
- Cultivating Success
- Model Business Plans
- Livestock Industry

C. Forestry Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-F1 Promote and Enhance Forestry.

Action Items

- Rural Forest Commission
- Forestry Related Organizations
- Forest Stewardship
- Healthy Forestlands
- Forestry Web page

RES-F2 Enhance the Forestry Market and Economic Base.

Action Items

- Low Impact Infrastructure
- Green Building Certification
- Vashon Forest Stewards
- Forestry Training for Youth

RES-F3 Provide Business Assistance to Forest Landowners.

Action Items

- Forest Related Small Business Support
- Fire Management Plans
- Forest Enhancement Events
- Model Business Plans

D. Home-Based Business Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-H1 Promote and Encourage Compatible Home-Based Businesses.

Action Items

- Home-Based Business Regulatory Assistance
- Home-Based Business Regulations
- Home-Based Business Technical Assistance
- Web Connectivity
- Model Business Plans

E. Tourism and Recreation Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-T1 Promote and Enhance Compatible Tourism and Recreation.

Action Items

- Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program
- Farm / Habitat Tourism Model
- Historic Preservation Office Programs
- Parks and Recreation Division Programs

F. Rural Town and Commercial Neighborhood Economic Strategies

RES-N1 Promote and Support Compatible Businesses in the Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhoods.

Action Items

- Business Enhancement Partnerships
- Business Support
- Road, Sidewalk, and Appropriate Infrastructure Support
- Tourism Support

- Model Business Plans
- Rural General Stores

G. Rural Cities Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-C1 Create and Sustain Partnerships with the Rural Cities.

Action Items

- Partnerships with the Rural Cities
- Regional Rural City-Based Tourism Project
- Rural City Economic Development Plans
- Abandoned Mill Site Redevelopment Plans

RURAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES REPORT

"We can all survive without another condominium, Taco Bell, or shopping center. Can we really survive without fertile soils, without fresh and unpoisoned food, without a place to teach our children about interconnections and context, or a place to gather on the land? ... We cannot all go back to the land, but we can provide something of the land to everyone."

*Michael Ableman, On Good Land,
The Autobiography of an Urban Farm*

Chapter 1: Introduction

A. Background and Creation of the Rural Economic Strategies

The momentum for creating the Rural Economic Strategies in November of 2004 probably had its start when the residents of King County came together in the 1970s to save the Pike Place Market, a long used testament to man's harvest of the land and the sea and his craftsmanship of our natural materials. Having successfully saved the Market, the residents, stakeholder organizations, and county continued over the next thirty years to take actions to ensure that much of the remaining fertile topsoil would be maintained. One of these actions to preserve the county's farmlands included passage of the Farmlands and Open Space Preservation Bond in 1979. This Bond raised \$50 million for the initial purchase of development rights in attempt to stop the rampant development of the rural area that occurred in the county during the 1940's and into the 1970's. During 1985 and 1986, development rights on 12,600 acres of land were purchased and a county staff person was hired to oversee this Farmlands Preservation Program and ensure adherence to the deed restrictions. Prior to that time, the only focus on farmland programs were the American Soil Conservation Service (now the Natural Resources Conservation Service) and the KC Washington State University Extension.

The State Growth Management Act (GMA), which was passed by the Washington State Legislature in 1990, requires, in part, the largest and fastest growing counties in the state to establish urban growth areas and to designate natural resource lands with long term commercial significance. The King County Comprehensive Plan developed in compliance with GMA was adopted in 1994. The 1994 Comprehensive Plan among many other actions did the following:

- Established the Urban Growth Area.
- Created the Agriculture Production Districts and Forest Production Districts.
- Classified significant land areas as Open Space / Recreation / Parks & Wilderness.
- Formed the Agriculture Commission.

The Farm and Forest Report, *A Strategy to Preserving the Working Landscapes of Rural King County* was developed by outside consultants and adopted by the King County Council in 1996. That report included extensive stakeholder input and has been used since that time to direct both the Agriculture and Forestry Programs of King County. Many of the existing King County programs described in the Agriculture and Forestry Economic Cluster Sections of this Report were originally proposed in the Farm and Forest Report.

These previous preservation and growth management efforts focused on land issues rather than the economics of the unincorporated area of the county or the economic viability of the residents and businesses of rural King County. Thus, in 2004 the King County Council adopted as part of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update, Policy R-107 which calls for the creation of the Rural Economic Strategies. The county recognizes that understanding the current economics of the unincorporated area and exploring the opportunities, challenges, and constraints facing the rural area today are significant components in preserving the rural land and its key uses, farming and forestry.

The King County Office of Economic Development and Business Relations, hereafter referred to as BRED, is leading this effort. The initial focus in developing the Strategies Report was to initiate conversations with rural residents and stakeholders, to explore the opportunities and needs of the rural area, and to inventory and evaluate the economic base of rural King County.

Rural residents, farmers, foresters, businesses and stakeholder groups, including the Agriculture Commission, the Rural Forestry Commission, the rural Unincorporated Area Councils, the rural cities, and other stakeholder organizations participated in the strategies project. It is the strength and enthusiasm of their ideas and recommendations that formulated the creation of the Strategies and Action Items. This project has evolved into a continuing dialogue with rural residents and stakeholders that will continue into 2006 as partnerships, projects, and programs are created and implemented. Implementation is intended to engage rural residents and stakeholders such that the rural economy can prosper, and can do so without any additional sacrifices to the character and quality of life of rural King County.

Table 2: What the Rural Economic Strategies Do

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate input from rural residents and stakeholder groups including the Agriculture Commission, Forestry Commission, and rural Unincorporated Area Councils.• Identify a Rural Economic Strategies Mission.• Present Rural Economic Strategies and Action Items that can be implemented to support the economic viability of rural King County.• Provide guidance to the King County Executive, Council, and staff in dealing with rural economic issues.• Work in concert with the King Country Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies. |
|---|

B. Development of the Strategies

This project was originally established in 2004 by the passage of Comprehensive Plan Policy R-107 and subsequent funding by the King County Council of a one-year position within King County government to serve as the coordinator for the development of the strategies. The Rural Economic Strategies Coordinator started in January of 2005 and is located in the King County Office of Economic Development and Business Relations (BRED). An internal committee, representing several county departments was established to provide direction, input, and support.

For this Report, rural land is defined as that land area outside of the UGA which contains almost eighty percent of the County’s land area. The map on the following page illustrates the rural area of King County.

BRED simultaneously initiated three tasks to begin developing the strategies. The first was to gain an overview of the rural areas within King County and what type of uses, particularly farming and forestry, were occurring in the area. The second task was to research and compile an economic overview of unincorporated King County, which is found in Chapter 2 of this Report. The third task was to initiate dialogue with residents and rural stakeholders. BRED met with Councilmembers Dow Constantine, David Irons, Steve Hammond, and Kathy Lambert to discuss what they saw as “economic” drivers and needs in the rural areas of King County.

The dialogue involved a comprehensive year long public process involving meetings and conversations with rural residents, farmers, foresters, business owners, and rural stakeholder groups. Many of these participants were interested in and expressed continuing interest in seeing what this project could accomplish for them. A list of the stakeholder groups that have been involved throughout the project are listed in Table 3: Stakeholder Groups Consulted.

Many rural residents requested a definition of the rural character this project is intended to help protect. What became clear during conversations with rural residents and stakeholders is that rural character is a lifestyle choice, with many definitions. The definition in the Comprehensive Plan is derived directly from the Washington State Growth Management Act definition. Please see Appendix A for the Comprehensive Plan definitions. The Four Creeks Area Council indicated in their response to the public review draft that the independent nature of rural residents is a critical aspect of rural life and should be stressed.

The decision to use economic clusters to describe the economic uses in the rural area parallels the use of clusters in the Regional Economic Strategy recently developed by the Prosperity Partnership for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The following definition of Industry Clusters is from the *Information Design Associates, Cluster-Based Economic Development: A Key to Regional Competitiveness* (Washington, DC.: Economic Development Administration, 1997).

“Industry clusters are agglomerations of competing and collaborating industries in a region, networked into horizontal and vertical relationships, involving strong buyer-supplier linkages, and relying on a shared foundation of specialized economic institutions.”

The key elements of an industry cluster are agglomeration (or large number of firms in the same industry in one region), linkages (horizontal / vertical and buyer / supplier), and specialized institutions (universities, research organizations, etc). Vertical linkages describe the situation where one activity is an input into another activity, as grapes are an input to the production of wine. Horizontal linkages involve the competition of firms or businesses for either markets or inputs, as when computer software firms compete for software engineers in the Seattle region.

The economic clusters found in rural King County include Agriculture, Forestry, Home-Based Businesses, Tourism and Recreation, Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Centers, and the Rural Cities.

Table 3: Stakeholder Groups Consulted

<p>King County Agriculture Commission</p> <p>King County Rural Forest Commission</p> <p>King County Unincorporated Area Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Creeks Unincorporated Area Council • Greater Maple Valley Area Council • Upper Bear Creek Community Council • Vashon Maury Island Community Council 	<p>King County Rural Cites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Diamond, meeting with the Mayor • Carnation, Presentation to City Council and meetings with staff • Duvall, Presentation to the City Council and meetings with staff and attended the Economic Development Open House • Enumclaw, meetings with the Mayor and Staff • North Bend, Presentation to City Council and meetings with staff • Skykomish, Presentation to City Council & attended Vision 2010 public meetings • Snoqualmie, meetings with the City Council, Community Relations Committee
<p style="text-align: center;">Other Related Organizations & Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4Culture • American Farmland Trust • Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club • Backcountry Horsemen, Tahoma Chapter • Cascade Harvest Coalition • Cascade Land Conservancy, Presentation of <i>The Cascade Agenda, 100 Years Forward</i> • Food Innovation Center, Oregon State Univ. • Green River Community College • Maple Valley - Black Diamond Chamber of Commerce • Puget Sound Fresh • Snoqualmie Falls Forest Theater • Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association • Suburban Cities Association, meetings with the Small Cities Caucus group • Vashon Chamber of Commerce • Vashon Forest Stewards • Washington State Department of Agriculture, Small Farms Program • Washington State University Extension • WSU Small Business Development Center 	

Each economic cluster is described in detail in Chapter 3 of this Report. The discussion for each economic cluster includes a background on the role of the cluster in rural King county. Current policies are identified to establish context and provide guidance for the development of Strategies and Action Items. The Economic Factors section of each economic cluster identifies and describes opportunities, ideas, and constraints by its economic driver (defined below). The ideas and recommendations contained in the discussion are those that were raised at public and stakeholder meetings and through conversations, letters, emails, and phone calls with residents and stakeholders.

The ideas and recommendations listed in the economic factors discussion have been incorporated into the Strategies and Action Items based on meeting certain criteria. The following criteria were used to determine which recommendations and ideas are appropriate, meet rural economic needs, and are compatible with the rural character.

- Does the idea or recommendation have any impact on or relationship to the economic viability of the rural area?
- Is the idea or recommendation something that the county could have any control over or influence on?
- Is the idea or recommendation feasible for implementation as a partnership, project, or program or does it need additional study, research, or analysis?
- Is the idea or recommendation in compliance with the mission of the Rural Economic Strategies?
- Is the idea or recommendation in compliance with the King County Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies?

C. Mission and Comprehensive Plan

This section presents the mission and the guiding direction and policy from the King County Comprehensive Plan. This Report supports a dynamic, evolving rural economic strategies process, thus the mission and the Comprehensive Plan Chapter III: “Rural Legacy and Natural Resource Lands,” will serve to guide implementation of the strategies.

The Mission

The mission of the Rural Economic Strategies is to support and maintain the character of rural King County with an emphasis on advancing the long term economic viability of local farming and forestry. It is the intent of this process that commercial and industrial economic development proposals will be directed towards the rural cities that have the infrastructure and appropriate land areas to handle economic growth. Economic development proposals related to rural resident support and the resource based industries will be directed into the rural towns and rural neighborhood centers. Economic development proposals related to agriculture, forestry, and home-based businesses will be directed into appropriate areas of unincorporated King County. The implementation of the Rural Economic Strategies is intended to result in an increase in the flow of dollars into the rural area and ultimately increase the number of job opportunities for rural residents. The mission statement along with its supporting parameters is shown in Table 4: Rural Economic Strategies Mission.

Table 4: Rural Economic Strategies Mission

The mission of the Rural Economic Strategies is to advance the long term economic viability of the rural area, with an emphasis on local farming and forestry, consistent with the character of rural King County.

Based on input from the rural community, the Rural Economic Strategies:

- Recognize the opportunities, constraints, and role of small scale farming and forestry;
- Recognize the importance of home-based businesses for individuals and families living in the rural area;
- Encourage recreation and tourism opportunities suitable to the area in which proposed;
- Encourage businesses that support the rural economy to locate in existing rural cities, towns and neighborhood centers; and
- Ensure the goals, policies, and implementation strategies are compatible with the lifestyles and character found in the distinct communities of rural King County.

The King County Comprehensive Plan

Chapter III of the King County Comprehensive Plan — “Rural Legacy and Natural Resources Lands” — establishes policies on management of land and uses suitable to the rural area. These policies will form the basis for evaluation of recommendations within this Report. Several Comprehensive Plan Policies set the stage for the types of uses suitable for the rural unincorporated areas of King County and are presented in this section. Other policies that relate to the individual economic clusters can be found in the Appendix of this Report.

KCCP Section 1. Rural Area Designation Criteria and Rural Character

The Rural Area is comprised of all lands in King County outside of the designated Urban Growth Area (UGA), and not including the designated Forest and Agricultural Production Districts. The Rural Area is generally located east of the Urban Growth Area (UGA), with the exception of the rural cities and their UGAs, and also includes the entirety of Vashon-Maury Islands. Within the Rural Area, three land use categories are applied: Rural, allowing low-density residential development, forestry, farming, and a range of traditional rural uses; Rural Town, recognizing historical settlement patterns and allowing commercial uses to serve rural residents; and Rural Neighborhood, allowing small-scale convenience services for nearby rural residents.

While the GMA, the Countywide Planning Policies and King County’s policies and regulations call for protecting the Rural Area by limiting housing densities, there are many other features besides density that characterize the Rural Area. Some of the most important features include: integration of housing with traditional rural uses such as forestry, farming and keeping of livestock; protection of streams, wetlands and wildlife habitat; preservation of open vistas, wooded areas and scenic roadways; and reliance on minimal public services. King County is committed to maintaining these features as well, and the policies in this chapter call for continuing and expanding upon these efforts.

KCCP Policy R-102

The Rural Area designations shown on the King County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map include areas that are rural in character and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a. Opportunities exist for significant commercial or noncommercial farming and forestry (large-scale farms and forestlands are designated as Natural Resource Lands);
- b. The area will help buffer nearby Natural Resource Lands from conflicting urban uses;
- c. The area is contiguous to other lands in the Rural Area, Natural Resource Lands or large, predominantly environmentally sensitive areas;
- d. There are major physical barriers to providing urban services at reasonable cost, or such areas will help foster more logical boundaries for urban public services and infrastructure;
- e. The area is not needed for the foreseeable future that is well beyond the 20-year forecast period to provide capacity for population or employment growth;
- f. The area has outstanding scenic, historic, environmental, resource or aesthetic values that can best be protected by a Rural Area designation; or
- g. Significant environmental constraints make the area generally unsuitable for intensive urban development.

KCCP Policy R-104

Farming and forestry are vital to the preservation of rural areas and should be encouraged throughout the Rural Area. King County should encourage the retention of existing and establishment of new rural resource-based uses, with appropriate site management that protects habitat resources. King County's regulation of farming and forestry in the Rural Area should be consistent with these guiding principles:

- a. Homeowner covenants for new subdivisions and short subdivisions in the Rural Area should not restrict farming and forestry;
- b. Agricultural and silvicultural management practices should not be construed as public nuisances when carried on in compliance with applicable regulations, even though they may impact nearby residences; and
- c. County environmental standards for forestry and agriculture should protect environmental quality, especially in relation to water and fisheries resources, while encouraging forestry and farming.

KCCP Policy R-105

Uses related to and appropriate for the Rural Area include those relating to farming, forestry, mineral extraction, and fisheries such as the raising of livestock, growing of crops, sale of agricultural products; small-scale cottage industries; and recreational uses that rely on a rural location are also appropriate.

KCCP Section 3. The Rural Economy

An economic development strategy for the Rural Area can support and advance the unique characteristics of rural King County. It is critically important for the Rural Area to sustain the farming and forestry industries. The strategy needs to recognize the role of home businesses and industries as well as a range of other businesses and economic clusters that can be compatible with rural lifestyles and the rural character of the area. Rural economic development means maintaining and, where possible, increasing the flow of income to rural households and revenues to rural businesses and families.

KCCP Policy R-10

King County recognizes and supports home occupations, home industries, and other small businesses that provide services to rural residents and are part of traditional rural economic activities and lifestyles found in King County's Rural Area. The county shall review its regulations and programs to preserve this component of the County's Rural Area. The Executive shall provide this analysis of the regulations and programs, along with any recommended code changes, for review by the King County Council by December 31, 2005.

Comprehensive Plan Policy R-106 is discussed in this Report both in the following section, *What Has Been Accomplished to Date*, and in Chapter 2 as part of the Home-Based Business Economic Cluster section.

Comprehensive Plan Policy R-107 requires the development of the Rural Economic Strategies and the mandates set out are being met by this Report and implementation of the Strategies and Action Items. Table 5: Requirements of Comprehensive Plan Policy R-107 shows the requirements of Policy R-107 and identifies where the specific requirements can be found in the Report.

Table 5: Requirements of Comprehensive Plan Policy R-107

King County shall develop and implement a rural economic development strategy, which shall be consistent with the character and service levels of the Rural Area. The strategy shall be developed in coordination with the Rural Forest Commission, the Agriculture Commission, interested rural residents and other stakeholders. This strategy shall be transmitted to the King County Council by December 31, 2005, and shall include the following components:	
Requirement	Where located
a) Identification of rural economic development policies, goals, objectives and implementation tools necessary to bring income to the businesses and residents of rural King County within the structures of GMA;	Chapters 2 & 3
b) Establishment of an action plan that will identify roles, expected outcomes, milestones and schedules;	Chapters 2 & 3
c) Assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities faced by the King County rural economy;	Chapter 4
d) Inventory of the existing supply of commercial and industrial lands in the Rural Area and an assessment of its sufficiency over the 20-year planning horizon;	Chapter 4
e) Identification of the types of businesses that should be encouraged and supported in rural areas;	Chapter 2
f) Identification of current obstacles to overall rural economic development as well as impediments to the location or expansion of favored industries that are consistent with rural character;	Chapter 2
g) Identification of the implementation tools capable of supporting and encouraging the retention, expansion, and relocation of favored businesses; and	Chapters 2 & 3
h) Consistency with and in support of the APD and the FPD.	Chapter 2, Sections A & B

D. What Has Been Accomplished to Date

This section outlines the 2003 to 2004 regulatory changes that were made to enhance farming, forestry, and home-based business in the rural area. It also identifies the partnerships, projects, and programs that were initiated this year to assist the rural economy.

