

# Introduction

## 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 the 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 which, if misguided, could contribute to a loss of the sense of place that gives the county its unique character. Some of these issues include the loss of rural character, increasing growth pressures from forces both within the county and from without, increasing traffic on area roadways, and the implementation of public transit routes and alternative modes of transportation.

The 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, the county grew from 189,731 to 229,400 – a 21 % increase between 1990 and 1997. Today, in terms of the number of people per acre, Kitsap is the second most-dense county in the state next to King County.

In the face of continued growth, the 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 county today and tomorrow, and what they do and don’t like. They have made it clear what they want the 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 components:

- # 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 forwards accomplishment of local economic development goals;
- # maintenance of the traditional character, appearance, functions and lifestyles of the 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 that 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 to occur in areas within incorporated cities and unincorporated areas which already are 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.

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

This Comprehensive Plan, once it is adopted in its final form by the Board of County Commissioners, is a vehicle to help Kitsap County achieve its vision of the future.

Used as a guide for the physical, economic and community development of the county for the next 20 years, the Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and policies for the county to use in evaluating and making future decisions. The plan's policies communicate the long-term values and aspirations of the region. By viewing the region as a whole, the plan shows how all the different parts – land use, housing, transportation and capital facilities – must work together to achieve the desired vision.

Once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, all the county's decisions must be consistent with it. Used this way, the Comprehensive Plan minimizes conflict in decision making, promotes coordination among programs and regulations, and brings predictability to the development process. Individual land owners and private interest groups are able to use the plan to evaluate their decisions in light of the community's goals. Everyone is able to determine how their individual interests can best be served in a manner consistent with the plan.

The Plan has these characteristics:

- # **Long-range.** The plan is based on a 20-year vision of the county, as articulated by the community through public participation meetings.
- # **Predictable.** The plan is site specific and the intent of the plan is stated clearly as to how properties will be zoned and used in the future.
- # **Consistent.** The plan is internally consistent and has been coordinated with

neighboring jurisdictions in an attempt to be externally consistent.

- # **Comprehensive.** The plan organizes and coordinates the complex interrelationships among people, land, resources, natural environmental systems, and public facilities in such a way as to protect the future health, safety and welfare of the citizens.
- # **Flexible.** The plan will continue to evolve after it is officially adopted to reflect Kitsap County’s actual experience of growth and citizens’ concerns. Through annual updates and major, five-year reviews, the plan will be adjusted to changing needs, unforeseen circumstances, or new local and regional trends.

**The Planning Context**

Planning for the future is happening simultaneously at several levels -- regional, countywide and in local cities and towns. Kitsap County’s plan must be consistent with planning policies adopted by the state and regional planning agencies.

The following outlines the state and regional planning policies and requirements that led to development of this plan:

**Washington State: Growth Management Act**

Passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 by the state Legislature was a critical step in the development of rational policies to sustain growth in Washington. For the first time in the state’s history, all urban counties and their cities were required to develop and adopt comprehensive plans and regulations to implement these plans. To ensure comparable planning efforts, the GMA required that comprehensive plans address specific issues including (but not limited to)

land use, transportation, housing, capital facilities and services, natural environment and economic development.

The GMA established 13 goals for the comprehensive planning process:

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, 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 shall 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.** Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.
  - 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.
- # **Capital facilities.** Kitsap County must demonstrate that it can afford the infrastructure needed to support the expected growth. If the services cannot be provided, the land uses must be revised or the levels of services reduced.
- # **Comprehensiveness.** This plan must look at the county as an integrated set of systems of land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities and utilities. All areas of the county and all elements of this plan must be addressed from a countywide perspective.
- # **Consistency.** This plan must avoid internal contradictions and must not interfere with the successful implementation of the plans of neighboring jurisdictions. Its policies must be consistent with the direction established by the GMA, Vision 2020 and the Kitsap County Countywide Planning Policy.

