

Kitsap County

growing for a better tomorrow



2024 Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

Executive Summary Outline



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1. Introduction

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires cities and counties to update their Comprehensive Plans every ten years. The Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan 2024-2044 (“Comp Plan”) serves as the policy document that helps guide decisions on services for a wide range of critical County programs, such as building roads, ensuring land for housing is available, and protecting the environment.

The Comp Plan is released concurrently with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP). Draft changes to development regulations were also release, which include increased heights, densities, and other changes that implement the Plan. This document includes the intent, background information, existing conditions, and various goals, policies, and strategies for the following eight elements: Land Use, Economic Development, Environment, Housing, Transportation, Parks, Recreation and Open Space, Capital Facilities and Utilities, and Climate Change.

The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes growth and future development in a sustainable manner. Kitsap County Leadership and staff use an inclusive and equitable approach to planning and decision-making that aims to balance housing needs, employment opportunities, transportation enhancements, and the protection of the natural environment. The Comp Plan demonstrates the County’s deep commitment to maintaining and restoring ecosystems via habitat conservation, restoration of waterways, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The Comp Plan establishes requirements that support and encourage healthy environment, affordable living, and ample resources that are attainable and sustainable for residents now and in the future. The Comp Plan was updated based on residential and employment targets that align with the regional growth strategy (VISION 2050) provided by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

The Comp Plan addresses each of the important policy areas presented in VISION 2050, such as:

- Provide opportunities for all.
- Increase housing choices and affordability.
- Sustain a strong economy.
- Significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Keep the region moving.
- Restore the health of the Puget Sound.
- Protect a network of open spaces.
- Grow in centers and near transit.
- Act collaboratively and support local efforts.

Throughout each element of the Comp Plan, special attention was paid to the diversity and equity implications of the goals, policies, and strategies to ensure that all residents within Kitsap County benefit from the intentions set forth. There is a special focus on purposeful and inclusive outreach for public engagement and involvement. The Comprehensive Plan 2024-2044 strives for an equitable distribution of county resources and opportunities for all residents who work, live, play, or visit Kitsap County.

a. Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted to address ways to accommodate growth. It requires that the growing cities and counties in the State complete comprehensive plans and development regulations to guide future growth. All jurisdictions are required to balance multiple goals including support for housing, economic development, protection of critical environmental areas, conserving natural resource lands and protecting property rights

The GMA calls for communities to review and, if necessary, revise their plans and regulations every ten years to ensure they remain applicable to local circumstances. The Kitsap County 2024 Comprehensive Plan update was developed in concert with the GMA, which is administered by the Washington State Department of Commerce.



b. Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs)

CPPs play an instrumental role in the development of the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan and implementing efforts such as development regulations and related programs. The CPPs cover a range of topics that the County and cities within utilize as a consistent framework for local comprehensive plans and development regulations. Topics covered in the CPPs include:

- Countywide Growth Patterns; and
- Urban Growth Areas; and
- Centers of Growth; and
- Rural Land Use and Development Patterns; and
- Natural Environment; and
- Contiguous, Compatible and Orderly Development; and
- Public Capital Facilities and Essential Public Facilities; and
- Transportation; and
- Housing; and
- Economic Development; and
- Coordination with Tribal and the Federal Governments.



2. Comprehensive Plan Update Focus Areas

Since the county's last update was adopted in 2016, new state legislation for housing needs ([HB 1220](#)) and climate change ([HB 1181](#)) have altered how the County is required to plan. In addition to addressing these prominent issues, the Comprehensive Plan also must be updated for consistency with state and regional planning efforts, such as [Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050](#) and the [Countywide Planning Policies](#) adopted in 2021. This includes meeting population and employment targets and housing need by income band. Although there are many objectives to plan for, the 2024 update has three focus areas:

- Housing Diversity beyond single-family detached housing,
- Climate Change to limit impacts of development and improve resiliency of our public infrastructure, and
- Centers (Silverdale, Kingston, McWilliams/303) to focus growth and expand walkability and transit

Housing Diversity

Housing is a fundamental need. Kitsap County is responsible for providing policy direction that facilitates housing for residents in all economic segments. Kitsap County has an adopted housing target of 14,497 new units through 2044. Many of these units need to be affordable to income segments 80% Area Median Income or lower, which requires producing more multi-family, townhome, and other housing types. This diversity is promoted in development of new projects but also redevelopment within established neighborhoods. The County encourages and supports a diverse and integrated mix of housing that includes housing for all ages, family types, abilities and limitations, household sizes, backgrounds, cultures, and incomes.

