

Vision Statement Review

10-Year Comprehensive Plan Update ■ Kitsap County ■ March 21, 2006



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Chapter 1. Overview

1.1. Purpose

Kitsap County is undergoing a 10-Year Comprehensive Plan Update. The adopted Comprehensive Plan includes a vision statement expressing how the community envisions the future for a 20-year period. When adopted in 1998 the plan horizon was for the year 2012; it was recently amended to address interim 2017 growth forecasts. With the 10-Year Update and a new horizon year of 2025, it is appropriate to review what portions of the county vision may need discussion or refinement particularly during the public scoping process intended for late March 2006.

1.2. What is a Vision Statement?

A vision statement is an articulation of a community's future:

- “A vision involves articulating when and how things should be accomplished and believing it can be achieved. It is the ability to see the end result.”¹
- “The purpose of a vision statement is to state your goals clearly so that you can build plans that will, over time, make all the parts of the statement substantially true.”²

¹ Washington State Department of Community Development (1991). *Towards Managing Growth in Washington: A Guide to Community Visioning*. Olympia, WA.

² Based on query “what is a vision statement” at www.ask.com.

- “Purpose and vision statements are short, clear, understandable written statements that identify [an agency’s purpose] and focus efforts and resources towards continuous change and improvement in a specific direction.”³

If implemented effectively, the “visioning” process in planning will:

- Engage community members in creating a shared vision;
- Generate public enthusiasm and support;
- Focus decision-makers on what really matters to the community;
- Result in a comprehensive plan that reflects community values; and
- Garner a commitment towards implementation of the comprehensive plan.

1.3. Kitsap County Vision Statement

Kitsap County’s Vision Statement was adopted in 1998 with its Comprehensive Plan. The Vision Statement focuses on the natural environment, livable urban communities, quality services, range of housing choices, parks/recreation, healthy cities, economic development, civic/cultural activities, rural community character, multi-modal transportation systems, and responsive government (see text box, following page). The Consultant Team concludes that Kitsap County’s Vision Statement provides a strong foundation for the 10-Year Comprehensive Plan Update. We recommend that the County maintain the direction provided in the Vision Statement, with any updates or minor revisions as identified through the public scoping workshops, rather than a fundamental change in direction.

³ Based on site accessed from www.ask.com; developed by a school district in Michigan.



A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Kitsap County has reached a crossroads in its growth and development where many residents, business people and government officials see an opportunity to provide direction and vision for the future growth of Kitsap County.

Despite rapid growth in the past two decades, Kitsap County remains an attractive place to live and work – and its residents want to keep it that way. Yet Kitsap County faces several critical issues that, if misguided, could contribute to a loss of the sense of place that gives Kitsap County its unique character. Some of these issues include the loss of rural character, increasing growth pressures from forces both within Kitsap County and from without, increasing traffic on area roadways, and the implementation of public transit routes and alternative modes of transportation.

Kitsap County absorbed an 87% increase in population between 1970 and 1990 – more than twice the state's growth rate of 42.6%. In the ensuing seven years, Kitsap County grew from 189,731 to 231,969 – a 22% increase between 1990 and 2000. Today, in terms of the number of people per square mile, Kitsap is the second most-dense County in the state next to King County.

In the face of continued growth, Kitsap County seeks to shape its future in ways that will maintain the quality of life that makes Kitsap County a special place to live and work.

Kitsap County citizens, through an extensive public involvement process, have described how they see their Kitsap County today and tomorrow, and what they do and don't like. They have made it clear what they want Kitsap County to look like 20 years from now.

They envision a future in which our natural systems are protected; the water quality in our lakes, streams and Puget Sound is enhanced; the village character of some of our smaller towns is preserved; the historical nature of our communities is respected in order to preserve our heritage for future generations; a diversified economic base supports good jobs, contributes to healthy downtowns in our cities and affordable housing choices; and the rural appearance of our county is perpetuated.