2003 - 2004 Regulatory Changes

King County regulations help protect the economic value of rural lands by ensuring that new development is compatible with the surrounding rural character, preserves environmental quality and integrity, reduces the risk of flooding, and manages traffic. Over the last couple of years, in part based on Policy R-106, King County has adopted a number of changes to its regulations to address a number of aspects of the rural economy. These changes include:

Allowing a Greater Diversity of Products to be Sold in Rural Areas

- Agriculture products sold at farms stands and farmers markets are no longer limited to those products produced on site, but 60% of the agricultural product sales must be grown or produced in Puget Sound counties. (21A.08.070)
- The definition of agricultural products now includes value-added products such as jams, cheeses, dried herbs, or similar items. (21A.08.060)
- The sales area for garden product sales is increased from 500 square feet to 2,000 square feet in the Agriculture zones. (21A.08.070)

Eliminating Barriers to Business Cooperatives

- Processing, storage, and refrigeration of agricultural products are now allowed. Products are no longer limited to those produced on site, but 60% of the agricultural products must be grown or produced in Puget Sound counties. Larger facilities must be accessory to agriculture uses and can operate in an existing farm structure such as a barn. The largest processing facilities are allowed in the Agriculture zones on properties that are at least 35 acres in size. (21A.08.080, 21A.08.060).

Diversifying Economic Activities

- **Wineries** are now allowed in the Agriculture and Rural zones and the wine does not have to be produced from grapes grown on site. Underground storage that is constructed completely below natural grade may double the overall size of the winery. Wineries located in the rural zones can have a tasting room for wine produced on site. Special events, such as weddings or sampling events are permitted at wineries in the rural zones but they are limited to two per month. (21A.08.080)
- The amount of space allowed for a **home-based business** in the Rural, Agriculture, and Forest zones is increased by calculating the outdoor storage and parking areas separately from the indoor space and it is based on lot size. The maximum size of vehicles that can be used for home occupations in these zones has been raised to 2.5 tons. (21A.30)
- **Small saw mills** are allowed in the RA-10 zone on lots of at least 10 acres. (21A.08.080)
- **Natural resource and heritage museums** are allowed in the Agriculture and Forest zones in existing farm structures, such as barns, and in forestry structures, such as sawmills. (21A.08.040)
- **Farm and forest machinery repair** is allowed as an accessory use to agriculture or forestry operations in the Agriculture and Rural zones. This allows repair of machinery as a business and not limited to machines used on site. (21A.08.050)
- **Dog training** facilities are allowed in the Agriculture, Rural, and Urban Reserve zones. (21A.08.050)

Reducing the Regulatory Burden of Regulations on Agriculture and Forestry

- **Agricultural ditch maintenance** no longer requires a separate county clearing and grading permit if conducted pursuant to a Farm Management Plan developed in consultation with the King Conservation District. (16.82.150)
- **New agriculture can expand** into unforested wetland and stream buffers with an approved Farm Management Plan developed in consultation with the King Conservation District. (21A.24)
- **Forest practices regulated by the county are now subject to the State Forest Practice rules**, not the regulations that apply to residential or commercial development. (16.82)
- With a county **Forest Stewardship Plan**, a landowner may avoid the development moratorium associated with State Forest Practice rules, if the future development area is not included in the harvest. (16.82)

Completed and On-Going Rural Economic Strategies Action Items

During meetings and conversations with rural residents and stakeholder groups such as the Agriculture Commission and Rural Forestry Commission, potential partnerships, projects, and programs were recommended. County staff explored the recommendations and found that several presented immediate opportunities to benefit the economic vitality of the rural area. In consultation with participating county departments and divisions, BRED evaluated these opportunities to determine those that could be implemented in 2005 with support from existing staff and programs, and with little to no county financial resources. The partnerships, projects, and programs listed below were determined to be too valuable to the rural area to wait until the Report was finished.

Completed Partnerships, Projects, and Programs

- **Get Fresh Week** – To support the State of Washington Farmers Market Week, Executive Sims declared Get Fresh Week in August with the Slogan: “The Time is Ripe to Eat Local.” BRED coordinated this effort with the KC Agriculture Program, Puget Sound Fresh, Cascade Harvest Coalition, the Executive’s office, and other partners.
- **Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour** – BRED, in coordination with 4Culture helped sponsor this year’s KC Washington State University Extension’s Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour. Historic agricultural information was added to the tour guide and several agricultural heritage sites were added to the tours.
- **Skykomish Vision 2010 Plan** – BRED, at the invitation of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Skykomish, participated in the public meetings held this past spring and summer to develop a vision for Skykomish.
- **Vashon Forest Stewards** – BRED secured three cargo containers to serve as a lumber drying kiln and storage for equipment and tools. BRED also connected this group with the Highline Community College Small Business Development Center to help develop business and marketing plans for their value-added wood products.
- **Infrastructure Improvement Application** – BRED coordinated and submitted a \$3 million infrastructure improvement grant to the federal Economic Development Administration on behalf of the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie and the Snoqualmie Tribe. This

application has passed the first recommendation threshold, and if funded, the collective projects would create over 2,000 new jobs for rural residents in the Snoqualmie Valley over the next eight years.

On-Going Partnerships, Projects, and Programs

- **Poultry Processing Facilities** – BRED and KC Agriculture Program are working with Puget Poultry of Washington to develop a USDA-inspected poultry processing facility. USDA certification will enable poultry growers throughout the county to increase their markets by selling products to supermarkets and restaurants. The facility will be able to process chickens, ducks, turkeys, and rabbits.
- **Farmer Chef Connection Conference** – Continue to support this inaugural conference that will bring farmers and local chefs together to network. The conference will be held in King County in February of 2006 and will encourage the use of local farm produce by area restaurants. The conference is being modeled after the successful farmer-chef conferences in Portland, Oregon. Partners include the county, Puget Sound Fresh, KC Washington State University Extension, Washington Department of Agriculture Small Farms Program, FORKS (the Seattle Chapter of the Chefs Collaborative), and others. Following completion and evaluation of the conference, the county may seek to establish it as an annual event.
- **Grass Fed Beef & Mobile Processing Unit** – In response to a growing demand for grass fed beef locally and the need to locally process that beef, BRED and the KC Agriculture Program are exploring market opportunities and potential partnerships for a USDA-inspected local processing facility, which would allow growers to sell to supermarkets and restaurants.
- **Small Farm Expo** – BRED is working with Green River Community College and other partners to add a business development track to this KC WSU Extension small rural landowner educational event, scheduled for March 2006.
- **Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program** – BRED, the KC Roads Division, KC Parks & Recreation Division, and 4Culture, in partnership with Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association, the State, and others are working to develop a pilot project for thematic and consistent signage for parks, historical, cultural, scenic, and other sites throughout the area to enhance the tourism market in the Snoqualmie Valley.
- **Agricultural Partnerships** – The county partners with local agricultural groups like the Cascade Harvest Coalition to deliver projects, such as Puget Sound Fresh and Washington FarmLink, which enhance the economy of the rural area and provide positive resources for rural residents.

E. Implementation of the Strategies and Action Items

Implementation

Implementation efforts of the Strategies and Action Items in 2006 and beyond will focus on the following:

- Continuation of existing and the creation of new partnerships, projects, and programs that will add economic benefit to the rural area while maintaining the rural character.

- Review with both internal and external stakeholders potential code revisions, relative to recommendations contained in this Report, particularly around agriculture, forestry, and home-based businesses.
- Evaluate new recommendations and ideas when presented by rural residents, businesses, or stakeholder organizations to determine if the idea should be developed into an action item that can then be implemented as a partnership, project, or program.
- Explore the potential for studies and research important to a better understanding of the rural economy or any of its economic clusters as identified and recommended by rural residents and businesses.

Annual Activities Report

To track implementation of the Strategies and Action Items in this Report, the Executive will provide an annual update to the County Council, which will be made available to the public. The Annual Report will provide an update on what was accomplished the previous year and set forth new and continuing partnerships, projects, and programs to be implemented the following year. Recommendations for new Strategies or Action Items can be made at any time by rural residents, businesses, and stakeholders. Recommendations will be considered based on the review process.

Chapter 2: Rural Economic Cluster Profiles and Strategies

This chapter addresses the following rural economic clusters: Agriculture, Forestry, Home-Based Business, Tourism and Recreation, Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhood Centers, and the Rural Cities.

The discussion for each economic cluster will include the following components:

- 1) **Background** – discussion of the cluster and its role in the rural area.
- 2) **Policies** – provides that the Comprehensive Plan will assist in determining the compatibility and suitability of proposals for rural economic strategies to be implemented within each economic cluster. (Note: The Comprehensive Plan text and policies for each economic sector can be found in the Appendix, along with relevant Countywide Planning Policies.)
- 3) **Economic Factors** – will identify and describe opportunities, ideas, and constraints by its economic driver that were raised at the public meetings and at the meetings held with rural stakeholder organizations such as the Agriculture and Rural Forestry Commissions.
 - a) **Market Driven** – refers to those factors that are being driven by the economy as a whole. These factors relate to supply and demand responding to consumer demands, examples here are the increase in public demand for farmers markets and coffee stands on every corner.
 - b) **Infrastructure Driven** – refers to the supporting or underlying “structures” that must be in place for a business or industry to succeed, examples may include sawmills, USDA processing facilities, or large animal veterinarians.
 - c) **Regulatory Driven** – refers to federal, state, and / or county regulations and practices that specify permitted uses, conditional uses, limitations on a specific industry, or how a specific use can be developed.
 - d) **Other** – refers to all items that fall outside of the above parameters, an example here might include developing model business marketing plans.
- 4) **Cluster Economic Strategies and Action Items** – This section presents the Strategies and Action Items for the specific economic cluster.

Not all of the ideas and recommendations presented in the economic cluster discussions are included as either Strategies or Action Items. The process developed to evaluate ideas and recommendations to determine implementation as a Strategy or Action Item is outlined in Chapter 1 under Section B. Development Process.

Chapter 3 is a compilation of all the Economic Cluster Strategies and Action Items, as well as the General Strategies and Action Items not included under any economic sector.

A. The Agriculture Cluster

The story of agriculture in King County spans many centuries. Native peoples were the area's first farmers. They mastered the practice of burning off forestlands to create open meadows for the growing of edible bulbs, bracken fern roots, and berries. Newcomers arriving in the 1850s found these cleared "prairies" very attractive for settlement. These prime garden spots included the fertile bottomlands of the Duwamish River, the White River, the Cedar River, Ranger's Prairie at Snoqualmie, Squak Prairie at Issaquah, and Jenkins Prairie at Maple Valley.

Change has been a constant ever since. Shifting markets, fluctuations of the economy, a growing population, and emerging technologies - all have shaped and reshaped the local agricultural scene. Only the county's temperate marine climate, fertile soil, and abundant rainfall remain the same. These natural attributes offer hope for the future of farming in King County, a future firmly rooted in the past.

... Written by Flo Lentz, 4Culture

1. Background

The fertile valley soils and temperate marine climate has enabled agriculture to flourish in King County. The urbanizing of the Puget Sound region and fluctuating agricultural markets nationwide has impacted farming in the county. Today, the shift is from larger farms with few products, to smaller farms often growing a diversity of crops to meet current market demands. The numbers seem to indicate that agriculture is making a comeback in the county with sales increasing from \$99 million in 1997 to \$120 million in 2002, but the challenges facing this economic cluster are still significant.

In a recent Census of Agriculture by the State of Washington, King County ranked 14th out of the 39 Washington counties based on value of production. Only three western Washington counties Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties ranked higher.

A critical mass of agricultural land is needed to support a diverse agriculture economy and necessary infrastructure, such as feed stores and large animal veterinarians, and is another reason to retain the remaining agriculture lands. Today, there are about 40 thousand acres in the county that have been zoned for Agriculture and much of that land lies within the Agricultural Production Districts (APDs). Some of the agriculturally zoned lands are either idle or underused, and the reasons the property owners are allowing this to happen should be explored. Additionally, the county is still losing agricultural land outside of the APDs. The county should continue to explore the reasons behind the loss of agricultural use on these lands to see what options might be available to ensure that more farmlands stay in production.

Growing for a commodity market is increasingly difficult in today's agricultural market place. Many farmers are growing produce for the niche or specialty markets, with crops such as Asian pears or banana leaves. Others are looking to value-added products, turning the raw produce into jams, sauces, or ciders.

Today, the two largest agriculture industries in King County are dairy and nursery products, however the numbers are changing every year with dairy apparently on the decline and nursery products on the rise. For instance, in 1997 both dairy and nursery products accounted for around \$40 million, yet in 2002 dairy was down to \$29 million or 20% of the county's total production value while nursery products were up to \$72 million which represents almost 60% of value of farm production in King County

The livestock industry appears to represent an increasing and possibly significant portion of the county's agricultural value. This industry generates little in what can be reported as annual sales, such as an annual crop or raw milk sales, thus numbers that would show an industry value for comparison are not available. However, it is estimated that there are currently about 22,500 head of cattle and approximately 20,000 equine (including horses, mules, and donkeys) in the county. It has also been estimated that the boarding, feeding, and shoeing of 20,000 equine animals would generate around \$80 million a year in sales and services.

King County Washington State University Extension (WSU Extension) provides an array of services and programs to the agricultural community. The mission of WSU Extension is to engage people, organizations, and communities to advance knowledge, economic well-being, and quality of life by fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research. The WSU Extension administers the following agricultural support programs that are grant funded and new grant funding will need to be obtained if these programs are to continue:

- **Small Farm Expo** – is a one-day annual event in the spring bringing technical assistance and education to small acreage landowners, reaching over 1,000 county citizens. Funding for this program will no longer be available after the 2006 Small Farm Expo.
- **Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour** – is a one-day annual event in the Fall that promotes local agriculture and agricultural heritage by bringing 5,000 to 8,000 visitors to local farms and related sites. Funding for this program is no longer available.
- **Cultivating Success** – in the past consisted of two 12-week courses and an internship targeting new, small scale sustainable agriculture producers. Funding for this program is no longer available.
- **Livestock Program** – the WSU Extension has identified the need in King County for a full time faculty position to support and enhance current programs with technical knowledge in raising livestock, business management, and marketing. No funding for this position currently exists.

The Farmers Market Taskforce initiated by Executive Sims and former Department of Health Director Alonzo Plough, has been instrumental in identifying and resolving issues that might otherwise impede certain products to be sold in farmers markets. It is comprised of farmers, market managers, Washington State University food safety researchers, and officials from the federal and local levels. This diverse group has developed standards for the safe handling and sale of products that traditionally were not allowed at farmers markets. For example meats and wines are now allowed to be sold directly via the markets because of the interdisciplinary work of this group. The county should continue to partner with and support the work of this taskforce.

The Cascade Harvest Coalition, a close partner with King County, has a goal to increase public awareness, appreciation, and support for the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of agriculture in the region. The Coalition has several roles:

- Promote preservation and protection of agricultural lands and resources,
- Enhance community food security and health by improving access to and consumption of locally-produced food, and
- Promote coordinated action and dialogue among the broad diversity of agricultural interests on issues affecting the region's farmers, agricultural resources and quality of life.

The Coalition achieves these roles through a number of programs and activities including Washington FarmLink, Puget Sound Fresh, Northwest Farming for Humanity, and support of the Washington Agricultural Summit and the WSU Extension annual Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour.

2. Comprehensive Plan

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides a strong policy basis for conserving agricultural lands and promoting agriculture in the county. The Comprehensive Plan states that King County will promote and support agriculture as a part of a diverse, regional and sustainable economy. The Comprehensive Plan policies related to agriculture are included in the Appendix of this Report. These policies will guide the development of new Agriculture Cluster Strategies and Action Items.

Additionally, any Agriculture Cluster Strategies and Action Items proposed for implementation will need to be consistent with and support the goals and policies of the Agriculture Production Districts as stated in the Comprehensive Plan.

3. Economic Factors

The discussion of the market driven, infrastructure driven, regulatory driven, and other economic factors relative to the agricultural economic cluster are based on recommendations and comments made by rural residents and stakeholder organizations.

Market Driven Factors

The majority of the comments received under market driven factors, particularly during the public meetings focused on livestock, access to land, and support of King County programs that assist with market driven issues.

- **Dairy and Cheese.** Large scale dairy operations are hard pressed to stay economically viable in the current market; while small scale cheese operations utilizing local sources of cow, sheep, and goat milk are being developed in the Puget Sound region.
- **Cattle / Grass Fed.** Grass fed beef and meat is growing in popularity throughout the Puget Sound region. For example, a nationally known natural food store sells 40 head of grass fed beef weekly. All of it is imported from Australia because this volume of local grass fed cattle is not available.

- **Sheep.** While sheep are not big business currently in rural King County, it is estimated that there are over 1,000 sheep being raised. Because of the susceptibility of sheep to foot rot there is a perception that sheep are not present in the county. However some breeds are more susceptible than others. Other factors that may contribute to the lack of sheep in the region are the high cost of fencing to keep out predators and the lack of processing facilities.
- **Direct Marketing Opportunities.** Farmers receive their highest return from direct marketing opportunities, particularly farmers markets. While the number of farmers markets has grown from around 12 markets ten years ago to around 25 markets in the county next year, exploring opportunities for direct sales should be a recommendation.
- **Access to Land.** The limited amount of land available for farmers to lease and the high cost of land in rural King County are of concern to rural residents and farmers interested in either obtaining land to farm or expanding an existing farm.
- **Washington FarmLink.** FarmLink is a joint project of the King County Agricultural Commission and the Snohomish County Agricultural Advisory Board, which connects people with agricultural resources and technical expertise. Today, in the FarmLink program there are 172 people enrolled who want to farm and only 39 landowners willing to rent or sell their properties. The county is also working with other groups, such as the Hmong farmers, who are looking for land to farm in the county. The county should explore the possibility of providing incentives to encourage landowners to rent their land for farming purposes as part of the FarmLink program.
- **Farmlands Preservation Program.** This is a voluntary program, where landowners sell the development rights to their property and allow restrictive covenants (limiting use and development) to be placed on the land. King County has preserved 12,600 acres of farmland by purchasing the development rights to land utilizing this program.
- **Access to Capital.** Getting started in farming is an expensive proposition. Many people who want to farm have too few resources to get started or struggle along for few years and finally quit because they never developed the momentum and / or obtained the dollars necessary to succeed. The county should explore grants, revolving loans, low costs loans, or other options to assist with start up, initial operating costs, and expansion to assist individuals who want to farm obtain access to the necessary capital and operating funds.

Infrastructure Driven Factors

Infrastructure comments received over the past several months supported and expanded upon many existing programs and recommended new ones as listed below.

- **Puget Sound Fresh.** King County helped to create Puget Sound Fresh, now a regional program of the Cascade Harvest Coalition. This program is designed to encourage consumers, wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants to seek out and purchase locally-grown products. The program also explores ways to improve the quality and freshness of farm products available to local residents and businesses.
- **Processing Facilities.** USDA processing facilities are needed in King County for poultry, grass fed beef, and other livestock so that growers have more options to sell and market their farm raised livestock.