Climate Change

Climate change is a new, but key, focus area for the Comprehensive Plan 2024-2044. The Climate Change element takes a proactive approach to addressing impacts on infrastructure and natural systems, while increasing the County's resiliency by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and advancing environmental justice. The Comp Plan encourages environmental protection through the dual lenses of intrinsic value and as an asset, by promoting conservation and environmentally sound development methods, such as low-impact landscaping and green building.

Centers

Centers are a critical part of Kitsap County's planning efforts and growth strategy. At the regional level, PSRC identifies 29 Regional Growth Centers, which include two in Kitsap County: Silverdale and Bremerton. Kitsap County also identifies two Countywide Centers: Kingston and McWilliams (located in Central Kitsap UGA). The Comp Plan update focuses on strategies to encourage growth in these centers, improve design standards for mixed-use and transit-oriented development, provide incentives for increased density and prioritize funding of public investments.



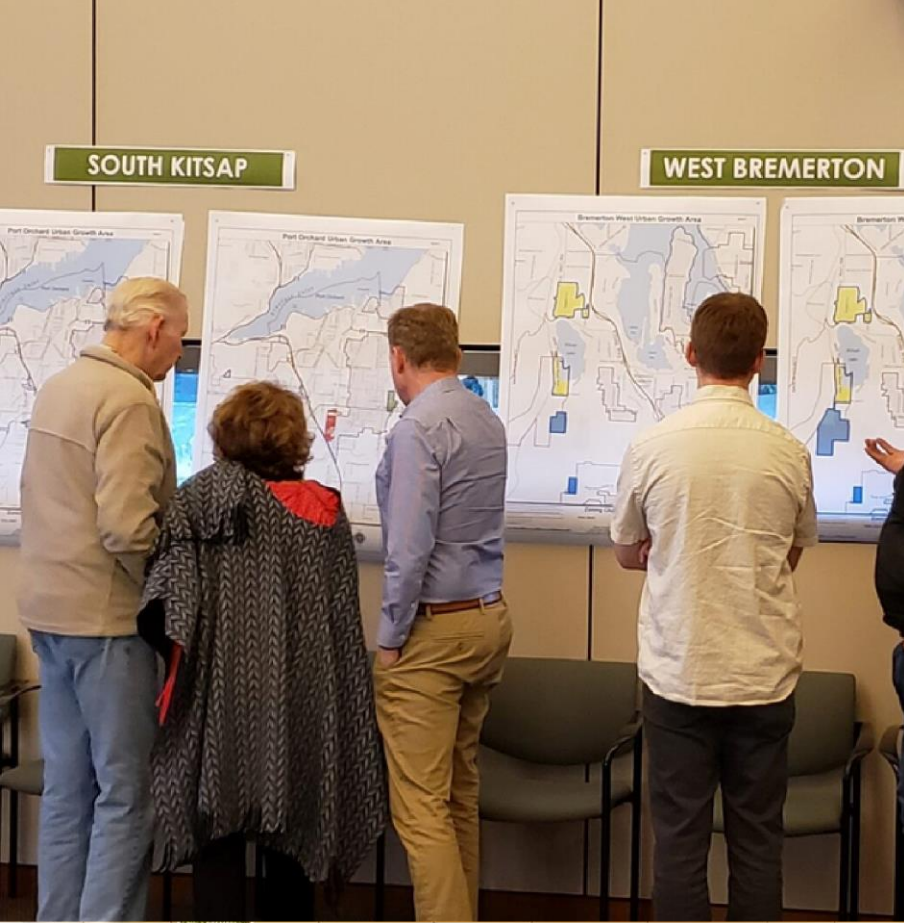
3. The Planning Process and Public Participation

Since Fall of 2022, Kitsap County followed a Public Participation Plan that included numerous, varied opportunities for engagement and public comment with the general public and stakeholders. The objective of this approach was to engage a diverse population equitably and inclusively, so that the Plan is well-grounded in the experiences and knowledge of the public. Through public engagement, the County was able to better understand the potential negative and positive impacts of the Comprehensive Plan and present these perspectives to elected officials.

The following outreach and public participation methods were used for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update:

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- **Project Kick-off Public Meeting:** introduced the project and solicited public participation and comments.
- **Virtual Meetings:** focused on key topics such as land use and economic development, housing, environment and climate change, parks and open space, and transportation and capital facilities.
- **In-person and Hybrid Open House Events:** to receive feedback on the draft alternatives prior to moving forward to the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners for public consideration.
- **Consultations:** offered to key communities including Community Advisory Committees, the Department Advisory Group, local business and interest associations, young residents of Kitsap County, and environmental interest groups.
- **Focused Outreach:** staff conducted meetings/consultations to answer questions about the project or obtain feedback from interested parties.
- **Website and Social Media:** used for outreach and release of project information.
- **Electronic Notification:** Project announcements were sent at all major milestones to interested parties and community members via the Constant Contact and GovDelivery services.
- **Local News Outlets:** The County updated local news media throughout the process, including the Kitsap Sun and Kitsap Daily News.





Public Comment

The County implemented several public comment periods to solicit and incorporate public feedback on the draft materials. One in April 2023 for preliminary alternatives, two from December 2023-April 2024 for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Comp Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, and Development Regulations, and one in September 2024 for Final Draft Documents.

These comments could be submitted via a comment form on the project webpage, by email sent to the project email address, by traditional mail, by submitting comment cards at open house events, or by presenting verbal testimony at public hearings. All comments were summarized and forwarded to the Kitsap County Planning Commission or Board of County Commissioners during their formal public comment periods and posted on the project webpage.

4. The Preferred Alternative

Growth can be accommodated in many ways using different strategies. In April of 2023, Kitsap County established three preliminary land use alternatives. The purpose of these preliminary alternatives was to compare different futures against each other in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). These included a “No Action” alternative where nothing was changed, a Compact Growth/Urban Center Focus alternative, where higher densities in existing urban areas were promoted and a Dispersed Growth alternative which followed Kitsap’s historic development trends and strategies. The three alternatives were developed using different approaches to balancing growth targets for population, employment, and housing. Based on the alternative, each tested different major policy initiatives such as structure heights, densities, parking, tree canopy, environmental protections, and others. In early 2024, the public and Board of Commissioners reviewed the opportunities and impacts of these three alternatives and developed a single Preferred Alternative for further consideration.

Alternative Summary

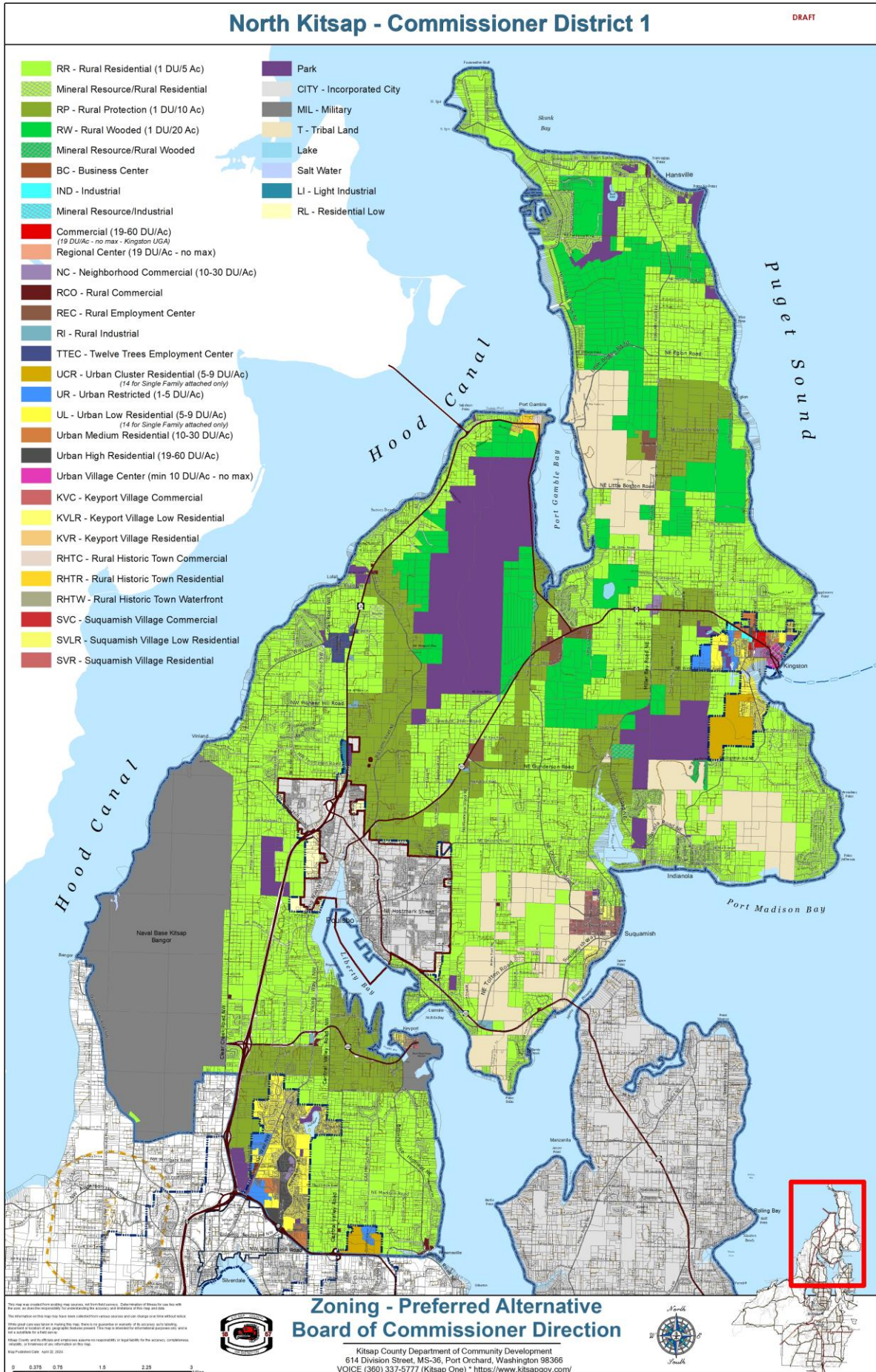
The Preferred Alternative balances proposed population and employment distributions set by VISION 2050 (“bending the trend” of past growth patterns) with the housing needs guidance of the Washington State Department of Commerce. It targets growth around high-capacity transit facilities and routes and in multi-family and commercial zones with an emphasis on the Silverdale Regional Center and Kingston and McWilliams countywide centers as well the associated UGAs of Bremerton, Port Orchard and Poulsbo. Proposes substantial increased housing diversity with an emphasis on new multifamily housing types (e.g. row houses, low story multifamily, cottage housing). New residential and employment development encouraged to be constructed vertically and in areas of infill or redevelopment. Proposes incentives and regulation revisions to promote new development patterns.

