DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The policies in this chapter address the location, types, design and intensity of land uses that are desired in King County and its cities. They guide implementation of the vision for physical development within the county. The policies also provide a framework for how to focus improvements to transportation, public services, the environment, and affordable housing, as well as how to incorporate concerns about climate change and public health into planning for new growth. Development patterns policies are at the core of growth management efforts in King County; they further the goals of VISION 2040, and recognize the variety of local communities that will be taking action to achieve those goals.

**Overarching Goal:** Growth in King County occurs in a compact, centers-focused pattern that uses land and infrastructure efficiently and that protects Rural and Resource Lands.

The Countywide Planning Policies designate land as Urban, Rural, or Resource. The Land Use Map in Appendix 1 shows the Urban Growth Area boundary and Urban, Rural, and Resource Lands within King County. Further sections of this chapter provide more detailed descriptions and guidance for planning within each of the three designations.

**DP-1** All lands within King County are designated as:

- Urban land within the Urban Growth Area, where new growth is focused and accommodated;
- Rural land, where farming, forestry, and other resource uses are protected, and very low-density residential uses, and small-scale non-residential uses are allowed; or
- Resource land, where permanent regionally significant agricultural, forestry, and mining lands are preserved.

**Urban Growth Area**

The Urban Growth Area encompasses all of the urban designated lands within King County. These lands include all cities as well as a portion of unincorporated King County. Consistent with the Growth Management Act and VISION 2040, urban lands are intended to be the focus of future growth that is compact, includes a mix of uses, and is well-served by public infrastructure. Urban lands also include a network of open space where ongoing maintenance is a local as well as a regional concern.

The pattern of growth within the Urban Growth Area implements the Regional Growth Strategy through allocation of targets to local jurisdictions. The targets create an obligation to plan and provide zoning for future potential growth, but do not obligate a jurisdiction to guarantee that a given number of housing units will be built or jobs added during the planning period.
Several additional elements in the Development Patterns chapter reinforce the vision and targeted growth pattern for the Urban Growth Area. Procedures and criteria for amending the Urban Growth Area boundary address a range of objectives and ensure that changes balance the needs for land to accommodate growth with the overarching goal of preventing sprawl within the county. A review and evaluation program provides feedback for the county and cities on the effectiveness of their efforts to accommodate and achieve the desired land use pattern. Joint planning facilitates the transition of governance of the Urban Growth Area from the county to cities, consistent with the Growth Management Act.

Urban form and development within the Urban Growth Area are important settings to provide people with choices to engage in more physical activity, eat healthy food, and minimize exposure to harmful environments and substances. In particular, the quality and safety of walking and biking routes children use to reach school is known to affect their health.

**Goal Statement:** The Urban Growth Area accommodates growth consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and growth targets through land use patterns and practices that create vibrant, healthy, and sustainable communities.

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**Urban Lands**

**DP-2** Promote a pattern of compact development within the Urban Growth Area that includes housing at a range of urban densities, commercial and industrial development, and other urban facilities, including medical, governmental, institutional, and educational uses and parks and open space. The Urban Growth Area will include a mix of uses that are convenient to and support public transportation in order to reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicle travel for most daily activities.

**DP-3** Efficiently develop and use residential, commercial, and manufacturing land in the Urban Growth Area to create healthy and vibrant urban communities with a full range of urban services, and to protect the long-term viability of the Rural Area and Resource Lands. Promote the efficient use of land within the Urban Growth Area by using methods such as:

- Directing concentrations of housing and employment growth to designated centers;
- Encouraging compact development with a mix of compatible residential, commercial, and community activities;
- Maximizing the use of the existing capacity for housing and employment; and
- Coordinating plans for land use, transportation, capital facilities and services.

**DP-4** Concentrate housing and employment growth within the designated Urban Growth Area. Focus housing growth within countywide designated Urban Centers and locally designated local centers. Focus employment growth within countywide designated Urban and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers and within locally designated local centers.
DP-5 Decrease greenhouse gas emissions through land use strategies that promote a mix of housing, employment, and services at densities sufficient to promote walking, bicycling, transit, and other alternatives to auto travel.

DP-6 Plan for development patterns that promote public health by providing all residents with opportunities for safe and convenient daily physical activity, social connectivity, and protection from exposure to harmful substances and environments.

DP-7 Plan for development patterns that promote safe and healthy routes to and from public schools.