This vision of the future, which is shared by citizens and elected officials, includes the following elements:

Protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including wetlands, streams, wildlife habitat, water quality and natural resource activities;

Attractive, well designed and livable urban communities, supported by efficient and high quality services and facilities, and providing a range of housing choices;

Creation of a system of open space, parks and greenbelts, that provide opportunities for recreation and that give structure and separation to urban areas;

Healthy cities that are the region's centers for employment, affordable housing choices, and civic and cultural activities;

A vital and diversified economy that provides living wage jobs for residents, supported by adequate land for a range of employment uses and that encourages accomplishment of local economic development goals;

Maintenance of the traditional character, appearance, functions and lifestyles of Kitsap County's rural communities and areas;

Creation of an efficient multi-modal transportation system – including roads and highways, ferries, and opportunities for non-motorized travel – that provides efficient access and mobility for county residents and supports our land use pattern; and

An efficient and responsive government that works with citizens, governmental entities and Tribes to meet collective needs fairly; and that supports education, environmental protection and human services.

This vision has guided development of this Comprehensive Plan. Its policies give direction for managing future growth consistent with our desired future and quality of life. A key strategy to accomplish this vision is the intention to encourage future urban growth in areas within incorporated cities and in unincorporated areas that are already characterized by urban growth with existing and planned services and facilities. These actions will work to strengthen our natural environmental and rural character, and are geared to reduce taxpayer costs by focusing the expenditure of public funds, encouraging concentrated development where appropriate, and increasing our choices for housing and jobs. This Plan recognizes the complexities involved in balancing historical patterns of growth with a preferred vision of the future and legal requirements. It recognizes that some tradeoffs must be made to balance the costs with the gains, that flexibility is necessary to adapt to changing conditions and that at all times the Plan must reflect the long-term goals of the people living and working here.

Chapter 2. Vision Statement Review

While more information will come from the March 2006 public workshops in terms of public input and priorities for the 10-Year Update, it is useful to review recent citizen survey input and Growth Management Act goals to determine possible areas of vision statement discussion/affirmation with the Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and community residents at upcoming meetings.

2.1. Growth Management Act Goals

Similar to a vision or purpose statement the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) identifies goals around which the requirements of the act revolve. The 13 goals appear in Appendix A and can be summarized by topic as:

- Urban growth
- Reduce sprawl
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic development
- Property rights
- Permits
- Natural resource industries
- Open space and recreation
- Environment
- Citizen participation and coordination
- Public facilities and services
- Historic preservation

Per RCW 36.70A.020 “[t]he ... goals are not listed in order of priority and shall be used exclusively for the purpose of guiding the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations.” All goals should be balanced in developing GMA Comprehensive Plans and no one goal has a priority over the other.



Kitsap County’s vision statement describes the County’s future, emphasizing issues of particular importance to its citizens. Although the County vision statement is consistent with GMA goals, it is not required to repeat GMA goals or address each goal. However, the Comprehensive Plan needs to be consistent with both the GMA goals and Kitsap community vision.

2.2. 2004 Citizens Survey

In Summer 2004, a telephone survey of 410 residents randomly sampled were asked a series of questions related to quality of life, county services, and county budget priorities. Several topics pertained to issues addressed in the county Comprehensive Plan and are relevant to consider for the 10-Year Update. A summary of the 2004 Citizen Survey is included in Appendix A. Table 2-1 identifies the categories of questions and brief results. In general, the top citizen concerns included:

- Communication
- Planning for the future
- Arts/cultural opportunities
- Trails
- Economic development
- Availability of low-income housing
- Traffic congestion
- Water quality
- Aesthetics/code enforcement (noxious weeds; junk cars)
- Public transportation
- Health – drug abuse and mental health

In terms of budget priorities, respondents’ top three categories were traffic and planning, education and social services, and economic development.

Table 2-1. Citizens Survey Summary

Category of Questions	Areas/Topics to Maintain Positive Ratings	Areas/Topics to Improve or to Focus Attention
Rating Kitsap County Overall	Overall, Kitsap County citizens give very favorable ratings to their county and most would recommend it to others as a place to live. They generally feel safe in their neighborhoods and integrated in their communities.	A significant segment feels dissatisfied with how the county communicates with its residents and plans for the future. Residents are also split on the amount of opportunity they feel they have to affect how things happen in Kitsap County.
Rating Kitsap County Services and Attributes	The top four performers for “good” and “excellent” ratings include being a good place to raise children, the quality of the public library system, the ability to get around by car and the availability of parks and open	Between one third and one half of residents give a good or excellent rating to the following items: the availability of arts and cultural activities, access to walking trails, planning for future growth, the availability of activities for kids and



