

Chapter Two

Urban Communities

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

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

I. Urban Land Use

A. Urban Communities

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

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

1. The Urban Growth Area

The Growth Management Act requires the county to designate an Urban Growth Area where most growth and development forecasted for King County will be accommodated. By designating an Urban Growth Area, King County and other counties in the state will:

- Limit sprawling development;
- Reduce costs by encouraging concentrated development;
- Improve the efficiency of human services, utilities and transportation;
- Protect rural areas and resource lands; and
- Enhance open space.

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

The UGA includes all cities within the county including the cities in the Rural Area, the cities' annexation areas, and land within the unincorporated part of the county characterized by urban-type growth. The UGA also includes the Bear Creek Urban Planned Developments east of Redmond. See Chapter 3, Rural Legacy and Natural Resource Lands, for additional policy guidance on growth within the rural cities annexation areas.

King County's total UGA covers 460 square miles, less than one-quarter of the county's total area of 2,134 square miles. Cities comprise most of the land mass of the UGA, at 383 square miles; the unincorporated portion of the UGA is now about 77 square miles, according to the *2003 King County Annual Growth Report*.

U-102 The Urban Growth Area designations shown on the official Land Use Map includes enough land to provide the capacity to accommodate growth expected over the period 2001-2022. These lands should include only those lands that meet the following criteria.

- a. **Are characterized by urban development which can be efficiently and cost effectively served by roads, water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage, schools and other urban governmental services within the next 20 years;**
- b. **Do not extend beyond natural boundaries, such as watersheds, which impede provision of urban services;**

- c. **Respect topographical features which form a natural edge such as rivers and ridge lines;**
- d. **Are sufficiently free of environmental constraints to be able to support urban growth without major environmental impacts unless such areas are designated as an urban separator by interlocal agreement between jurisdictions;**
- e. **Are included within the Bear Creek Urban Planned Development (UPD) sites; and**
- f. **Are not rural land or unincorporated agricultural or forestry lands designated through the Countywide Planning Policies Plan process.**

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

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

U-104 **Rural properties that are immediately adjacent to a city and are planned or designated for park purposes by that city may be redesignated to urban when the city has committed to designate the property in perpetuity in a form satisfactory to the King County Council for park purposes and:**

- a. **The property is no more than 30 acres in size and was acquired by the city prior to 1994; or**
- b. **The property is no more than 30 acres in size and receives county support through a park or recreation facility transfer agreement between King County and a city; or**
- c. **The property is or was formerly a King County park and is being or has been transferred to a city.**

U-105 **Except for the Blakely Ridge and Redmond Ridge Fully Contained Communities designations, no new Fully Contained Communities shall be approved in King County.**

2. Growth in Cities and Urban Centers and the Promotion of Public Health

The King County Comprehensive Plan directly affects land use planning decisions only in unincorporated King County. The cities, however, contain most of the county's economic base and much of its urban population and provide urban services to adjacent unincorporated areas. In addition, many public services vital to urban growth are provided to unincorporated areas by independent special purpose districts. The Countywide Planning Policies guide the development of urban centers, which are located in cities and should accommodate concentrations of housing and employment. The significant role of the cities and districts therefore must be recognized in county decision-making and through future planning efforts.

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

- U-106** **Most population and employment growth should locate in the contiguous Urban Growth Area in western King County, especially in cities and their Potential Annexation Areas.**

- U-107** **King County supports land use and zoning actions that promote public health by increasing opportunities for every resident to be more physically active. Land use and zoning actions include: concentrating growth into the Urban Area, promoting urban centers, allowing mixed-use developments, and adding pedestrian linkages.**

- U-108** **King County supports the development of Urban Centers to meet the region's needs for housing, jobs, services, culture and recreation and to promote health. Strategies may include exploring opportunities for Joint Development or Transit Oriented Development, siting civic uses in mixed-use areas, and leveraging or utilizing existing county assets in urban centers.**

- U-109** **King County should concentrate facilities and services within the Urban Growth Area to make it a desirable place to live and work, to increase the opportunities for walking and biking within the community, to more efficiently use existing infrastructure capacity and to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure maintenance.**

- U-110** **King County shall work with cities, especially those designated as urban centers, in collaborative efforts that result in transfers of density from the Rural Area.**

- U-111** **Development standards for urban areas should emphasize ways to allow maximum permitted densities and uses of urban land while not compromising the function of critical environmental areas. Mitigating measures should serve multiple purposes, such as drainage control, groundwater recharge, stream protection, air quality, open space preservation, cultural and historic resource protection and landscaping preservation. When technically feasible, standards should be simple and measurable, so they can be implemented without lengthy review processes.**

3. Urban Growth Area Targets

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

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

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

- U-112** **Land use policies and regulations shall accommodate a growth target of approximately 13,400 households and approximately 7,900 jobs by 2022, established in the Countywide Planning Policies for the unincorporated portion of the Urban Growth Area.**

- U-113** **King County shall provide adequate land capacity for residential, commercial and industrial growth in the urban unincorporated area. This land capacity shall include both redevelopment opportunities as well as opportunities for development on vacant lands.**
- U-114** **King County shall use household and employment targets to implement the comprehensive plan in urban communities. The targets allocated to subareas of unincorporated King County will be monitored and may be refined through future planning that includes communities, affected cities and service providers.**

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

HOUSEHOLD GROWTH TARGETS BY SUB-REGION

Unincorporated King County, 2001-2022

Adopted Household Growth Target 2001-2022

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

NOTES:

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

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

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

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

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

**Adopted 22-year Household Growth Targets
King County and its Cities, 2001 - 2022**
Household Growth Target to be accommodated by local jurisdiction plans and regulations
Between January 2001 and 2022

	A	B	C	D	E	
	1990 Households	Original 1992- 2012 Growth Target	2000 Households	Adopted H'hold Target 2001-2022	PAA H'hold Target	
Jurisdiction						
Algona	587	404	845	298		
Auburn	13,357	8,088	16,108	6,003	815	
Beaux Arts	119	0	121	3		
Bellevue	35,756	8,727	45,836	10,117	178	
Black Diamond	541	1,624	1,456	1,099		
Bothell	4,807	1,951	6,401	1,751	584	
Burien	12,000	1,796	13,399	1,552		
Carnation *	439	404	636	246		
Clyde Hill	1,063	12	1,054	21		
Covington	3,400	1,493	4,398	1,373		
Des Moines	7,054	2,154	11,337	1,576	2	
Duvall *	946	1,661	1,596	1,037		
Enumclaw *	2,936	2,425	4,317	1,927		
Federal Way	25,705	15,239	31,437	6,188	1,161	
Hunts Point	187	4	165	1		
Issaquah	3,170	3,380	4,840	3,993	802	
Kenmore	n.a.	n.a.	7,307	2,325		
Kent	16,246	9,075	31,113	4,284	546	
Kirkland	17,211	5,837	20,736	5,480	747	
Lake Forest Park	1,488	451	5,029	538		
Maple Valley	2,250	1,539	4,809	300		
Medina	1,129	17	1,111	31		
Mercer Island	8,007	1,122	8,437	1,437		
Milton	266	29	339	50	33	
Newcastle	2,000	833	3,028	863	1	
Normandy Park	2,570	135	2,609	100		
North Bend *	1,044	1,527	1,841	636		
Pacific	1,707	1,212	1,992	721	39	
Redmond	14,153	11,617	19,102	9,083	390	
Renton	18,219	8,960	21,708	6,198	1,739	
Sammamish	n.a.	n.a.	11,131	3,842		
Seattle	236,702	53,877	258,499	51,510		
SeaTac	9,611	5,525	9,708	4,478	0	
Shoreline	n.a.	2,559	20,716	2,651		
Skykomish	103	27	104	20		
Snoqualmie *	611	2,784	632	1,697		
Tukwila	5,639	5,388	7,186	3,200	8	
Woodinville	3,000	1,797	3,512	1,869		
Yarrow Point	371	18	379	28		
City Total:	454,400	163,683	584,974	138,526	7,045	
Unincorp. KC:	123,400	33,501	125,942	19,406	6,361	
- urban	123,400	26,501	79,042	13,406	6,361	
- rural **	38,000	7,000	46,900	6,000	n.a.	
Urban Area Total:	577,800	190,184	664,016	151,932	n.a.	
King County Total	615,800	197,184	710,916	157,932	n.a.	

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

B. Residential Land Use

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

U-115 New residential development in the Urban Growth Area should occur where facilities and services can be provided at the lowest public cost and in a timely fashion. The Urban Growth Area should have a variety of housing types and prices, including mobile home parks multifamily development, townhouses and small-lot, single-family development.

1. Residential Densities

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

U-116 King County shall seek to achieve through future planning efforts over the next twenty years, an average zoning density of at least seven to eight homes per acre in the Urban Growth Area through a mix of densities and housing types. A lower density zone may be used to recognize existing subdivisions with little or no opportunity for infill or redevelopment.

U-117 King County should apply the urban residential, low land use designation: to protect floodplains, critical aquifer recharge areas, high function wetlands and unstable slopes from degradation, and link these environmental features into a network of open space, fish and wildlife habitat and urban separators. The residential density for land so designated should be maintained at one unit per acre, provided that lands that are sending sites under the Transfer of Density Program may transfer density at a rate of at least four units per acre.

U-118 Multifamily housing in the Urban Growth Area should be sited as follows:

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

U-119 Land zoned for multifamily uses should be converted to nonresidential zone categories only after new multifamily sites are identified and rezoned to replace the multifamily housing capacity lost due to the conversion.

