

# LAND CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION WORK PLAN

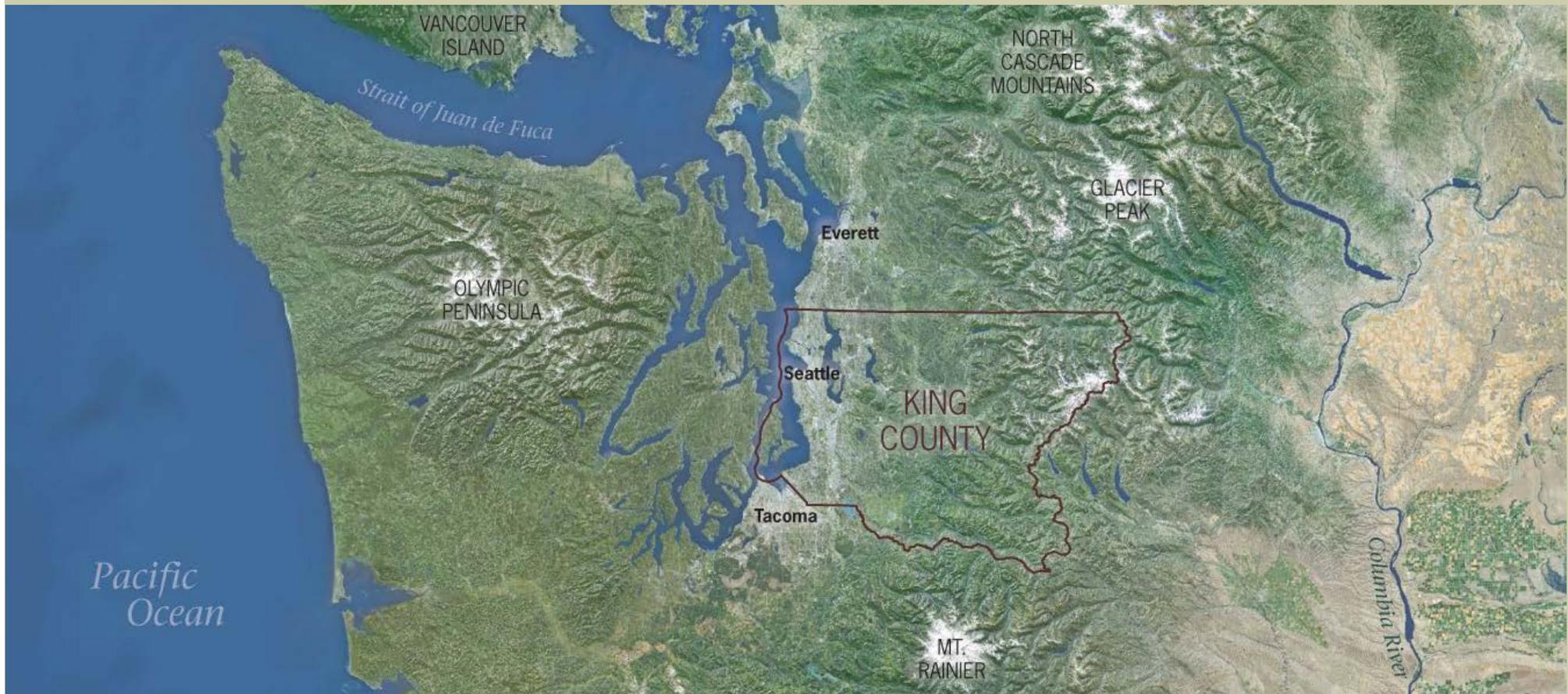
Excerpt, updated September 15, 2016



**King County**

Prepared by  
**King County Executive Dow Constantine**

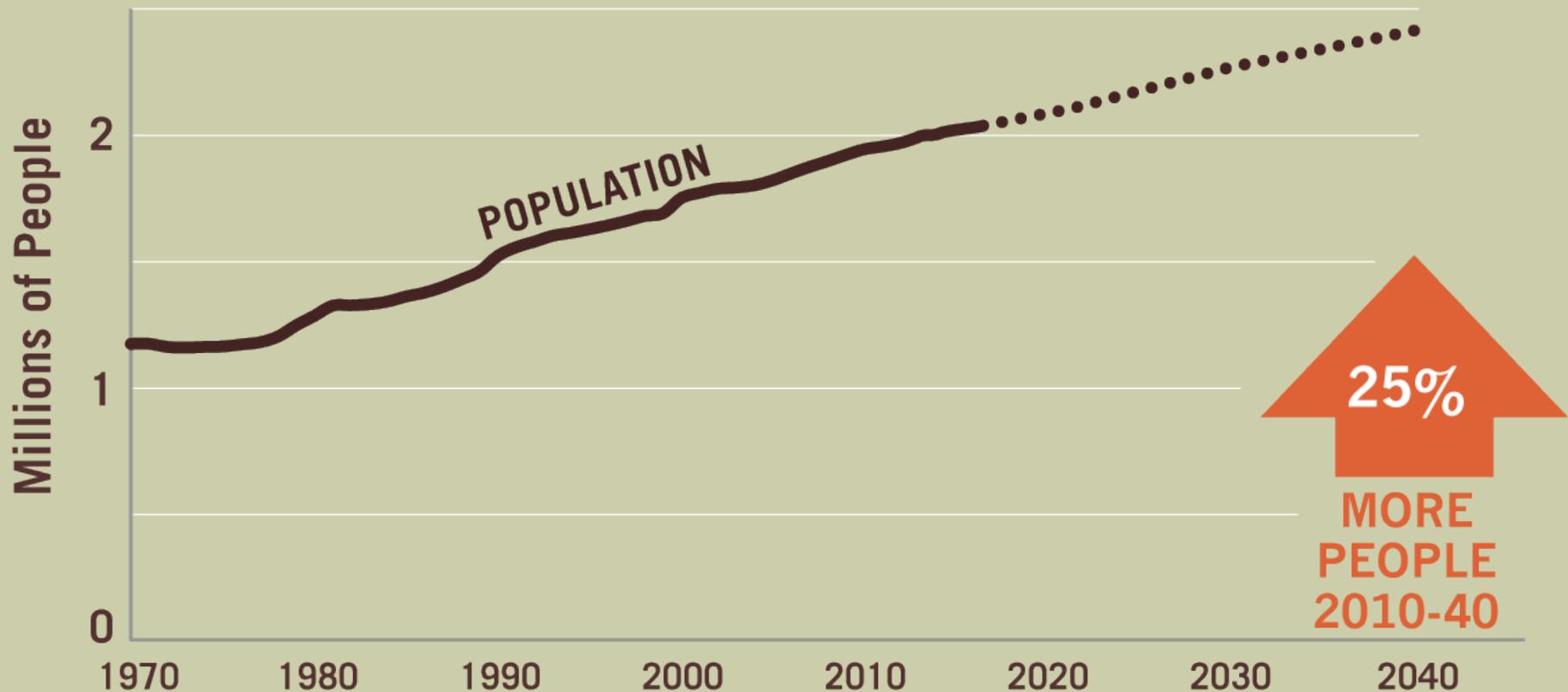
## King County: The Heart of Cascadia



## Importance of Conservation

**King County's valuable landscape is worth protecting.** Our landscape is spectacular – from the depths of the Puget Sound, with iconic salmon and orca whales, through a thriving metropolis, quiet rural communities, and abundant farms and working forests, to the alpine peaks of the Cascade Mountains. Our surrounding landscape gives King County a **competitive economic advantage** in the global marketplace – people want to live here and businesses want to be here, in part because of the abundant and accessible open space. For King County to thrive we need to keep our natural lands and river corridors intact, maintain viable working resource lands, and preserve great places for people to explore, relax and stay connected to the natural world.

## King County is one of the fastest growing large counties in the U.S.

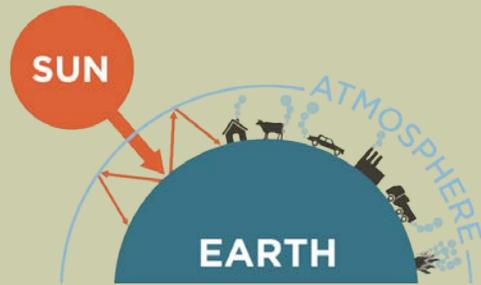


Data: WA state Office of Financial Management, *County Growth Management Population Projections: 2010-2040*, Forecasting Division, August 2012.

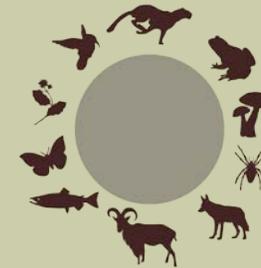
## Conservation is part of responsible growth

More than 2 million people call King County home today, and many more will move here in the coming years. Because King County is one of the fastest growing large counties in the nation, **we must act quickly** to protect our most important remaining conservation lands before prices escalate and we lose opportunities as development pressure increases. Since the adoption of the Washington State Growth Management Act in 1990, regional leaders have focused growth in and around Seattle's metropolitan core and other urban areas, keeping the eastern reaches of King County rural so viable farmland, forest land, and other natural open spaces can continue to thrive.

