



King County

ADDENDUM To Existing Environmental Documents

For the 2008 Amendments to

The King County Comprehensive Plan

**King County
Department of Development and Environmental Services**

September 16, 2008

Prepared in Compliance with

The Washington State Environmental Policy Act of 1971
Chapter 43.21C Revised Code of Washington
Chapter 197-11, Washington Administrative Code
Revised SEPA Guidelines, Effective April 4, 1984
And
Chapter 20.44, King County Code

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Responsible Official:



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Distribution List

Fact Sheet

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Proposed Action: Annual amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan are being proposed in accordance with the provisions of the Growth Management Act and King County Code Title 20. Executive-proposal includes amendments to the King County Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, technical appendices and the development regulations that implement the Plan.

Responsible Official: Steve Bottheim, Planning Supervisor
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Department of Development and Environmental Services

Approvals Required: Adoption by Metropolitan King County Council

EIS Addendum issued by: Department of Development and Environmental Services

Location of Background Data & Supporting Documents: Department of Development and Environmental Services
900 Oakesdale Ave SW
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Environmental Review Process

The Growth Management Act (GMA), adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 1990, established an overall framework for tiered and coordinated planning in Washington State. It requires counties and cities to work cooperatively to plan for orderly development. In 1994, King County complied with the GMA through its adoption of Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) and the King County Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan). The primary function of the CPPs is to provide policy guidance for the orderly development of King County and its cities while the Comprehensive Plan outlines an overall vision for King County and the region. The Comprehensive Plan offers policy direction related to urban land use, rural land use, economic development, housing, natural resource lands, the natural environment, facilities and services, transportation, parks and recreation, cultural resources, energy and communications, and planning and implementation.

The GMA requires that all proposed amendments to a comprehensive plan be considered no more than once a year and that they are considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect of various proposals are considered as one consolidated package. Every ten years the urban growth area must be reviewed for adequate capacity. Under King County regulations small routine or technical changes can be made to the comprehensive plan every year, but large changes including policy amendments and the urban growth boundary can be made only once every four years. A major update occurred in 2000. The 2004 update was the second major update and the first mandated review of the capacity of urban growth area.

To comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), in 1994 King County issued environmental impact statements (EISs) for the CPPs and Comprehensive Plan. King County issued addenda to the Comprehensive Plan EIS in 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998. In 2000 King County issued a Supplemental EIS for the Comprehensive Plan.

Environmental review for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan included review of all existing environmental documents and issuance of an addendum, which adopted existing environmental documents and assessed the environmental effects associated with the Executive Recommended Plan dated March 1, 2004.

Environmental review for the 2008 annual review of the KCCP occurs through the issuance of this addendum adopting existing environmental documents and assessing the environmental effects associated with the Executive Recommended Plan, March 1, 2008 (Executive Proposal) and the amendments approved by the King County Council Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee (GMUAC Amendments)..

This addendum provides additional information and analysis and does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts and alternatives in the environmental documents adopted in this addendum.

Environmental Review of Proposed Amendments

Summary of Proposal

The proposed project is an update of the King County Comprehensive Plan. The update includes amendments and additions to the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, technical appendices and the development regulations that implement the Plan. This addendum reviews the update to both the policies and the development regulations. There are many technical and formatting changes to the plan such as capitalization, minor language changes and updating references to population figures, names of documents and websites. Several major sections have been moved to different chapters with no substantive changes. This analysis will only consider the affects of those amendments to the plan that are substantive in nature.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan amendments, the proposal includes:

- Regional Trail Needs Report
- Transportation Needs Report
- Thirty-one land use and area zoning map amendments, and
- Amendments to King County Code Titles 13, 14, 16, 19A, 20, and 21A to implement the policy amendments. The impacts associated with the development regulations that are proposed to implement the policy amendments are the same as the impacts associated with the Comprehensive Plan policy amendments and additions.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

1. Introduction

1.1 Proposal

Add a new section to address new and emerging issues including seven new framework policies addressing:

- sustainable communities,
- climate change,
- public health in the built environment,
- equity and social justice,
- food policy and planning,
- protection and recovery of Puget Sound implementing watershed based fisheries plans
- performance measurement.

1.2 Background

King County has been using the principles of the Smart Growth movement since 1997 to set comprehensive plan policy and delivering services. The new framework policies are

intended to build upon the Smart Growth initiative to address existing and emerging issues.

1.3 Analysis

Smart Growth, once focused on relatively narrow principles of sustainability, takes on a holistic planning approach to integrating social, economic and environmental quality of life considerations into the process of how King County should plan and implement public projects, guide private development and create a framework of interdependent goals to sustain all aspects of the natural and built environment within urban and rural communities while promoting growth and economic prosperity. Aspects of Smart Growth sustainability will substantially alter the methods by which private and public proposals are reviewed for consistency with comprehensive planning policies.

2. Chapter One—Regional Planning

2.1 Proposal

Amend the planning framework section to recognize the subarea plan as the planning process for the sub-county level planning. Delete neighborhood planning policy. Add elements to comprehensive plan amendment process.