2. Minimum Density

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

- U-120** King County should apply minimum density requirements to all urban residential zones of four or more homes per acre, except under limited circumstances such as the:
- a. Presence of significant physical constraints, or
 - b. Implementation of standards applied to a property through a property specific development condition, special district overlay, or subarea plan.

3. Increases of Zoning Density

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

- U-121** Requests for increases in density of urban residential property zoned for one dwelling unit per acre must include a demonstration that the property does not meet the criteria of Policy U-117.
- U-122** King County shall not approve proposed zoning changes to increase density within the Urban Area unless:
- a. The development will be compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood;
 - b. Urban public facilities and services are adequate, consistent with adopted levels of service and meet GMA concurrency requirements, including King County transportation concurrency standards;
 - c. The proposed density change will not increase unmitigated adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, either on site or in the vicinity of the proposed development;
 - d. The proposed density increase will be consistent with or contribute to achieving the goals and policies of this comprehensive plan, and subarea plan, if applicable; and
 - e. The proposal is consistent with the adopted city comprehensive plan for the Potential Annexation Area where the rezone is located if the proposed density exceeds eight dwelling units per acre. If the city is not planning for urban densities and efficient land use patterns consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies, then this paragraph shall not apply.
- U-123** King County, when evaluating rezone requests for increases in density, shall notify adjacent cities, special purpose districts and local providers of urban utility services and should work with these service providers on issues raised by the proposal.
- U-124** King County supports increases in urban residential density through a rezone or a proposal to increase density through the density transfer or density incentive programs when the proposal will help resolve traffic, sewer, water, parks or open space deficiencies in the immediate neighborhood or will help promote physical activity by providing trail linkages and connections to services.
- U-125** King County shall not support requests for residential density increases on lands located within the outer boundaries of the Noise Remedy Area as identified by Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

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

- U-126** **Density incentives should encourage private developers to provide innovative affordable housing, significant open space, trails and parks; to locate close to transit; to participate in historic preservation; and to include energy conservation measures exceeding state requirements.**

4. Mixed-Used Development

Mixed-use development combines higher density residential units with retail or office uses in the same building or within an integrated development on the same lot. Quality mixed-use developments can provide convenient shopping and services to both residents of the development and those who live near by. They can help to build a sense of community, as neighboring merchants and residents get to know each other. Mixed use is traditional in older downtowns and commercial areas, where offices and retail typically occupy the first floor and residences are upstairs. Mixed-use developments can promote public health by providing opportunities for people to walk or bicycle to retail and public services. People are more likely to walk to their destination if the distance is less than one-half mile or to bike if the distance is less than two miles.

- U-127** **King County supports mixed-use developments in community and neighborhood business centers, the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, and in areas designated commercial outside of centers.**
- U-128** **Design features of mixed-use developments should include the following:**
- a. Integration of the retail and/or office uses and residential units within the same building or on the same parcel;**
 - b. Ground level spaces built to accommodate retail and office uses;**
 - c. Off-street parking behind or to the side of the buildings, or enclosed within buildings; and**
 - d. Opportunities to have safe, accessible pedestrian connections and bicycle facilities within the development and to adjacent residential developments.**
- U-129** **In a mixed-use development where residential and nonresidential uses are proposed in separate structures and the residential uses are proposed to be constructed prior to the nonresidential uses, the initial review of the development should be through a process that ensures an integrated design.**
- U-130** **In a mixed-use development, incentives such as increases in residential density or floor area ratio should be used to encourage the inclusion of public gathering spaces in the site design.**

5. Urban Residential Neighborhood Design and Infill/Redevelopment

King County residents can enjoy their urban neighborhoods both for their unique character and for the amenities they provide. Outdoor spaces need to be usable, attractive, comfortable, and enjoyable. The design of urban streets, including features such as parking strips, street trees, alleys and off-street parking all contribute to the character of urban neighborhoods. Careful site planning can incorporate neighborhood features, contribute to aesthetic value, minimize site disturbance, conserve energy and, in some cases, reduce development costs. Neighborhood shopping, libraries, larger parks, high schools and public golf courses are examples of uses that provide amenities for nearby residents. Small retail establishments integrated into residential development (e.g., a laundromat or video rental store) can provide convenient services and help residents reduce automobile trips. Urban areas that are interesting and safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, and that provide many necessary services close to residential developments, can promote public health by increasing opportunities for physical activity during a normal day's activities.

- U-131** King County encourages innovative, quality infill development and redevelopment in existing urban areas. A variety of regulatory, incentive and program strategies could be considered, including:
- a. Special development standards for infill sites;
 - b. Assembly and resale of sites to providers of affordable housing;
 - c. Impact mitigation fee structures that favor infill developments;
 - d. Greater regulatory flexibility in allowing standards to be met using innovative techniques; and
 - e. Joint public/private loan guarantee pools.
- U-132** Single-family detached homes, townhomes, duplexes and apartments shall be allowed in all urban residential zones, provided that:
- a. Apartments shall not be allowed in the R-1 zone unless fifty percent or more of the site is environmentally constrained; and
 - b. Apartments in R-1, R-4, R-6 and R-8 shall not be developed at densities in excess of 18 units per acre in the net buildable area.
- U-133** Urban residential neighborhood design should preserve historic and natural characteristics and neighborhood identity, while providing privacy, community space, and safety and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- U-134** Site planning tools, such as clustering, shall be permitted in order to allow preservation or utilization of unique nature features within a development.
- U-135** New urban residential developments should provide recreation space, community facilities and neighborhood circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists to increase opportunities for physical activity.
- U-136** Residential developments should provide a variety of housing types and lot patterns through lot clustering, flexible setback requirements and mixed attached and detached housing.
- U-137** Nonresidential uses, such as schools, religious facilities, libraries and small scale retail and personal services should be integrated into urban residential neighborhoods to create viable neighborhoods with reduced dependence on the automobile. These uses should be sited, designed and scaled to be compatible with existing residential character and should provide convenient walking and bicycling connections to neighboring residences.

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

- U-138** Multifamily residential development should provide common and private open space, variation in facades and other building design features which may include varying window treatments, building colors and materials, and light fixtures that will give a residential scale and identity to multifamily development.

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

As larger vacant lots become increasingly scarce, attention will turn more and more towards smaller vacant lots often located within built neighborhoods (i.e., infill) and to redevelopment. Residential development proposals on small lots and redevelopment often can be an unobtrusive and desirable

means of increasing density within existing neighborhoods. Infill development and redevelopment are necessary to achieve growth management objectives such as maximizing the efficient use of land and increasing the variety of housing choices and prices.

U-139 King County should support infill and redevelopment proposals that serve to improve the overall character of existing communities or neighborhoods.

6. Residential Site Improvement Standards and Public Services

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

U-140 Residential developments within the Urban Growth Area, including mobile home parks, shall provide the following improvements.

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

U-141 Common facilities such as recreation space, internal walkways that provide inter- and intra-connectivity, roads, parking, solid waste and recycling areas should be included in multifamily developments.

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

U-142 Recreation space based on the size of the developments shall be provided on site, except that in limited cases, fee payments for local level park and outdoor recreation needs may be accepted by King County.

U-143 Recreation spaces located within a residential development, except those for elderly or other special needs populations, shall include a child's play area.

U-144 Recreation spaces located in residential developments in the Urban Area should include amenities such as play equipment, open grassy areas, barbecues, benches, trails and picnic tables.

C. Commercial Land Use

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

In addition to the urban centers, cities and unincorporated urban King County have existing intensive industrial, commercial and residential areas that will continue to grow and provide employment, services,

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

U-145 Business/office park developments should be located in or adjacent to an unincorporated activity center. They may serve as a transition between office/retail areas and residential areas. They should be designed to take advantage of on-site or nearby structured parking and/or bus service and passenger facilities should be compatible with the objective of higher employment densities.

U-146 New commercial and office development shall locate in designated unincorporated activity centers, community and neighborhood business centers, and in areas designated commercial outside of centers.

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

U-147 New facilities and businesses that draw from throughout the region, such as large retail uses, large public assembly facilities and institution of higher education should locate in the Urban Area.

1. Unincorporated Activity Centers

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

U-148 Unincorporated activity centers in urban areas should provide employment, housing, shopping, services and leisure-time amenities to meet the needs of the regional economy. The mix of uses may include:

- a. Health, human service and public safety facilities;**
- b. Retail stores and services;**
- c. Professional offices;**
- d. Business/office parks;**
- e. Multifamily housing and mixed-use developments;**
- f. Heavy commercial and industrial uses, when there is direct freeway or rail access;**
- g. Light manufacturing; and**
- h. Parks and open space.**

U-149 Within unincorporated activity centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Urban Residential with a density of twelve to forty-eight dwelling units per acre; Regional Business; Community Business; Neighborhood Business; Office and Industrial.