# Benefits and Value of Conservation to the Region



*Climate Change*



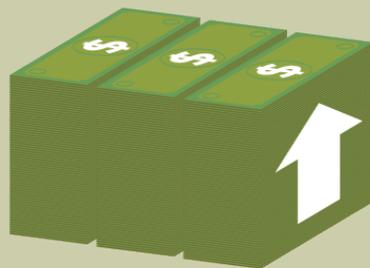
*Biodiversity*



*Social Equity*



*Human Health*

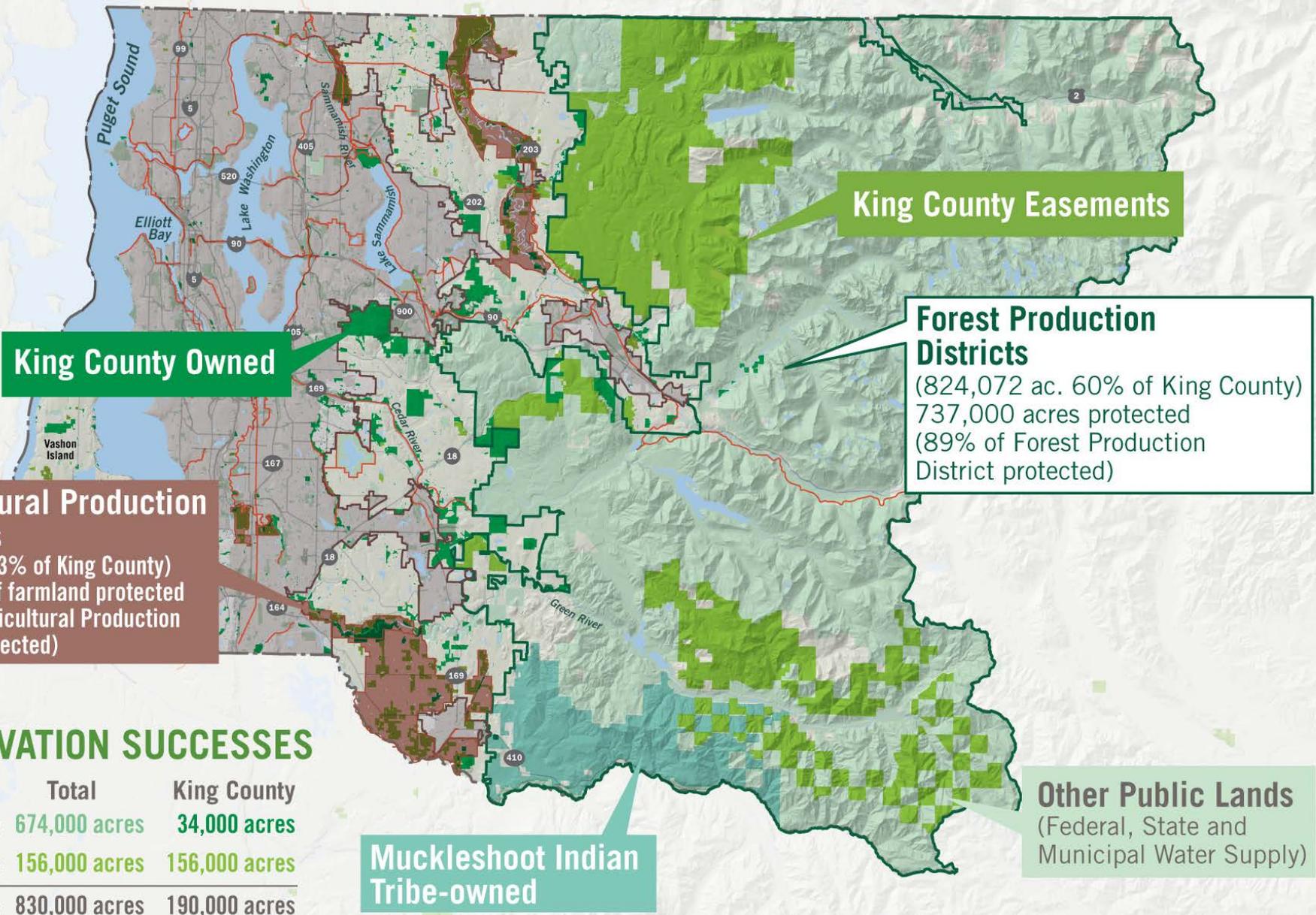


*Economic Development*



*Competitive Advantage*

# Conservation Success To Date

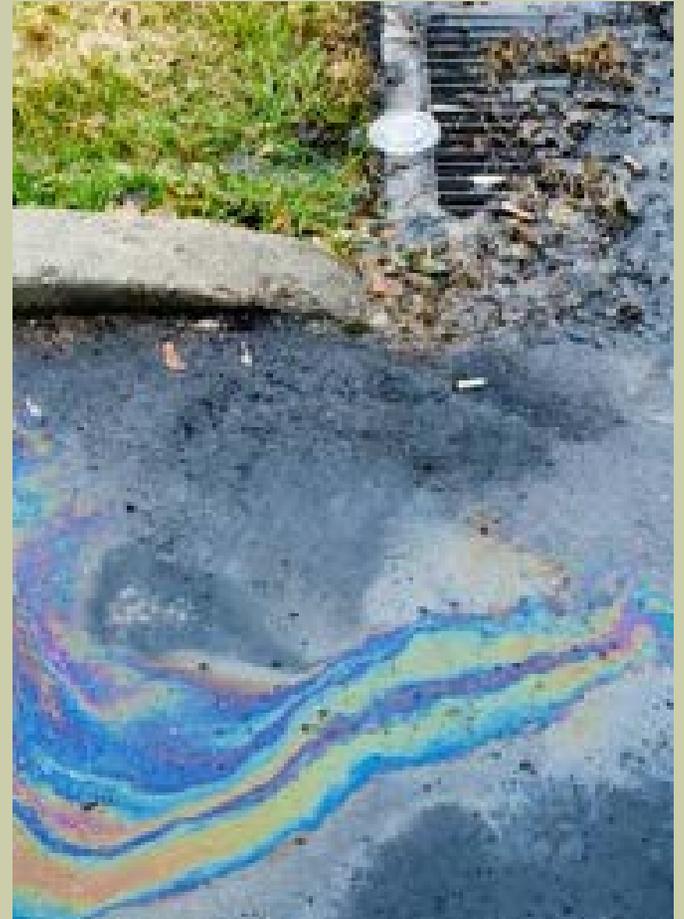


## CONSERVATION SUCCESSES

	Total	King County
Fee:	674,000 acres	34,000 acres
Easement:	156,000 acres	156,000 acres
<b>Total:</b>	<b>830,000 acres</b>	<b>190,000 acres</b>

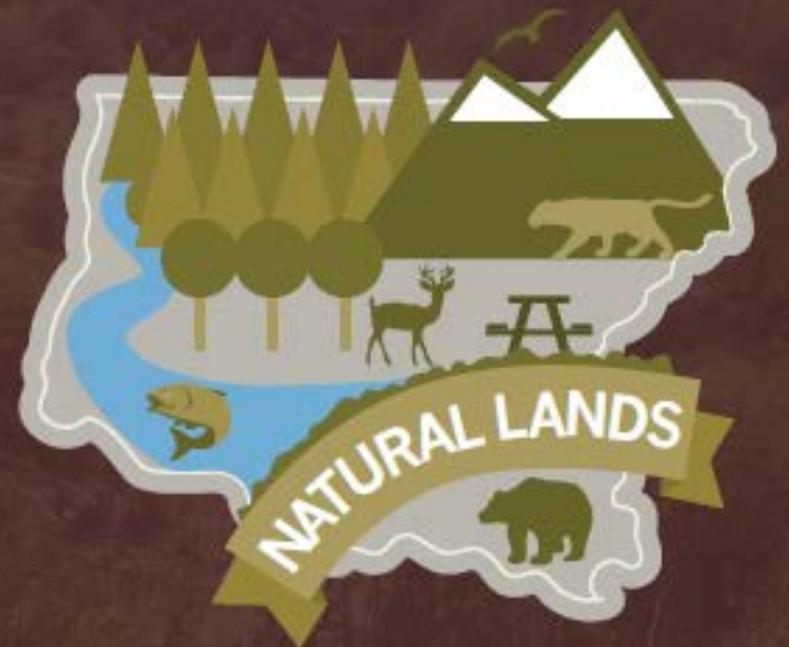
# *There's More To Do*

- **Puget Sound water quality**
- **Salmon recovery**
- **Stormwater control**
- **Flood control**
- **Trail connections**
- **Forest and farm economies**

