

## **ANNEXATION** Related Amendments in 2016 Proposed Plan

In order to meet the Growth Management Act goal that counties serve as rural and regional service providers and cities serve as the provider of urban services, King County has actively pursued annexation of its unincorporated urban areas. This has required collaboration between the county and the cities and, since 1994, a significant portion of these areas have been moved into cities.

Annexations are complicated because of a variety of service delivery, tax structure and infrastructure issues as well as varied interests among local residents. These structural issues need to be considered and addressed to move annexation forward and they cannot be fixed by the county independent of the cities. *Given limited resources to incentivize annexations*, the Comprehensive Plan focuses on working with cities to support annexations. The following amendments are included in the proposed 2016 Comprehensive Plan update to move annexations forward.

### 1. Text changes

Text amendments are included to discuss the social and equity benefits of annexation for local residents:

**King County's annexation efforts are particularly important given the impacts of historical patterns of annexation. Over time, higher tax revenue-generating areas – retail, industrial, and commercial centers and more affluent residential neighborhoods – have incorporated or annexed first, while lower income, ethnically diverse communities remained unincorporated. Given the County's limited taxing authority, promoting annexation is the best way to advance equity and socially justice outcomes for residents living in unincorporated urban areas.**

Also, the Potential Annexation Area Map is updated to create greater clarity regarding which city is affiliated with each of the hundred-plus unincorporated urban areas.

### 2. Policy changes

Policy changes for potential annexation areas address a number of topics: promoting high-quality development, promoting the provision of amenities, and promoting coordination with the cities that are affiliated or have a logical nexus for annexation. If there is a commitment to annex, a variety of land use tools could be considered for joint planning. The amended policy removes the potential for industrial development as this would be inappropriate in most potential annexation areas. Last, there is a commitment for King County to work further on these issues through GMPC (see section #4 below).

- U-208 King County ~~shall consider initiating new subarea~~ **will engage in joint planning processes for the urban unincorporated areas in tandem with the annexing city upon a commitment from the city to annex through an interlocal agreement. Such planning may consider land use tools such as:**
- a. to assess the feasibility of traditional subarea plans or areawide rezoning;**
  - b. allowing additional commercial, industrial and high-density residential development through the application of new zoning;**
  - c. Transfers of Development Rights that add units to new development projects; or**
  - d. application of collaborative and innovative development approaches.**

**King County will work through the Growth Management Planning Council to develop a plan to move the remaining unincorporated urban potential annexation areas towards annexation.**

- U-133 King County encourages innovative, quality infill development and redevelopment in existing unincorporated urban areas. A variety of regulatory, incentive and program strategies could be considered, including:
- a. Special development standards for infill sites;
  - b. Assembly and resale of sites to providers of affordable and healthy housing;
  - c. Impact mitigation fee structures that favor infill developments;
  - d. Greater regulatory flexibility in allowing standards to be met using innovative techniques; ((and))
  - e. Coordination with incentive programs of cities affiliated to annex the area.
  - f. Green Building techniques that create sustainable development; and
  - g. Joint public/private loan guarantee pools.

Other policies speak to development within Potential Annexation Areas, and promote annexation by fostering quality development, additional attention to the provision of amenities and coordination with affiliated cities.

- Quality of development (see U-130, U-132, U-141, U-142, U-143, U-171)
- Provision of amenities (see U-132a, 132b, U-139a, U-139b, U-171a, R-320a)
- Coordination with cities affiliated for annexation (U-152)

### 3. Subarea Planning

Since 1994, there have been only minor updates to the county's Community Plans. After nearly two decades of aging plans and significant growth, King County's Department of Permitting and Environmental Review will initiate a subarea planning program. The program will use the seven Community Service Areas as the geographic framework for subarea planning. The planning schedule revolves around an eight-year cycle with a broad, policy level look at each CSA and more detailed focus in specific subareas within a CSA. Potential annexation areas will be the focus every four years (shown in boldface below), and there is increased attention at the initiation of the program in 2016 and 2017.

Year	Community Service Area	Other Planning
2016	<b>West King County CSA – Skyway-West Hill, and Vashon-Maury Island CSA</b>	Major Comp. Plan Update
2017	<b>West King County CSA – North Highline</b>	
2018	Snoqualmie Valley/Northeast King County CSA	
2019	Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River CSA	
2020	<b>West King County CSA</b>	Major Comp. Plan Update
2021	Bear Creek/ Sammamish CSA	
2022	Southeast King County CSA	
2023	Four Creeks/Tiger Mountain CSA	

### 4. Workplan

The workplan section is a new feature of the Comprehensive Plan and an action is included that commits the County, through Growth Management Planning Council, to reconsider the affiliations on the Annexation Area Map as well as the Joint Planning and Annexation section of the Countywide Planning Policies.

**Action 2: Develop a Plan, with the Growth Management Planning Council, To Move Remaining Unincorporated Urban Potential Annexation Areas Towards Annexation.** This interjurisdictional body has authority to propose amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies and has a unique defined role related to recommending approval or denial of urban growth area expansions. In order to move the remaining areas, which greatly range in size and complexity, towards annexation, this will be a major focus of work and will involve reconsideration of the Potential Annexation Areas map and the "Joint Planning and Annexation" section of Countywide Planning Policies.

- Timeline: Start following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, likely to be a two-year process.
- Outcomes: Updated Annexation Initiative that is anticipated to identify a path towards annexation for the remaining 125-plus areas.