Category of Questions	Areas/Topics to Maintain Positive Ratings	Areas/Topics to Improve or to Focus Attention
	<p>spaces.</p> <p>A second tier of performers includes services and amenities that rate excellent and good from half to two thirds of respondents. They include: recognizing and appreciating diversity, the infrequency of violent crime, the adequacy of support systems for senior citizens, and the infrequency of non-violent crime.</p>	<p>teens, planning for economic development, the availability of low-income housing and the ability to get around by bicycle.</p> <p>Fewer than one in four residents attest that the amount or extent of traffic congestion and the county's plans for future traffic is either good or excellent.</p>
Kitsap County Issues	<p>The level of concern over access and activities ranks somewhat lower altogether, including recreational facilities, arts and cultural activities, access to shoreline and to walking trails.</p> <p>Issues of lesser concern include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ noise and air pollution rate ▪ racial and ethnic discrimination is a much lesser concern 	<p>Residents are generally most concerned with environmental and aesthetic issues, including traffic, road conditions, water pollution, nuisance plants, junk vehicles and illegal dumping.</p> <p>There are corresponding levels of concern about social issues such as unemployment, alcohol abuse, low-income housing, public transportation, and mental illness.</p> <p>Although the general trend indicates a more positive rating of the county's response to drug abuse problems, there are significant segments of the population who clearly demonstrate a more negative attitude towards current county efforts.</p>
Identifying and Rating County's Highest Budget Priority		<p>Kitsap Citizens focus on three main areas of concern in allocating the County's highest budget priority: traffic and planning, education and social services, and economic development.</p>
Priority for Spending County Tax Dollars		<p>The top three priorities include maintaining county roads, recruiting businesses that can offer living wage jobs, and responding to drug abuse problems – each with at least one in two who says it should be a major priority.</p>

2.3. Potential Vision Discussion Topics

In March 2006, discussions with the BOCC and Planning Commission will occur regarding affirmation of the community vision for the 10-year Update. In addition, the County will host a series of public workshops on the County vision. This section identifies potential discussion topics based on GMA principles and the 2004 Citizen's Survey.



Kitsap County's vision statement addresses GMA goals directly or indirectly. Topics directly addressed include natural environment, urban growth (livable urban communities and healthy cities – focus on centers for growth), quality services, range of housing choices particularly in cities, parks/recreation, economic development, civic/cultural activities, rural community character, multi-modal transportation systems, and responsive government. Some GMA goal topics that are more indirectly addressed include: affordable housing choices in the county as well as the cities, density of development/sprawl reduction, natural resource lands (timber primarily), and historic resources.

The Kitsap County vision statement addresses many of the same topics as identified by citizens in the 2004 survey including traffic, education, and economic development. Citizen topics indirectly addressed in the vision statement include: communication, arts/cultural activities, and affordable housing in the County as well as cities.

The 10-Year Update is expected to focus upon forecast growth, urban and rural land use, and adequate transportation and public facilities/services to accommodate growth. GMA and citizen issues that could be explored further in decision-maker discussions and vision workshops related to the 10-Year Update include the following:

- Citizen participation and communication – for the 10-Year Update and beyond
- Planning for the future – particularly economic development and affordable housing
- Development character in urban and rural areas, including a discussion of what “traditional character” means in the current vision bullet
- Cultural/historic resources and protection
- Natural environment quality and protection
- Property rights, e.g. GMA goals
- Transportation and transit services
- Future education and public service capacities and improvements

The topics and format of the meetings and workshops will address these topics through the vision statement review. The above list is provided as a guide to issues the County may propose to discuss with citizens.

Appendix A: GMA Goals

RCW 36.70A.020: Planning goals.

The following goals are adopted to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations of those counties and cities that are required or choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040. The following goals are not listed in order of priority and shall be used exclusively for the purpose of guiding the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations:

- (1) Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- (2) Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
- (3) Transportation. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- (4) Housing. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.
- (5) Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
- (6) Property rights. Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
- (7) Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
- (8) Natural resource industries. Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.