- **Commercial Kitchens.** Commercial kitchens, either as cooperatives or part of a culinary institute, have been identified as one of the infrastructure needs for rural farmers who cannot afford to convert their home kitchens to make value-added products such as jam or sauces.
- **Water Right Issues.** Many farms in King County, including some owned by the County, have either insufficient or no legal access to water for irrigation purposes. The water rights never existed or have been rescinded. Additionally, high value crops that require irrigation, such as baby vegetables, berries, flowers, and other produce that can be grown with season-extension techniques, such as hoop houses on small parcels of land, are one potential solution to the high cost of land in the county. Unfortunately, these crops require irrigation and the additional water needed for irrigation may not be available.
- **Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program.** This is an innovative effort that will let farmers maintain the drainage system on their farmlands with updated methods that will avoid harmful effects to fish, especially those listed under the Endangered Species Act. Both citizens and staff alike often refer to this program as the *fish'n'ditch* program. Yet some farmland is becoming water saturated and too wet to farm, as the ability to drain these lands has become either too expensive or just not even possible due to regulatory and / or permitting issues. The county should investigate strategies that make it easier or more cost effective for farmers to drain their properties.
- **Large Animal Veterinary Services.** Explore the adequacy of the number, types, and locations of large animal vets in the county. One concern mentioned is that many of the large animal vets are either near the age of retirement or specialize in equine to the exclusion of other types of livestock, thus limiting the services available for large farm animals.
- **Livestock Auctions.** A concern was expressed that livestock auctions are now limited in number and location. It was recommended that a review of the current county regulations and ordinances related to livestock auctions may be beneficial.

Regulatory Driven Factors

Several regulatory and policy issues were raised by rural residents and stakeholder organizations relating to evaluation of codes, permitting, and policies. It was suggested by rural residents and farmers at the meetings that the county revisit and evaluate its regulations and practices in regard to the following recommendations.

- **Coordination of Federal, State, and County Regulations.** Evaluate regulations to make sure that federal, state, and county regulations are compatible, complementary, and do not contradict each other.
- **Easy Access to all Regulatory Information.** Explore options for one stop access to regulations pertaining to agriculture
- **Horticulture Program.** This program offers technical and cost-share assistance to horticulture operations.
- **Livestock Program.** The primary purpose of this program is to support the raising and keeping livestock in a manner that minimizes the adverse impacts of livestock on the environment. In King County impacts by livestock on water quality and salmonid fisheries habitat can be minimized by implementing the Livestock Management Ordinance (LMO).

The WSU Extension would like to provide a livestock specialist position to support the county's livestock program and other related programs such as the grass-fed beef program.

- **Hazardous Food Permit Coordination.** Farmers who sell easily perishable foods at farmers markets need to get a separate hazardous food permit for each market they sell at. At \$200 for each permit, this can be very expensive for small farmers who sell at several different markets.
- **Seasonal Workers.** Concern was raised that seasonal workers who help with planting, trimming, or harvesting crops are identified as employees in county regulations. Regulations should be reviewed and revised to define and make provisions for seasonal and / or temporary farm workers.
- **Waste Disposal Regulations.** Farmers processing produce, regardless of the type of produce, are required to hire a certified septic technician to establish that the sewage is not defined as industrial wastewater and that sewage effluent applied to an infiltrative surface does not exceed typical residential effluent characteristics. For small operations, this can be very costly and the regulations should be reviewed and evaluated.
- **Agricultural Related Home Industry Regulations.** The existing conditional use process for farmers to create value-added products on site, is expensive and often a lengthy process.
- **Parking Regulations.** The existing parking, driveway, and paving requirements for agriculture related businesses should be reviewed and evaluated in terms of proposed usage, potential impacts on neighbors, and compatibility with rural character.
- **Fire Codes.** A concern has been expressed that existing fire codes may be excessive for existing and proposed agricultural use. Review regulations for small barns and stables to determine when and if barns and stables need to comply with commercial fire codes.
- **Assessments.** The county should evaluate combining several of the special service assessment fees for the agricultural community to try and keep costs down. These could include, but is not limited to the storm water fee, conservation district fee, and drainage fees.
- **Ranch-Based Competition.** There appears to be a growing interest in ranch-based competitions, such as cattle sorting, roping, etc. It was recommended that the regulations on such activities be evaluated.

Other Factors

Rural residents expressed support for and continuation of the several existing community programs and suggested several other issues or concerns for the county to consider.

- **The Agriculture Commission.** The Commission was established in 1995 to advise the King County Executive and Council on ways to enhance and promote commercial agriculture in the county. Staff support for the Commission is critical to the effectiveness of the Commission and should be continued.
- **Urban / Rural Interface.** The county should continue to support and partially fund existing programs such as Puget Sound Fresh and Washington FarmLink. These partnership efforts support important interactions between urban purchasers and rural producers.
- **Affordable and Temporary Farm Worker Housing.** Both affordable housing and temporary farm worker housing are an issue in rural King County. Existing code regulations should be explored for options to deal with these issues.

- **Nuisance Animals.** Rural residents expressed issues with deer, peacocks, and other animals becoming nuisances.
- **Right-to-Farm Issues.** Concerns were raised about surrounding new “suburban” neighbors and other individuals complaining to the county about adjacent and nearby typical farming activities, such as roosters, manure, or tractor noise.

4. Agriculture Cluster Economic Strategies and Action Items

The implementation Strategies and Action Items for the Agriculture Economic Cluster will focus on those programs that are under the King County Agricultural Program whose function is to bring together the County’s previous efforts to preserve prime agricultural soils, with recent efforts to encourage the activity of agriculture.

RES-A1 Promote and Enhance Agriculture Production.

Action Items

- **Agriculture Commission** – Continue to support the Agriculture Commission with its activities to support agriculture and in its role as advisor to the King County Executive and Council.
- **Agricultural Related Non-Profit Organizations** – Continue to partner with non-profit organizations, such as the Cascade Harvest Coalition, whose goals are related to the support and enhancement of agriculture in the county and throughout the region.

RES-A2 Promote Programs that Educate and Encourage Urban Residents and Businesses on the Importance of Buying Local Produce.

Action Items

- **Urban / Rural Interface** – Continue to support existing programs, such as Puget Sound Fresh, whose partnership efforts support the crucial urban / rural interaction. The interface encourages urban residents and businesses to buy local rural produce. Buying local produce, participating in annual crop subscriptions, and patronizing restaurants that use local produce will help keep local farmers and producers viable and help retain the agricultural base.
- **“Get Fresh Week”** – Continue to support Washington Farmers Market Week each year to support and increase the purchase of local produce. In August, Executive Sims declared “Get Fresh Week” with the slogan: “The Time is Ripe to Eat Local.”
- **Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour** – Continue to support the WSU Extension Harvest Celebration each fall. In 2005, the county in coordination with 4Culture added historic agricultural information to the tour guide and agricultural heritage sites to the tour. Grant funding for this annual program is no longer available, and the county will work with the WSU Extension to try to obtain new grant funding to continue this valuable program.
- **Farmer Chef Connection Conference** – Continue to support this inaugural conference that will bring farmers and local chefs together to network. The conference will be held

in King County in February of 2006 and will encourage the use of local farm produce by area restaurants. The conference is being modeled after the successful farmer-chef conferences in Portland, Oregon. Partners include the county, Puget Sound Fresh, WSU Extension, Washington Department of Agriculture Small Farms Program, FORKS (the Seattle Chapter of the Chefs Collaborative), and others. Following completion and evaluation of the conference, the county may seek to establish it as an annual event.

RES-A3 Enhance the Agricultural Market and Economic Base.

Action Items

- **Poultry Processing Facilities** – Continue to work with partners to develop a USDA-inspected poultry processing facility. This privately operated facility would be able to process chickens, ducks, turkeys, and rabbits. The USDA certification will increase the market for poultry growers throughout the county by allowing them to sell to supermarkets and restaurants. Current partners include Puget Poultry of Washington and Green River Community College. This project may be eligible for a Community Development Block Grant loan for operations and tenant improvements.
- **Grass Fed Beef & Mobile Processing Unit** – Continue to explore opportunities to provide a privately operated USDA-inspected processing unit(s) in response to the growing local demand for grass fed beef and the need to process that beef. The county is exploring opportunities and potential partnerships. Startup costs will vary and the county could explore opportunities for grant and low interest loan funds to help defray these costs.
- **Farmers Markets** – Continue to support the existing county farmers markets and help new farmers markets become successful. County staff works directly with farmers markets and supports the regional Puget Sound Fresh program and the Small Farms Program of the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Both programs support farmers markets in the region at which county farmers can sell their produce.
- **Commercial Kitchen** – Continue to explore options to develop a privately operated commercial kitchen, possibly as a cooperative or as part of a culinary institution. This facility would enable local farmers and rural entrepreneurs to make USDA-inspected value-added products, such as sauces and jams, which can then be sold in specialty stores, supermarkets, and on the world-wide web. Based on similar facilities in the Pacific Northwest, startup costs will vary based on size and scale of operation. The county could explore opportunities for grant and low interest loan funds to help defray these costs.
- **Drainage Options** – Explore options available to provide lower cost drainage solutions for farmers whose lands are becoming saturated due to inadequate drainage facilities.
- **Agriculture Related Home-Based Business Regulations** – Further review county regulations and procedures governing agriculture related home-based businesses, taking into consideration the need to ensure compatibility of these activities with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character. Invite the Agriculture Commission, farmers, and other agriculture related stakeholders to 1) document specific regulations or

procedures that act as obstacles to establishing or operating agriculture home-based businesses, including the conditional use permitting process, and 2) identify potential solutions to remove these obstacles while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character.

RES-A4 Provide Business Assistance to the Agriculture Industry.

Action Items

- **Small Farm Expo** – Continue to work with Green River Community College and other partners to create a business development track for this WSU Extension business assistance event in March 2006.
- **Agriculture Education Programs** – Investigate opportunities to partner with WSU Extension, Green River Community College, Lake Washington Technical College, and others to promote existing agricultural education programs.
- **Cultivating Success** – Work in partnership with the WSU Extension to seek grant funding to continue this 12-week course and internship, as well as other programs that target and provide support for new and existing small scale sustainable agriculture producers.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for agricultural businesses and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).
- **Livestock Industry** – Explore options to fund a livestock extension agent within the WSU Extension to support the county livestock program, the growing grass-fed beef program, and other livestock and equestrian issues.

B. Forestry Cluster

In the early 1890s, about a third of Washington's population worked in logging camps, sawmills, shingle mills, and in factories making wooden doors and window sashes. Nearly 1.2 billion board feet of lumber and almost 1.9 billion shingles were shipped from the state in 1892. Huge trees still filled the coastal forests, and no one thought the supply would ever run out. Bothell, for instance, got its start in 1886 when David Bothell started a lumber camp and shingle mill in the area.

Until just recently, two national leaders in timber harvest and forestry practice were based and had major operations in King County; Weyerhaeuser and Plum Creek Timber. Weyerhaeuser, the first and still one of the largest timber companies in the State of Washington, has a history dating back to January 3, 1900. Plum Creek Timber Company merged with the Georgia-Pacific Corporation's The Timber Company making it, in July of 2000, the second largest private owner of timberland in the nation. Thanks to the leadership of these forestry companies, heightened public awareness, and environmental protection policies and initiatives, much is being done to ensure that timber and other environmentally-dependent industries include land management, habitat protection, and species protection measures.

... excerpts from *Seattle & King County, Gateway to the Pacific Northwest*, 2001

1. Background

The conservation of the county's forests is extremely important for the many values forestlands provide: clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, flood control, recreation, scenic beauty, and carbon sequestration. Forestry is the most predominant land use in King County, plays an important role in the county's economic base, and provides tax revenue for the county. The entire eastern half of the county land base was originally protected by a forest designation created by the county in 1985 to protect commercial forestlands from incompatible uses. This area was later designated as Forest Production District (FPD) and is the county's forestland of long-term commercial significance as required by the state Growth Management Act. Outside the FPD, in the rural areas, there are still many acres of forested lands in smaller tree farms and residential parcels.

In recent years, the FPD acreage in forest production has decreased as land areas have been set aside for protection. The 1994 Federal Forest Plan nearly eliminated logging in the Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest which includes over 300,000 acres in the county. The Seattle Watershed eliminated most logging on its 90,000 acres when it adopted its Habitat Conservation Plan in the 1990's. Today, 340,000 acres of the FPD remain in active forest production, 90,000 acres are part of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources trust lands, and the remaining acreage is in private ownership.

The face of private forestland ownership has also changed in recent years as the two largest forest landowners, Plum Creek and Weyerhaeuser, began to sell their land holdings. And, when Weyerhaeuser sold its forest land areas to Hancock Timber, it also closed the last major sawmill

in the county. In an effort to conserve large tract production forests, the county invested 22 million dollars and purchased the development rights on 90,000 acres of the Snoqualmie Tree Farm.

Over the past few decades, the rural area acreage in large private timber production has declined as the urban area has expanded and portions of the rural area have been subdivided and sold as rural residential lots. In the areas outside the FPD, the rural residential zoning allowed the large forest landowners to sell their holdings in smaller lots, resulting in an increase in the number of backyard forest landowners. Often these forestlands have either been unmanaged for years, and are predominately aging hardwood stands, or are industry plantations due for thinning. Left unmanaged, these stands are susceptible to fire, disease, and insect damage. Many of these new landowners may not consider themselves tree farmers, but they have purchased pieces of former tree farms that require proper management whether the owner intends to harvest the trees or not. These landowners, with education, permit simplification, and innovative market ideas, have the potential to maintain and / or enhance the health of their forestlands and even harvest some of the forest. One of the goals of the Water and Land Resources Division's Firewise initiative is to work with landowners on improving forest health.

The Water and Land Resources Division's forestry technical assistance program combined with WSU Extension's forest stewardship courses have reached hundreds of these landowners and have generated enthusiasm in several communities for forest management and thinning activities. The Vashon Forest Stewards have set up a small mill, and are developing markets for island-grown wood from forests being managed with stewardship plans. The Tolt River Highlands neighborhood has written a community fire plan and organized a multi-property thinning project to reduce fire hazard. Many individual landowners have completed forest stewardship plans that include harvest components. Continuing and expanding upon these programs will provide the business opportunities necessary for low-impact harvest operators, small mills, and value-added product producers to be successful in the county.

In 1996, King County adopted the Farm and Forest Report, which recommended strategies to keep forestry viable. The formation of the Rural Forest Commission, the beginning of forestry technical assistance, forest stewardship education programs, and innovative land conservation efforts were all a direct result of that report and should be continued.

2. Comprehensive Plan

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides a strong policy basis for conserving forestlands and encouraging forestry. The Comprehensive Plan states that "King County shall promote and support forestry... as a part of a diverse, regional and sustainable economy." The Comprehensive Plan policies related to forestry are included in the Appendix of this Report. These policies will guide the development of new Forestry Cluster Economic Strategies and Action Items.

Additionally, any Forestry Cluster Strategies and Action Items for implementation will need to be consistent with and support the goals and policies of the Forest Production Districts as stated in the Comprehensive Plan

3. Economic Factors

Rural residents and stakeholder organizations presented the county with comments on opportunities, challenges, and constraints related to the forestry cluster of the rural economy. The following discussion organizes these comments by market, infrastructure, regulatory, or other economic factor.

Market Driven Factors

Small acreage forest landowners face challenges to profitability, especially when the stands were neglected by previous owners or not properly managed. Several suggestions were directed at reducing costs and increasing the value of small timber operations.

- **Specialty Markets.** Creation of specialty markets for wood products and value added products could enhance timber harvest opportunities and value for small forestland owners.
- **Wood Waste Products.** Explore alternative uses of waste products such as saw dust, small diameter thinned wood, and wood scraps.
- **Buy Local Wood.** A “Buy Local Wood” campaign should encourage the sale of local wood and wood products, leading to increased profits to forest landowners and product manufacturers.
- **Create Opportunities.** Help create opportunities to set up new businesses that work with non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners.
- **Coordinated Forest Activities.** Several nearby small landowners could coordinate forestry activities, such as thinning forest stands, and each would maximize potential return by sharing in the major expense of transporting and setting up the necessary equipment in their area.
- **Green Certification.** Green certification of forest operations can offer added value to landowners. However, certification is expensive and difficult for smaller operations to justify the cost. Options to reduce the cost of certification for small landowners should be explored. Forest products from well-managed small acreage forests should be recognized as “green” even if they have not achieved forest certification.

Infrastructure Driven Factors

- **Sawmill Availability.** The majority of local saw mills have left the region, just a few small mills remain in the area and only a few companies have equipment and / or staff trained to utilize portable mills. It is expensive to transport logs, so the distance to saw mills affects profitability.
- **Specialized Equipment.** The infrastructure needed to serve small landowners is limited, costs are high, and log prices are low. Many landowners want a low-impact harvest, with careful tree selection. This requires specialized equipment and trained operators. There are few trained operators available for this type of small harvest. One opportunity that could be explored is the displaced workforce trained in forest production and harvesting that resulted from the recent sale of major forest landholdings and closing of regional mills. Local secondary manufacturers of wood products might also result in higher process for logs.

Regulatory Driven Factors

- **Layers of Regulations.** The primary regulatory concern expressed is the perception that there are too many layers of regulations on forestry, including federal, state, and county. The state Forest Practices Act regulates forest practices unless the activity is part of a conversion from forestry to another use or the activity occurs on a parcel platted after 1960. In those cases, the county has jurisdiction. The county also regulates any permanent clearing. One instance where there is overlap is the county's shoreline permit being required for forest practices in shoreline areas. This permit is not required in most Washington counties.
- **Permit Process.** The county recently revised its regulations to facilitate long-term forestry on parcels where it does have jurisdiction. There could still be improvements in the permit process to alleviate concern that the permits take too long and are too expensive.
- **Development Moratorium.** One specific concern has to do with the state requirement that a development moratorium be placed on a property if it is harvested under a state permit. Landowners would like to be able to thin a property without having the moratorium placed on their property.

Other Factors

- **Business Development Assistance.** Rural forestry related business owners expressed an interest in obtaining business development, operation, and marketing information on forestry related businesses to either enhance their existing business or start a new business.

4. Forestry Cluster Economic Strategies and Action Items

RES-F1 Promote and Enhance Forestry.

Action Items

- **Rural Forest Commission** – Continue to support the Rural Forest Commission with its activities to promote forestry and in its role as advisor to the King County Executive and Council on policies and programs related to forestry.
- **Forestry Related Organizations** – Develop partnerships with non-profit and other organizations whose goals are to increase public awareness, appreciation, and support for the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of forestry in the county and throughout the region.
- **Forest Stewardship** – Continue to provide and possibly expand services and education programs for forest landowners to foster knowledge about the importance of retaining and managing their forested lands.
- **Healthy Forestlands** – Continue to partner with WSU Extension, Washington Department of Natural Resources, the USDA Forest Service, and others to create quality education and stewardship programs that promote the goal of healthy forestlands on both public and private land holdings.
- **Forestry Web Page** – Develop an online resource that provides information for rural landowners to effectively manage their forestlands and evaluate harvest options.