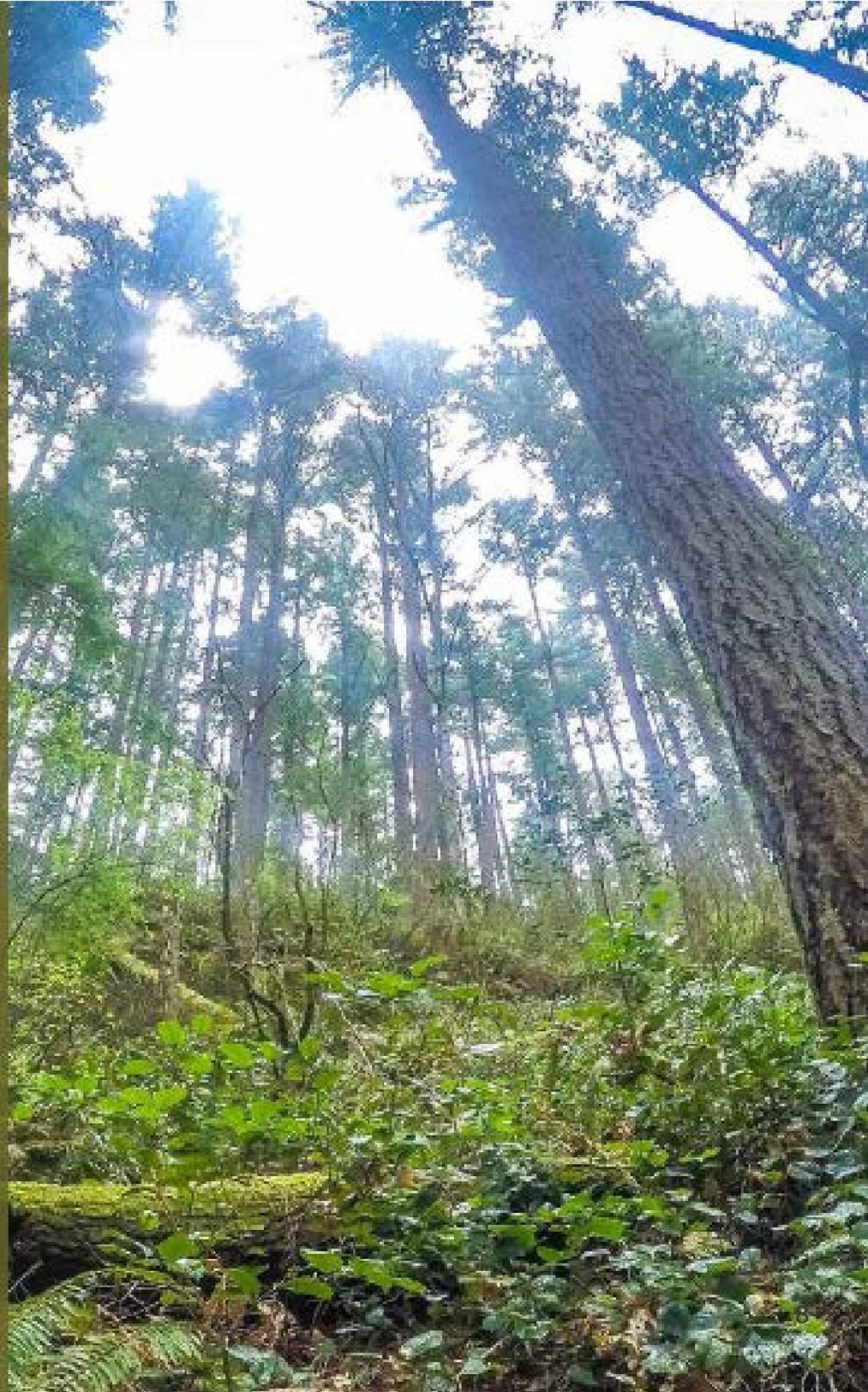




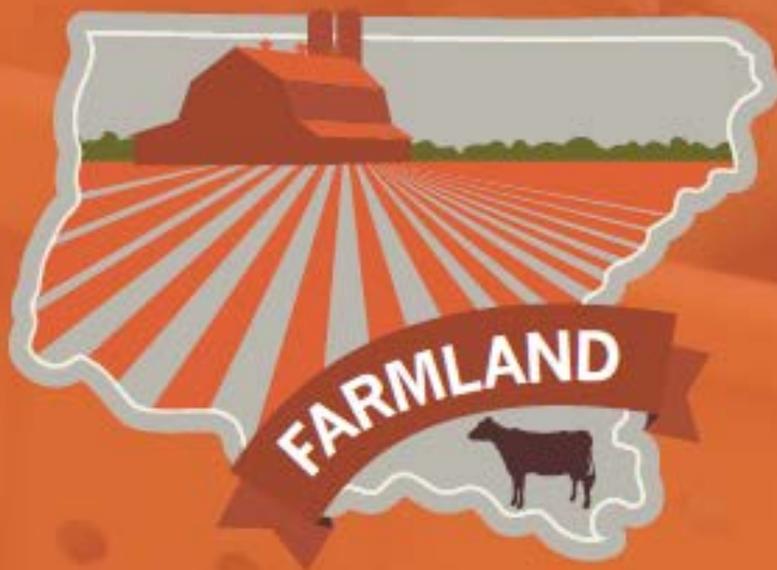
**Natural lands for  
clean water, wildlife,  
clean air, ecological  
integrity and  
resilience in an  
uncertain future**



Healthy forests for  
clean water,  
wildlife, recreation,  
and a sustainable  
timber industry



**Abundant  
farmland for  
healthy local food  
and a thriving  
farm economy**



A world-class  
regional  
**trail network**  
to increase mobility  
and reduce pollution



**Natural river corridors**  
for water quality,  
salmon, flood safety,  
recreation, and a  
healthy Puget Sound





**Urban river corridors**  
for increased water  
quality, better health,  
and recreational  
opportunities for  
residents