(9) Open space and recreation. Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.

(10) Environment. Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.

(11) Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

(12) Public facilities and services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.

(13) Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.



Appendix B: Citizens Survey 2004 – Summary

Kitsap County Citizen Survey: Final Report, Submitted July 30, 2004

The Kitsap County Board of Commissioners has decided that Kitsap County will develop and implement a county-wide citizen survey in 2004 to support the larger County budgeting and planning process. The primary purpose of this research is to gather input from the County's citizens related to the importance of and satisfaction with specific County services, issues, problems and programs.

Kitsap County's Citizen Survey was conducted via telephone between June 17, 2004 and June 25, 2004. Northwest Research Group contacted households within the county from a random sample of County residents. The sample, purchased from Scientific Telephone Samples, contained a total of 5,290 phone numbers in Kitsap County in which all numbers were attempted to reach the final sample size of 410.⁴

Rating Kitsap County Overall

Overall, Kitsap County citizens give very favorable ratings to their County and most would recommend it to others as a place to live. They generally feel safe in their neighborhoods and integrated in their communities. While a majority of residents indicate overall satisfaction, a significant segment feels dissatisfied with how the County communicates with its residents and plans for the future. Residents are also split on the amount of opportunity they feel they have to affect how things happen in Kitsap County.

Accessing Kitsap County Services

Understanding how residents access the range of services provided by Kitsap County begins with identifying the various sources where they gather information on these services. Residents obtain information on County services from a number of sources, including community and local newspapers, flyers they receive in the mail and information they read in County buildings. The second part of understanding residents' access to county services concerns the means of delivery. A majority assign a high priority to providing customer service staffing to ensure that citizens can conveniently and quickly obtain information and use services. Providing multiple channels to access information and county services is also seen as a very strong priority, particularly among younger residents. The connection with a real "live" person is also an essential aspect of accessing county services. Most respondents

⁴ About 1/3 of respondents lived in the three County districts, north, central, south.

indicate having a live operator to answer calls from the public is important, including two out of three who rate it as very important.

Using Kitsap County Services, Programs and Facilities

Residents were asked about their use or exposure to an array of county services, amenities and publications over the past year. There are interesting and significant distinctions between the districts regarding some of the services, publications and programs they are more or less likely to have been recently exposed to. Increased exposure to county services and amenities, in particular to the County Fair and Community Centers, is linked to a more favorable rating of Kitsap County as a place to live.

Rating Kitsap County Services and Attributes

Residents rated Kitsap County on seventeen specific services and attributes. The top four performers for “good” and “excellent” ratings include being a good place to raise children, the quality of the public library system, the ability to get around by car and the availability of parks and open spaces.

A second tier of performers includes services and amenities that rate excellent and good from half to two thirds of respondents. They include: recognizing and appreciating diversity, the infrequency of violent crime, the adequacy of support systems for senior citizens, and the infrequency of non-violent crime.

Between one third and one half of residents give a good or excellent rating to the following items: the availability of arts and cultural activities, access to walking trails, planning for future growth, the availability of activities for kids and teens, planning for economic development, the availability of low-income housing and the ability to get around by bicycle.

Fewer than one in four residents attest that the amount or extent of traffic congestion and the County’s plans for future traffic is either good or excellent.

Important and significant regional differences are noted on a number of key services and attributes in Kitsap County. The contrasts between districts are most salient on rating Kitsap County as a good place to raise children, the quality of its public library system, the infrequency of violent and non-violent crime and the availability of parks and open spaces.

Comparing to Services in Other Counties

Over half of respondents feel the quality of services provided by Kitsap County is somewhat or significantly better compared to those in other counties. Residents who are more likely to rate the quality of services provided by the County as better than in other counties include households with children, as well as residents aged 18 to 45 and those aged 65 and older. In all these categories, approximately six in ten indicate services provided by Kitsap County are better than in other counties. It is interesting



to note the level of exposure and experience with county services and amenities, as well as contact with a county employee have no effect on how residents compare the quality of Kitsap services to those in other counties.

Rating Kitsap County Employees

Approximately half of residents say they or someone in their household has contacted a Kitsap County employee in the past year. The overall impression of county employees is generally favorable, with three out of four indicating either “good” or “excellent”.