In addition, the GMA established three key requirements which all local plans must meet:

### **Kitsap County: Countywide Planning Policy and Vision 2020**

To achieve coordinated planning efforts, the GMA further required that counties and cities develop a set of framework policies to guide development of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. On August 10, 1992, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the Kitsap County Countywide Planning Policy which defines the countywide vision and establishes the parameters from which the comprehensive plans of Kitsap County and its cities were developed. Seven agencies participated in development of the Countywide Planning Policy through the Kitsap Regional Council: the City of Bainbridge Island, City of Port Orchard, Port

Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, Kitsap County, City of Bremerton, City of Poulsbo and Squamish Tribe.

Specific objectives of the Countywide Planning Policy include:

- # Establish a process and criteria for designation of Urban Growth Areas.
- # Promotion of contiguous and orderly development.
- # Siting of public capital facilities.
- # Establishing transportation facilities and strategies.
- # Creating affordable housing plans and criteria.
- # Ensuring favorable employment and economic conditions in the county.
- # Coordination with tribal and federal governments.

In addition, Kitsap County’s Comprehensive Plan was guided by the growth policies of Vision 2020, the regional plan developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council. Vision 2020 calls for directing future growth into existing urban centers and serving those centers with a regional transit system.

**Kitsap County’s Comprehensive Plan**

The Growth Management Act, the Countywide Planning Policy and Vision 2020 represent the framework for Kitsap County’s Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive plans spell out the general policies and goals of a jurisdiction. They cover a wide range of issues relating to how a city or county changes over time.

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to comply with the Washington State Growth Management Act and other state laws that require local governments to plan comprehensively. It will be used to guide growth and development for residents living in the unincorporated area of Kitsap County.

This document is the result of a process that began in 1990 with the formation of citizens advisory committees and community planning efforts (see following section and appendix for detail on public participation).

On December 29, 1994, the Kitsap Board of County Commissioners adopted a Comprehensive Plan, which was subsequently appealed to the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board and declared invalid. The county adopted interim development regulations and interim urban growth areas (IUGA’s) as it worked to revise its comprehensive plan to meet GMA compliance in order to avoid potential sanctions, such as the state withholding payment of highway or other taxes.

To guide revision of the Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations, a number of “framework principles” grew out of a mediated process involving parties to various appeals to the county’s plan. The Board of County Commissioners affirmed these principles in January 1996: For a complete text of the principles and of substantive changes needed within the Comprehensive Plan to achieve the principles, see the Framework Principles Appendix.

Portions of the second Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1996, were invalidated by the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board in September, 1997. A revised plan, following the direction in the Hearings Board order, was prepared to meet the requirements of state law. This third revision – resulting in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan – was focused on revising the approach to

defining Urban Growth Areas and designating appropriate types, amounts and locations of different land uses; reconciling rural designations with Growth Management Act requirements; and ensuring consistency between the plan's amended land use element and map and other plan provisions.

### How to Use this Document

This Comprehensive Plan is divided into chapters dealing with specific issue areas, such as land use, housing, transportation, economic development and so forth. In this version of the Comprehensive Plan, three separate chapters in previous drafts -- Urban Growth Areas, Resource Lands, Land Use and Greenways -- have been included in the Land Use Chapter. In addition, much of the background information (e.g. population statistics, housing inventory and so forth) are now found in the Appendix.

Chapters contain goals and policies and, in some cases, maps. The goals and policies usually are preceded by some explanatory text, which describes the context. Goals represent broad statements of what the county would like to achieve in that specific area. They are clearly identified as goals within the text. Policies are intended to guide county decisions and actions needed to achieve its vision of the future. All policies are numbered and highlighted in bold print.

### Citizen Involvement

This Comprehensive Plan is based on an extensive public involvement process that began in 1990. Involvement included Community Forums, workshops, citizen advisory committees, open houses, comment sheets, mailings, public reviews by the Planning Commission and public hearings by the Board of County Commissioners.

A summary of the public participation program follows. For more detail, see the Public Participation appendix.