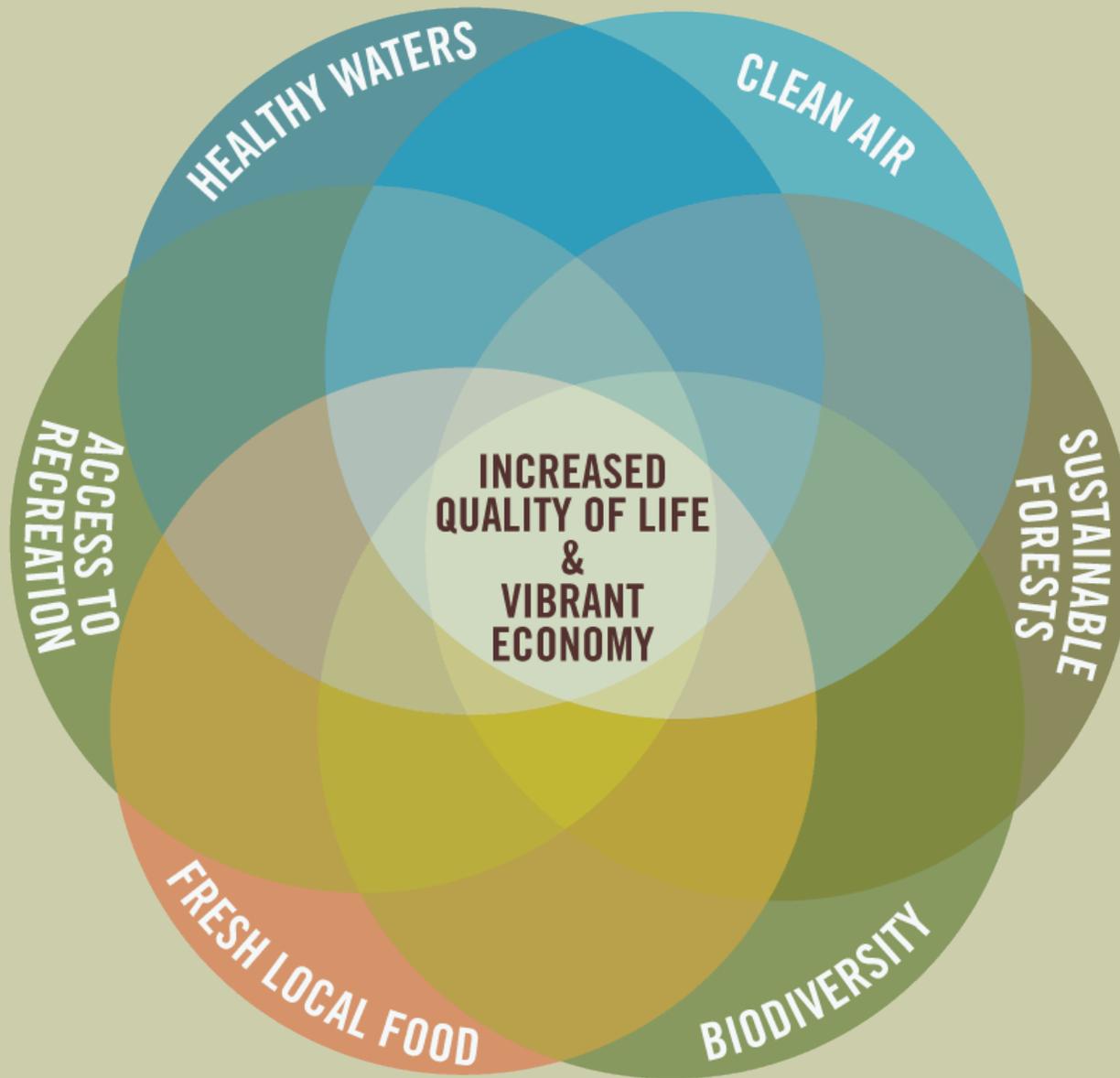
# PROTECTING THESE LANDS...



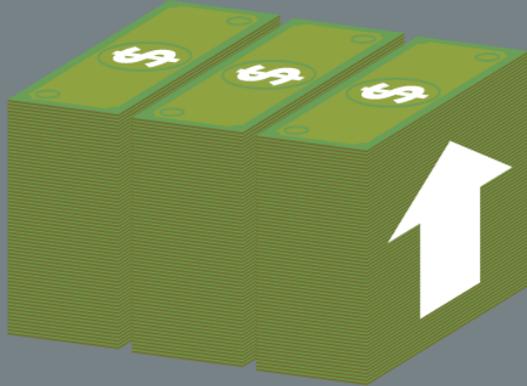
# LEADS TO MORE...

- CLEAN AIR
- HEALTHY WATERS
- BIODIVERSITY
- SUSTAINABLE FORESTS
- ACCESS TO RECREATION
- FRESH LOCAL FOOD

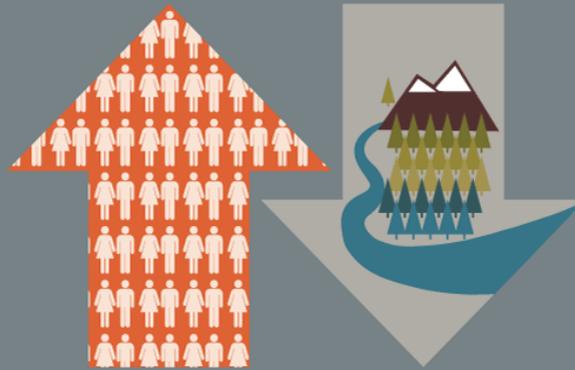
# Conservation protects what we love about this region.



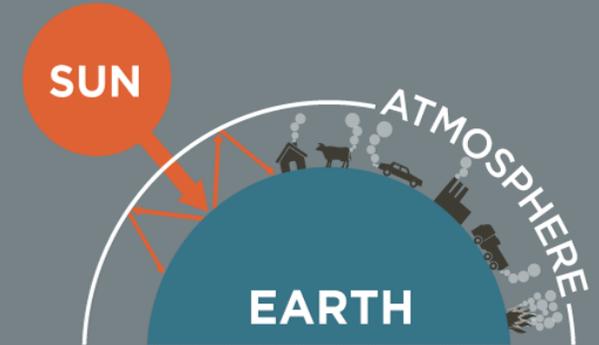
# Why now?



The longer we wait, the more expensive it becomes.



As population grows, opportunities to conserve land will diminish.

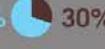
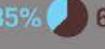
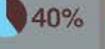
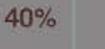


Climate change is creating an uncertain future.

# Acreages By Category and Estimated Cost to Protect Identified Lands

## What lands should we consider?

**COSTS & ACREAGES  
IN MARCH 30 WORK PLAN**

CONSERVATION CATEGORY	NATURAL LANDS		RIVERS	FORESTS		FARMLAND		TRAILS	
	Natural Protection (Urban & Rural)	Multi-Objectives (Other Zones)		Protecting Communities from Floods	Forest Production & Resiliency	Multi-Objective (Forest Zones)	Agricultural Production	Multi-Objective (Agricultural Zones)	Passive Recreation
PARCELS	2,000	325	70	350	140	1,450	40	50	Specific Parcels not identified
ACRES	15,000	7,500	200	11,000	8,500	17,000	800	500	
FEE / EASEMENT (by acreage)	70%  30%	70%  30%	100%  0%	0%  100%	35%  65%	0%  100%	60%  40%	60%  40%	
ESTIMATED COST	\$530,000,000	\$300,000,000	\$40,000,000	\$70,000,000	\$50,000,000	\$200,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$80,000,000

TOTAL PARCELS: **4,425**

TOTAL ACRES: **60,500**

TOTAL EST. COST: **\$1,300,000,000** *includes acquisition & transaction costs and 30 years of O&M.*