U-150 King County may designate new unincorporated activity centers or expand existing unincorporated activity centers only through a subarea planning process which should address:

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

- U-151** **The size, uses and boundaries of unincorporated activity centers should be consistent with the following criteria:**
- a. More than forty acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally sensitive areas;
 - b. Retail space based on the amount of residential development planned for the surrounding area to provide for community and regional shopping needs; and
 - c. Retail space should not exceed sixty acres and 600,000 square feet unless it is served by direct freeway access by a principal or minor arterial and is well served by transit.
- U-152** **Design features of unincorporated activity centers should include the following:**
- a. Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes with access to each major destination including schools, community centers and commercial areas;
 - b. Buildings close to sidewalks to promote walking and access to transit;
 - c. Compact design with close grouping of compatible uses;
 - d. Off-street parking in multistory structures located to the side or rear of buildings or underground;
 - e. Public art;
 - f. Public spaces, such as plazas and building atriums;
 - g. Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings and established character;
 - h. Aesthetic design and compatibility with adjacent uses through setbacks, building orientation, landscaping and traffic control;
 - i. Screening of unsightly views, such as heavy machinery, outdoor storage areas, loading docks and parking areas from the view of adjacent uses and from arterials; and
 - j. Signs should be regulated to reduce glare and other adverse visual impacts on nearby residences, without limiting their potential contribution to the color and character of the center.
- U-153** **Development within the designated White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, a shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, shall be in accordance with the White Center Community Action Plan.**
- U-154** **The White Center Community Action Plan establishes the following zoning as appropriate within the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center: Urban Residential with a density of twelve to forty-eight dwelling units per acre, Neighborhood Business, Community Business, Office and Industrial.**
- U-155** **In the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, existing Industrial uses should be zoned and regulated to preserve their use into the future. Conversion of industrial properties to other uses shall be strictly limited.**

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

U-156 In the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, new major residential developments should include low-impact design features and should promote public health by increasing opportunities for physical activity in daily life. The development should include: safe walkways and bicycle lanes with access to commercial areas, schools, and community facilities; trails; and pocket parks.

2. Community Business Centers

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

U-157 Community business centers in the urban areas should provide primarily shopping and personal services for nearby residents. Offices and multifamily housing are also encouraged. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be excluded. Community business centers should include the following mix of uses

- a. Retail stores and services;
- b. Professional offices;
- c. Community and human services; and
- d. Multifamily housing as part of a mixed-use development, with residential densities of 12 to 48 units per acre when well served by transit.

U-158 Designated community business centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Expansion of existing or designation of new community business centers shall be permitted only through a subarea planning process. Redevelopment of existing community business centers is encouraged.

U-159 Within community business centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business, Community Business and Office.

U-160 The specific size and boundaries of community business centers should be consistent with the criteria listed below.

- a. More than ten acres and up to 40 acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally sensitive areas;
- b. Designed to provide shopping and services for a market population of 15,000 to 40,000 people;
- c. Located one to three miles from an unincorporated activity center or from another community business center. May be located less than two miles from a neighborhood business center when it is demonstrated the neighborhood business center will not be adversely affected; and
- d. Must be located at the intersection of two principal or minor arterials.

U-161 Design features of community business centers should include the following:

- a. Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes;
- b. Close grouping of stores;
- c. Off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings, or enclosed within buildings;
- d. Public art; and
- e. Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings and established character.

3. Neighborhood Business Centers

Neighborhood business centers are shopping areas offering convenience goods and services to local residents. Neighborhood business centers are intended to be small and compatible with adjacent residential areas and often are used on the way to another destination (for example, a fuel stop before or after commuting). Sometimes they consist of only one use or business. Neighborhood business centers should be designed to promote pedestrian and bicycle access.

- U-162** **Neighborhood business centers in urban areas should include primarily retail stores and offices designed to provide convenient shopping and other services for nearby residents. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be excluded. Neighborhood business centers should include the following mix of uses:**
- a. Retail stores and services;**
 - b. Professional offices; and**
 - c. Multifamily housing as part of a mixed-use development with residential densities up to 12 units per acre when convenient to a minor arterial. Higher densities of 12 to 18 units per acre are appropriate when the center is convenient to a principal arterial.**
- U-163** **Designated neighborhood business centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Expansion of existing or the designation of new neighborhood business centers shall only be permitted through a subarea planning process. Redevelopment of existing Neighborhood neighborhood business centers is encouraged.**
- U-164** **Within neighborhood business centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business and Office.**
- U-164** **The specific size and boundaries of neighborhood business centers should be consistent with the criteria listed below.**
- a. Ten acres or less in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally sensitive features;**
 - b. Designed to provide convenience shopping for a market population of 8,000 to 15,000 people;**
 - c. Located on a minor arterial with adequate traffic capacity;**
 - d. Serviced by intersections free of traffic congestion caused by topography or poor road design; and**
 - e. Located one to three miles from another neighborhood business center.**
- U-166** **Design features of neighborhood business centers should include the following:**
- a. Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes;**
 - b. Close grouping of stores;**
 - c. Off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings, or enclosed within buildings.**
 - d. Public art;**
 - e. Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings or established character;**
 - f. Landscaping, which may include planters and street trees;**
 - g. Appropriate signage;**
 - h. Public seating areas; and**
 - i. Architectural features which provide variation between buildings or contiguous storefronts.**

4. Commercial Development Outside of Centers

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

U-167 Stand-alone commercial developments legally established outside designated centers in the Urban Growth Area may be recognized with the CO designation and appropriate commercial zoning. When more detailed subarea plans are prepared, these developments may be designated as centers and allowed to grow if appropriate, or may be encouraged to redevelop consistent with the residential density and design policies of the comprehensive plan.

U-168 The CO designation may be applied as a transitional designation in Potential Annexation Areas identified in a signed memorandum of understanding between a city and the county for areas with a mix of urban uses and zoning in order to facilitate the joint planning effort directed by the memorandum of understanding. Zoning to implement this transitional designation should recognize the mix of existing and planned uses. No zone changes to these properties to allow other nonresidential uses, or zone changes to allow expansion of existing nonresidential uses onto other properties, should occur unless or until a subarea planning process with the city is completed.

5. Commercial Site Improvement Standards and Public Services

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

U-169 Commercial, retail and industrial developments should foster community, create enjoyable outdoor areas and balance needs of automobile movement with pedestrian and bicycle mobility and comfort. Commercial and industrial developments shall provide the following improvements:

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

6. Industrial Development

Maintaining a strong industrial land supply is an important factor in maintaining the county's economic base and providing family wage jobs. The following policies assure that industrial development is compatible with adjacent land uses while providing appropriate services for employees. In addition, King County is committed to helping return contaminated sites to productive use.

U-170 Within the UGA but outside unincorporated activity centers, properties with existing industrial uses shall be protected. The county may use tools such as special district overlays to identify them for property owners and residents of surrounding neighborhoods.

- U-171** **Industrial development should have direct access from arterials or freeways. Access points should be combined and limited in number to allow smooth traffic flow on arterials. Access through residential areas should be avoided.**
- U-172** **Small amounts of retail and service uses in industrial areas may be allowed for convenience to employees and users.**
- U-173** **King County, in collaboration with cities and the development community, should create and fund a process to clean up and reclaim polluted industrial areas in order to expand the land available for industrial development.**

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

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

- U-174** **Sites for potential Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) may be designated within the established Urban Growth Area to realize mutual benefits for the public and the property owner. Two UPD areas have been designated by the county: the Bear Creek UPD area, comprised of Redmond Ridge (formerly known as Northridge) UPD, Trilogy at Redmond Ridge (formerly known as Blakely Ridge) UPD, and the proposed Redmond Ridge East UPD; and Cougar Mountain Village UPD. Future UPD sites in the Urban Growth Area shall be designated through a subarea planning process, or through a comprehensive plan amendment initiated by the property owner.**
- U-175** **The creation of Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) is intended to serve as a model for achieving a mix of uses, appropriate development patterns, and high quality design as well as providing for public benefits which shall include:**
 - a. Open space and critical areas protection;**
 - b. Diversity in housing types and affordability;**
 - c. Quality site design; and**
 - d. Transit and nonmotorized transportation opportunities.**

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

Through the adoption of the King County Comprehensive Plan 2000 Update, King County reaffirmed its urban designation of the Bear Creek UPD area. In addition to the reasons that led the county (and the region) to originally include this area within the county's UGA, when the county adopted the 2000 update, it noted that: two sites within this area had been approved for urban development after the adoption of the original GMA comprehensive plan; significant infrastructure improvements had been made at these

sites; and the ultimate development of these sites was proceeding in accordance with issued permit approvals. The existence of these urban improvements further supported a conclusion that this area is characterized by urban growth within the meaning of the GMA and was therefore appropriately included within the county's UGA.

Since the county considered and adopted the 2000 update, significant development within the Bear Creek UPD area has taken place. The UPD permits approved by the county required the construction of infrastructure needed to support urban development of the Bear Creek UPD area. Those infrastructure improvements have now been completed or are under construction. This includes sanitary sewer trunk lines and pump stations; water trunk lines, pump stations, and storage facilities; stormwater collection, detention, treatment and discharge facilities; other utilities; a park and open space system linked by trails; and required road improvements. In addition, King County has granted final plat approval for lots for more than 2,100 of the dwelling units approved by the Redmond Ridge and Trilogy UPD permits and more than 1,600 of those dwelling units have been built, are under construction, or have been permitted. Furthermore, major community facilities and services such as the 18-hole golf course and clubhouse, the Redmond Ridge Community Center, and the retail center and grocery store have been completed or are under construction. All of these developments support the conclusion that the Redmond Ridge and Trilogy UPD sites are now fully characterized by and irrevocably committed to urban growth, and the county therefore reaffirms its urban designation of the Bear Creek UPD area.

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

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

U-176 King County has established a new Fully Contained Community. One area is designated through this plan shown on the Land Use Map as a Fully Contained Community: the Bear Creek UPD area comprised of Trilogy at Redmond Ridge, Redmond Ridge, and Redmond Ridge East Urban Planned Development sites. Nothing in these policies shall affect the continued validity of the approved Urban Planned Development permits for either of these sites. This FCC designation may be implemented by separate or coordinated FCC permits.

U-177 The population, household, and employment growth targets and allocations for the county's UGA in this plan include the Bear Creek UPD area. Accordingly, the requirements in RCW 36.70A.350(2) that the county reserve a portion of the 20-year population projection for allocation to new Fully Contained Communities has been satisfied.

U-178 The review and approval process for a Fully Contained Community (FCC) permit shall be the same as that for an Urban Planned Development (UPD) permit, except

the following additional criteria shall be met, pursuant to the provisions of RCW 36.70A.350:

- a. New infrastructure (including transportation and utilities infrastructure) is provided for and impact fees are established and imposed on the FCC consistent with the requirements of RCW 82.02.050;
- b. Transit-oriented site planning and traffic demand management programs are implemented in the FCC. Pedestrian, bicycle, and high occupancy vehicle facilities are given high priority in design and management of the FCC;
- c. Buffers are provided between the FCC and adjacent non-FCC areas. Perimeter buffers located within the perimeter boundaries of the FCC delineated boundaries, consisting of either landscaped areas with native vegetation or natural areas, shall be provided and maintained to reduce impacts on adjacent lands;
- d. A mix of uses is provided to offer jobs, housing, and services to the residents of the FCC. No particular percentage formula for the mix of uses should be required. Instead, the mix of uses for a FCC should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, in light of the geography, market demand area, demographics, transportation patterns, and other relevant factors affecting the proposed FCC. Service uses in the FCC may also serve residents outside the FCC, where appropriate;
- e. Affordable housing is provided within the new FCC for a broad range of income levels, including housing affordable by households with income levels below and near the medium income for King County.
- f. Environmental protection has been addressed and provided for in the new FCC, at levels at least equivalent to those imposed by adopted King County environmental regulations;
- g. Development regulations are established to ensure urban growth will not occur in adjacent nonurban areas. Such regulations shall include but are not limited to rural zoning of adjacent rural areas, FCC permit conditions requiring sizing of FCC water and sewer systems so as to ensure urban growth will not occur in adjacent nonurban areas; and/or FCC permit conditions prohibiting connection by property owners in the adjacent Rural Area (except public school sites) to the FCC sewer and water mains or lines;
- h. Provision is made to mitigate impacts of the FCC on designated agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resource lands; and
- i. The plan for the new FCC is consistent with the development regulations established for the protection of critical areas by King County pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170.

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

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

The Countywide Planning Policies call for the county and cities to implement urban separators. Different from the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands, these are low-density areas within the Urban Growth Area that create open space corridors, provide a visual contrast to continuous development and reinforce the unique identities of communities. Urban separators can play a significant role in preserving environmentally sensitive areas and in providing habitat for fish and wildlife. They also provide recreational benefits, such as parks and trails, and meet the Growth Management Act's requirement for greenbelts and open space in the Urban Growth Area. Urban Separators are mapped on the Land Use 2004 map in Chapter 1.

U-179 Urban separators are corridors of land that define community or municipal identities and boundaries, provide visual breaks in the urban landscape, and link parks and open space within and outside the Urban Growth Area. These urban corridors should include and link parks and other lands that contain significant environmentally sensitive features, provide wildlife habitat or critical resource protection, contain defining physical features, or contain historic resources. The residential density for land so designated should be maintained at one unit per acre, provided that lands that are sending sites under the Transfer of Density Program may transfer density at a rate of at least four units per acre.

U-180 King County should actively pursue designating urban separators in the unincorporated area and work with the cities to establish permanent urban separators within the unincorporated area that link with and enhance King County's urban separator corridors.

U-181 Designated urban separators should be preserved through park, trail and open space acquisitions, incentive programs such as the Transfer of Development Credit program, the Public Benefit Rating System program and regulatory measures.

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

U-182 King County shall actively pursue dedication of open space north and south along the Urban Growth Area line through the Four-to-One Program. Through this program, one acre of Rural Area land may be added to the Urban Growth Area in exchange for a dedication to King County of four acres of permanent open space.

U-183 King County shall evaluate Four-to-One proposals for both quality of open space and feasibility of urban development. The highest-quality proposals shall be recommended for adoption as amendments to the Urban Growth Area. Lands preserved as open space shall retain their rural area designations and should generally be configured in such a way as to connect with open space on adjacent properties.

U-184 King County shall use the following criteria for evaluating open space in Four-to-One proposals:

- a.** Quality of fish and wildlife habitat areas;
- b.** Connections to regional open space systems;
- c.** Protection of wetlands, stream corridors, ground water and water bodies;
- d.** Unique natural, biological, cultural, historical, or archeological features; and

- e. **Size of proposed open space dedication and connection to other open space dedications along the Urban Growth Area line.**

U-185 King County shall preserve the open space acquired through this program primarily as natural areas, passive recreation sites or resource lands for farming or forestry. King County may allow the following additional uses only if located on a small portion of the open space, provided that these uses are found to be compatible with the site's natural open space values and functions such as those listed in the preceding policy;

- a. **Trails;**
- b. **Natural-appearing stormwater facilities;**
- c. **Compensatory mitigation of wetland losses on the urban designated portion of the project, consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan and the Sensitive Area Ordinance; and**
- d. **Active recreation uses not to exceed five percent of the total open space area. Support services and facilities for the active recreation uses may locate within the active recreation area only, and shall not exceed five percent of the active recreation area. An active recreation area shall not be used to satisfy the active recreation requirements for the urban designated portion of the project as required by K.C.C. Title 21A.**

U-186 Land added to the Urban Growth Area under this policy shall meet the density requirements, shall be physically contiguous to the existing Urban Growth Area and shall be able to be served by sewers and other efficient urban services and facilities. In some cases, lands must meet affordable housing requirements under this program. The total area added to the Urban Growth Area as a result of this policy shall not exceed 4,000 acres.

U-187 King County shall amend the Urban Growth Area to add rural lands to the UGA consistent with Policy U-182 during the annual comprehensive plan amendment process. Open space dedication shall occur at final formal plat recording. If the applicant decides not to pursue urban development or fails to record the final plat prior to expiration of preliminary plat approval, the urban properties shall be restored to a rural designation during the next annual review of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

II. Potential Annexation Areas

There are 216,000 people living in urban unincorporated King County, as reported in the 2003 Annual Growth Report. This population is equivalent to the second largest city in the state. The land base in these areas is primarily residential, with limited amounts of commercial and retail development. Much of the urban unincorporated area is made up of geographically isolated islands surrounded by cities, or adjacent to the urban growth boundary. Because these areas are scattered across the county, the efficient provision of services is difficult. The lack of a substantive tax base exacerbates these difficulties, and the cost of serving these areas reduces the amount of money available for regional services, and for local services in rural areas. Therefore, King County has a strong fiscal interest in seeing the remaining urban unincorporated areas annexed within the next several years.

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

Although it is the policy of the county to promote annexation, its ability to do so is extremely limited. State laws provide the cities, county residents and property owners with the authority to initiate the annexation process. A successful annexation initiative depends on establishing a collaborative and ongoing dialogue between the three affected interest groups: residents, the county, and the affected city. King County has a long history of engaging in annexation discussions with urban unincorporated area residents, and will continue to do so. The county will also continue to work collaboratively with the cities to plan for orderly and timely governance transitions.

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

U-201 **In order to meet the Growth Management Act and the regionally adopted Countywide Planning Policies goal of becoming a regional service provider for all county residents and a local service provider in rural areas, King County shall encourage annexation of the remaining urban unincorporated area. The county may also act as a contract service provider where mutually beneficial.**

U-202 **To help create an environment that is supportive of annexations, King County shall work with cities and with Unincorporated Area Councils, neighborhood groups, local business organizations, public service providers and other stakeholders on annexation-related activities. King County will also seek changes at the state level that would facilitate annexation of urban unincorporated areas.**

U-203 **The Interim Potential Annexation Areas Map adopted by the Growth Management Planning Council illustrates city-designated potential annexation areas (PAAs), contested areas (where more than one city claims a PAA), and those few areas that are unclaimed by any city. For contested areas, the county should attempt to help resolve the matter, or to enter into an interlocal agreement with each city for the purpose of bringing the question of annexation before voters. For unclaimed areas,**

King County should work with adjacent cities and service providers to develop a mutually agreeable strategy and time frame for annexation.

- U-204** King County shall support annexation proposals that are consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies and the Washington State Growth Management Act, and when the area proposed for annexation is wholly within the annexing city's officially adopted PAA, and is not part of a contested area.
- U-205** King County shall not support annexation proposals that would:
- a. Result in illogical service areas;
 - b. Create unincorporated islands unless the annexation is preceded by an interlocal agreement in which the city agrees to pursue annexation of the remaining island area in a timely manner;
 - c. Focus solely on areas that would provide a distinct economic gain for the annexing city at the exclusion of other proximate areas that should logically be included;
 - d. Move designated Agricultural and/or Forest Production District lands into the Urban Growth Area; or
 - e. Apply zoning to maintain or create permanent, low-density residential areas, unless such areas are part of an urban separator or are environmentally constrained, rendering higher densities inappropriate.
- U-206** King County shall favor annexation over incorporation as the preferred method of governance transition. King County will not support incorporations when the proposed incorporation area is financially infeasible.
- U-207** King County shall work with cities to jointly develop preannexation agreements to address the transition of service provision from the county to the annexing cities. The development of such agreements should include a comprehensive public involvement process. Pre-annexation agreements may address a range of considerations, including but not limited to:
- a. Establishing a financing partnership between the county, city and other service providers to address needed infrastructure;
 - b. Providing reciprocal notification of development proposals in PAAs, and opportunities to identify and/or provide mitigation associated with such development;
 - c. Supporting the city's desire, to the extent possible, to be the designated sewer or water service provider within the PAA, where this can be done without harm to the integrity of existing systems and without significantly increasing rates;
 - d. Assessing the feasibility and/or desirability of reverse contracting in order for the city to provide local services on the county's behalf prior to annexation, as well as the feasibility and/or desirability of the county continuing to provide some local services on a contract basis after annexation;
 - e. Exploring the feasibility of modifying development, concurrency and infrastructure design standards prior to annexation, when a specific and aggressive annexation timeline is being pursued;
 - f. Assessing which county-owned properties and facilities should be transferred to city control, and the conditions under which such transfers should take place;
 - g. Transitioning county employees to city employment where appropriate;
 - h. Ensuring that land use plans for the annexation area are consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies with respect to planning for urban densities and efficient land use patterns; provision of urban services, affordable housing, and transportation; the protection of critical areas; and the long-term protection of urban separators;

- i. Continuing equivalent protection of cultural resources, and county landmarks and historic resources listed on the King County Historic Resource Inventory;**
- j. Maintaining existing equestrian facilities and establishing equestrian linkages; and**
- k. Establishing a timeline for service transitions and for the annexation.**

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

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

III. Economic Development

A. Overview

King County's economy is the largest and most significant economy in the Puget Sound Region (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties) and in Washington State. In 1998, King County had:

- 1,127,000 nonagricultural jobs, or 42.4% of the state's 2,655,000 jobs and 67.9% of the region's 1,660,000 nonagricultural jobs.
- A \$52.9 billion payroll, or 52.3% of the state's \$101 billion payroll and 74.5% of the region's \$70.9 billion payroll.
- Almost 83,900 business firms (excluding sole proprietorships), which is 36.7% of the state's 228,500 firms and 66% of the region's 127,200 firms.
- A population of 1,774,300 or 29.4% of Washington State's 6,041,700 population and 52.8% of the region's 3,362,000 population.

The foundation for a vibrant and sustainable economy consists of several factors including a favorable business climate, a trained workforce, public infrastructure, land supply, predictable regulations, advancing technology, affordable housing, and a healthy natural environment.

The policies in this chapter are designed to continue King County's long-term commitment to sustainable economic development. They do so by promoting public programs and actions that support a strong stable and diversified economy, one that is compatible with the environment and contributes to a strong and stable tax base.

The policies also recognize businesses and the workforce as customers of an economic development system; they support actions and programs that promote the strength and health of both groups.

General King County economic development policies include:

- U-301** King County has a long-term commitment to sustainable economic development. Sustainable economic development shall mean economic development that does not exceed the ability of the natural or built environments to remain healthy while sustaining growth over the long term.
- U-302** King County policies, programs, and strategies shall recognize the importance of, and place special emphasis on, retaining and expanding home grown firms in basic industries which bring income into the county and increase the standard of living of our residents.
- U-303** King County policies, programs, and strategies will place special emphasis on training low-income, low-skill residents for job opportunities with livable wages, benefits, and wage-progression and retention strategies.
- U-304** King County shall work to ensure that maximum economic benefit accrues to local businesses and workers when public funding is included in the construction or operation of large projects.
- U-305** King County recognizes the environment as a key economic value in the region that must be protected.

King County's role in economic development is implemented at several levels as described in the following policies:

- U-306** **At the multicounty level, King County should partner with other counties, regional entities and the state, as appropriate, to devise and implement economic development policies, programs and strategies for the benefit of the region.**

- U-307** **At the countywide level, King County should partner with other jurisdictions, economic development organizations, the Port of Seattle, and others, as appropriate, to develop and implement policies, programs, and strategies that set the general framework for economic development within the county for the benefit of the county as a whole.**

- U-308** **Within the unincorporated area, King County should partner with local businesses, unincorporated area councils, and others, as appropriate, to development and implement policies, programs, and strategies that promote appropriate local economic development.**

At all three levels, King County seeks to coordinate and partner with private and public organizations to pursue mutually beneficial outcomes.

B. Business Development – Creation, Retention, Expansion, and Recruitment

King County's policies, plans, and programs should support a positive and healthy business climate that enables local firms to stay globally competitive, quality-oriented, technologically advanced, and able to pay good wages.

Industries and firms that export their products and services outside King County bring income into the county and are considered basic, in economic terms. About 30% of the county's basic jobs come from the export of manufactured goods; 42% come from the export of business services such as banking, insurance, accounting, legal architectural, engineering, research and development, and computer services; and 28% come from exports associated with wholesale trade, transportation, and public utilities. Jobs in basic industry generally pay better than nonbasic jobs and support the nonbasic or secondary part of the county's economy. In general, nearly one-half of the jobs in the county's economy are basic and support the other half such as retail and personal services.

Local and national research over the last 20 years has concluded that homegrown, small businesses create the majority of new jobs in a local economy. Additionally, roughly one of every four jobs in the Puget Sound Region is dependent on international trade.

There is recognition, however, that the county's impact on the creation of new businesses is impacted by the amount of available industrial and commercial land in unincorporated King County, which has declined from approximately ten percent in 1994 to approximately 5.6 in 2000.

- U-309** **King County supports programs and strategies to help create, retain, and expand homegrown businesses in basic industries, particularly within the county's manufacturing and industrial areas.**

- U-310** **King County supports programs and strategies, in partnership with the federal, state, and local governments and the private sector, that provide technical assistance to homegrown businesses including but not limited to:**
 - a. Pollution prevention and assessments of contamination to enable manufacturers to remediate contaminated property to continue or expand production;**

- b. Technological, efficiency, and managerial assessments to enable manufacturers to reduce costs and use smaller footprints for existing or expanded production;
- c. Mentoring, financial management training, and other technical assistance to disadvantaged businesses, particularly in the construction industry, to help them become competitive in the private sector;
- d. Workforce recruitment, training and retention assistance.

U-311 King County supports programs and strategies for the targeted recruitment of firms that will:

- a. Support the county's basic industries by providing services that help keep existing firms globally competitive, or
- b. Export their goods or services and/or have the potential for high levels of growth and wages.

U-312 King County supports programs and strategies to expand international trade including those that:

- a. Promote, market, and position the county for increased export, import, and foreign investment opportunities;
- b. Provide technical assistance, training, and opportunities for local firms wishing to export.

U-313 King County supports programs and strategies to preserve and plan for an adequate supply of industrial and commercial land including but not limited to:

- a. In compliance with the State of Washington Buildable Lands legislation – RCW 36.70A.215 – and in cooperation with the cities, inventory and monitor the use of industrial, commercial, and residential lands every 5 years. The first 5-year report is due to the state in 2002;
- b. In partnership with other jurisdictions and the private sector, advocate for a regional Geographic Information System to track the supply of industrial and commercial land;
- c. Actively apply for federal, state, and other resources to help defray the costs of assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of private and/or public brownfields. Brownfields are defined as vacant or underdeveloped industrial/commercial sites with real or perceived contamination;
- d. Sell county-owned surplus industrial and commercial lands for development by the private sector;
- e. Promote the redevelopment and infill of industrial and commercial areas and explore the feasibility of using incentives to achieve this goal;
- f. Prevent the encroachment of nonindustrial uses on industrially-zoned land and the rezoning of industrial land to other uses.

U-314 King County recognizes that adequate infrastructure is essential to support existing economic activity and to attract new industry and development. The county therefore supports programs and strategies to maintain existing infrastructure and construct new facilities (transportation, utilities, schools, information, communications), including an adequate supply of housing, necessary to accommodate current and future economic demand.

The county recognizes the importance of traditional economic activities which may occur in conjunction with or as a byproduct of other business activities in the rural area. Such examples could include residents operating farms, ranches, logging operations or other small businesses and who use their equipment to perform excavation services for others. While it is not the intent of the county to develop these areas for commercial purposes, there is recognition that some proportion of landowners may undertake complementary, small-scale commercial activities. The county values and supports these types of economic activities in the rural area and does not wish to artificially limit them.

U-315 **King County recognizes the importance of traditional economic activities that support a rural lifestyle. While it is not the intent of the county to develop the unincorporated rural areas for commercial activities, county policy, regulations and programs should support the preservation of traditional rural economic activities and lifestyles.**

C. Workforce Development – Skilled Workers, Employer Involvement and Economic Opportunities

King County should address the ongoing workforce challenges of the Puget Sound region. The robust economy of today and the last several years makes it very difficult for employers to find and retain both skilled and entry-level workers. At the same time, many disadvantaged county residents have difficulties gaining access to quality education, training, and support services needed to prepare them for the world of work. Meeting these challenges successfully will depend on better strategies and working relationships between business, government, labor, advocacy organizations, education and training institutions, and human service providers.

Jobs that pay wages sufficient to support families are vital to the quality of life. However, training, education, skill levels, and abilities vary from person to person. As such, it is important for King County to support job opportunities for all residents with entry level jobs being essential to helping low-income, low-skilled individuals enter the workforce, reduce their dependence on public resources, and move up and out of poverty.

A family wage is a wage that allows a family to meet its basic needs without resorting to public assistance and provides it some ability to deal with emergencies and plan ahead. This definition is taken from the Northwest Job Gaps Study, produced by the Northwest Policy Center, although the study uses the term livable wage instead of family wage. According to this study, the 1996 family (livable) wage for 11 urban counties was \$16.86 an hour or \$35,079 a year for a single adult with two children.

For context, the 1998 King County average annual wage, excluding software workers, was \$35,900. Adding the average annual wage for software workers – \$291,000 – increases the 1998 King County average annual wage to \$41,300. Adjusting the Northwest Job Gaps Study for inflation and costs specific to King County, the 2000 family wage is \$19.30 an hour or \$38,740 for a single adult with two children.

As defined for this comprehensive plan, an acceptable entry-level wage pays a minimum of \$8.00 per hour (to be reviewed annually and adjusted as appropriate), provides benefits, and offers workers wage progression opportunities. While an entry-level wage is a wage that provides workers greater economic incentive than does being on welfare, it is not a family wage. Depending upon household size and income, persons making entry-level wages in King County most likely require public subsidies in the form of childcare, housing, food stamps and/or Medicaid. As skill levels and wages increase, workers become less dependent upon public subsidies as they approach a family-wage level defined above.

U-316 **King County supports assuming a leadership role in workforce development as a member of the King County Workforce Development Council, established by the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, composed of high-level representatives from business, local government, labor, education and training institutions, advocacy organizations and human service providers. The purpose of the council is to coordinate and improve employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs to meet the needs of the workforce system’s two customers – employers and workers.**

- U-317** King County supports programs and strategies to provide employment and training opportunities including:
- a. Programs that facilitate employer involvement in hiring low-income and low-skilled workers with limited experience and skills, and provide successful strategies for skills training, job placement and retention for workers;
 - b. Training for and placement of low-income and low-skilled workers in jobs in growing industries that pay an entry-level wage of at least \$8.00 per hour (in year 2000 dollars), provide benefits, and offer workers wage progression opportunities. This hourly figure is to be evaluated during each update of this plan and adjusted to reflect changes in cost-of-living or other similar indices and consideration of market conditions;
 - c. School-to-work programs and effective alternatives for out-of-school youth; and
 - d. Services to enable unemployed, underemployed and dislocated workers to obtain employment at a wage that enables them to be self-sufficient.
- U-318** King County supports programs and strategies to address the barriers to entry-level wage employment including:
- a. Access to transportation by providing transportation information and services to jobseekers and workers;
 - b. Access to childcare by increasing the availability and affordability of quality childcare for low-income families.
- U-319** King County supports apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged populations on county public works projects in order to address the forecasted shortage of construction trades workers and to encourage family-wage job opportunities.
- U-320** King County supports workforce development programs that are integrated with the county's economic development strategies, such as training and employment as environmental clean-up technicians for low-income residents of brownfields communities.

D. Regional Plans, Regional Projects and Public-Private Partnerships

King County will consider participation in (1) regional economic development plans and projects that provide benefits to multiple jurisdictions or (2) require a partnership between the public and the private sector to be feasible. For either regional plans and projects or public-private partnerships, the county will base its investment decision upon a full and thorough analysis of the public costs and public benefits of proposed projects.

- U-321** King County shall partner, where feasible, with jurisdictions and other stakeholders to develop subarea economic development strategies to promote development and redevelopment in areas that can accommodate growth.
- U-322** King County shall cooperate in efforts to establish and maintain county and regional economic development strategies to provide for orderly, sustainable, and equitable economic growth throughout the Puget Sound Region.
- U-323** King County should consider participation in the funding of regional economic development projects when the project meets the following guidelines:
- a. The project should support a firm in basic industry;
 - b. At least 75% of the jobs created by a firm, excluding management positions, should pay a family wage;
 - c. The project is located within (1) an urban center or manufacturing industrial center as designated in the Countywide Planning Policies, (2) other industrial

- areas, or (3) business/office parks within activity areas which can be supported by and promote transit, pedestrian and bicycle uses;
- d. The firm or project will generate sufficient new tax revenue to repay the debt the county incurs to support the project. The preferred average coverage ratio over the life of county financing is two dollars of new revenue for every one dollar of incurred debt;
 - e. Other jurisdictions benefiting from a project must commit financial support based on a mutually agreeable pro rata funding formula. The funding formula will be established on a project-by-project basis;
 - f. The firm or project must create 1 new, permanent full-time, family-wage job for each \$35,000 of aggregate public investment; and
 - g. The firm or project should create all jobs within 3-5 years from project completion.

- U-324** King County shall foster the development and use of public/private partnerships to implement economic development projects and programs. At a minimum, these projects must demonstrate that they:
- a. Cannot be accomplished solely by either sector;
 - b. Have an experienced and proven private partner(s);
 - c. Do not unduly enrich the private partner(s);
 - d. Provide tangible and measurable public benefits in terms of tax and other revenue, construction and permanent jobs, livable-wages with benefits and a wage-progression strategy, and public amenities; and
 - e. Will use the King County Jobs Initiative, or other entities with similar programs, as their first source of referral for training and employing low-income, low-skill residents in entry-level and semiskilled jobs.

- U-325** Through local subarea planning and coordination with other agencies and organizations, King County should use zoning, incentives or other measures to ensure that an appropriate proportion of the land adjacent or near to major public infrastructure facilities is used to capitalize on the economic benefit of that infrastructure. The surrounding land uses should be buffered or compatible with economic development uses.

IV. Housing

A. Housing Choice and Opportunity Throughout King County

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

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

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

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

1. Range of Housing Choices

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

U-401 King County shall work with cities and the private sector to encourage a wide range of housing within the Urban Growth Area to meet the needs of our diverse population, support economic growth, ensure an equitable and rational distribution of low-income and affordable housing throughout the county and provide housing choices for people of all income levels.

U-402 Through subarea and regional planning with cities, incentives programs and funding initiatives, King County shall plan for housing to meet the needs of all economic segments of the population throughout the Urban Growth Area and within Rural Towns. King County shall plan for construction or preservation of housing units affordable to households as follows:

- 24% of housing stock should be affordable to households below 50% of the King County median income;
- 17% of housing stock should be affordable to households between 50% and 80% of the King County median income;
- 20% of housing stock should be affordable to households between 80% and 120% of the King County median income; and
- 39% of housing stock should be affordable to households above 120% of the King County median income.

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

- U-403** King County, in partnership with other jurisdictions, shall evaluate achievement of countywide and local goals for housing for all economic sectors of the population by analyzing housing indicators, adopted land use regulations, actions that encourage development and preservation of low and moderate-income housing and the effect of market factors on housing development. The results of this evaluation shall be used to develop new or revised policies, programs, regulations, and incentives to better meet the Countywide Planning Policies' housing goals.
- U-404** King County should work with cities to increase opportunities for affordable housing development by assuring there is sufficient land capable of being developed for multifamily housing, small lot single-family homes and townhouses, and manufactured housing parks, and other types of housing, such as accessory dwelling units, that tend to be affordable to low-, moderate- and middle-income households.
- U-405** King County shall provide opportunities for attached and detached accessory dwelling units in urban residential areas and shall encourage all jurisdictions within King County to adopt provisions to allow accessory dwelling units in their communities.
- U-406** King County should work with other jurisdictions to eliminate barriers for low-income and special needs housing development.
- U-407** King County should support housing development that is compatible with surrounding uses by:
- a. Providing information on potential development sites;
 - b. Funding services, amenities, infrastructure and access improvements;
 - c. Developing public financing techniques which give housing development and redevelopment in designated areas, such as urban centers, a market advantage; and
 - d. Making transit and rideshare services available.
- U-408** King County should encourage land use and investment strategies to stimulate mixed-use and mixed-income developments as a way to integrate neighborhoods and increase housing choices.
- U-409** King County should encourage affordable housing through redevelopment of nonresidential buildings, such as schools and commercial buildings, in locations suitable for housing and in ways that preserve significant historic features where appropriate.
- U-410** King County should encourage the development and preservation of residential buildings that have shared facilities, such as single-room occupancy hotels and boarding homes, to provide opportunities for lower rents.
- U-411** King County shall provide opportunities and encourage other jurisdictions to provide opportunities for housing types that provide lower-cost ownership opportunities including manufactured housing, condominiums, townhouses and cottage-style housing.

U-412 King County should explore adding affordable housing as a benefit criteria in the Transfer of Development Credits program, especially as the program is expanded to include incorporated areas of King County.

U-413 All Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) and other large housing developments shall provide a mix of housing types and densities, including housing that is affordable to a range of households including low-, moderate-, and middle-income households. This mix should include housing opportunities for households with special needs, including the elderly and persons with disabilities.

2. Ensuring and Expanding Affordable Housing Resources

U-414 King County should initiate and actively participate in regional solutions to critical affordable housing needs. Cities, community and housing representatives should be invited to identify and implement solutions.

U-415 King County should work with cities and community representatives to establish new, countywide funding sources for housing development, preservation and related services, such that each city and King County contribute on an equitable basis.

U-416 King County should work with other jurisdictions, housing developers, and service providers throughout the state to urge federal and state government to expand both capital and operating funding for low-income housing, including low-income housing for people with special needs.

U-417 King County should work with jurisdictions and housing providers across the state to urge state and federal governments to expand funding for direct assistance services such as rental assistance and emergency services.

U-418 King County should participate in developing and sustaining a coordinated, regional response to homelessness that includes access to homelessness prevention services, emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent affordable housing, and appropriate support services for homeless families, single adults, and youth.

B. Affordable Housing Development

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

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

1. Development Incentives for Low- and Moderate-Income Housing

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

U-419 Density bonuses and other incentives should be available to both single-family and multifamily developments that provide rental or ownership housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households and households with special needs.