### Comprehensive Plan

# **Phase one: Growth symposium, community plans and citizen advisory committees.** In October 1990, Kitsap County conducted a Growth Management Symposium to 1) educate the community about growth and related planning issues in Kitsap County; 2) develop a vision and guidelines for a growth management strategy in 10 key areas; and 3) set forth a plan for post-symposium action. The visions and issues identified at the symposium have guided the comprehensive plan development. Subsequently, several communities of unincorporated Kitsap began community planning efforts which included establishment of citizen advisory committees and community plans for Silverdale, Kingston, Suquamish, Hansville and the South Kitsap area.

In addition to the citizen advisory committees which developed the above-mentioned community plans, other citizen advisory committees were appointed to focus on various issues which would contribute to, if not become a part of, the countywide comprehensive plan. These citizen advisory committees are:

- # Subarea Transportation Citizens Advisory Committee, which worked with Public Works' transportation staff and consultants in developing a 20-year plan by identifying and prioritizing transportation improvements for 6, 12 and 20 years.
- # Ground Water Advisory Committee developed a 20-year Groundwater Management Plan which addresses water quantity and quality in Kitsap County.

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- # Parks Citizen Advisory Committee worked with the Parks Department staff and consultants to develop a 20-year comprehensive plan which identifies park improvements, acquisitions and funding sources.
  - # Open Space Council supported Department of Community Development planning staff by writing the Open Space Goals and Policies and identifying areas to be included on the Open Space Overlay.
  - # The Solid Waste Citizen Advisory Committee assisted Public Works' staff in writing the Solid Waste Management Plan.
  - # Rural Roundtable, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to direct staff with policies for the Interim Development Regulations for Resource Lands.
  - # Kitsap County Planning Commission, the central citizen advisory committee which considered and made recommendations on the entire comprehensive plan.
  - # **Phase two: Visioning.** Visioning was an important and essential component of the public involvement program and in the development of the comprehensive plan. Visioning provided opportunities for Kitsap County residents, Planning Commissioners and planning staff to interact and discuss the issues facing planning for Kitsap's future. Beginning with the Growth Symposium, DCD staff initiated a separate visioning process for the countywide comprehensive plan in August 1992 and conducted nine public forums. The public input gathered at these meetings, and the questionnaires which were distributed throughout these meetings and subsequent outreach meetings, were used by planning staff to develop the framework of the plan, and specifically the goals and policies for the plan.
  - # **Phase three: Outreach.** From January 1993 through March 1994, DCD conducted an extensive program to gain public involvement in comprehensive plan development. The outreach included open houses and attending meetings of community and civic groups as well as regular press releases, meeting notices, newsletters and updates on the planning process. DCD mailed to a list of some 2,000 names, as well as making presentations at 54 open houses and meetings.
  - # **Phase four: Planning Commission as GMA Citizen Advisory Committee.** In September 1992, the Board of County Commissioners established that the Kitsap County Planning Commission would serve as the central citizen advisory committee to direct and assist planning staff in developing the countywide comprehensive plan. Between January 1993 and July 1993, the Planning Commission held 10 "education sessions" when experts in each of the areas to be addressed in the comprehensive plan made presentations. These sessions were vital for the both the planing staff and commission to grasp and understand the complexity and interconnectedness of developing a comprehensive plan under growth management. These were followed by 21 public sessions to review and revise comprehensive plan elements. On June 8, 1994, the draft comprehensive plan was presented to the Planning Commission and the public.
  - # **Phase five: Public Hearings.** The Planning Commission held seven public hearings between June and July 1994 before sending its recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners on

August 3, 1994. The Board of County Commissioners held three public hearings in September 1994 on the Planning Commission's recommended draft comprehensive plan. The County Commissioners sent portions of the draft plan with their proposed revisions back to the Planning Commission for its consideration and recommendations. The Planning Commission then held four public hearings in October 1994 on these remanded portions and proposed revisions. On October 17, 1994 the Planning Commission sent its recommendations on the remanded portions back to the County Commissioners, who approved the draft plan on October 19, 1994. The plan was sent to the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development for the 60-day review period mandated by the Growth Management Act. The Board of County Commissioners subsequently adopted the plan on December 29, 1994.

# **Phase six: Redevelopment of Comprehensive Plan.** On October 6, 1995, the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board declared the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan and implementing development regulations invalid. Following that decision, DCD began to rewrite the comprehensive plan in order to gain approval of the Growth Management Hearings Board. This phase also included extensive public involvement in the form of public hearings, educational workshops and public outreach meetings. On May 3, 1996, the Planning Commission adopted its recommended plan and presented it to the Board of County Commissioners, who held three public hearings as well as receiving public comment on the plan. Parts of the plan were returned to the Planning Commission for additional review in July 1996, and then sent back to the Commissioners for further consideration in September 1996. The

Commissioners approved the Plan on October 7, 1996 and sent it to the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development for the 60-day review period mandated by the Growth Management Act.

### # **Phase seven: 1998 Revision of the Comprehensive Plan**

On September 8, 1997, the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board invalidated the 1996 Comprehensive Plan, finding that several provisions – including defined Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) that were too large, and Rural Area land use provisions that permitted inappropriate urban densities -- still violated the Growth Management Act. Because the Land Use Element was invalidated, numerous provisions of the Plan had to be reviewed and potentially revised to ensure consistency with required changes. The County was also required to adopt implementing development regulations.

The County's work program for revising the Comprehensive Plan to comply with the Hearings Board decision focused on urban residential land capacity as the foundation for establishing correctly sized UGAs. Adopted and approved population forecasts and allocations (1992-2012) were the basis for this work, along with recalculated factors used to estimate developable land. GMA criteria for locating growth within UGAs (RCW 36.70A.110) were relied on to allocate growth in a priority sequence to areas already characterized by urban development and which had existing or planned services to accommodate planned growth.

Public involvement activities supporting this revision were geared to the nature of the plan revision effort and the compressed timetable for compliance established by the Hearings



Board order (180 days). The range of opportunities for public involvement and information included: dissemination and discussion of several issue papers (urban residential land capacity, commercial/ industrial land capacity, and rural character/limited areas of more intensive development); public informational meetings and workshops; meetings and discussions with interested groups, associations, tribes, cities and property owners; study sessions between the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners; and public hearings conducted by the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to hear testimony and to make recommendations and decisions. The revised plan is scheduled to be adopted by April 3, 1998 and transmitted to the Hearings Board on April 17, 1998.

### **SEPA Process**

Scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) began with the community meetings for the comprehensive plan's visioning process, initiated in August 1992. At each of the public forums, public comment was solicited on both planning issues and environmental impacts of concern. The meetings were advertised as opportunities for participation in the GMA planning process and for early scoping in the environmental review process.

The Determination of Significance and Scoping Notice for the Comprehensive Plan was issued in February 1994. A scoping meeting was held in Silverdale on March 1, 1994. Following the formal scoping period, a draft EIS was developed. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan was issued on July 11, 1994 with the comment period ending August 12, 1994. A public hearing on the DEIS was held August 9, 1994 in Silverdale.

After review of the comments, a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was prepared and issued on August 23, 1994. The adequacy of the FEIS was appealed by several parties. The appeal was heard by the Board of County Commissioners, who upheld the adequacy of the FEIS prior to adopting the comprehensive plan. The adequacy of the FEIS was subsequently appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board along with the comprehensive plan. A decision by the Hearings Board on the adequacy of the FEIS is still pending.

On June 21, 1996, the County released an Addendum to the Plan's EIS to cover two, more recent alternatives being considered to the Comprehensive Plan -- one issued on January 8, 1996; the other, May 3, 1996. The appeal period for the Addendum EIS ended on July 12, 1996. An appeal was filed and was heard in a public hearing held before the Board of County Commissioners on September 16, 1996. On October 7, 1996 the Board of County Commissioners upheld the appeal. County Staff was directed to prepare a Supplemental EIS to address the two previously mentioned alternatives and an analysis of the changes contained in the October 7, 1996 recommended Comprehensive Plan.

An EIS Addendum on the revised, 1998 plan was published in March, 1998. The Addendum provided new information concerning environmental impacts associated with the revised plan. The types and degree of environmental impacts anticipated to occur as a result of the plan are the same as or similar to those identified in previous Kitsap County environmental documents for a broad range of land use alternatives.