2.2 Background

Vision 2020, a long-range growth management economic and transportation strategy for the central Puget Sound region, is replaced by Vision 2040 as the long range guide for the future of the four-county region. As part of its GMA mandated guide to comprehensive plan development King County has formulated framework policies in support of objectives aimed at: balancing infrastructure needs (with social, cultural, educational, recreational, civic, health and safety needs to preserve the high quality of life enjoyed by King County residents); concentrating infrastructure investments and service delivery; solving service deficiencies (for existing demand and future phased growth); promoting economic prosperity; increasing housing choices; targeting road and transit investments to meet facility and service demand; balancing urban use development and environmental protection; and preservation of Rural Resource lands and ecologically fragile areas for future generations by maintaining low residential densities in such areas.

As more of the urban area has incorporated sub-area planning studies have narrowed their focus to smaller areas.

2.3 Analysis

Subarea plans address issues of concern at the neighborhood level. This change is administrative in nature and will not affect the planning process.

3. Chapter Two—Urban Communities

3.1 Proposal

The proposal adds new or amends existing environmental policies related to:

- **Urban Land Use:** designating Rural City Urban Growth Areas as part of the Urban Growth Area (UGA); adding mitigation of climate change impacts as a goal to development within the UGA; adding a new policy allowing Rural Area lands to be considered part of the UGA; adding a new policy to encourage techniques to reduce heat absorption in development proposals; and amending policies and add a new policy regarding Transferable Development Rights (TDRs); moves economic development section to a new chapter;
- **Housing:** addresses affordable housing issues by setting affordable housing goals and mandates for regional cooperation, and targeting surplus county property for affordable housing development; promoting preservation and development of affordable rental housing and housing ownership opportunities; promoting accessory dwelling units in urban residential zones; providing incentives for affordable housing projects; including framework policies in affordable housing projects and projects that receive incentives or subsidies from King County, and promoting housing ownership opportunities;
- **Human Services:** delete all existing human services policies and replace with new policies to define King County’s regional role and goals in service delivery, and identify priorities and principles to guide use of resources for human service actions and investments,
- **Sustainable Development:** delete policy requiring cost-benefit analysis of green building practices in county capital improvement projects; provide technical assistance and incentives for the private sector to use sustainable and low-impact development practices, and delete the use of demonstration projects to guide the application and refinement of low impact development regulations.

3.2 Background

The UGA for King County now covers 460 square miles, less than one-quarter of the county’s total area of 2,134 square miles, and unincorporated areas within the UGA account for approximately 73 square miles of the total UGA (15.86%). Additional land should be added to the UGA when it is contiguous to such area, but not adjacent to agricultural or forest production lands, and meets specific development criteria. Increased use of transferable development rights within the UGA encourages preservation of Rural Resource lands. Managing growth by focusing increased density within the UGA creates communities that have positive effects on public health and climate change. Creation of new UGA lands and opportunities for increased densities within the UGA helps create affordable housing opportunities.

Development regulations that help residents replace vehicle trips with walking or biking helps improve individual health outcomes and reduce carbon emission impacts. Reducing

the public health hazard of heat island effects within UGA lands is a planning goal to improve the quality of life for UGA residents.

3.3 Analysis

Urban lands available for development are becoming a scarce resource. Responsible growth management allowing for increased densities within the UGA while protecting Rural Area lands focuses growth to the UGA in keeping with sound planning policies. Increased densities can also support development strategies that favor better public health outcomes and a reduced carbon footprint.

4. Chapter Three—Rural Legacy and natural Resource Lands

4.1 Proposal

Reorganization and revision of the introductory text to reflect policies that encourage natural resource-based industries and natural resource land uses in the Rural Area.

The proposal adds new or amends existing environmental policies related to:

- Rural Legacy and Communities;
- Rural Designation: Rural Area Designation Criteria in conformance with the GMA specified rural element for comprehensive plans defining rural character; rural King County Forestry and Agriculture policies, (formerly Rural Resource policies), with reference to other portions of this section; to promote conservation and ensure active forest management and implementation of forestry stewardship programs in various regulations, permitting processes and incentive programs; support livestock rearing and management, and production of associated products, as components of King County’s agricultural economy; support and sustain equestrian activities in the Rural Area; existing policy encouraging owners of property to allow continued equestrian access to existing trails and recognizing such trails so that land owners might qualify for a property tax reduction and ensure key linkages to regional trail systems are not lost;
- Rural Densities and Development: Transfer of Development Rights Program; maintaining low density development in the Rural Areas and Resource Lands, providing mitigation for impacts of urban development on global warming by reducing emissions from transportation and sequestering carbon through retention of forest cover; defining eligible sending and receiving sites, and creating allocations of development rights and preferences based on location; the Rural and Resource Land Preservation Program, setting goals for the program to meet development reduction targets, supporting Demonstration Projects that involve potential expansion of the UGA, and supporting climate change initiatives, transportation concurrency requirements and density bonuses; supporting sustainable development, by implementing a program of customized stewardship plans with land owners.
- Rural Neighborhood Commercial Centers: (formerly Rural Neighborhoods) designating such areas specifically on the Land Use map and setting Non-