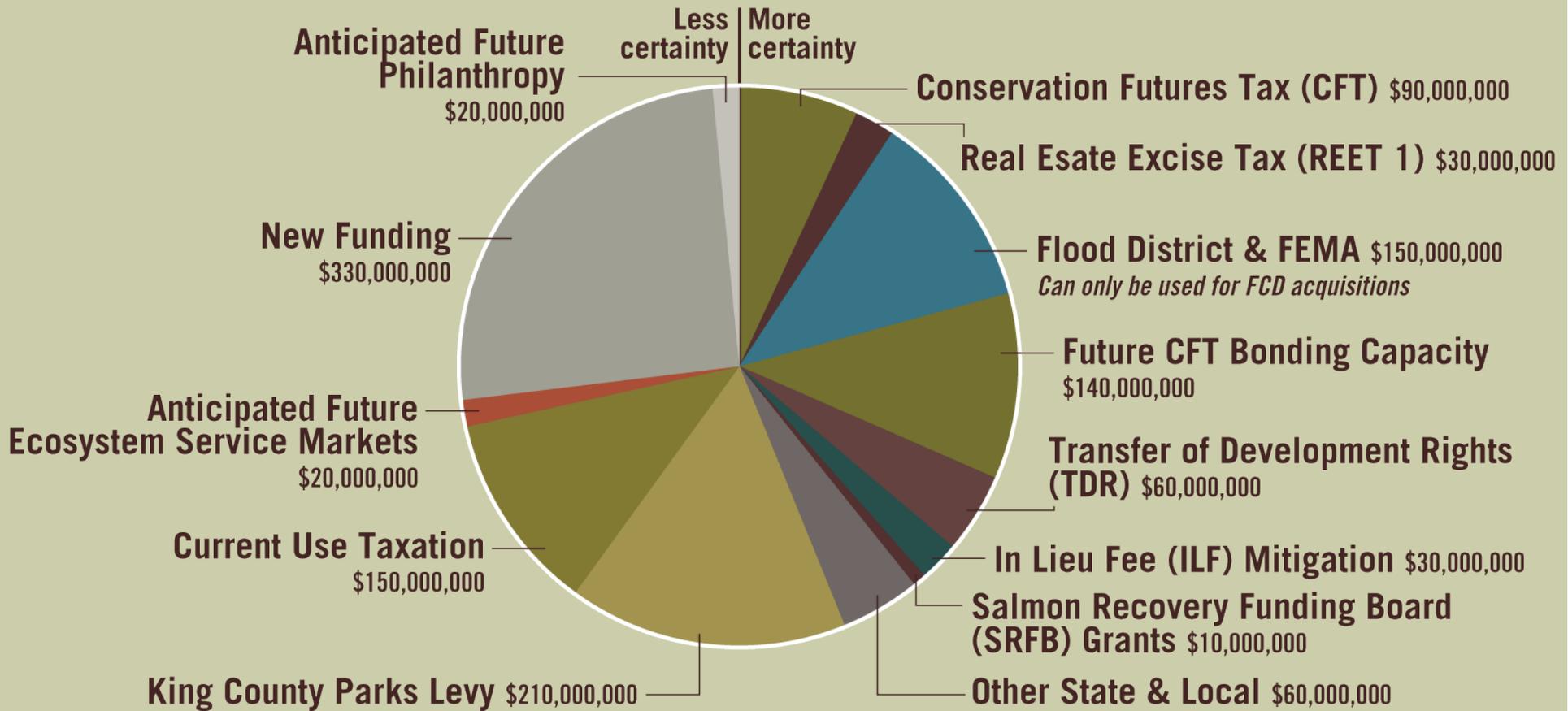
**Historic Barn Preservation:** Funding to restore up to 174 historic barns adds **\$11-22 million**

This table shows the lands identified in each category. The “multi-objective” categories include lands that would advance more than one conservation objective, shown in their associated zone (e.g. Rural Area or other residential/commercial zones, Forest Production District, or Agricultural Production District).

# Existing County Funding Sources and Gap - 30 Year Projection based on Historic Funding

Total cost: \$1.3 billion (in 2015 dollars) Arranged by Certainty

**FUNDING SOURCES SHOWN  
IN MARCH 30 WORK PLAN**



This chart shows the same total value as the estimated costs: \$1.3 billion. Existing funding sources are shown in today's dollars, projected out 30 years at current levels of funding. The wedges of the pie are arranged in order of certainty: the most certain source (CFT) is in the noon to 1 o'clock position. Moving clockwise, the funding sources and amounts become progressively less certain.

## *Work Plan Step:* **REFINEMENT of LANDS, COSTS & REVENUE**

### **King County Conservation Lands**

- Partner and stakeholder outreach, and refined King County analysis of unincorporated area priorities, leading to an increase in overall acreage
- Revised cost and revenue projections based on 2016 Assessed Values and refined methodologies



### **City Conservation Lands (in process)**

- City-identified open space priorities, acreage and cost estimates to be determined
- WRIA Salmon Recovery Plan priorities
- Lands to improve equity and public health



### **Rural/Forest Land Conservation led by Other Entities**

- Federal, State, city utilities, Land Trust priorities

# What Lands Should We Consider?

## Updated 2016 Acreages By Category and Total Cost

CONSERVATION CATEGORY	NATURAL LANDS		RIVERS	FORESTS		FARMLAND		TRAILS	
	Ecological Protection (Urban & Rural)	Multi-Objective (Other Zones)	Protecting Communities from Floods	Forest Production & Resiliency	Multi-Objective (Forest Zones)	Agricultural Production	Multi-Objective (Agricultural Zones)	Passive Recreation	Regional Trail Corridors
PARCELS	2,570	650	150	430	180	980	210	350	<i>Specific Parcels not identified</i>
ACRES	19,500	6,600	250	12,500	8,750	10,500	3,700	4,300	
FEE / EASEMENT (by acreage)	57% / 43%	87% / 13%	100% / 0%	1% / 99%	25% / 75%	0% / 100%	33% / 67%	68% / 32%	