DP-8 Increase access to healthy food in communities throughout the Urban Growth Area by encouraging the location of healthy food purveyors, such as grocery stores and farmers markets, and community food gardens in proximity to residential uses and transit facilities.

DP-9 Designate Urban Separators as permanent low-density incorporated and unincorporated areas within the Urban Growth Area. Urban Separators are intended to protect Resource Lands, the Rural Area, and environmentally sensitive areas, and create open space and wildlife corridors within and between communities while also providing public health, environmental, visual, and recreational benefits. Changes to Urban Separators are made pursuant to the Countywide Planning Policies amendment process described in policy G-1. Designated Urban Separators within cities and unincorporated areas are shown in the Urban Separators Map in Appendix 3.

DP 10 Discourage incompatible land uses from locating adjacent to general aviation airports throughout the county.

Growth Targets

DP-11 GMPC shall allocate residential and employment growth to each city and unincorporated urban area in the county. This allocation is predicated on:

- Accommodating the most recent 20-year population projection from the state Office of Financial Management and the most recent 20-year regional employment forecast from the Puget Sound Regional Council;
- Planning for a pattern of growth that is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy including focused growth within cities with countywide designated centers and within other larger cities, limited development in the Rural Area, and protection of designated Resource Lands;
- Efficiently using existing zoned and future planned development capacity as well as the capacity of existing and planned infrastructure, including sewer and water systems;
• Promoting a land use pattern that can be served by a connected network of public transportation services and facilities and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities;
• Improving the jobs/housing balance within the region and the county;
• Promoting sufficient opportunities for housing and employment development throughout the Urban Growth Area;
• Allocating growth to individual Potential Annexation Areas within the urban unincorporated area proportionate to its share of unincorporated capacity for housing and employment growth.

**DP-12** GMPC shall:
• Update housing and employment targets periodically to provide jurisdictions with up-to-date growth allocations to be incorporated in state-mandated comprehensive plan updates;
• Adopt housing and employment growth targets in the Countywide Planning Policies pursuant to the procedure described in policy G-1; and
• Adjust targets administratively upon annexation of unincorporated Potential Annexation Areas by cities. Growth targets for the 2006-2031 planning period are shown in table DP-1.

**DP-13** All jurisdictions shall plan to accommodate housing and employment targets. This includes:
• Adopting comprehensive plans and zoning regulations that provide capacity for residential, commercial, and industrial uses that is sufficient to meet 20-year growth needs and is consistent with the desired growth pattern described in VISION 2040;
• Coordinating water, sewer, transportation and other infrastructure plans and investments among agencies, including special purpose districts; and
• Transferring and accommodating unincorporated area housing and employment targets as annexations occur.
Urban Design and Historic Preservation

The countywide vision includes elements of urban design and form intended to integrate urban development into existing built and natural environments in ways that enhance both the urban and natural settings. These elements include high quality design, context sensitive infill and redevelopment, historic preservation, and the interdependence of urban and rural and agricultural lands and uses.

**Goal statement:** The built environment in both urban and rural settings achieves a high degree of high quality design that recognizes and enhances, where appropriate, existing natural and urban settings.

**DP-39** Develop neighborhood planning and design processes that encourage infill development, redevelopment, and reuse of existing buildings and that, where appropriate based on local plans, enhance the existing community character and mix of uses.

**DP-40** Promote a high quality of design and site planning in publicly-funded and private development throughout the Urban Growth Area.

**DP-41** Preserve significant historic, archeological, cultural, architectural, artistic, and environmental features, especially where growth could place these resources at risk. Where appropriate, designate individual features or areas for protection or restoration. Encourage land use patterns and adopt regulations that protect historic resources and sustain historic community character.

**DP-42** Design new development to create and protect systems of green infrastructure, such as urban forests, parks, green roofs, and natural drainage systems, in order to reduce climate-altering pollution and increase resilience of communities to climate change impacts.

**DP-43** Design communities, neighborhoods, and individual developments using techniques that reduce heat absorption, particularly in Urban Centers.

**DP-44** Adopt design standards or guidelines that foster infill development that is compatible with the existing or desired urban character.

Rural Area and Resource Lands

The Rural Area and Resource Lands encompass all areas outside of the Urban Growth Area and include Vashon Island in Puget Sound and the area just east of the Urban Growth Area all the way to the crest of the Cascade Mountains. The Rural Area is characterized by low density development with a focus on activities that are dependent on the land such as small scale farming and forestry. The Rural Area also provides important environmental and habitat