

EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE Related Amendments in 2016 Proposed Plan

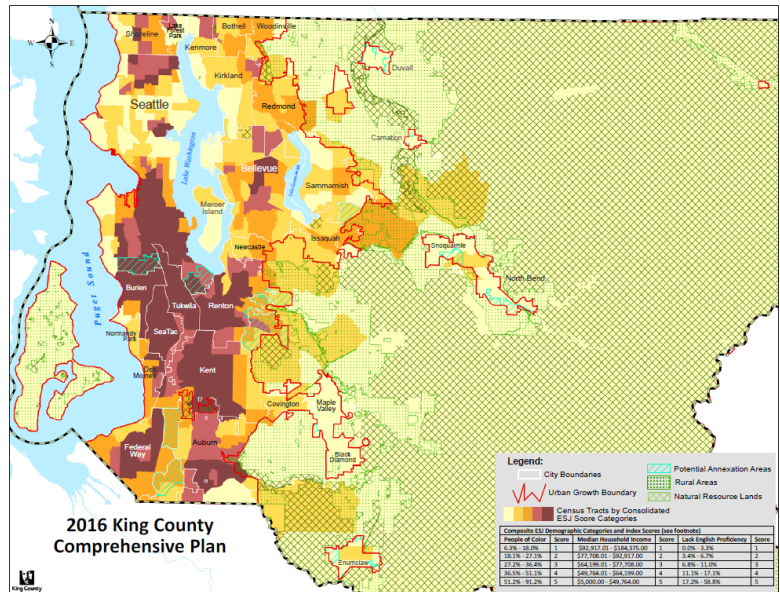
By any measure, our region has one of the highest qualities of life in the world, however, there is staggering inequity across King County and many communities are being left behind. For our region to continue to prosper, we need everyone to have a fair shot at success, regardless of where they started out in life.

This has long been recognized and policies were included in almost every chapter of 2012 adopted Comprehensive Plan. Addressing equity is foundational to other county planning work as well, such as limiting expansion of the urban growth area boundary to avoid creating auto-dependent housing far from services and working to annex unincorporated urban areas into cities that are able to provide a fuller range of services. In May 2016, Motion 14351 was adopted to establish the Scope of Work for the 2016 update and it included a strong focus on ESJ issues. In response, the following amendments are proposed in the *Executive Recommended 2016 Plan*.

1. Text and map changes

The draft plan establishes a new chapter on Housing and Human Services to heighten the focus on equity and the human-dimensions of land use planning. The new chapter consolidates and updates existing policies, and reflects equity-related initiatives such as Communities of Opportunity, the Health and Human Services Transformation program, and the Determinants of Equity program.

Additionally, to clarify the geographic dimension of these issues and how they relate to the long-range planning in the Comprehensive Plan, a new map is added that overlays Growth Management Act geographies (such as urban areas, rural areas, and the urban growth area boundary) with the geographic distribution of demographic groups that are the focus of the county's Equity and Social Justice work (including People of Color, Households by Median Household Income, and Households that Lack English Speaking Proficiency). This overlay clarifies that while equity considerations remain an important planning factor across all geographies, the county's planning best addresses equity through coordination with cities and continued efforts to move unincorporated urban areas towards annexation.



2. Policy changes

Policies are changed throughout the plan related to the planning process, public engagement, establishment of new community development tools, increasing housing density and affordable housing near business corridors and frequent transit, as well as addressing public health issues such as tobacco-free parks, smoke-free housing, healthy food retail, and urban agriculture. Policy changes address urban, rural and resource geographies, and topics range from housing, to parks, infrastructure investments, public facilities, economic development, and more. Specific examples are noted below.

Overarching Planning Objectives – ESJ added to the first policy in the entire plan

RP-101 King County shall strive to provide a high quality of life for all of its residents by working with cities, special purpose districts and residents to develop attractive, safe and accessible urban communities, retain rural character and rural neighborhoods, support economic development, promote equity and social justice, ((maintain)) preserve resource and open space lands, preserve the natural environment, and to protect significant cultural and historic resources.

Overarching Planning Objectives – from evaluating to implementing ESJ

((GP-405)) RP-205 King County will seek to reduce health ~~((disparities))~~ inequities and proactively address issues of equity, social and environmental justice when ~~((evaluating))~~ implementing its land use policies, programs, and practices.

Rural Area and Resource Lands Chapter – expanding representation in decision-making

R 661b King County should expand representation of low income and socially disadvantaged farmers within King County agricultural processes such as the Agriculture Commission, advisory committees, task forces and hiring.

Housing and Human Services – assisting with permanent affordable housing

((U-374)) H-171 King County should support innovative and flexible tools and programs that assist low-income renters to ~~((remain in))~~ maintain housing stability or to gain access to permanent affordable housing and private market housing, such as revolving loan funds that cover utility and damage deposits, and rental assistance programs.

Public Facilities and Services Chapter – considering impacts and involving affected communities in siting decisions

F-228 King County should strive to site essential public facilities equitably so that no racial, cultural, or socio-economic group is unduly impacted by essential public facility siting or expansion decisions. No single community should absorb an inequitable share of these facilities and their impacts and an assessment of existing facilities should be conducted when siting new facilities. Siting should consider equity, environmental justice and environmental, economic, technical and service area factors and communities with a disproportionate share of existing facilities should be actively engaged in the planning and siting process for new facilities. The net impact of siting new essential public facilities should be weighted against the net impact of expansion of existing essential public facilities, with appropriate buffering and mitigation. Essential public facilities that directly serve the public beyond their general vicinity shall be discouraged from locating in the Rural Area.

Public Facilities and Services Chapter – supporting variable rate structures for low-income communities

F-225a King County should consider provisions for service to low-income households through discount or low-rate fees for [public] services.

F-354 Cable companies should take ~~((affirmative steps to ensure that reasonable services are available regardless of income or the income of other people in the person's neighborhood))~~ proactive steps to ensure that there is widespread availability of cable service and diverse information is available to county residents, especially low-income communities.

Economic Development Chapter – equity in job and career opportunities for youth,

ED-304 King County shall continue to increase equity in jobs and career opportunities for youth through programs such as the Education Engagement Strategy launched by Public Health in 2013, and others.
a. Partner with private businesses, community organizations and educational institutions to provide job shadowing, internship and summer job opportunities for King County youth.
b. Partner with Maritime and Manufacturing industry businesses, and other business sectors, to engage high school students in vocational programs that offer training for living wage industry jobs. Work with these businesses to engage schools in promoting regional opportunities for apprenticeships and internships for high school students.

Other relevant policy changes include U-108, U-201a, R661b, E-221a, H-102, H-149, H-152, H-158, H-202, H-203, P-202, P-134, T-104a, F-108, F-201a, F-221a, F-287, F-271b, F-323, F-358, F-359, ED-303, ED-305, I-101 and I-601.

3. Annexation-related changes

As noted above, annexation of unincorporated urban areas is a key part of the strategy for addressing equity. While a separate fact sheet has been prepared on this issue, some highlights are noted below.

Policy changes: Policy changes for potential annexation areas include promoting high-quality development, increased provision of amenities, coordination with the cities that are affiliated or have a logical nexus for annexation in joint planning and, if there is a commitment to annex, collaboration on a variety of land use planning tools.

Workplan: This new section of the Comprehensive Plan includes an action committing the County, through the Growth Management Planning Council, to reconsider the affiliations shown on the Annexation Area Map as well as revisiting the Joint Planning and Annexation section of the Countywide Planning Policies.