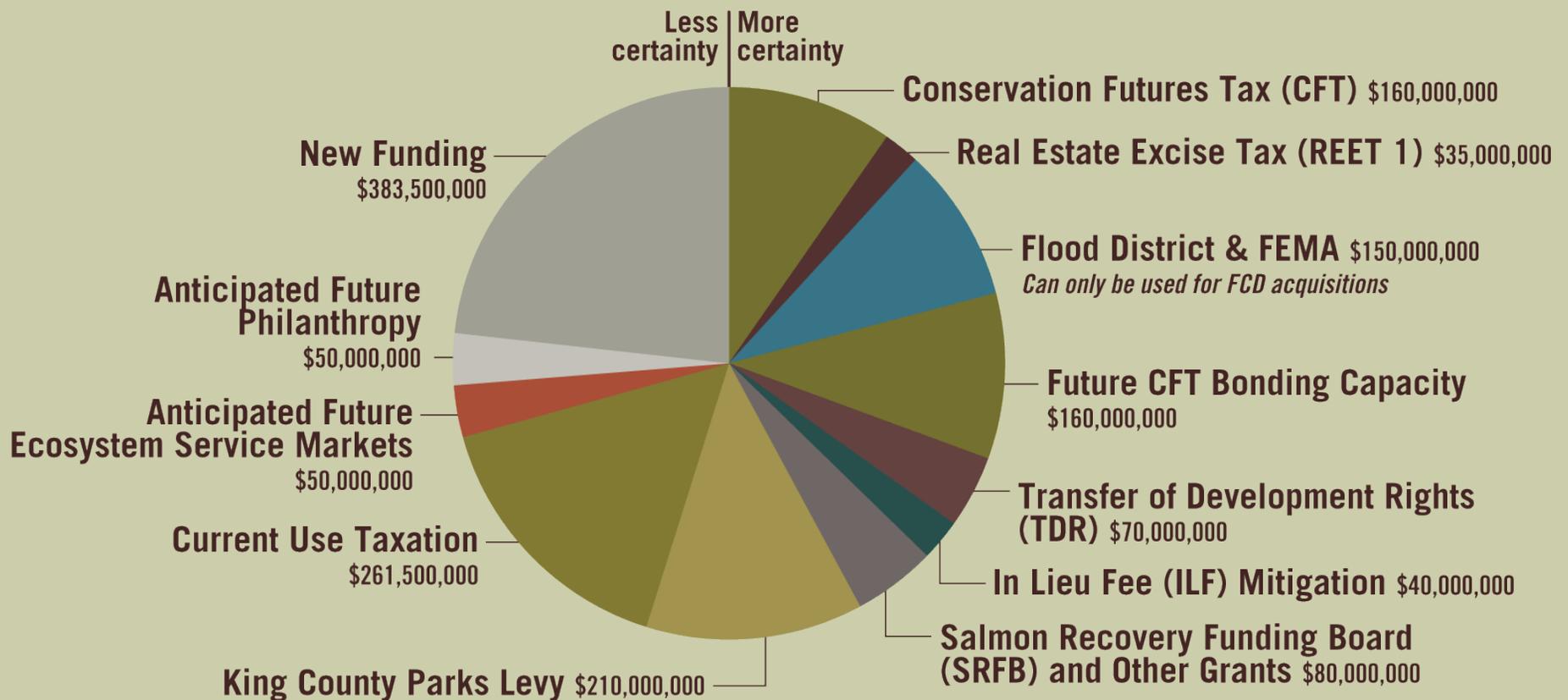
TOTAL PARCELS: **5,500**

TOTAL ACRES: **66,000**

TOTAL EST. COST: **\$1.5 to \$1.8 B** *includes acquisition & transaction costs and 30 years of O&M.*

# Existing County Funding Sources and Gap - 30 Year Projection based on Historic Funding

*Total cost: \$1.65 billion (in 2016 dollars) Arranged by Certainty*



This chart shows the same total value as the midpoint of revised estimated range of costs: \$1.65 billion. Existing funding sources are shown in today's dollars, projected out 30 years at current levels of funding, except in cases where forecasts are available. The wedges of the pie are arranged in order of certainty; the most certain source (CFT) is in the noon to 1 o'clock position. Moving clockwise, the funding sources and amounts become progressively less certain.

# 2014-2019 King County Parks Levy

Levy Rate = 18.77¢ per \$1,000/AV (~\$56/year for a \$300,000 home)