Kitsap County Issues

Awareness and Perception of Current Issues

Kitsap County citizens rely on a wide array of local and community newspapers to get information about local issues. The wide range in the levels of knowledge and awareness about county issues captures some of the vastness and breadth of the areas of concern to Kitsap County and its citizens. Results show that two out of three are aware of the NASCAR proposal and a similar proportion has at least some concerns about it.

Importance of County Issues

Residents rated the importance of specific items as well as the magnitude of issues on a series of relevant problems and concerns for Kitsap County. Residents are generally most concerned with environmental and aesthetic issues, including traffic, road conditions, water pollution, nuisance plants, junk vehicles and illegal dumping (noise and air pollution rate considerably lower). There are corresponding levels of concern about social issues such as unemployment, alcohol abuse, low-income housing, public transportation, and mental illness (racial and ethnic discrimination is a much lesser concern). The level of concern over access and activities ranks somewhat lower altogether, including recreational facilities, arts and cultural activities, access to shoreline and to walking trails.

Drug Issues in Kitsap County

Although the general trend indicates a more positive rating of the County’s response to drug abuse problems, there are significant segments of the population who clearly demonstrate a more negative attitude towards current county efforts. Drug abuse problems have directly affected a reported thirteen percent of county households.

Emergency Preparedness

At least two out of three residents feel Kitsap County is somewhat prepared or very prepared to deal with natural disasters. Residents who have had greater exposure and experience with County services and amenities tend to indicate the county is more prepared to deal with natural disasters. Approximately one in two residents reports

they have a designated emergency kit. Of those, four out of five say their kit provides at least three days of food, water, first aid, clothing and other emergency supplies for everyone in the household.

Recommendation for County Open Space and Parks Plan

When asked what one change they would like to make to the County plan for parks and open spaces, the most cited response was to increase the space available for parks and recreation. Approximately one in ten respondents mention improving access to parks or improving park facilities, equipment and staffing. Other suggestions include: reducing fees, improving general park maintenance, keeping existing parks open, improving security and improving communications about park services.

County Budget Priorities

Identifying and Rating County's Highest Budget Priority

Kitsap Citizens focus on three main areas of concern in allocating the County's highest budget priority: traffic and planning, education and social services, and economic development. There is some degree of regional variation in these priorities, in particular between the relative importance of managing and planning for growth versus aiming to develop a stronger economy in the region. The importance of education is driven to some extent by age whereas the priority for health and social services is highly sensitive to household income. Overall, there is a fairly acute sense of urgency and negativity towards the county's performance on the self-identified highest budget priority.

Maintaining a Balanced Budget

Counties are facing difficult choices in attempting to maintain a balanced budget while dealing with reduced revenues. When asked to choose between four plausible options, a plurality of residents would rather go to the polls and seek voter approval for higher taxes. Those who would elect to eliminate specific programs from Kitsap County operations had some difficulty in identifying which specific programs to eliminate.

Priority for Spending County Tax Dollars

Nearly all the issues that residents were asked to rate garnered very high levels of attention, with at least two out of three rating it a major or moderate priority for spending tax dollars. The top three priorities include maintaining county roads, recruiting businesses that can offer living wage jobs, and responding to drug abuse problems –each with at least one in two who says it should be a major priority.

At a second level of priority, there are a number of issues that rate a “major” priority among just fewer than two in five residents. These include: developing and maintaining county parks, promoting economic development and diversification, promoting safe housing and coordinating land use. Kitsap residents rate developing

and maintaining walking and bike trails and promoting tourism rate slightly lower. Fewer than half of Kitsap residents rate this item as a major (7%) or moderate (34%) budget priority.

Perception of Value-for-Money in Kitsap County

Kitsap residents are generally accepting that they are getting good value-for-dollar for the services and programs provided by the County. While more than three in four believe their property tax bill is the same or higher than in other Washington counties, there is little consensus as to how much of their tax bill goes to support county government services. The perception of value for money does not appear to be predicated by age or household income, nor does it appear to be based the level of exposure to county services and amenities. On the other hand, those who feel that they are paying more than the State average in property taxes in Kitsap County are more likely to say they are getting their money's worth for County services and facilities.