- U-420** To reduce development costs for affordable housing projects, King County shall exempt payment of impact fees for housing units that will serve low-income households with incomes which do not exceed 80% of the median.
- U-421** King County should explore methods to expedite plan reviews for housing projects serving low- and moderate-income households, in coordination with other incentive or subsidy programs.
- U-422** King County shall explore coordination of incentive programs with cities to develop common program guidelines and reduce administrative costs.

2. Housing Development Subsidies

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

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

- U-423** King County shall give priority in its housing funding programs to developments that serve low-income individuals and households, secure appropriate housing options for people with special needs, prevent displacement of low-income people, or provide low-income and special needs housing along with social services.
- U-424** King County should explore increasing affordable housing opportunities, especially in areas with an existing or forecast shortage of affordable housing, through new programs, development incentives, and changes to funding program guidelines to facilitate new construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition to preserve affordable housing.
- U-425** King County should seek opportunities to fund programs and projects where county funds are matched by additional public and private loans and contributions, increasing the amount of housing that can be developed.
- U-426** King County should expand its use of surplus county-owned property and air-rights over county-owned property for affordable housing and should explore its use for other public benefits, such as human services, and consider conveyance of properties to public or nonprofit housing developers and agencies at below-market cost. In communities where the home ownership rate is lower than the county average, surplus county property shall be targeted for housing development that would expand the stock of owner-occupied, low- or moderate-income housing.
- U-427** King County should support the efforts of nonprofit developers and housing agencies to increase the supply of housing for low-income households, through technical assistance and funding for capacity building, training, and predevelopment activities.
- U-428** King County should encourage and support efforts by nonprofit housing developers, housing agencies, and service providers to develop long-term nongovernment

funding sources such as planned giving, endowments, and related economic development ventures.

- U-429 King County should support programs that provide apprenticeship and employment training in the building trades through affordable housing development. King County should explore ways to partner with nonprofit housing developers in offering pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and employment training opportunities.**

C. Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing

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

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

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

- U-430 King County should develop and expand incentives and subsidy programs to preserve affordable housing threatened by market forces and expiring federal subsidies. Relocation assistance and replacement housing should be developed, where feasible, to help low-income households when displacement is unavoidable.**
- U-431 King County should explore land use and financial incentives to preserve and improve existing housing in redeveloping areas through the use of programs such as transfer of development rights, tax credits and tax abatements for low-income housing and tax abatements and restoration loans for housing designated as an historic landmark.**
- U-432 King County should assist owners of rental properties serving low- and moderate-income residents to acquire financing for building health and safety improvements in exchange for long-term agreements to maintain affordable rents.**
- U-433 King County should work with financial institutions and other housing agencies to expand resources for housing rehabilitation through techniques such as reverse mortgage programs and loan pools.**
- U-434 King County should coordinate preservation of existing affordable housing with city and county historic preservation programs and incentives, and should promote preservation and restoration of significant historic features in the rehabilitation of existing buildings and sites for housing.**
- U-435 King County should support ongoing efforts to maintain and preserve existing mobile home parks, at an appropriate level of safety and habitability, as a source of affordable housing for low-income homeowners through zoning, funding for acquisition and rehabilitation of parks and homes.**

- U-436** **King County should consider the constraints of rehabilitation, legalization of accessory dwelling units, and historic preservation, so usable structures are rehabilitated to an appropriate level of safety and habitability.**

- U-437** **Development standards should promote lower-cost infill development such as accessory dwelling units and cottage-style housing in a manner that allows existing housing to be retained through measures such as an innovative or flexible building envelope, access and infrastructure standards.**

D. Access to Housing

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

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

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

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

- U-438** **King County shall promote opportunities for publicly funded housing, including housing for low-income people with special needs, by:**
 - a. Adopting land use policies and regulations that treat publicly funded housing and other low-income housing the same as housing of a similar size and density;**
 - b. Adopting funding and program policies that encourage integration of assisted housing within communities and a fair distribution of publicly funded housing throughout the county. However, mandatory dispersion requirements which limit where publicly funded housing may locate, should not be applied; and**
 - c. Encouraging developers and owners of publicly funded housing units to undertake activities to establish and maintain positive relationships with neighbors.**

- U-439** **King County shall make reasonable accommodations in its rules, policies, practices and services when such accommodations may be necessary to afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling.**

- U-440** **King County should explore standards for publicly funded housing that:**
 - a. Increase the ability of people with special needs to visit or have physical access to housing units regardless of their residency status;**
 - b. Allow household members to age in place; and**
 - c. Include universal design principles that increase the amount of housing that is accessible and usable by all persons.**

- U-441** King County should support the ability of people, especially the elderly and persons with disabilities, to find housing opportunities that allow them to live as independently as possible in the housing and community of their choice.
- U-442** King County shall prohibit special requirements through land-use regulations, restrictive covenants and conditional or special use permits that limit the ability of persons from protected classes (as defined in the King County Fair Housing Ordinance) to live in residences of their choice.
- U-443** King County shall permit group living situations, including those where residents receive such supportive services as counseling, foster care or medical supervision, within a single-family house or apartment.
- U-444** King County should work with housing industry representatives to identify and remove barriers (such as real estate marketing, finance or insurance practices) that restrict housing choices and opportunities for low- and moderate-income people and people with special needs.
- U-445** King County should use land use planning and funding programs to help site community facilities and assisted publicly funded housing so that low- and moderate-income residents and persons with special needs have convenient access to community and transportation services.

E. Reducing Development Costs

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

- U-446** King County should pursue land use policies and regulations that result in lower development costs without loss of adequate public review, environmental quality or public safety and do not reduce design quality, inhibit infrastructure financing strategies, or increase maintenance costs for public facilities.
- U-447** King County shall continue to improve development standards to allow higher densities and flexibility of housing types in all residential zones, in order to best accommodate the environmental conditions on the site and the surrounding neighborhood when planning housing developments.
- U-448** King County should encourage the use of area-wide Environmental Impact Statements when plans are developed for activity centers, areas identified for redevelopment or other neighborhoods to provide a more complete analysis of cumulative environmental impacts and reduce the time and cost of environmental review for individual developments.
- U-449** King County shall seek to minimize the time necessary to process development permits to meet affordable housing and environmental goals and community and aesthetic concerns.
- U-450** King County should encourage the formation of common development codes and standards with cities, sewer and water districts and other permitting agencies to increase predictability and reduce development costs.

- U-451** King County should develop new partnerships with public and private lending institutions to find solutions that reduce housing financing costs for both builders and consumers.

F. New Housing Models

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

King County can assist in the development of housing types that meet the needs of these individuals and families by funding affordable housing, revising development standards and/or expediting permit processing. Demonstration projects can provide needed housing for low-income households and test new models for housing simultaneously.

- U-452** King County should assist in development of innovative, affordable demonstration projects by exploring alternative land development, flexible development standards, and construction techniques.
- U-453** King County should encourage new housing models by supporting projects such as owner-built housing, land trusts for rental and ownership housing, and other innovative developments.
- U-454** King County should support transit-oriented development that expands housing opportunities at locations near frequent transit by engaging private and nonprofit entities in an investment/development partnership. Public transit funds should be used only when it is shown that the public transit benefit of such investment is equal to or greater than the cost. King County should support efforts to incorporate affordable housing in transit-oriented development.
- U-455** King County should explore the feasibility of allowing five-story wood frame construction as a technique that will increase the availability of multifamily housing while lowering development costs and maintaining fire safety.
- U-456** King County should support cottage-style housing development that clusters a limited number of small scale detached units around a common green space at a density level that is up to twice that allowed by base density. The general character and size of cottage-style development should be controlled in the same manner that creates compatibility with a single-family neighborhood.
- U-457** King County should encourage development of residential communities that achieve lower prices and rents through shared common houses, open spaces and community facilities.

G. Direct Assistance to Households

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

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1. Homeowner Assistance

- U-458** King County should work with local lenders to expand assistance for first-time homebuyers, including homebuyer education and counseling, low-cost financing and assistance with down payments and closing costs.
- U-459** King County should provide financial assistance for housing rehabilitation to low-income home owners, including owners of mobile homes residing in parks, and through community-based repair programs, such as tool banks or painting programs.

2. Renter Assistance and Homeless Prevention

- U-460** King County should support programs that help prevent homelessness, such as emergency rental assistance, mortgage default counseling, and improvements to emergency services referral networks.
- U-461** King County should support programs that assist low-income renters to remain in or to gain access to private market housing, such as revolving loan funds that cover utility and damage deposits, and rental assistance programs.
- U-462** King County should support programs that provide landlord-tenant counseling, workshops and mediation in landlord-tenant disputes, as well as legislation which protects the rights of tenants and landlords, such as fair rental contracts.

H. Balancing Jobs and Housing

As the population of the Puget Sound region grows, King County is expected to remain the major employment center of the region. As job growth occurs, the workers for these jobs must be accommodated with adequate opportunities for housing. If a balance of job growth and housing availability is not achieved, these workers will need to live longer distances away from their jobs, thus increasing pressures upon transportation systems.

- U-463** King County shall work with the Growth Management Planning Council or its successor and the private sector to support development of an adequate supply of housing commensurate with job growth within the county and its cities. To attain this goal, King County shall:
- a.** Support job and household growth targets and policies established in the Countywide Planning Policies;
 - b.** Establish performance measures to gauge how jurisdictions are accommodating growth;
 - c.** Participate in buildable lands inventories, market analyses and other studies to evaluate if sufficient land capacity is available for residential development; and
 - d.** Work with cities to ensure additional actions are taken throughout the county to accommodate and promote residential development when job growth causes great demand for housing and severe shortages in the availability of housing for new workers in the county.

V. Human Services

People are King County's most valuable resource. Their well being affects the prosperity of the region. King County's vision for the future includes livable, safe communities that are attractive to families, thriving cities, healthy rural communities and a robust economy. The availability of human services is an essential component of this vision.

Regardless of age, cultural background, income or family size, *everyone* is likely to need human services at some point. Human services range from youth recreation programs to mental illness programs to social programs for senior citizens. Many needs associated with human services are circumstantial and have nothing to do with income. Any one can have trouble locating quality childcare. Any one may need help dealing with family violence or substance abuse problems. Naturally, people with low incomes have the highest needs for human services, including help in meeting such basic needs as food, housing, health care and job training.

King County helps address the human service needs of its residents in many ways, including financial assistance for programs that serve residents who lack resources to meet basic needs. Although there are many funding sources, the amount is inadequate to meet rising human service needs. A large portion of King County's resources for human services comes from the State of Washington. This money is mandated to be spent on particular groups, such as people with developmental disabilities, people with mental illness, people with substance abuse problems and veterans. The county also accesses its own current expense fund to support other human services.

The policies in this section reflect the intent of the *King County Framework Policies for Human Services* adopted by the King County Council in 1999.

A. King County's Role in Human Services

Over the years, King County has become a regional leader in providing human services. Activities include:

- **Resource Development and Administration:** King County works aggressively to direct federal, state, and private resources to our jurisdiction, and, where appropriate, administer available funds.
- **Funder:** King County uses a portion of current expense and criminal justice funds to support a variety of health, human services and housing programs for people in need.
- **Planner and Advocate:** King County is proactive in anticipating and responding to the changing needs of residents and communities.
- **Partnerships:** The county works with a variety of public and private partners to design, implement, and evaluate better ways of providing human services and conducting associated business.

U-501 **King County, in partnership with other jurisdictions, should help provide access to a range of prevention, intervention and rehabilitative human services for all residents of King County. Access to human services should be available in all areas of the county. In order to achieve the goal of equitable countywide distribution, residential human service facilities should be encouraged to locate in areas of King County where factors such as high property costs currently discourage their location. In communities where there is a disproportionate share of human service facilities and providers located, King County should provide community amenities such as parks, transit improvements, sidewalks, and community centers.**

- U-502** King County should lead the development and implementation of quality, countywide human service systems for its mandated service areas (mental health, drug and alcohol, people with developmental disabilities, veterans, and public health services). King County should execute this role chiefly through the mandates, guidelines, and funding provided by the State of Washington and/or the federal government.
- U-503** King County, in partnership with other jurisdictions, should support nonmandated regional human service systems for persons most in need.
- U- 504** King County should provide local services such as family, youth, and senior social and recreation programs; local food and clothing banks and community referral for residents of the unincorporated area.

B. King County's Human Service Goals

The five community goals listed in U-505 were developed through a county-wide community process sponsored by United Way of King County. All of the county's human services activities should support one or more of these goals.

1. Community Goals

- U-505** King County should promote healthy families and safe communities by supporting activities that help attain the following community goals throughout King County:
- a. Food to eat and a roof overhead. Ensure that the essential food and housing needs of all people in King County are met.
 - b. Supportive relationships within families, neighborhoods, and communities. Ensure all people in King County experience positive and supportive relationships in their families and communities.
 - c. A safe haven from all forms of violence and abuse. Ensure that all people in King County are safe and feel secure in schools, in their homes, and in their communities.
 - d. Health care to be as physically and mentally fit as possible. Promote and enhance the health of all people in King County, and assist them to attain and maintain the greatest functional independence as possible.
 - e. Education and job skills to lead an independent life. Help all people in King County become as economically self-sufficient as their abilities permit.
- U-506** King County policies and regulations should help promote easy access to jobs, housing, and services. In establishing and carrying out policies and regulations regarding land use, transportation, economic development, facilities, and related areas, King County should promote access to and availability of human services and affordable housing for low-income residents and communities.
- U-507** King County should ensure that its involvement in human services is sensitive to the cultural, economic, and social diversity of King County. Toward that end, King County should promote culturally competent and culturally relevant service delivery; uphold federal, state, and local laws against discrimination; work to remove obstacles that impair residents' ability to access human services and affordable housing; and provide opportunities for diverse representation of people and interests on King County's boards, commissions, advisory committees, and planning processes.
- U-508** King County should support efforts to break the cycle of poverty, promote personal responsibility and reduce the overall need for human services. This includes organizing and empowering residents and communities to be involved in the

decision making that affects their lives. Services supported by King County should do so in a manner that helps foster self-determination and self-sufficiency to the greatest extent possible.

2. Ensuring and Enhancing Human Services Resources

U-509 King County should work in the federal, state, and local government arenas, and with the private sector, to garner additional human services and affordable housing resources for King County residents to help further the community goals. This work may include legislative advocacy, pursuit of grant funds, regulatory changes, and related actions.

C. Assessing Use of Resources and Achievement of Goals

King County should ensure that human services funding and other activities are directed in an effective and appropriate manner. The policies below and the *King County Framework Policies for Human Services* outline an assessment and evaluation process to help ensure the county is responsive to ongoing changes in achieving community goals. The assessment and evaluation process focuses on the discretionary spending on human services and the necessary coordination with mandated human services as appropriate.

U-510 King County should conduct an ongoing assessment and evaluation cycle to help ensure its activities and use of resources for human services are responsive to changing needs in the five community goal areas and other King County human services priorities.

U-511 King County should periodically, but no fewer than every three years, produce a King County Human Services Recommendation Report that describes strategies that King County will pursue during the period covered by the Report.

U-512 King County should encourage and facilitate broad community participation — including consumers and providers of services — in developing the King County Human Services Report, and in the provision and evaluation of human services.

U-513 King County should actively coordinate with other local, regional, state, federal, and private human services efforts in order to ensure that its human service activities, including the use of resources, complement the programs and activities of others. Wherever feasible, King County should participate in joint assessments with other funders to analyze human service trends and needs.

U-514 Together with its community partners, King County should help to establish and monitor key indicators of overall social and health conditions in King County. The information shall be used to help determine progress towards meeting the five community goals identified in U-505.

VI. Sustainable Development

It is the goal of King County to work toward a model sustainable community where both the public and private sectors seek to balance urban growth with natural resource protection. Sustainable development seeks to achieve this goal by addressing the impacts of the built environment in which we live and work. Sustainable development is implemented through planning, design and construction methods, including green building and low-impact development (LID) that promote environmental quality, economic vitality and social benefits.

Current development practices contribute significantly to the adverse impacts buildings have on our environment. These impacts include heavy consumption of energy and water, large-scale production of wastes, water pollution and contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Implementing sustainable development involves incorporating green building and LID practices into our policies through education, incentives and regulation to help reduce these negative impacts.

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

A. Sustainable Development for King County Capital Improvement Projects

The King County Green Building Initiative establishes Executive policy to encourage and promote the use of sustainable development practices in all buildings the county constructs, remodels and renovates. By incorporating sustainable development practices when projects are in the planning and predesign phase, economic benefits may realized, including the reduction of operating costs, enhanced asset value, optimized building performance and a healthier workplace for its employees.

- U-601** **King County should incorporate sustainable development principles and practices into the design, construction and operation of county facilities and county-funded projects when economically feasible.**
- U-602** **The use of green building practices should be accomplished within traditional project budgets. If additional funds are sought for up-front costs, a life cycle cost analysis of the project should be completed to determine the long-term benefits of using green building practices.**
- U-604** **King County should leverage its purchasing power related to capital improvement projects to help expand the markets for green building products, including recycled-content materials and clean, renewable energy technologies.**

B. Sustainable Development in the Private Sector

King County seeks to foster innovative design and development techniques in the private sector that reduce the negative impacts of site development and building construction while maintaining affordability and economic development. Similarly, King County also encourages the use of low-impact site design techniques to reduce impacts to aquatic resources.

- U- 605** King County should encourage, support and promote the application of sustainable development practices in all private sector development within the county. This may be accomplished through working with residential and commercial developers to incorporate habitat conditions, reduce impervious surface areas, protect ground and surface water within a watershed, incorporate greater use of green building materials and utilize systems that conserve resources, including those that use energy more efficiently.
- U-606** King County should identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote green building and low impact development. This may be accomplished through demonstration projects to guide the application and refinement of regulations such as zoning, and road and stormwater regulations.

C. Low-Impact Development

Current development practices can adversely impact water resources. Low-impact development (LID) is a new approach to land development which works to match a site's natural hydrologic function by protecting native vegetation and soils, reducing impervious surface and managing stormwater at the source. LID techniques include retention of native vegetation, soil amendment, rainwater harvesting, pervious pavement and bioretention.

- U-607** King County should incorporate low-impact development principles and practices into the design, construction and operation of all county facilities and county-funded projects to the fullest extent feasible.
- U-608** King County should work with residential and commercial developers to incorporate low-impact development practices that protect native vegetation and soils, and reduce impervious surface.
- U-609** King County should identify and evaluate potential changes to land use development regulations and building codes to support and promote low-impact development. This may be accomplished through demonstration projects to guide application and refinement of regulations such as zoning, subdivision, roads and stormwater regulations.