RES-F2 Enhance the Forestry Market and Infrastructure.

Action Items

- **Low Impact Infrastructure** – Develop partnerships with stakeholders and businesses to develop and recruit needed low impact infrastructure, such as mobile sawmills and low-impact harvesters, to support economic harvesting of small acreage forestry tracts.
- **Green Building Certification** – Work with the green building industry to promote the recognition of high quality forestry stewardship and local forest products within the green building point system.
- **Vashon Forest Stewards** – Continue to partner with the Vashon Forest Stewards, an organization committed to environmentally sensitive forest thinning, forest products, and quality forest management of small parcels. In 2005, at the request of the Rural Forest Commission, the county arranged for donated containers for use as a kiln and storage of equipment and tools and for business and marketing plan assistance to this group.
- **Forestry Training for Youth** – Continue to partner with other agencies to provide grants and technical assistance for after school training and activities related to forestry. Explore opportunities to apply for grants to continue and expand the program, which will receive federal funding in 2006.

RES-F3 Provide Business Assistance to Forest Landowners.

Action Items

- **Forest Related Small Business Support** – Continue to partner with non-profit organizations and forest operators who provide services and markets to forest landowners. A modest amount of funding is in place for 2006 for a forestry grant program to promote and support businesses using innovative approaches for use of forest products and to strengthen local infrastructure for forestry. Explore opportunities to apply for grants and / or develop long term funding for this effort.
- **Fire Management Plans** – Continue to partner with rural communities as each develops fire management plans that support thinning operations to create healthy forests. Use the 2006 Fire Protection Initiative as an opportunity to work with stakeholders and assess existing programs and regulations to maximize fire plan effectiveness.
- **Forest Enhancement Events** – Continue to sponsor events that promote forest stewardship and showcase effective management techniques. Explore options for continued funding of the Small Farm Expo and Harvest Celebration and expand the forestry presence at these events.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for forestry related businesses and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).

C. Home-Based Business Economic Cluster

1. Background

There are many people who work out of their homes either as a home-based business or as an employee who telecommutes. Numerous national and regional studies indicate that the number of people working from their home is steadily increasing. Working from home has many impacts on the economy including reducing the need for certain types of infrastructure (such as road capacity) and increasing the need for others (such as high speed Internet connection). Working from home also helps support the retail shops, services, and restaurants in the rural area, supporting commercial endeavors in the rural cities, towns, and neighborhood centers.

Data on home-based businesses is generally not available anywhere in the country based on the very nature of the economic cluster. Unless the business owner is required to have a permit or license from a local or state jurisdiction, there is no way of tracking the number and types of home-based businesses. The United States Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy published a report in 2004 that analyzed available existing data on home-based businesses throughout the country which does provide some insight, from a nationwide perspective:

- The majority of home-based businesses appear to be in services (52%); followed by construction (16%); retail trade (14%); finance, insurance, and real estate (5%); transport, communications, and utility (4%); wholesale trade (3%); manufacturing (3%); and other types of business (3%).
- The study found that home-based businesses in the construction and services sectors represent a rapidly growing element of home-based businesses while finance, insurance and real estate, agricultural services, forestry, fishing, mining, and manufacturing appear to be the slowest to be expanding.
- Home-based businesses are generally in individual proprietorships (91%), followed by S corporations (5%), and partnerships (4%).
- The majority of home-based businesses have no employees (93%), followed by those with one to four employees (6%), and very few have five or more employees (1%).
- Home-based business owners work, on average, 26 to 35 hours a week; ten hours less than owners of similar non-home-based businesses.
- Less than ten percent of home-based businesses report annual receipts greater than \$100,000 a year while 37.5% report annual receipts of less than \$5,000 a year.

A study conducted by Lake Country, a predominately rural but rapidly growing area of British Columbia, surveyed entrepreneurial home-based businesses in 1996 and found that in a district with just under 3,000 homes, twenty-five percent of the homes had a home-based business. The report concluded that the minimum economical impact generated by these home-based businesses was almost \$21.5 million (Canadian) a year. A rural community near Lake Country, Peachland, British Columbia, conducted a similar survey and found that 17% of their households had home-based businesses.

Telecommuting is another work related activity that allows people to work at home. A survey sponsored by AT&T in 2001 found that one in five Americans telecommutes at least part the

time. Telecommuting is popular with employees with 87% of the companies on the year 2000 *Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For*, allowing employees to telecommute at least part of the time. AT&T's study found that employers save \$10,006 annually per employee in reduced absenteeism and job retention costs when they allow employees to telecommute.

A home-based business may be operated by a resident. King County's zoning code provides for two categories of home-based businesses. The categories are based on a combination of factors, including number of employees and the area taken up by the business. The two categories are:

Home Occupation - allowed as a permitted use and no permit is required. The limitations include:

- No more than 20% of the square footage of the home may be used for the business;
- In rural areas, outdoor areas devoted to the business may use no more than 1 % of the lot, up to a maximum of 5,000 square feet;
- Only one non-resident may be employed by the business;
- Parking must be provided for a non-resident employee and for patrons who come to the business;
- Sales are by mail order and telephone with off-site delivery; and
- Services to patrons or onsite are by appointment only.

Home Industry - allowed as a conditional use on property one acre or larger. The limitations are:

- No more than 50% of the square footage of the home may be used for the business;
- No more than four non-residents may be employed by the business;
- Parking must be provided for each non-resident employee and for customers;
- Sales are generally limited to items produced on site; and
- Additional conditions may be required to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, limits on hours, types of outdoor lighting, and noise levels.

The zoning code limitations on home-based businesses serve to contain the impacts of business activity on site. Neighbors may be disturbed by increased traffic, noise, smells, or other off-site impacts of a business activity.

Business activity may also be allowed in residential areas as a standalone business, not subject to the same limitations that apply to home-based businesses. For example, veterinary clinics are allowed as a conditional use in rural residential zones, subject to conditions relating to areas where animals are kept. Agricultural product sales are allowed as a permitted or conditional use in rural residential zones, subject to limits on floor area, kinds of products sold, and other measures to reduce impacts.

2. Comprehensive Plan Policies

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides a strong policy basis for encouraging home-based business in the rural unincorporated areas of the county. The Comprehensive Plan policies related to home-based businesses are included in the Appendix of this Report. These policies will guide the development of Home-Based Business Economic Cluster Strategies and Action Items.

3. Economic Factors

The home-based businesses economic cluster received a significant number of comments from the rural residents. Some residents are concerned that their home-based businesses be allowed to continue while others are concerned about increased commercial activities in the residential areas.

Market Driven Factors

- **Markets for Home-Based Business.** Rural residents asked for support from the county for information about and to help create markets for home-based business services and products.
- **Access to Capital.** Rural residents asked for assistance to identify financing options available for home-based businesses.
- **Agriculture and Farm-Based Businesses.** As discussed in the Agriculture Section earlier in this Chapter, concerns were expressed about the lack of information on opportunities to produce and market value-added products.

Infrastructure Driven Factors

- **Web Connectivity.** Availability of cable and/or wireless options for connections to homes and rural businesses vary throughout the rural area and is of concern to rural residents. In some areas there is limited or no access and in other situations the initial installation cost is excessive for an individual.
- **Technical Assistance.** Home-based business operators often need resources for technical assistance related to business plans, international trade, and green business practices and would like to see assistance from the county in this arena.
- **Business Link Site.** A comment was received about exploring the option of developing a business link site, similar to the existing King County FarmLink site that matches available farm land with individual who want to farm.
- **Business Cooperatives.** It was suggested that the county explore options with rural cities, towns, and neighborhood centers about creating business cooperatives, where rural home-based businesses can share in the cost and use of office space, printers, copiers, conference rooms, etc.

Regulatory Driven Factors

- **Conditional Use Permit.** Numerous rural residents raised concerns about the time and cost involved in obtaining a conditional use permit for home industries in the rural area to ensure efficiency and effectiveness and asked that the county review and modify its regulations.
- **Flexibility.** Concern was expressed that the regulations do not permit enough flexibility, especially in regards to new or slightly different businesses that do not exactly fit any one category. It was suggested that the county should evaluate current practices and regulations for flexibility to accommodate new ideas or businesses.
- **Home, Farm, and Forest Support Businesses.** It was suggested that the county evaluate regulations that affect services and other support businesses for farmers, foresters, and other rural businesses.

- **Fire Codes.** Concerns were expressed by rural residents that implementation of certain fire code regulations can be extremely expensive and generally the scale of protection required is not necessarily warranted based on usage. It was suggested that the county evaluate the King county fire codes as applicable to home-based businesses to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Other Factors

- **Partnership Opportunities.** Rural residents expressed interest about options the county might implement to provide information about home-based business opportunities. It was suggested that the county evaluate the creation of a rural permit coordinator position and / or providing home-based business technical assistance.
- **Marketing Plan Assistance.** Rural residents are interested in obtaining assistance with and / or access to model home-based business marketing plans.

4. Home-Based Business Cluster Economic Strategies and Action Items

RES-H1 Promote and Encourage Compatible Home-Based Businesses.

Action Items

- **Home-Based Business Regulatory Assistance** – Explore options to assist home-based businesses with the county regulatory process, including potential use of a Rural Permit Coordinator (Strategy RES-G2).
- **Home-Based Business Regulations** – Further review county regulations and procedures governing rural home-based businesses, taking into consideration the need to ensure compatibility of these activities with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character. Invite Unincorporated Area Councils, chambers of commerce, business owners, neighborhood associations, and other rural stakeholders to 1) document specific regulations or procedures that act as obstacles to establishing or operating appropriate rural home-based businesses and 2) identify potential solutions to remove these obstacles while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character.
- **Home-Based Business Technical Assistance** – Work with existing programs that provide technical assistance to home-based businesses such as the Small Business Development Centers, colleges, and community colleges.
- **Web Connectivity** – Explore opportunities for enhanced web connectivity for rural residents and businesses.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for home-based businesses and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).

D. Tourism and Recreation Cluster

1. Background

Tourism and recreation in the rural area play an important role in the quality of life for all residents of King County and the region. Additionally, compatible rural tourism and recreation opportunities can provide jobs for rural residents and bring dollars into the rural economy. These jobs could be from an array of professions as diverse as whitewater tour guide, trail maintenance / landscape supervisor, or farm stand assistants. Visitors to rural King County will often need places to eat, to sleep (be it campground or bed and breakfast), and to buy gas, supplies, and souvenirs.

Rural King County offers a diverse spectrum of active and passive recreation opportunities for residents and tourists through an extensive network of parks and trails. Recreation opportunities include kayaking, fishing, or watching a stream float by; hiking, biking, or riding on horseback on the many trails; picnicking; golfing; or simply enjoying scenic Snoqualmie Falls or other rural mountain vistas.

The King County Parks and Recreation Division support the following programs:

- **Parks and Destinations Program** – King County is the regional provider of great destinations for recreation adventures including hiking, bicycling, camping, climbing, backcountry mountain biking, swimming, and more.
- **Trails Program** – King County owns and maintains one of the nation’s most exciting regional trail systems, consisting of more than 175 miles of regional trails with 300 miles proposed for the future.
- **Environmental Stewardship Program** – King County is the regional leader in protecting, preserving, managing, and maintaining, open space, resource lands, habitat, and large parklands containing more than 25,000 acres.
- **Partnerships, Grants, Volunteering** – King county manages an innovative and nationally recognized business plan developed by Parks to encourage partnerships, provide recreation grants, and encourage volunteering. The “Partnership for Parks Initiative” means the King County Park System is more entrepreneurial, efficient, and exciting.

Tourism opportunities in rural King County are also diverse. The rural area offers farmers markets, farm tours, wineries, arts and crafts, antiques, the annual King County Fair, and festivals, as well as significant cultural and historic sites, some of which portray the role that agriculture, forestry, and the railroad have had in the development of King County through the decades.

The King County Historic Preservation Office, part of the Office of Business Relations and Economic Development, supports the following programs:

- **Fall City Historic Street Signs** – In cooperation with the King County Roads Services Division, produced and installed 68 new street signs in Fall City. The signs incorporate the historic name of the street with the current name. This is the first in a series of historic signage projects that will be implemented throughout unincorporated King County. The goal

of this and related projects is to enhance and preserve the character of the county's rural communities.

- **Historic Resource Inventories** – Comprehensive historic resource inventories have been completed in the cities of Snoqualmie, North Bend, and Carnation, and in unincorporated Snoqualmie Valley. Information from these projects serves as the basis for landmark designations, building rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, general community planning purposes, and development of tourism marketing materials.
- **Barn Again Initiative** – The county will partner with property owners, local banks, chambers of commerce, historical societies / museums to develop economic and other incentives to preserve and adaptively re-use the county's significant historic barns.
- **Snoqualmie Mill Power Plant** – Currently working with the cities of North Bend, Snoqualmie, the Weyerhaeuser Company, the Snoqualmie Valley Historical Society, and former residents of the Snoqualmie Falls mill town, to find an owner / developer who will stabilize and find a new use for the historic power plant and smokestack at the mill site.
- **Heritage Corridor Program** – Working to develop a Heritage Corridor Program in cooperation with 4Culture and the King County Roads Services Division. Identification, documentation, and enhancement of the county's scenic and historic corridors will provide the foundation for on-going tourism marketing efforts.
- **Transportation Enhancement Grant** – The County has received a grant to support identification and documentation of historic and cultural resources associated with the road network in rural King County. Data collected in this project will be used for development of interpretive signage and other tourism marketing materials.

2. Comprehensive Plan Policies

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides direction and policies designed to enhance and support tourism and recreation in rural King County. The Comprehensive Plan policies related to tourism and recreation are included in the Appendix of this Report. These policies will guide the development of new Recreation and Tourism Cluster Economic Strategies and Action Items.

3. Economic Factors

Rural residents and rural stakeholder organizations presented the county with a wide variety of comments on opportunities, challenges, and constraints related to the recreation and tourism cluster of the rural economy. The following discussion organizes these comments by market, infrastructure, regulatory, or other economic factor.

Market Driven Factors

- **Way Finding Signs.** The majority of the comments received under market driven factors, particularly during the public meetings focused on what is perceived as a lack of information about and signage to the recreation and tourism opportunities available in rural King County.
- **Eco-tourism.** Many individuals brought up the most recent tourist boon of eco-tourism stating that King County has many of the attributes those searching out eco-tourism want, such as farms and forestlands, farm stands and farmers markets, organic farming, sustainable forestry, and salmon runs. Three areas of rural King County have expressed interest in

pursing the eco-tourism market are the farmers of the Sammamish Valley Agricultural Production District (APD), Vashon-Maury Islands, and the Snoqualmie Valley area.

- **Agricultural Heritage.** The Sammamish Valley APD is located adjacent to a suburban area. The farmers within the APD are exploring opportunities to provide activities, festivals, and educational programs to these suburban residents. They hope to demonstrate how a successful farm operates and educate people on the agricultural heritage of the area and how successful habitat stewardship programs benefit everyone in the county.
- **Sustainable Communities.** Vashon-Maury Island is focusing much of their attention on island sustainability and have already created educational programs and are attracting visitors interested in learning more about sustainable communities. BRED is currently working with the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council and its Economic Development Committee on economic strategies for the community.
- **Recreation and Tourism.** Within the Snoqualmie Valley area, the rural cities, rural communities, and others entities, such as the Snoqualmie Forest Theater, are exploring options to encourage the many tourists that already visit Snoqualmie Falls to linger in the Valley and take advantage of the great diversity of other recreation and tourist opportunities located throughout the valley.
- **Marketing Plans.** Rural cities, organizations, and entities are also looking to the county to provide leadership and possibly assist with tourism marketing plans, tourism business retention and recruitment, way finding signage, and website promotion.
- **Cultural Sites.** Promotion of historic farms, railroad history, and other historic and cultural sites in rural King County was also mentioned as an important item to rural residents. It was suggested that the county partner with rural residents and rural stakeholders to further promote and implement the national Barn Again Initiative that King County has adopted.

Infrastructure Driven Factors

Infrastructure comments received over the past several months supported and expanded upon many programs already under way in the county.

- **Trail System.** Residents voiced strong support of King County's continuing efforts to complete its extensive trail system throughout the county.
- **Trailheads and Parking.** Another important issue to rural residents related to trails is the need for additional trailhead access and providing parking to meet the demand created by increasing number of persons using the trails.
- **Trail Surface Choices.** Rural residents and stakeholders desiring equestrian trails, raised the issue that horses do not do well on paved trails, that equestrian trails need to be constructed utilizing natural materials.
- **Mountain Biking Trails.** Those residents and stakeholders interested in hiking or biking were also interested in more biking trails and hope that the county will consider creating more off road or natural type trails through some of the newer parks in the rural area.
- **Bike Lanes.** The biking stakeholders asked that when the county is or has influence over designing and rebuilding of roads that bicycle lanes should be separate from vehicle lanes, wherever possible.

- **River Access.** Rural residents and stakeholders stated that they want more access to rivers and streams along with additional boat launch sites and vehicle parking at the launch sites.
- **Campgrounds.** Rural residents would like to see an increase in the numbers and diversity of campgrounds available in rural King County. During the public meetings several individuals mentioned that additional campgrounds with several amenities, such as the King County Tolt MacDonald Park and Campground in Carnation, which has river access, would be well used.
- **Signage.** Several rural residents and stakeholder groups indicated that recreation and tourist sites would receive additional visitation if additional way finding and site signage is provided. Other residents feel that providing additional interpretive signage will increase public awareness of the county's natural and historic resources. They recommended that interpretive signage should be provided at parks, cultural and historic sites, and for crops being grown on farms and forestlands.
- **King County Library.** The King County Library on Vashon indicated that it provides tourism information for residents and visitors and recommended that the other libraries in King County, particularly in the rural cities, also provide this information. The Vashon Library feels that this service increases public awareness of the opportunities to recreate in the area.
- **Natural Areas.** Rural residents would like to see parks left in a natural state, they feel it is unnecessary to provide manicured lawns and completely paved access and parking. These residents felt that this turns the rural parks into urban facilities and is more costly for the county. They suggested that the dollar savings could be applied to opening new access areas within the rural parks.
- **Public Transportation.** A few rural residents stated that public transportation to rural parks and tourist destinations would enhance visitation to these areas. Vashon Island residents feel that the ferry schedules and limited public bus service limits visitor access to the island. Residents in eastern rural King County would like to see additional bus service out into the rural areas.
- **Recreation Guides.** Information dissemination about recreation and tourist destination sites, activities, and festivals was another item several residents and the rural cities raised. This type of information, along with links to the appropriate sites for detailed information, is currently being proposed as part of a Rural Resources Website Action Item (RES-G1).

Regulatory Driven Factors

The regulatory issues raised by rural residents and stakeholder organizations relate to permitting processes and regulations as often being limiting factors to providing additional tourism and recreation sites and activities in the rural area.