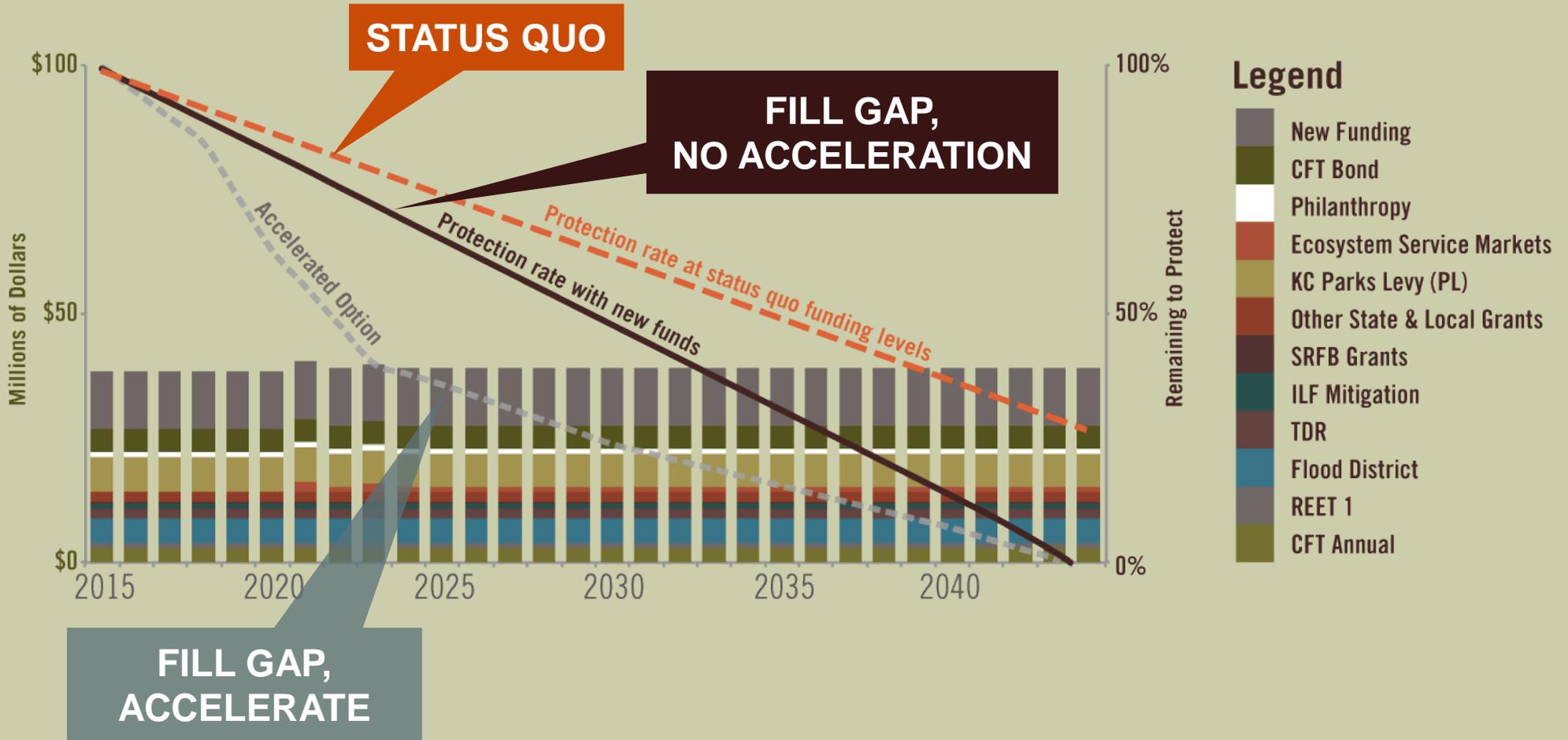
Estimated \$66 million per year

Estimated \$396 million over six years

**Provides approximately 80% of Parks operating budget**

		(percentage of levy)
King County Parks O&M	County Parks Operations and Maintenance Peak Season Core Maintenance Enforcement and Safety Community Partnerships and Grants Preserve/Protect Eastside Rail Corridor 4-H Program	47%
King County Parks Capital	Regional Trails System New Trail Corridor Development (ERC and L2S) Regional Open Space Acquisition and Stewardship Infrastructure Repair and Preservation Bridges and Trestles Trailhead Development and Accessibility	39%
*	Cities' Parks and Trails	7%
*	Woodland Park Zoo	7%

# Conservation Funding Outlook - Full Funding with Accelerated Option



# Potential Funding Options to Fill the Gap

Source	Pros	Cons
<b>Bond backed by property tax increase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can set amount</li> <li>• Use could be flexible</li> <li>• Relatively inexpensive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires 60% to pass</li> <li>• Single subject</li> <li>• 40% turnout requirement</li> </ul>
<b>Property Tax Levy Lid Lift</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can set amount</li> <li>• Only 50% to pass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Might suppress junior taxing districts' ability to raise funds</li> </ul>
<b>REET 3 (Real Estate Excise Tax)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing source of funding</li> <li>• Progressive revenue source</li> <li>• Even low percentages could raise enough revenue to fund priority acquisitions</li> <li>• Only 50% to pass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of revenue based on external factors</li> </ul>
<b>CFT rate increase property tax</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could raise significant revenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing above 6.25¢/\$1,000AV would require statute change by state legislature</li> </ul>

# Overview of Options to Fill the Funding Gap

## BOND

Term	Principal \$	Rate	Annual Cost for \$416K AV
15 year	\$385,000,000	2.80%	\$26.98
20 year	\$385,000,000	3.00%	\$21.97

## LEVY

*7 year levy beginning at 11¢ per \$1,000 AV raises \$385 million*

## CFT

*Raising rate to 6.25¢ per \$1,000 AV raises an additional \$340 million in 30 years*

## REET 3

Based on 2016 countywide transaction value, REET 3 at 0.1% raises \$1.8 billion in 30 years. (REET 3 at 0.021% raises \$385M)

# Private Capital Investments and Public-Private Partnerships

King County is exploring opportunities for how “natural capital” can offer returns to investors or play a role in new markets. Including private capital investments would reduce the overall need for public financing. Opportunities could include:

- New environmental markets, such as carbon or water quality markets.
- Growth of existing markets such as transfers of development rights, in lieu fee mitigation, and mitigation banks.
- Private investments with returns generated by management of the lands, such as sustainable timber harvest, farmland leases or revenue from crop sales.

# REVIEW: *LANDS AND BENEFITS*

- In coordination with staff and partner organizations, we have identified nearly 66,000 acres of unprotected high conservation value land in unincorporated King County in five categories:
  - Natural lands
  - River corridors
  - Forests
  - Farmland
  - Trail corridors

*(Many lands meet multiple objectives)*
- Additional lands in cities will be added
- “Finishing the job” will ensure the next generation has:
  - A landscape more resilient to effects of climate change
  - Clean air
  - Healthy waters
  - Sustainable forest
  - Biodiversity
  - Fresh local food
  - Access to recreation

## REVIEW: ***ESTIMATED COSTS & FUNDING SOURCES***

- \$1.65 billion mid-range estimate to conserve remaining identified high conservation value lands in unincorporated King County
- Target acreage in cities mostly unknown at this time, and not priced.
- Variety of funding sources exist to conserve these lands.
- Potential revenue sources to help fill the gap
  - Property tax bonding
  - Property tax lid lift
  - Real Estate Excise Tax 3 (payable by buyer)
  - Conservation Futures Tax rate increase
  - Potential private sources, including investments
  - Future ecosystem services markets
  - Philanthropy
- Funding strategy should consider
  - Filling the gap
  - Benefits and drawbacks of acceleration
  - Impact on King County Parks Levy

# KEY ADVISORY GROUP QUESTIONS

- What is your preferred approach to accomplishing the goals of the initiative?
- What are the most important benefits and challenges to the initiative?
- What is the preferred timeline?
- What funding sources should be targeted?
- Implementation strategies?
- How to incorporate lands in cities and fund city priorities?
- Implications for the County parks levy?

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our region has adopted a vision of managing growth responsibly while preserving and protecting our quality of life and the environment. The issue of climate change has brought into greater focus the need to grow responsibly, while transitioning to a green and sustainable economy. Conservation of our most important natural and resource lands is a crucial element in realizing both our growth management vision, and in combatting climate change. The mission of the Advisory Group is to review the Executive's proposal to protect all remaining unprotected high conservation value lands in King County within a generation and make recommendations for a preferred approach or approaches to implement the proposal. The Advisory Group's recommendations should address:

- Any refinements proposed to the Executive's proposal
- The expected benefits of, and challenges associated with, implementation of the proposal, in particular considering the health and quality of life for County residents and race and social justice considerations
- A preferred timeline for implementation
- The amount of private funding that can reasonably be anticipated
- Preferred public funding option(s)
- Implementation strategies
- How high conservation value lands within cities should be addressed
- Implications for the County's parks system levy, which is up for renewal in 2019<sub>29</sub>

THE TIME IS

**NOW**

TO CONSERVE  
KING COUNTY'S LANDS



FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS