

Get Involved in Kitsap County's Comprehensive Plan Update

Kitsap County is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan—a blueprint for local policies, planning, and capital facility investment with long-term implications for Kitsap residents' quality of life, and the County's environmental health. This is an opportunity to revise population and employment growth targets with the most up to date data; review existing goals, policies, and regulations; and write new policies based on community priorities. It's important that you make your views known to the Board of County Commissioners, county advisory groups, and county staff involved in this planning process at complan@kitsap.gov.

The overarching decision within the Comprehensive Plan Update is about land use. The county uses three alternatives about land use as the organizing framework for then conducting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Because North Kitsap has considerable land classified as rural, the choices among the alternatives are especially important to the North End. The three alternatives distribute growth differently based on regional plan goals, growth targets, requests for reclassification (rezoning) of properties and local circumstances.

Kitsap County's three alternatives can generally be described as:

Alternative 1—No Action: In this alternative, no changes are proposed in maps, policies, and regulations. This alternative accommodates the least growth in population, housing, and employment. This alternative continues current land use, urban growth area sizes and configurations, zoning and development regulations. Generally, it does not accommodate future population and employment growth or document its environmental impacts or capital facility needs. Since this alternative does not meet the requirements established for the county by the state and regional entities, it is used here as a baseline for looking at change rather than thinking of it as a viable alternative.

Alternative 2—Focused Growth/Urban Center Focus: Population, housing and employment growth is focused in existing urban areas such as Silverdale and Kingston with policies to incentivize more diverse housing types such as townhomes, multi-family and cottage housing. Rural uses remain the same as current and policies are developed to set greenhouse gas emission targets and provide greater tree canopy in urban areas. This alternative accommodates the most population growth focused within existing UGA boundaries to meet housing targets.

Alternative 3—Dispersed Growth: This alternative distributes growth similar to historic trends. It is single-family centric with limited multi-family opportunities or incentives. Urban areas are expanded to accommodate growth and some additional rural development is allowed for housing and jobs. The population is spread in a larger geography than the other alternatives but overall includes less population, housing and employment growth than Alternative 2. It would include

most reclassification (rezoning) requests except those that are GMA-non-compliant (e.g., urban zones in rural areas). This alternative includes no new incentives or regulatory revisions for urban center development.

There are two ways to communicate your views are:

- Written comments: Clearly identify the property/area or policy you are referring to and make specific comments about why you do or do not support a proposed change or are suggesting a change that is not currently in one of the alternatives.
- Public oral comments: Attend meetings of the Board of County Commissioners or the county's many advisory groups (in-person or via Zoom). To find advisory groups, go to www.kitsapgov.com. Scroll down and click on *County Advisory Groups* to see which groups seem relevant to your interests and concerns.

The Board of County Commissioners will make a decision (likely in April 2024) about what is called the "Preferred Alternative." The preferred alternative can draw from all three of the alternatives initially proposed. This is why it is so important for you to comment and let them know which features of these plans you prefer.

While the commissioners are expected to act in accord with the state Growth Management Act (GMA), there is considerable room for them to make decisions about the reclassifications (rezoning) that have been requested by landowners. If you support or are opposed to certain rezoning requests, please make your voice heard at any time through written or oral comments at meetings. Additionally, a public hearing will likely be held by the Board of County Commissioners in early 2024.

Keep your eyes open for a series of monthly articles published here with topics that include sustainable growth, fish and wildlife habitat/biodiversity, water, wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, and transportation. The articles are intended to help you contribute to the Comprehensive Plan Update and related planning efforts currently underway such as the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS plan) and the updating of the Critical Areas Ordinance.