- **Design Standards.** It was suggested that the county revisit and evaluate its policies and regulations in regard to development requirements for driveways, common areas, parking lots, etc. of parks and tourist facilities in the rural area. The need to provide the paving and manicured areas, often needed or desirable in urban settings, is not considered necessary nor in character with the rural area by several rural residents.

- **Bed and Breakfast.** It was suggested that regulations relating to development of bed and breakfast and other tourist support industries should be re-evaluated to maximize opportunities for tourist, in the rural area, without sacrificing the rural character.
- **Volunteer Programs.** It was suggested that the county should re-evaluate its volunteer programs and policies. Several outdoor interest groups indicated that they would like the opportunity to work with the county to help construct and open up new trails as well as maintain other areas of the parks, but are limited in these efforts by current policies.
- **Risk Management.** Risk management and liability insurance were raised as a concern for those individuals who want to either open a private enterprise, such as white water trips or farm U-picks, to the public either on public lands or private land. Rural residents asked if the county would review its regulations and policies regarding these issues to minimize, if possible, the exposure of rural property owners or those opening an enterprise on public lands.
- **Multi-Use Sites.** Rural residents and stakeholders feel that the county should look at balancing regulations that may close areas for public access for habitat or open space protection with the need for passive recreation opportunities for rural residents. Rural residents generally understand the need for the habitat protection regulations; however, they feel that the loss of passive recreation access at some of these sites is unnecessary. These stakeholders asked that the county review and evaluate the loss of passive recreation sites to habitat restoration and open space regulations and look at balancing the multi-use of these sites.

Other Factors

- **Grant Programs.** Rural residents expressed support for and continuation of the existing community recreation grants program administered by the Parks and Recreation Division.
- **Community Partnerships.** Rural residents support the existing county community partnerships that support recreation and tourism and should work towards strengthening existing programs and help create new partnerships where needed.

4. Recreation and Tourism Economic Strategies and Action Items

RES-T1 Promote and Enhance Compatible Tourism and Recreation.

Action Items

- **Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program –** Continue this pilot project to provide way finding and standardized signage as part of a tourism enhancement program in the Snoqualmie Valley. Project partners include the county, the rural cities, rural communities, and the Washington Department of Transportation.
- **Farm / Habitat Tourism Model –** Partner with the Sammamish Valley Agriculture Production District farmers and businesses to create a model for farm-based tourism in the county that will also support the rural / urban link of Strategy RES-A2. This project will encompass tours within the Sammamish Valley of working farms, heritage sites, and

habitat restoration sites. The project will also promote festivals and other events, activities, and educational projects to promote the critical rural / urban link.

- **Historic Preservation Office Programs** – Continue to support the Historic Preservation Office partnerships and programs that enhance tourism opportunities in the rural area. These programs include the Barn Again Initiative; Resource Inventory Updates; Historic Sign Projects; and 4Culture’s Historic Trails Program.
- **Parks and Recreation Division Programs** – Continue to support the Parks and Recreation Division partnerships and programs that support and enhance recreation and tourist opportunities in the rural area. These programs include the Parks and Destinations Program; Trails Program; Environmental Stewardship Program; and the Partnerships, Grants, and Volunteering Program.

E. Rural Towns and Neighborhood Centers Economic Cluster

1. Background

The three unincorporated Rural Towns designated by the Comprehensive Plan are Fall City, Snoqualmie Pass (Alpental), and the Town of Vashon. The Comprehensive Plan finds that unincorporated Rural Towns contribute to variety in development patterns and housing choices and provide employment opportunities, retail shopping and other services to nearby residents. These towns, along with Rural Cities, contain a significant portion of King County's historic architecture and are the primary locations for nonresidential uses in the rural area.

Rural King County also contains several small Rural Neighborhood Centers, which provide limited, local convenience shopping. The Rural Neighborhood Centers as identified within the Comprehensive Plan are:

Bear Creek:	Cottage Lake and Redmond-Fall City Road / 236th NE
East King County:	Greenwater, Baring and Timberlane Village
Enumclaw:	Cumberland, Krain's Corner and Newaukum
Newcastle:	Coalfield and East Renton Plateau
Snoqualmie:	Preston and Stillwater
Tahoma / Raven Heights:	Maple Valley, Hobart, Ravensdale and North Cedar Grove Road
Vashon:	Burton, Dockton, Tahlequah, Portage, Heights Dock, Jack's Corner, Vashon Center, Vashon Service Center, Vashon Heights and Maury Island Service Center

The Rural Towns

Rural Towns are unincorporated towns governed directly by King County. These towns serve as a focal point for community groups such as chambers of commerce or community councils which often participate in public affairs. The purposes of the Rural Town designation are to 1) recognize existing concentrations of higher density and economic activity in Rural Areas, whether by virtue of historical rural settlements or redesignation of an urban commercial center; 2) provide a physical focus for the historic identity of rural communities; and 3) to allow for modest growth of residential and economic uses within these designations if supported by the community and adequate utilities and other public services are available. Unlike rural cities, rural towns are not included in the Urban Growth Area and are not eligible for incorporation as a city or for annexation to an existing city.

Fall City is an unincorporated town located at the intersection of State Highways 202 and 203 and bordered by the Snoqualmie River. This town has an interesting mix of restaurants, retail shops, and services needed by area and regional residents.

Snoqualmie Pass is also designated as an unincorporated town and is also known as Alpental. This rural town is primarily a ski resort with its focus on those services necessary for individuals to enjoy the alpine terrain regardless of the season.

The unincorporated Town of Vashon is located on Vashon Island and supports its surrounding Vashon-Maury islands residents and visitors with a variety of restaurants, retail shops, grocery stores, banks, and other services.

A Vashon Town Plan was developed in 1996 and the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council and its Economic Committee has requested that this Town Plan be used by the county when making decisions about development or redevelopment of any town uses or land areas. (Please see Appendix C, Letter to Julia L. Larson, Coordinator, Rural Economic Strategies from Vashon-Maury Island Community-Council dated October 18, 2005.)

Rural Neighborhoods

Rural neighborhoods are small commercial developments, or in some cases, historic towns or buildings, that are too small to provide more than convenience shopping and services to surrounding residents. They generally do not have services such as water supply or sewage disposal systems any different from those serving surrounding rural development.

Development in Rural Towns and Neighborhood Centers

For this Report, detailed research was performed on the availability of land for development within the designated rural towns and neighborhood centers. Preliminary results of this research indicate there is sufficient land for commercial development in the rural area to serve existing and planned development. In addition to currently vacant lots, approximately nine percent of the commercially zoned lots in the rural, unincorporated portions of the County appear to be used as single family residences. Additional information on the commercial and industrial land inventory can be found in Chapter 4 of this Report.

2. Comprehensive Plan Policies

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides a strong policy basis for promoting and supporting the rural towns and rural neighborhood centers. The Comprehensive Plan policies related to the towns and rural neighborhood centers are included in the Appendix of this Report. These policies will guide the development of new Rural Town and Neighborhood Centers Economic Strategies and Action Items.

3. Economic Factors

Rural neighborhoods and rural towns are critical elements of each rural community's identity and character. In some cases, on Vashon Island and throughout the rural area, many of the historic structures have a significant visual impact on the surrounding area serving as an anchor to the neighborhood's individual identity. At the same time, the older infrastructure that accompanies the historic character of the neighborhood centers may limit future commercial development or redevelopment.

Market Driven Factors

- **Residential Use versus Commercial Use.** The rural neighborhoods continue to accommodate limited infill development commercial use, suitable for a neighborhood center

and compatible with the area in which it is being located. And, while the overall population increase in the rural area is significantly less when compared to the growth in urban areas, it has the potential to provide a larger consumer base for the businesses in these areas.

Additionally, it should be noted that residential uses are still evident on approximately nine percent of the commercial lands inventory that was conducted this past year.

- **Opportunities for Expanding Home Businesses.** A report published by the Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy (SBA) (2004) reports that one of the most critical and difficult stage for businesses was going from one employee (home-based business) to hiring employees. It may be a logical step for these expanding commercial enterprises to move into a nearby rural neighborhood center, rural town, or even one of the rural cities more suitable of the location of the business. It was suggested that the county should review their regulations to ease this transition and at the same time provide assistance to the small business owner to help them work through the process.
- **Historic and Community Identification.** Rural towns and neighborhoods may benefit from identifying a brand for these unique communities. Some commercial properties in rural King County have structures that are at least fifty years old including some built prior to 1905. Many of these older structures reflect the local history of the neighborhood.
- **Marketing and Business Development Assistance.** This effort could be part of a larger marketing effort to help advertise the neighborhood centers and their unique character and businesses, while promoting business retention and recruitment. It was suggested that the rural communities might want to enter into business enhancement partnerships with the county and the creation of business circuit rider position could assist in these business development efforts.
- **General Stores.** Many rural neighborhoods include a general store. The diversity of products offered by these stores varies from location to location adding to the distinct character of the local community. Many of these stores are at a disadvantage in their purchasing power because they are not part of a chain of stores.

Infrastructure Driven Factors

- **Infrastructure Needs.** The limited availability of infrastructure may hinder the viability of some rural neighborhoods and towns. Rural residents recommended that the county assist rural neighborhoods in applying for infrastructure construction grants for items such as sidewalks, roads, and other compatible infrastructure improvements.
- **Meeting Health Department Requirements.** Several rural business owners and residents raised the option of providing alternative septic systems that would accommodate businesses that traditional septic systems would not allow. The King County Department of Public Health currently has a list of approved alternative septic systems that should be referenced for possible use.
- **Assistance with Business Support Incubators.** Rural residents indicated that there is a need, particularly in the rural towns, to provide business support incubators. Vashon has initiated a business support center and it was suggested the county could partner with Vashon to help disseminate the information on start up, costs, and lessons learned in developing the center to interested parties.

Other Factors

- **Information Dissemination.** Rural Residents asked if there was some way the county could assist with providing information about businesses, festivals, or special events in the rural towns and neighborhood centers. Additionally, stakeholders asked if the county could inform the towns and neighborhood centers about existing economic and demographic information and provide this information to interested communities.

4. Rural Town and Rural Neighborhood Economic Strategy and Action Items

RES-N1 Promote and Support Compatible Businesses in the Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhoods.

Action Items

- **Business Enhancement Partnerships** – Explore options and opportunities to work with the rural towns and neighborhood centers on partnerships or programs to promote and enhance the business environment of these areas.
- **Business Support** – Use the Rural Business Circuit Rider action item presented in Strategy RES-G2 to provide business support for those businesses located in the rural towns and neighborhood centers.
- **Road, Sidewalk, and Appropriate Infrastructure Support** – Use the Infrastructure Improvement Application action item and the Private Development Financing action item as presented in Strategy RES-G3 to provide appropriate and compatible infrastructure support for business development in the rural towns and neighborhood centers.
- **Tourism Support** – Use the Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program action item presented in Strategy RES-TI or other potential partnerships or programs to provide tourism support to the rural towns and neighborhood centers.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for commercial businesses suitable for location in the rural towns and neighborhood centers and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).
- **Rural General Stores** – Explore options related to product purchasing networks, business plan and marketing assistance, and branding for general stores.

F. Rural Cities Economic Cluster

1. Background

The rural cities identified in the King County Comprehensive Plan are Duval, Carnation, Snoqualmie, North Bend, Black Diamond, Enumclaw, and Skykomish. The rural cities are included within the Rural Economic Strategies Report for several reasons. They do the following:

- Serve as the focus for economic growth of the commercial and industrial economic sectors in the rural area.
- Provide retail shopping and services for residents in the unincorporated areas.
- Provide resource business and industry that support farming and forestry that are not suitable for location within the unincorporated area; such as a cheese processing plant.
- Provide jobs for residents of the unincorporated area.

The rural cities are all unique in history, character, population, and economic base. Statistical information in Chapter 4 and the individual city websites provide additional information on each rural city.

To help facilitate the King County Comprehensive Plan direction to focus commercial and industrial economic growth into the rural cities, Strategy RES-C1 was included to encourage the county to create and sustain partnerships with the rural cities to enhance the economic health of the rural area. Several existing partnerships include:

- **Infrastructure Development Application** – BRED coordinated and submitted a \$3 million infrastructure improvement grant to the federal Economic Development Administration on behalf of the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie and the Snoqualmie Tribe. This application has passed the first approval threshold and if funded, the collective projects would create over 2,000 new jobs for rural residents in the Snoqualmie Valley over the next eight years.
- **Skykomish Vision 2010 Plan** – At the invitation of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Skykomish, the county participated in the public meetings held this past spring and summer to develop the vision for Skykomish completed in August of 2005. This Plan was developed by the Washington State Department of Ecology to direct the clean up activities being implemented within the Town by the State and Burlington Northern Railroad over the next several years.
- **Duvall Economic Development Program** – The county was invited to attend the Economic Development Open House in Duvall in October of 2005 and will continue to work with the City as the program is finalized and implemented.
- **Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program** – BRED, the KC Roads Division, KC Parks & Recreation Division, and 4Culture, in partnership with Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association, the State, and others are working to develop a pilot project for thematic and consistent signage for parks, historical, cultural, scenic, and other sites throughout the area to enhance the tourism market in the Snoqualmie Valley.

- **Poultry Processing Facilities** – BRED and KC Agriculture Program are working with Puget Poultry of Washington on the development of a poultry processing facility to provide needed processing facilities for poultry growers throughout the county.

2. Comprehensive Plan Policies

The King County Comprehensive Plan states that the rural cities “contribute to variety in development patterns and housing choices and provide employment opportunities, retail shopping and other services to nearby residents.” The Comprehensive Plan policies related to the rural cities are included in the Appendix of this Report. These policies will guide the development of Rural City Cluster Economic Strategies and Action Items.

3. Economic Factors

The discussion of the market driven, infrastructure driven, regulatory driven, and other economic factors relative to the rural cities economic cluster includes comments and recommendations made during meetings and conversations with rural residents and stakeholders. Additionally, the county has met on several occasions with the individual rural cities, the Snoqualmie Valley Governments Association, the Suburban Cities Small City Caucus, and the Maple Valley-Black Diamond Chamber of Commerce.

Market Driven Factors

- **Big Box Stores.** One of the market driven factors being experienced by the rural cities is a loss of retail sales by commuting residents shopping at the relatively new large one-stop shopping retail stores found on the edge of the urban fringe. The cities indicated that both the long term resident commuter and the new comer to the city are stopping by the new Fred Meyer or Wal-Mart stores on their drive home.

Infrastructure Driven Factors

- **Sewers.** Infrastructure needs vary from city to city. Duvall has just completed a new sewer system and thus has lifted the development moratorium that existed for the past few years. Carnation is in the process of working with the county and other partners on developing a new sewer system to handle its present and future needs, however, limited development and redevelopment of existing buildings can occur within the city until this system is complete.
- **Flood Control.** Snoqualmie has several large new residential developments within the city boundaries with some retail and services provided as part of the expansion, however, its downtown area is prone to flooding.
- **Public Water Systems.** North Bend is exploring options to provide water to its expanding commercial and industrial base, while Black Diamond has just completed a new plan for the city.
- **Visitor Center.** Enumclaw is working on a creation of a regional visitors’ center with several partners and is exploring options to use the fairgrounds site currently owned by the county.

- **Upgrading Downtown.** Skykomish is initiating clean-up activities of its downtown area with the State Department of Ecology, Burlington Northern Railroad, the county, and other partners which will be completed over the next few years.

Regulatory Driven Factors

- **Potential Annexation Areas.** While the rural cities have adopted their own development regulations and conduct permitting for their jurisdictions, coordination with the county on development or redevelopment of businesses in potential annex areas was raised as a concern. It was recommended that the county should evaluate its policies and regulations such that development and / or redevelopment in potential annexation areas are also required to meet minimum city standards, so that the buildings and uses will be in compliance once annexed into the city.

Other Factors

- **Tourisms Opportunities.** The rural cities also discussed coordination with the county to expand tourism in the rural area.
- **Business Support.** The rural cities also asked about options for the county providing business support, both in the potential annexation areas and for individual businesses.

4. Rural Cities Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-C1 Create and Sustain Partnerships with the Rural Cities.

Action Items

- **Partnerships with the Rural Cities** – Continue to work with the rural cities to focus commercial and economic growth into the cities and promote rural economic vitality.
- **Regional Rural City-Based Tourism Project** – Continue to discuss and potentially partner with the rural cities, chambers of commerce, and other interested parties on regional tourism based activities and / or actions. Coordinate efforts to ensure compatibility with the Way Finding and Tourism Pilot Project in the Snoqualmie Valley action item presented in Strategy RES-T1.
- **Rural City Economic Development Plans** – Continue to support the rural cities by participating in the creation of economic development plans and reviewing draft plans, when requested by the community. The county is currently working or meeting with Duvall, Skykomish, and Snoqualmie on their current planning efforts.
- **Abandoned Mill Site Redevelopment Plans** – Explore working with appropriate cities and property owners to formulate redevelopment site plans for the abandoned mill sites in the county, which encompass the historic heritage of each site and adjacent land uses.

Chapter 3: Rural Economic Strategies and Action Items – Comprehensive List

This chapter lists the current Rural Economic Strategies and Action Items for implementation. The Strategies and Action Items are based on the discussion in Chapter 2 of the comments, ideas, and recommendations identified during meetings, conversations, and discussions with rural residents and stakeholders. The strategies include 1) partnerships, projects, and programs, and 2) issues and concepts that need further study or analysis. Each strategy has at least one implementing action item and will be implemented by the appropriate county department(s). Each of the Strategies and Action Items included in this Report have been evaluated for compliance with 1) the Mission of the Rural Economic Strategies, 2) the King County Comprehensive Plan, and 3) the King County Countywide Planning Policies. Estimated costs are provided for proposed Action Items when the project includes significant, identifiable costs or when additional staff is needed to implement the project.

The Rural Economic Strategies proposed in this Report are identified and numbered with an “RES” for Rural Economic Strategy, followed by a letter and number to identify the classification and economic cluster of each strategy:

RES-G# – General Rural Economic Strategies

RES-A# – Agriculture Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-F# – Forestry Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-H# – Home-Based Business Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-T# – Tourism and Recreation Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-N# – Rural Town and Neighborhood Centers Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-C# – Rural Cities Cluster Economic Strategies

A. General Rural Economic Strategies

RES-G1 Inform and Communicate with Rural Residents and Businesses.

Action Items

- **Rural Resources Website** – Develop a rural resources web page to provide information significant to rural residents and businesses. The site will provide information and links on agriculture, forestry, home-based business, small business development, tourist destinations and activities, recreation sites, and other information to support and promote the Rural Economic Strategies.
- **Rural Advisory Commission** – Establish a rural citizen advisory committee to advise the King County Executive and Council on timely issues that relate to or potentially impact the rural area. The Commission will be modeled after and complement both the Agriculture and Rural Forestry Commissions.

RES-G2 Provide Rural Business Assistance.

Action Items

- **Rural Permit Coordinator** – Analyze creating a full-time position dedicated to assisting rural residents and businesses understand and proceed efficiently through the county permitting processes. The coordinator will also analyze proposed policy or regulatory changes for potential economic impacts. This position could cost approximately \$90,000-\$100,000.
- **Rural Business Circuit Rider** – Explore with the rural cities creating a full time position to provide technical assistance to support and enhance businesses located throughout the rural area. This position could be jointly funded by the county, the rural cities, and possible grant funds. The Circuit Rider could coordinate and work with the existing business programs in the county such as the Small Business Development Centers and college programs. Business assistance brochures and seminars and a business information database may be developed as part of this program to meet specific needs identified. The total cost of this position, including travel would be around \$100,000 with the county contributing some portion.
- **Coordination Among County Departments** – Continue to explore options for regulatory coordination among the county departments. The county has initiated coordination pilot projects to assist rural residents this past year (locations were Vashon, Black Diamond and Carnation). These pilot projects will be assessed for their effectiveness and will form the basis for future programs.
- **Rural Business Review** – further analyze county regulations and practices on the establishment and operation of businesses in rural unincorporated King County.

RES-G3 Create Partnerships with Rural Communities to Promote Economic Vitality.

Action Items

- **Infrastructure Improvements** – Continue to work with the rural communities to explore opportunities to apply for individual and / or joint federal grants for infrastructure improvements to stimulate economic development. The county submitted a joint application on behalf of the Cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie and the Snoqualmie Tribe in October of 2005, and will continue to work with the rural communities on similar applications in the future.
- **Private Development Financing** – Work with developments to provide financing, where feasible, for commercial and office development through the Housing and Urban Development 108 Loan program.
- **Community Partnerships** – Work with the rural communities to support partnerships and programs through the Unincorporated Area Councils, regional chambers of commerce, and other organizations that have a community focus.

- **Vashon-Maury Island Community Council** – Continue to partner with the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council and its Economic Development Committee on partnerships and projects to enhance economic vibrancy.

RES-G4 Create Partnerships with the Counties of the Puget Sound Region to Promote Economic Vitality.

Action Items

- **Regional Partnerships** – Work with the counties and region-oriented organizations within the Puget Sound region to create and support partnerships and support programs that promote and enhance economic vitality on a regional basis.

B. Agriculture Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-A1 Promote and Enhance Agriculture Production.

Action Items

- **Agriculture Commission** – Continue to support the Agriculture Commission with its activities to support agriculture and in its role as advisor to the King County Executive and Council.
- **Agricultural Related Non-Profit Organizations** – Continue to partner with non-profit organizations, such as the Cascade Harvest Coalition, whose goals are related to the support and enhancement of agriculture in the county and throughout the region.

RES-A2 Promote Programs that Educate and Encourage Urban Residents and Businesses on the Importance of Buying Local Produce.

Action Items

- **Urban / Rural Interface** – Continue to support existing programs, such as Puget Sound Fresh, whose partnership efforts support the crucial urban / rural interaction. The interface encourages urban residents and businesses to buy local rural produce. Buying local produce, participating in annual crop subscriptions, and patronizing restaurants that use local produce will help keep local farmers and producers viable and help retain the agricultural base.
- **“Get Fresh Week”** – Continue to support Washington Farmers Market Week each year to support and increase the purchase of local produce. In August, Executive Sims declared “Get Fresh Week” with the slogan: “The Time is Ripe to Eat Local.”
- **Harvest Celebration and Farm Tour** – Continue to support the WSU Extension Harvest Celebration each fall. In 2005, the county in coordination with 4Culture added historic agricultural information to the tour guide and agricultural heritage sites to the tour. Grant funding for this annual program is no longer available, and the county will work with the WSU Extension to try to obtain new grant funding to continue this valuable program. The project budget is approximately \$20,000 annually not including a .5 FTE.

- **Farmer Chef Connection Conference** – Continue to support this inaugural conference that will bring farmers and local chefs together to network. The conference will be held in King County in February of 2006 and will encourage the use of local farm produce by area restaurants. The conference is being modeled after the successful farmer-chef conferences in Portland, Oregon. Partners include the county, Puget Sound Fresh, WSU Extension, Washington Department of Agriculture Small Farms Program, Seattle Chapter of FORKS (Chefs Collaborative), and others. Following completion and evaluation of the conference, the county may seek to establish it as an annual event. Annual sponsorship by King County could cost from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

RES-A3 Enhance the Agricultural Market and Economic Base.

Action Items

- **Poultry Processing Facilities** – Continue to work with partners to develop a USDA-inspected poultry processing facility. This privately operated facility would be able to process chickens, ducks, turkeys, and rabbits. The USDA certification will increase the market for poultry growers throughout the county by allowing them to sell to supermarkets and restaurants. Current partners include Puget Poultry of Washington and Green River Community College. This project may be eligible for a Community Development Block Grant loan for operations and tenant improvements.
- **Grass Fed Beef & Mobile Processing Unit** – Continue to explore opportunities to provide a privately-operated USDA-inspected processing unit(s) in response to the growing local demand for grass fed beef and the need to process that beef. The county is exploring opportunities and potential partnerships in this arena. Startup costs could range from \$100,000 to \$150,000, and the county could explore opportunities for grant and low interest loan funds to help defray these costs.
- **Farmers Markets** – Continue to support the existing county farmers markets and help new farmers markets become successful. County staff works directly with farmers markets and supports the regional Puget Sound Fresh program and the Small Farms Program of the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Both programs support farmers markets in the region at which county farmers can sell their produce.
- **Commercial Kitchen** – Continue to explore options to develop a privately operated commercial kitchen, possibly as a cooperative or as part of a culinary institution. This facility would enable local farmers and rural entrepreneurs to make USDA-inspected value-added products, such as sauces and jams, which can then be sold in specialty stores, supermarkets, and on the world-wide web. Based on similar facilities in the Pacific Northwest, startup costs will vary based on size and scale of operation. The county could explore opportunities for grant and low interest loan funds to help defray these costs.
- **Drainage Options** – Explore options available to provide lower cost drainage solutions for farmers whose lands are becoming saturated due to inadequate drainage facilities.
- **Agriculture Related Home-Based Business Regulations** – Further review county regulations and procedures governing agriculture related home-based businesses, taking

into consideration the need to ensure compatibility of these activities with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character. Invite the Agriculture Commission, farmers, and other agriculture related stakeholders to 1) document specific regulations or procedures that act as obstacles to establishing or operating agriculture home-based businesses, including the conditional use permitting process, and 2) identify potential solutions to remove these obstacles while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character.

RES-A4 Provide Business Assistance to the Agriculture Industry.

Action Items

- **Small Farm Expo** – Continue to work with Green River Community College and other partners to create a business development track for this WSU Extension business assistance event in March 2006. Funding is no longer available for this project beyond 2006. The project budget is approximately \$10,000 annually not including a .5 FTE.
- **Agriculture Education Programs** – Investigate opportunities to partner with WSU Extension, Green River Community College, Lake Washington Technical College, and others to promote existing agricultural education programs.
- **Cultivating Success** – Work in partnership with the WSU Extension to seek grant funding to continue this 12-week course and internship, as well as other programs that target and provide support for new and existing small scale sustainable agriculture producers.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for agricultural businesses and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).
- **Livestock Industry** – Explore options to fund a livestock extension agent within the WSU Extension to support the county livestock program, the growing grass-fed beef program, and other livestock and equestrian issues. The potential cost to the county of this position could be \$50,000 to \$70,000 with WSU assuming responsibility for overhead and benefits.

C. Forestry Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-F1 Promote and Enhance Forestry.

Action Items

- **Rural Forest Commission** – Continue to support the Rural Forest Commission with its activities to promote forestry and in its role as advisor to the King County Executive and Council on policies and programs related to forestry.
- **Forestry Related Organizations** – Develop partnerships with non-profit and other organizations whose goals are to increase public awareness, appreciation, and support for the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of forestry in the county and throughout the region.

- **Forest Stewardship** – Continue to provide and possibly expand services and education programs for forest landowners to foster knowledge about the importance of retaining and managing their forested lands.
- **Healthy Forestlands** – Continue to partner with WSU Extension, Washington Department of Natural Resources the USDA Forest Service, and others to create quality education and stewardship programs that promote the goal of healthy forestlands on both public and private land holdings.
- **Forestry Web Page** – Develop an online resource that provides information for rural landowners to effectively manage their forestlands and evaluate harvest options.

RES-F2 Enhance the Forestry Market and Infrastructure.

Action Items

- **Low Impact Infrastructure** – Develop partnerships with stakeholders and businesses to develop and recruit needed low impact infrastructure, such as mobile sawmills and low-impact harvesters, to support economic harvesting of small acreage forestry tracts.
- **Green Building Certification** – Partner with the green building industry to promote the recognition of high quality forestry stewardship and local forest products within the green building point system.
- **Vashon Forest Stewards** – Continue to partner with the Vashon Forest Stewards, an organization committed to environmentally sensitive forest thinning, forest products, and quality forest management of small parcels. In 2005, at the request of the Rural Forest Commission, the county arranged for donated containers for use as a kiln and storage of equipment and tools and for business and marketing plan assistance to this group.
- **Forestry Training for Youth** – continue to partner with other agencies to provide grants and technical assistance for after school training and activities related to forestry. Explore opportunities to apply for grants to continue and expand this program, which will receive federal funding in 2006.

RES-F3 Provide Business Assistance to Forest Landowners.

Action Items

- **Forest Related Small Business Support** – Continue to partner with non-profit organizations and forest operators who provide services and markets to forest landowners. A modest amount of funding is in place for 2006 for a forestry grant program to promote and support businesses using innovative approaches for use of forest products and to strengthen local infrastructure for forestry. Explore opportunities to apply for grants and / or develop long term funding for this effort.
- **Fire Management Plans** – Continue to partner with rural communities as each develops fire management plans that support thinning operations to create healthy forests. Use the 2006 Fire Protection Initiative as an opportunity for to work with stakeholders and assess existing programs and regulations to maximize fire plan effectiveness.

- **Forest Enhancement Events** – Continue to sponsor events that promote forest stewardship and showcase effective management techniques. Explore options for continued funding of the Small Farm Expo and Harvest Celebration and expand the forestry presence at these events.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for forestry related businesses and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).

D. Home-Based Business Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-H1 Promote and Encourage Compatible Home-Based Businesses.

Action Items

- **Home-Based Business Regulatory Assistance** – Explore options to assist home-based businesses with the county regulatory process, including potential use of a Rural Permit Coordinator (Strategy RES-G2).
- **Home-Based Business Regulations** – Further review county regulations and procedures governing rural home-based businesses, taking into consideration the need to ensure compatibility of these activities with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character. Invite Unincorporated Area Councils, chambers of commerce, business owners, neighborhood associations, and other rural stakeholders to 1) document specific regulations or procedures that act as obstacles to establishing or operating appropriate rural home-based businesses and 2) identify potential solutions to remove these obstacles while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and rural character.
- **Home-Based Business Technical Assistance** – Work with existing programs that provide technical assistance to home-based businesses such as the Small Business Development Centers, colleges, and community colleges.
- **Web Connectivity** – Explore opportunities for enhanced web connectivity for rural residents and businesses.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for home-based businesses and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).

E. Tourism and Recreation Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-T1 Promote and Enhance Compatible Tourism and Recreation.

Action Items

- **Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program** – Continue this pilot project to provide way finding and standardized signage as part of a tourism enhancement program in the Snoqualmie Valley. Project partners include the county, the rural cities, rural communities, and the Washington Department of Transportation. Potential cost to the county could be between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

- **Farm / Habitat Tourism Model** – Partner with the Sammamish Valley Agriculture Production District farmers and businesses to create a model for farm-based tourism in the county that will also support the urban / rural interface of Strategy RES-A2. This project will encompass tours within the Sammamish Valley of working farms, heritage sites, and habitat restoration sites. The project will also promote festivals and other events, activities, and educational projects to promote the critical urban / rural interface.
- **Historic Preservation Office Programs** – Continue to support the Historic Preservation Office partnerships and programs that enhance tourism opportunities in the rural area. These programs include the Barn Again Initiative; Resource Inventory Updates; Historic Sign Projects; and 4Culture’s Historic Trails Program.
- **Parks and Recreation Division Programs** – Continue to support the Parks and Recreation Division partnerships and programs that support and enhance recreation and tourist opportunities in the rural area. These programs include the Parks and Destinations Program; Trails Program; Environmental Stewardship Program; and the Partnerships, Grants, and Volunteering Program.

F. Rural Town and Commercial Neighborhood Economic Strategies

RES-N1 Promote and Support Compatible Businesses in the Rural Towns and Rural Neighborhoods.

Action Items

- **Business Enhancement Partnerships** – Explore options and opportunities to work with the rural towns and neighborhood centers on partnerships or programs to promote and enhance the business environment of these areas.
- **Business Support** – Use the Rural Business Circuit Rider action item presented in Strategy RES-G2 to provide business support for those businesses located in the rural towns and neighborhood centers.
- **Road, Sidewalk, and Appropriate Infrastructure Support** – Use the Infrastructure Improvement Application action item and the Private Development Financing action item as presented in Strategy RES-G3 to provide appropriate and compatible infrastructure support for business development in the rural towns and neighborhood centers.
- **Tourism Support** – Use the Way Finding and Standardized Signage / Tourism Enhancement Program action item presented in Strategy RES-TI or other potential partnerships or programs to provide tourism support to the rural towns and neighborhood centers.
- **Model Business Plans** – Explore the availability of model business plans for commercial businesses suitable for location in the rural towns and neighborhood centers and place on the Rural Resources Website (Strategy RES-G1).
- **Rural General Stores** – Explore options related to product purchasing networks, business plan and marketing assistance, and branding for general stores.

G. Rural Cities Cluster Economic Strategies

RES-C1 Create and Sustain Partnerships with the Rural Cities.

Action Items

- **Partnerships with the Rural Cities** – Continue to work with the rural cities to focus commercial and economic growth into the cities and promote rural economic vitality.
- **Regional Rural City-Based Tourism Project** – Continue to discuss and potentially partner with the rural cities, chambers of commerce, and other interested parties on regional tourism based activities and / or actions. Coordinate efforts to ensure compatibility with the Way Finding and Tourism Pilot Project in the Snoqualmie Valley action item presented in Strategy RES-T1.
- **Rural City Economic Development Plans** – Continue to support the rural cities by participating in the creation of economic development plans and reviewing draft plans, when requested by the community. The county is currently working or meeting with Duvall, Skykomish, and Snoqualmie on their current planning efforts.
- **Abandoned Mill Site Redevelopment Plans** – Explore working with appropriate cities and property owners to formulate redevelopment site plans for the abandoned mill sites in the county, which encompass the historic heritage of each site and adjacent land uses.

Chapter 4: A Profile of the Rural Economy

This chapter provides a brief overview of population, employment, housing, and economic cluster data on agriculture, forestry, and mineral resources, as well as information on the commercial and industrial land inventory conducted in 2005.

The majority of rural King County lies east of the Urban Growth Area (UGA) in central and eastern King County. This area of King County is characterized by forests, streams, open farmland, majestic mountains, and winding scenic lanes. Vashon and Maury Islands on the west side of the main UGA make the remainder of rural King County and have unique vistas, pastoral and natural settings, an island pace of life, and boast a thriving artist community.

A. History of Rural King County¹

History of the Snoqualmie and Sammamish Regions

As the forest receded, homesteaders migrated into the Snoqualmie River and Sammamish River valleys. In the 1860s, families practiced basic subsistence farming, and eked out a living raising livestock, grains, potatoes and fruit. Some farmers cut timber and made hand-split shingles as a cash crop. From crude river landings, valley settlers shipped their produce on scows and small steamboats into the growing city of Seattle.

In the 1880s, a strong market for hops triggered a “hops craze” throughout King County. Many an east county farmer became rich over night by specializing in this lucrative cash crop. The sprawling Snoqualmie Hop Farm in the upper valley prospered for 12 years, employing up to 1200 people during the harvest. But the boom was short-lived. Every hop farm in the region was destroyed by aphid attacks in 1889.

By the turn of the century, east King County farmers had reinvented themselves. A burgeoning market for milk in the cities of Puget Sound brought dairy farming into the spotlight for the next fifty years. This area was home to several important experimental dairy farms. Carnation, Willowmoor, and Hollywood farms specialized in the latest scientific methods of breeding. But dairying provided a comfortable living for average families, too. In 1940, a typical family dairy farm was just 40 acres, and supported 17 cows and 14 acres of clover and grass hay.

Since then, another wave of growth and change has overtaken the farms of the Snoqualmie and Sammamish valleys. Today, many pastures once dotted with grazing Holstein cows now host seasonal produce, flowers, and specialty livestock – another chapter in the agricultural heritage of King County.

¹ The history text in this section is written by Flo Lentz of 4Culture for the Harvest Celebration.

History of the Enumclaw and Soos Creek Plateau Regions

Early settlers were immediately drawn to the rich soils of south King County river valleys. Later, new arrivals cleared farms on the Enumclaw and Soos Creek plateaus. In the 1860s and 1870s, farms in the White River Valley (now the Green River / Kent Valley) supplied the people of Seattle with most their meat, produce, and grain. After the hops craze of the 1880s, area agriculture turned to dairying and poultry farming in a big way.

Populist political movements took root in the farming communities of the south county. White River was the scene of early grange movement activities, and farmers' cooperatives emerged at Enumclaw – the Enumclaw Cooperative Creamer and Farmers Mutual Insurance Company. Scandinavian immigrants populated the plateau, while the first and second generation Japanese and Italians favored the fertile alluvial valleys.

Soon after the turn of the century, the farmlands southeast of Seattle gained renown for row cropping, or truck farming. The Pike Place Market and new methods of long-distance shipping guaranteed both local and national markets for south county vegetables, fruit, and berries. In the 1920s, Kent became famous as the “Lettuce Capital of the World” and was home to commercial canneries and packing plants. By 1940, King County was tops in statewide vegetable production.

Monumental changes to south King County came in the form of flood control on the Green River. In 1962, the construction of Howard Hanson Dam triggered rapid industrialization in the Kent Valley. Farmlands disappeared. But here and there even today, surprising pockets of agriculture remain tucked among the factories and housing developments. On the Enumclaw Plateau, with its scenic views of Mt. Rainier, healthy signs of our farming heritage can still be found at specialty farms, gardens, and ranches.

History of Vashon-Maury Islands

The first farmers on Vashon raised subsistence livestock and planted the sandy soils with orchards of cherries, pears, apples, and quince. In the early 1880s, all kinds of berries were grown – including raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries, and currants. But, by the turn of the century, strawberries reigned supreme.

In 1901, 15,000 crates of strawberries were shipped from the island, and the Vashon Island Strawberry Festival was born. Japanese immigrants to Vashon specialized in strawberry farming. Their numbers increased in the 1910s and '20s, even though first-generation Asians were prohibited by law from owning and leasing land. During the June strawberry harvest, growers hired Native American and Filipino workers by the hundreds.

Vashon also gained fame as a center of greenhouse agriculture. By 1915, there were 13 commercial greenhouse operations on the island, turning out everything

from tomatoes, lettuce, and cucumbers to camellias, roses, and orchids. Chicken ranching was prominent on the island in the 1920s and '30s.

World War II changed Vashon agriculture forever. Most Japanese families did not return after their internment camp experiences. Specialized strawberry farming was no longer profitable, and farming families began once again to diversify. Today's island farms continue to evolve. A host of specialized farms offer products ranging from alpaca wool to walnuts.

B. Economic Profile of Rural King County

Population

In 2004, the population of unincorporated rural King County was 137,000, or around 7.7% of King County's total population of 1,788,300. Vashon-Maury Island has about 10,500 residents, while the rural cities had combined population of 32,580. Table 6: Population for Unincorporated King County, 1980-2004 provides the population numbers for rural unincorporated King County, as well as the rural cities from 1980 to 2004. For comparison, the population numbers for all of King County are also provided.

Table 6: Population for Unincorporated King County, 1980-2004

Jurisdiction	1980	1990	2000	2004	Change 1980-2004	% Change '80-'04	AAGR ²
Unincorporated King County	127,226	129,548	135,123	137,000	9,774	8%	0.31%
Rural Cities							
Black Diamond	1,170	1,422	3,970	4,000	2,830	242%	5.26%
Carnation	951	1,243	1,893	1,895	944	99%	2.91%
Duvall	729	2,770	4,616	5,545	4,816	661%	8.82%
Enumclaw	5,427	7,227	11,126	11,160	5,733	106%	3.05%
North Bend	1,701	2,578	4,746	4,660	2,959	174%	4.29%
Skykomish	209	273	214	210	1	0%	0.02%
Snoqualmie	1,370	1,546	1,531	5,110	3,740	273%	5.64%
Rural City Total	11,557	17,059	28,096	32,580	21,023	182%	4.46%
Total Rural King County	138,783	146,607	163,219	169,580	30,797	22%	0.84%
Total King County	1,269,898	1,507,319	1,737,034	1,788,300	518,402	41%	1.44%

Source: King County Office of Management and Budget, *The 2004 Annual Growth Report* (Seattle: 2004)

² Annual Average Growth Rate

Over eight out of every ten rural King County residents reside in the unincorporated portions of the county. The rural cities account for the remaining 20%. In 2004, Enumclaw was the largest rural city with a population of 11,160, while Duvall and Snoqualmie have the next highest populations of 5,545 and 5,110 respectively. Black Diamond and North Bend had populations of 4,000 and 4,660 respectively, while Skykomish in the far northwestern portion of the county had a population of 210.

Although the bulk of the county's rural population lived outside the rural cities, most of the population growth in the rural areas over the past 24 years occurred in the cities. Moreover, rural population increase lagged the rate experienced by the county at-large.

As show in Between 1980 and 2004, unincorporated rural King County population grew by 22%, about one-half the rate experienced by all of King County (41%). Most of the population growth in rural King County occurred in the rural cities during this time. Total population in these cities almost tripled and they accounted for about 70% of the total rural population increase that occurred. On the other hand, the unincorporated rural King County population grew by a meager eight percent.

Housing Characteristics

The single-family house is the predominant housing type in the rural cities. (See Table 7: Housing Types for Unincorporated King County and the Rural Cities; 2003.) However, there are significant differences in the housing stock among these jurisdictions. In four of the cities, Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall and Skykomish, single-family units constitute over 80% of the total units, reaching a peak of 89% in Skykomish and 88% in Carnation. On the other hand, Enumclaw (62%) and North Bend (67%) had the smallest proportion of single-family housing. There were a significant proportion of multi-family units in both North Bend (31%) and Enumclaw (27%). Enumclaw also had a relatively higher proportion of its stock, 11%, in mobile homes. Black Diamond had the highest proportion of mobile homes at 16%. See Table 8: Percent Distribution of Housing Types, 2003 for details.

Table 7: Housing Types for Unincorporated King County and the Rural Cities; 2003

Jurisdiction	Single Family	Multi-Family	Mobile Home/ Other	Total Units
Unincorporated Rural County	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vashon*	4,228	242	397	4,867
Rural Cities				
Black Diamond	1,286	37	246	1,569
Carnation	582	63	14	659
Duvall	1,667	139	184	1,990
Enumclaw	2,819	1,210	496	4,525
North Bend	1,259	579	39	1,877
Skykomish	145	3	15	163
Snoqualmie	1,521	420	19	1,960
Rural City Total	9,279	2,451	1,013	12,743

*Year 2000 from the US Census
 Source: *The 2004 Annual Growth Report (AGR)*; 2000 U.S. Census
 NA = Not available.

Table 8: Percent Distribution of Housing Types, 2003

Jurisdiction	Single Family	Multi-Family	Mobile Home / Other
Vashon*	86.9%	5.0%	8.2%
Rural Cities			
Black Diamond	82.0%	2.4%	15.7%
Carnation	88.3%	9.6%	2.1%
Duvall	83.8%	7.0%	9.2%
Enumclaw	62.3%	26.7%	11.0%
North Bend	67.1%	30.8%	2.1%
Skykomish	89.0%	1.8%	9.2%
Snoqualmie	77.6%	21.4%	1.0%
Rural City Total	72.8%	19.2%	7.9%

*Year 2000 from the US Census
 Source: *The 2004 Annual Growth Report (AGR)*; 2000 U.S. Census
 Note: rows may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding.

Employment

Covered employment in all of rural King County (the unincorporated portion and the rural cities) was 30,337 in 2003, the latest year that data is available (see Table 9: Covered Employment Rural King County, 2003). Covered employment consists of those jobs subject to the payroll tax and covered under unemployment insurance.

The bulk of rural employment is in the unincorporated portions of the County. There were 19,954 employees in unincorporated rural King County in 2003, 65.8% of the total (see Tables 9 and 10).

The largest share of rural employment is in the service sector which contains 33% of total employment or 9,922. This is about two times the next largest sector – construction and natural resources – which has 5,237 jobs (17.3% of total rural employment), followed by education (13% of employment) and retail (11.5%).

There were a total of 10,383 covered jobs in 2003 (see Table 9: Covered Employment Rural King County). This is a little over one-third (34.2%) of total rural employment.

Enumclaw had the largest amount of employment of all rural cities, 4,143 jobs or 40% of the cities' total. North Bend, with 2,194 jobs, had the second highest number of jobs, followed closely by Snoqualmie with 1,847. Together, these three cities accounted for about eight out of every ten jobs in King County's rural cities.

While the Washington State Department of Employment reported total employment as well as employment by sector for four of the seven rural cities, employment in two sectors have been suppressed to maintain confidentiality in Black Diamond, Carnation and Skykomish³. Because the number of jobs not reported is a small fraction of total rural cities' jobs, it is nonetheless possible to obtain an accurate picture of the distribution of jobs in these jurisdictions.

³ Manufacturing and FIRE employment in Black Diamond was suppressed. These sectors together totaled 25 jobs. In Carnation, manufacturing and retail sectors were not reported, for a total of 117 jobs. A total of 9 jobs in then retail and construction / resources were not reported. Thus, 151 jobs are not accounted for; this equals 1.5% of total rural city employment.

Table 9: Covered Employment Rural King County, 2003

Jurisdiction	Manufacturing	WTU	Services	Retail	FIRE	Education	Government	Construction & Resources	Total
Unincorporated King County	874	1,801	6,010	1,635	390	2,409	2,390	4,445	19,954
Rural Cities									
Black Diamond	*	32	126	37	*	89	40	113	462
Carnation	*	27	100	42	*	222	56	32	596
Duvall	56	13	453	168	82	152	38	118	1,080
Enumclaw	238	103	1,548	736	634	534	199	150	4,143
North Bend	15	82	789	814	63	141	132	156	2,194
Skykomish	0	0	14	*	0	30	8	*	61
Snoqualmie	115	39	882	44	72	372	100	223	1,847
Rural City Total	424	296	3,912	1,841	851	1,540	573	792	10,383
Total Rural King County	1,298	2,097	9,922	3,476	1,241	3,949	2,963	5,237	30,337

Source: Puget Sound Council of Governments from Washington State Employment Security Department

WTU: Wholesale, Transportation, and Utilities

FIRE: Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

* Suppressed to avoid disclosure.

The rural cities serve as the retail and finance centers for rural residents. In both these sectors, total city employment outpaces employment in the unincorporated areas. However, the bulk of the city jobs tend to be concentrated in the services, retail and education sectors. There is little manufacturing employment in these cities. In four of the cities, services constitute the largest employer, each having over 25% of total employment, reaching a high of almost 50% in Snoqualmie (see Table 10: Percent Distribution of Covered Employment by Location, 2003). A good portion of Snoqualmie's service employment (536 out of 882) is found in sectors devoted to tourism, i.e., accommodation and food services and arts, entertainment, and recreation. Service employment in cities such as Enumclaw and North Bend are also found in motels and restaurants, but in both these cities' service sector, health care and social assistance employment make up a significant portion.

Retail is the second largest employment sector when all cities are considered and in both Duvall and Enumclaw. It is the largest in North Bend, underscoring the key role played by the Outlet Mall in the North Bend economy.

Table 10: Percent Distribution of Covered Employment by Location, 2003

Jurisdiction	Manufacturing	WTU	Services	Retail	FIRE	Education	Government	Construction & Resources	Total
Unincorporated County	4.4%	9.0%	30.1%	8.2%	2.0%	12.1%	12.0%	22.3%	100%
Rural Cities									
Black Diamond	*	6.9%	27.3%	8.0%	*	19.3%	8.7%	24.5%	100%
Carnation	*	4.5%	16.8%	7.0%	*	37.2%	9.4%	5.4%	100%
Duvall	5.2%	1.2%	41.9%	15.6%	7.6%	14.1%	3.5%	10.9%	100%
Enumclaw	5.7%	2.5%	37.4%	17.8%	15.3%	12.9%	4.8%	3.6%	100%
North Bend	0.7%	3.7%	36.0%	37.1%	2.9%	6.4%	6.0%	7.1%	100%
Skykomish	0.0%	0.0%	23.0%	*	0.0%	49.2%	13.1%	*	100%
Snoqualmie	6.2%	2.1%	47.8%	2.4%	3.9%	20.1%	5.4%	12.1%	100%
Total Rural Cities	4.1%	2.9%	37.7%	17.7%	8.2%	14.8%	5.5%	7.6%	100%
Total Rural	4.3%	6.9%	32.7%	11.5%	4.1%	13.0%	9.8%	17.3%	100%

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council of Governments from Washington State Employment Security Department.

*Suppressed to avoid disclosure.

WTU: Wholesale, Transportation, and Utilities

FIRE: Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

Table 11: Percent of Covered Employment by Sector, 2003

Education also plays an important role in the rural economy. The sector provides the largest

Jurisdiction	Manufacturing	WTU	Services	Retail	FIRE	Ed	Government	Construction & Resources	Total
Unincorporated County	67.3%	85.9%	60.6%	47.0%	31.4%	61.0%	80.7%	84.9%	65.8%
Rural Cities									
Black Diamond	*	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%	*	2.3%	1.3%	2.2%	1.5%
Carnation	*	1.3%	1.0%	1.2%	*	5.6%	1.9%	0.6%	2.0%
Duvall	4.3%	0.6%	4.6%	4.8%	6.6%	3.8%	1.3%	2.3%	3.6%
Enumclaw	18.3%	4.9%	15.6%	21.2%	51.1%	13.5%	6.7%	2.9%	13.7%
North Bend	1.2%	3.9%	8.0%	23.4%	5.1%	3.6%	4.5%	3.0%	7.2%
Skykomish	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	*	0.0%	0.8%	0.3%	*	0.2%
Snoqualmie	8.9%	1.9%	8.9%	1.3%	5.8%	9.4%	3.4%	4.3%	6.1%
Rural City Total	32.7%	14.1%	39.4%	53.0%	68.6%	39.0%	19.3%	15.1%	34.2%
Total Rural County	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council of Governments from Washington State Employment Security Department.

*Suppressed to avoid disclosure.

number of jobs in Carnation and Skykomish (about one-half of total employment in the city), the second largest in Snoqualmie, and the third largest in Black Diamond and Duvall.

Enumclaw had the largest absolute number of jobs in the sector, 534, although services, retail and FIRE (finance, insurance and real estate) employed more people than did education.

Manufacturing is hardly present in the rural cities. Enumclaw has the largest number of jobs in this sector – 238, but these jobs constitute only 5.7% of total employment there. In no city does manufacturing represent more than 6.5% of total employment.

Household Income

Data covering rural King County household income, family and the per capita income by city, Vashon Island and the County are shown in Table 12: Median Household and Family Income and Per Capita Income. Similar data for Unincorporated Rural King County was unavailable.

In all but three cases (Enumclaw, Skykomish and Snoqualmie), 1999 household income in rural cities and Vashon Island exceed that for the County and in some instances by a significant amount. Median household income in Duvall at \$71,300 was 34% above the County's. Household income in Black Diamond was also relative high – \$67,092 or 26% above the County median. On the other hand, household income in Enumclaw was 18% below the median for the County.

The picture for median family income (households with related individuals) is similar to that of household incomes, although the three above-mentioned cities are joined by Carnation in being below County levels.

Based on household and family income, it would appear that the people in rural King County residents were wealthier than the average King County resident. However, per capita income data in Table 13: Comparison of Median Household and Family Income, 1999 would suggest differently. In all of the rural cities, income per person was below the County's, in the case of Enumclaw, as much as over 30% below. In three other cities, Carnation, Snoqualmie and Skykomish, per capita income was between 23% and 26% less than King County's per capita level.

The reason for this paradoxical situation is easy to grasp from Table 13: Comparison of Median Household and Family Income, 1999. Households in rural cities tend to be much larger as compared to the more urban-influenced county-wide average of 2.39. With the exception of Vashon Island and Skykomish, household size in rural King County cities exceeded the countywide average and exceeded that average by as much as 20% and 25% in Duvall and Carnation, respectively.

Table 12: Median Household and Family Income and Per Capita Income, 1999

Jurisdiction	Households	Median Household Income	Families	Median Family Income	Per Capita Income
Black Diamond	1,456	\$67,092	1,132	\$72,981	\$26,936
Carnation	636	\$60,156	496	\$64,167	\$21,907
Duvall	1,596	\$71,300	1,327	\$78,740	\$27,764
Enumclaw	4,317	\$43,820	2,851	\$56,270	\$20,596
North Bend	1,841	\$61,534	1,334	\$69,402	\$28,229
Skykomish	104	\$45,357	66	\$48,500	\$22,829
Snoqualmie	632	\$52,692	460	\$58,889	\$22,239
Vashon	4,193	\$58,261	2,861	N/A	\$31,983
King County	711,490	\$53,157	423,511	\$66,035	\$29,521

Sources: 2004 AGR; 2000 US Census
N/A – not available

Table 13: Comparison of Median Household and Family Income, 1999

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income: % Different From County	Median Family Income: % Different from County	Per Capita Income: % Different from County	Household Size	Household Size: % Different from County
Black Diamond	26.2%	10.5%	-8.8%	2.73	14.2%
Carnation	13.2%	-2.8%	-25.8%	2.98	24.7%
Duvall	34.1%	19.2%	-6.0%	2.88	20.5%
Enumclaw	-17.6%	-14.8%	-30.2%	2.52	5.4%
North Bend	15.8%	5.1%	-4.4%	2.53	5.9%
Skykomish	-14.7%	-26.6%	-22.7%	2.06	-13.8%
Snoqualmie	-0.9%	-10.8%	-24.7%	2.58	7.9%
Vashon	9.6%	1.5%	8.3%	2.08	-13.0%

Sources: 2004 AGR; 2000 US Census

Agriculture

King County farms tend to be relatively small. Over 80% of the county's farms reported by the data are below fifty acres (see Table 14: Farms by Size in King County, 2002). Only one in five county farms is between 50 and 999 acres. There may be one or more farms larger than 1,000 in the North Bend area, but the number has been suppressed by the US Department of Agriculture for reasons of confidentiality.

Comparison with the State underscores the small size of King County farms. About 55% of farms in the State are between 1-49 acres, while 32% of all Washington farms are between 50 – 999 acres. About 50% of the County's farms are located in the Enumclaw area.

King County farms tend to generate relatively small levels of income. Almost 90% of these farms have sales below \$50,000 a year. Only 12% of county farms have sales greater than \$50,000 a year. About 25% of all State of Washington farms generate sales of \$50,000 and more annually, while about 22% of US farms have sales equal to or in excess of \$50,000 per year.

About one-half of the farms in King County sell livestock, poultry and related products. The county's livestock and poultry farms tend to be small and generate relatively small amounts of sales (see Table 16: Value of All Livestock, Poultry, and Related Products Sold; 2002).

Almost 300 King County farms grow and harvest crops (Table 17: Size of Cropland Harvested, King County, 2002). Most of these farms are small as well, with cropland between 1 and 49 acres. Only about ten percent of the farms have cropland exceeding 50 acres.

Only about 5% of all farms are engaged in dairy production, but three-quarters of the dairy farms generate more than \$50,000 in annual revenues. Almost 200 farms (25% of all farms) sell cattle and calves, although most are small, only ten of them generate more than \$ 50,000 per year revenues (see Table 18: Sales from Milk, Other Dairy Products, Cattle and Calves, 2002).

Table 14: Farms by Size in King County, 2002

Location	All Farms	From 1 to 49 Acres	From 50 to 999 Acres	1,000 Acres or Greater
Black Diamond	20	17	*	0
Carnation	74	57	17	0
Duvall	65	50	15	0
Enumclaw	407	342	65	0
Fall City	36	21	15	0
Hobart	*	0	*	0
Maple Valley	88	83	5	0
North Bend	16	7	7	*
Preston	*	*	0	0
Ravensdale	19	15	*	0
Snoqualmie	5	*	*	0
Vashon	76	70	6	0
Total	806	662	130	*

Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture 2002

* Data withheld in situations of from one to four farms to avoid disclosure.

Table 15: Value of Agricultural Products Sold, 2002

Location	Black Diamond	Carnation	Duvall	Enumclaw	Fall City	Hobart	Maple Valley	North Bend	Preston	Ravensdale	Snoqualmie	Vashon	Total
Total Farms	20	74	65	407	36	*	88	16	*	19	5	76	806
Less than \$50,000	20	62	54	356	30	*	87	12	*	17	*	72	710
\$50,000 to \$249,999	0	10	5	24	5	0	*	*	0	*	*	*	44
\$250,000 or More	0	*	6	27	*	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	33

Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture, 2002

*Data withheld for categories with one to four farms.

Table 16: Value of All Livestock, Poultry, and Related Products Sold; 2002

Location	Black Diamond	Carnation	Duvall	Enumclaw	Fall City	Hobart	Maple Valley	North Bend	Preston	Ravensdale	Snoqualmie	Vashon	Total
Total Farms	6	33	37	222	14	*	46	*	0	9	*	27	394
Less than \$50,000	6	29	31	185	13	*	46	*	0	9	*	27	346
\$50,000 to 249,999	0	*	*	15		0	0	*	0	0	0	0	15
Over \$250,000	0	*	*	22	*	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	22

Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture, 2002

*Data withheld for categories with one to four farms.

Table 17: Size of Cropland Harvested, King County, 2002

Location	Black Diamond	Carnation	Duvall	Enumclaw	Fall City	Hobart	Maple Valley	North Bend	Preston	Ravensdale	Snoqualmie	Vashon	Total
Total Farms	6	45	20	113	18	*	20	12	*	*	*	56	290
1 to 49 Acres	6	41	16	96	12	*	20	8	*	*	*	54	253
50 to 499 Acres	0	*	*	17	6	0	0	*	0	0	0	*	23
Over 500 Acres	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	0

Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture, 2002

*Data withheld for categories with one to four farms.

Table 18: Sales from Milk, Other Dairy Products, Cattle and Calves, 2002

Location	Black Diamond	Carnation	Duvall	Enumclaw	Fall City	Hobart	Maple Valley	North Bend	Preston	Ravensdale	Snoqualmie	Vashon	Total
Total Farms Value of Dairy Products	0	*	10	32	*	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	42
Number with Dairy Sales > \$50,000	0	*	*	32	*	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	32
Total Farms Value of Cattle and Calves	*	13	13	139	10	*	14	*	0	*	*	7	196
Number with Cattle and Calves Sales > \$50,000	*	*	*	10	*	0	*	*	0	*	0	0	10

Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture, 2002

*Data withheld for categories with one to four farms.

Table 19: Special Income Sources for Local Farms, 2002

Location	Black Diamond	Carnation	Duvall	Enumclaw	Fall City	Hobart	Maple Valley	North Bend	Preston	Ravensdale	Snoqualmie	Vashon	Total
Farms with Farm-Related Sources of Income	*	20	11	93	*	0	18	*	*	5	0	15	162
Farms Selling Certified Organically Produced Commodities	0	7	*	7	*	0	*	0	0	0	0	*	14
Farms with Production Contracts	0	*		*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Farms with Direct Sales	*	22	6	44	*	0	15	*	0	*	*	19	106

Source: USDA, Census of Agriculture, 2002

*Data withheld for categories with one to four farms.

Income generation is quite diversified in the rural area of King County (see Table 19: Special Income Sources for Local Farms, 2002). About 160-170 farms receive revenues from sales of products closely related to the principal functions of the farm business. However, a very small proportion of County farms, only about 20, are involved in a growing niche market – certified organic products. Direct sales to customers were another important farm revenue source. About 100 farms were involved in this type of activity.

Forestry

There were about 91 million board feet of timber harvested in King County in 2002; a decrease 35% over 2000 and 2001 levels (see Table 20: Timber Harvest by Ownership Class, King County, 2000-2002).

Forest industry harvesting decreased by a little over 51 million board feet between 2000 and 2002. The only increase in forest production over this time period was the increased harvesting of over 13 million board feet on State lands.

About 80% of the county's timber production came from private lands, with close to 46% from land owned by industry. State lands accounted for another 21% of the county's harvest.

King County's 2002 timber harvesting was a small portion (about three percent) of western Washington's total production of 2.7 billion board feet and the State's 3.6 billion board feet. The county's harvesting was far below the 503 million board feet harvested in Grays Harbor County, the most prolific timber producer in western Washington.

Table 20: Timber Harvest by Ownership Class, King County, 2000-2002

Ownership Class	2000	2001	2002	Change 2000-2002	% Change 2000-2002
<i>Thousand Board Feet, Scribner Rule</i>					
Native American	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Forest Industry	93,025	93,193	41,848	(51,177)	-55.0%
Private Large	19,914	20,044	19,062	(852)	-4.3%
Private Small	19,938	19,859	10,750	(9,188)	-46.1%
Total Private	132,877	133,096	71,660	(61,217)	-46.1%
State	5,728	10,981	19,006	13,278	231.8%
Other Non-federal	338	0	319	(19)	-5.6%
National Forest	1,561	79	0	(1,561)	-100.0%
Other Federal	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total Public	7,627	11,060	19,325	11,698	153.4%
Total King County	140,504	144,156	90,985	(49,519)	-35.2%

Source: *Washington Timber Harvest*, various years. Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Table 21: Timber Harvest by Ownership Class and Species, 2002

Ownership Class	Douglas-Fir	Western Hemlock	True Firs	Cedars	Other Conifers	Red Alder	Other Hardwoods	Total Volume
<i>Thousand Board Feet, Scribner Rule</i>								
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Industry	24,357	13,801	0	634	2,343	572	141	41,848
Private Large	5,596	9,378	0	784	1,796	1,064	444	19,062
Private Small	2,459	1,893	0	348	5,164	329	557	10,750
Total Private	32,412	25,072	0	1,766	9,303	1,965	1,142	71,660
State	9,693	4,752	1,140	1,140	0	1,711	570	19,325
Other Non-federal	183	102	0	0	0	0	34	319
National Forest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Federal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Public	9,876	4,854	1,140	1,140	0	1,711	604	19,325
Total All Owners	42,288	29,926	1,140	2,906	9,303	3,676	1,746	90,985

Source: *Washington Timber Harvest 2002*. Washington State Department of Natural Resources

The species of timber harvested in King County in 2002 are listed by ownership in Table 21: Timber Harvest by Ownership Class and Species. About one-half of King County 2002 timber production (42.3 million board feet) was in Douglas-Fir with another 30 million board feet in Western Hemlock. Together, these two timber species accounted for 79% of the county's 2002 harvest.

Mineral Resources / Mining

Mining in King County consists of sand, gravel, rock or stone mining, as well as nonmetallic operations which can include silica, shale, crystal, and clay.

It is not possible to identify the actual number of employees in the King County mining economic sector because they are included in the construction and resources sectors reported by the Puget Sound Regional Council. Sand and gravel operators and permit holders are far more numerous than those involved in nonmetallic mining. The majority of the sand and gravel extracted is used in the construction industry and much of this mining occurs in the vicinity of Enumclaw, Ravensdale, Black Diamond, and Vashon.

Table 22: Private Sand and Gravel Operators / Permit Holders

Operator / Permit Holder	Property	Permitted Acreage	Permitted Depth (feet)
Cadman	Black Diamond, Brickroad, Redmond Site	182	30 to 150
Tim Corlis and Sons		133	150
Fiorito Brothers	Homestead Valley	40	300
Glacier Northwest	Maury Island Pit	243	380
Interwest Development Northwest	Fjetland	32.4	240
Jensen's Sand and Gravel	Neilson	26	100
Johnson Underwood Properties	Reid Pit	48	40
La Pianta Limited Partnership	Meade Pit	83	100
Lakeside Industries	Issaquah	277	250
Lloyd Enterprises	Corridor Group and Milton Pit		
Lone Star Northwest	Snoqualmie Pit	210	100
Maury Island Land Company	Reidel Maury Island	176	280
Miles Sand and Gravel company	Main Plant	40	150
Oldcastle Northwest	Baydo	664	225
Palmer Coking Coal Company	Morgan Kane Terrace and Wheeler Expansion	169	75 to 720
Procon Construction	Cedar Mountain	40	100
Quality Rock Products	Lake Francis I	80	25
R & H Mining, LLC	Hayes Sand & Gravel	58	125
Red-Samm Mining Company	Gun Club	80	45
Reid Sand and Gravel	J&B Gravel Co.	20.52	20
Schrod Mar, Inc.	Palmer	40	120
Stoneway Concrete	Cedar Shores, Hartman Pit, Lake Francis	536	25 to 125
Stoneway Rock and Recycling	Kangley Pit	610	100
Vashon Sand and Gravel	Maury Island Operation	36	30 to 150
Wakefield 1-90, LLC		29.5	15

Source: Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Directory of Washington Mines (August, 2001) pp.58-59.

There is no data available covering sand and gravel production, however the operators located in King County are displayed in Table 22: Private Sand and Gravel Operators / Permit Holders.

There are seven rock or stone mining operations greater than twenty acres in size in King County. Two of the largest sites are operated by firms that also produce sand and gravel; Cadman, Inc. (52 acres to a depth of 200 feet) and Stoneway Rock and Recycling (100 acres at a depth of 500 feet).

Of the nonmetallic mining operations, silica is used in glass manufacturing while shale is an input in making bricks. Table 23: Nonmetallic Mining Operations, 2001 shows the 2001 operations for silica and shale. Other nonmetallic operations for crystal and clay have been permitted in the county, however, neither one was actively mined in 2001.

Table 23: Nonmetallic Mining Operations, 2001

Commodity	Operator	Activity	Use / Comment
Silica	Reserve Silica Corp.	Mined and washed 1220,000 tons and shipped 78,000 tons of silica sand.	Most silica sand used in glass manufacturing in Seattle area.
Silica	Ash Grove Cement Co.	Mined 110,000 tons of silica.	Silica used in cement manufacturing.
Silica	James Hardie Building Products, Inc.	Mined 120,000 tons of silicified andesite. Shipped 20,000 tons to Lafarge Corp.	Andesite used for cement and fiber-cement manufacturing.
Shale	Mutual Materials Co.	Hauled 3,000 tons from stockpile from one site and mined / hauled 45,000 tons of shale from another property	Shale used in manufacturing of brick.
Crystal	Robert Jackson	Extracted mineral and crystal specimens from property, but no production	
Clay	Pacific Coast Coal Co.	Not active at the John Henry No. 1 Mine in 2001	

Source: Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington Geology, Vol. 30, No. 1-2 (July, 2002), pp.6-7

C. Commercial and Industrial Land Inventory

1. Rural Cities

Opportunities for development of new commercial and industrial uses in rural King County are primarily found within existing rural cities (including their Urban Growth Areas or UGAs), although rural neighborhood centers provide some potential for further expansion. A UGA designates land in proximity to a city that is currently unincorporated, but which will ultimately be annexed to that individual city. In addition, rural residential zones house a significant number of home occupations and home industries.

A rough guide to the amount of land suitable for future rural commercial and industrial growth is provided by King County's *Buildable Lands Evaluation Report*, produced in September 2002 with the cooperation of the County's cities. That report was produced in response to State Growth Management Act requirements and provides estimates of land available within the cities' boundaries and in their UGAs. However, the Buildable Lands Report only offers an approximation of development capacity. Although gross acreage is adjusted to account for land unavailable due to environmental considerations, public uses such as rights-of-way, and market conditions, the report does not effectively deal with such issues as infrastructure availability and capacity or the actual number parcels and / or space on the market for sale or lease at any one time.

However, the Buildable Lands Report does present the best current data on the potential for non-residential growth in rural cities.

Table 25: Net Acres Available for Development in Rural Cities, By City, September, 2002 displays the estimate of total net adjusted commercial and industrial acreage available for the rural cities of Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall, Enumclaw, North Bend and Snoqualmie. It also demonstrates how environmental considerations, rights-of-way, and market factors are taken into account in order to provide an estimate of net developable acreage.

As shown in Table 24: Land Available for Development in Rural Cities, September, 2002, there are 639 acres available for commercial or industrial development or redevelopment in the six rural cities. Of this amount, 528 acres or 83% of the total are located within the rural cities' boundaries, while the remainder is located in their UGAs.

Table 24: Land Available for Development in Rural Cities, September, 2002

Land Use Variable	Gross Acres	Adjusted Net Acres	Percent of Total
Commercial Vacant	205.36	131.94	22.3%
Commercial Redevelopable	67.26	44.71	9.3%
Industrial Vacant	693.36	256.53	43.3%
Industrial Redevelopable	72.55	45.78	7.2%
Mixed Use Vacant	23.35	23.35	3.9%
Mixed Use Redevelopable	27.84	25.84	4.4%
Sub-Total: Current Supply of Commercial and Industrial Land	1,089.72	528.15	82.7%
UGA Commercial Vacant	17.13	7.28	1.1%
UGA Industrial Vacant	142.16	92.24	14.4%
UGA Mixed Use Vacant	20.73	8.97	1.4%
UGA Mixed Use Redevelopable	2.05	2.05	0.3%
Sub-Total: UGA Current Land Supply	182.07	110.54	17.3%
Total Commercial and Industrial Land	1,271.79	638.69	100.0%
Square Feet at a .25 Floor Area Ratio		6,955,367	
Square Feet at a .40 Floor Area Ratio		11,128,597	

Source: King County Budget Office, *King County Buildable Lands Evaluation Report*, September, 2002
Note: The rural cities are Black Diamond, Carnation, Duvall, Enumclaw, North Bend, and Snoqualmie.
UGA = Urban Growth Area

Most of the land available for development is set aside in industrial zones. Over 60% of the total buildable lands in cities and UGAs (395 adjusted net acres) are potentially amenable to industrial development. The bulk of this land, 349 acres, is currently vacant.

Vacant land zoned for commercial and industrial uses constitutes the majority of buildable land currently within the rural cities. Seventy-eight percent (412 acres) of the in-city 528 acre total is undeveloped land set aside for industrial (257 acres), commercial (132 acres), or mixed use (23 acres) purposes. The remaining 116 acres, although currently having structures, are deemed prime for redevelopment.

Land in the UGA is primarily vacant and mostly set aside for industrial uses: 92 of the 111 UGA buildable acreage is zoned industrial.

To obtain a sense of the potential development of non-residential square footage in rural cities, two floor area ratios (FARs), i.e., the proportion of developed acreage taken up by buildings, were applied to adjusted net acres. Using a FAR of .25, typical of retail developments, almost seven million square feet of space would be available in rural cities and their UGAs.

Applying a more intense .40 FAR, more typical of office or industrial development, over eleven million square feet is potentially available. However, it is more likely that the actual amount of future square footage will be closer to the lower end of the square footage estimates.

The location of the net adjusted acreage for each of the rural cities including their UGAs is displayed in Table 25: Net Acres Available for Development in Rural Cities, by city, September 2002.

Black Diamond has the largest amount of developable land within the city limits, 178 acres or 34% of the total current supply. North Bend has the second largest amount of land developable city land, 98 acres or 19% of the total 528 acres, while Snoqualmie and Enumclaw each have 89 acres potentially available for development. Duvall has an additional 67 acres, but in Carnation there are only seven acres.

Black Diamond and North Bend have the bulk of the industrial land, although all of Black Diamond's land is within the city. North Bend's 172 industrial acres are about evenly divided between land within its boundaries and in its UGA.

Table 25: Net Acres Available for Development in Rural Cities, By City, September, 2002

Land Use Variable	Black Diamond	Carnation	Duvall	Enumclaw	North Bend	Snoqualmie	Total
Commercial Vacant	4.17	3.18	31.38	12.93	7.35	72.93	131.94
Commercial Redevelopable	14.75	0.71	13.15	12.23	0.00	3.87	44.71
Industrial Vacant	105.09	0.00	6.27	57.46	83.29	4.42	256.53
Industrial Redevelopable	20.61	0.00	10.62	6.71	0.00	7.84	45.78
Mixed Use Vacant	17.52	2.23	0.99	0.00	2.61	0.00	23.35
Mixed Use Redevelopable	15.52	1.07	4.74	0.00	4.51	0.00	25.84
Sub-Total:	177.66	7.19	67.15	89.33	97.76	89.06	528.15
Current Supply of Commercial and industrial Land							
Percent of Total	33.6%	1.4%	12.7%	16.9%	18.5%	16.9%	100.0%
UGA Commercial Vacant [1]	0.00	3.45	0.00	0.00	3.83	0.00	7.28
UGA Industrial Vacant	0.00	3.45	0.00	0.00	88.79	0.00	92.24
UGA Mixed Use Vacant	0.00	5.04	0.00	0.00	3.93	0.00	8.97
UGA Mixed Use Redevelopable	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.05	0.00	2.05
Sub-Total: UGA Current Land Supply	0.00	11.94	0.00	0.00	98.60	0.00	110.54
Percent of Total	0.0%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%	89.2%	0.0%	100.0%
Total Commercial and Industrial Land	177.66	19.13	67.15	89.33	196.36	89.06	638.69
Percent of Total	27.8%	3.0%	10.5%	14.0%	30.7%	13.9%	100.0%
Square Feet at a .25 Floor Area Ratio	1,934,717	208,326	731,264	972,804	2,138,360	969,863	6,955,334
Square Feet at a .40 Floor Area Ratio	3,095,548	333,321	1,170,022	1,556,486	3,421,377	1,551,781	11,128,535

Source: King County Budget Office, *King County Buildable Lands Evaluation Report*, September, 2002

[1] UGA = Urban Growth Area

2. Unincorporated Rural King County

A detailed survey establishing an inventory of non-residential land uses in rural unincorporated King County, that is, in rural towns and neighborhood centers, was undertaken in the summer and fall of 2005. The survey was accomplished using the King County Assessor's property data base, the County's Geographic Information System, and sites visits of about 70% of parcels in the database. The results of this inventory by rural town or neighborhood business center are contained in Table 26: Developed and Undeveloped Zoned Commercial / Industrial Acreage, 2005.

The survey identified close to 1,900 acres of non-residential land either in use or zoned for non-residential uses. The bulk of this land, 1,128 acres, is already developed in retail, office and industrial uses. The remaining 756 acres are either vacant or have the potential for redevelopment.

This vacant acreage in unincorporated rural King County is similar to the gross acreage in rural cities found in the Buildable Lands Report and included in Table 26. Being gross acreage, this total was not adjusted for environmental considerations, market issues, or other inhibiting factors as this would require a detailed analysis of each parcel.

Table 26: Developed and Undeveloped Zoned Commercial / Industrial Acreage, 2005

Land Use/Zone	Bear Creek	East King County	Enumclaw ⁴	Newcastle	Preston	Tahoma	Vashon	Fall City	Other ^{5,6}	Total
Neighborhood Business Developed ⁷	16.98	8.77	104.21	16.27	2.41	19.60	93.64	8.08	282.62	552.58
Neighborhood Business Vacant ^{8,9}	0.00	14.57	47.45	1.09	0.00	9.37	33.31	6.73	20.54	133.06
Neighborhood Business Zoned Residential	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	32.73	0.00	2.38	0.00	35.11
Office Developed	15.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.37	0.51	0.00	16.09
Office Vacant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Industrial Developed	6.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	121.69	0.53	65.16	0.77	329.68	524.34
Industrial Vacant	0.00	0.00	531.21	0.00	23.64	0.84	57.67	0.00	9.70	623.06
Total Developed	38.70	8.77	104.21	16.27	124.10	52.86	159.17	11.74	612.30	1,128.12
Total Vacant	0.00	14.57	578.66	1.09	23.64	10.21	90.98	6.73	30.24	756.12
Total Acres	38.70	23.34	682.87	17.36	147.74	63.07	250.15	18.47	642.54	1,884.24

⁴ Enumclaw industrial acreage consists entirely of Weyerhaeuser holdings in Forest Production District.

⁵ Includes: Snoqualmie Pass Rural Town, Tiger Mountain Neighborhood Business District, Auburn-Black Diamond Road area, Kummer, Auburn East / Pacific Raceways Industrial Area, Covington North Industrial Area, and Kangley Neighborhood Business Zone.

⁶ All this industrial acreage is located at the Pacific Raceway site.

⁷ Includes Commercial Business zoning.

⁸ Includes Commercial Business zoning.

⁹ Vacant includes vacant land, vacant buildings and potentially redevelopable parcels mostly parking lots.