Major Initiatives of the Preferred Alternative

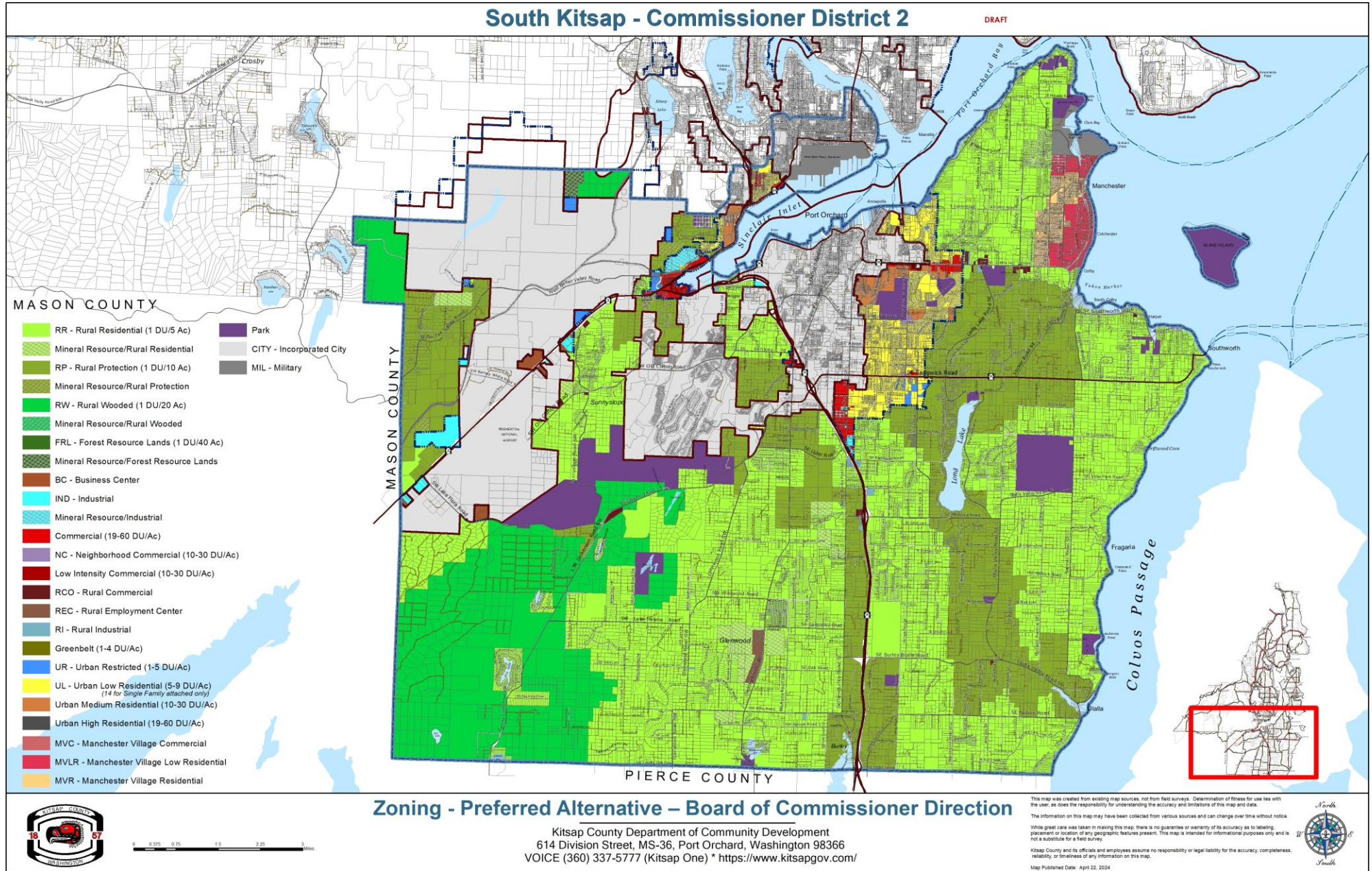
To achieve these goals, the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update includes key aspects:

- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) are minimally expanded to address industrial employment needs and areas with urban services that meet city annexation goals.
- Increase development capacity of current urban areas and existing neighborhoods to allow a greater selection of housing including townhomes and multifamily projects.
- Focus growth around existing services such as major roads, sewer service, transit, schools and businesses
- Expand transit frequency and reliability within our urban areas specifically the Silverdale Regional Center and Kingston and McWilliams Countywide Centers.
- Expand pedestrian and bicycle opportunities through sidewalks and bike lanes to provide an option to driving.
- No expansions of residential density or development intensity in the rural areas of Kitsap.
- Acknowledge and support the increased environmental protections of March 8th Draft Critical Areas Ordinance (currently under separate development).
- Provide incentives for green building and the inclusion of trees in new development proposals through the C-PACER and Tree Canopy programs.

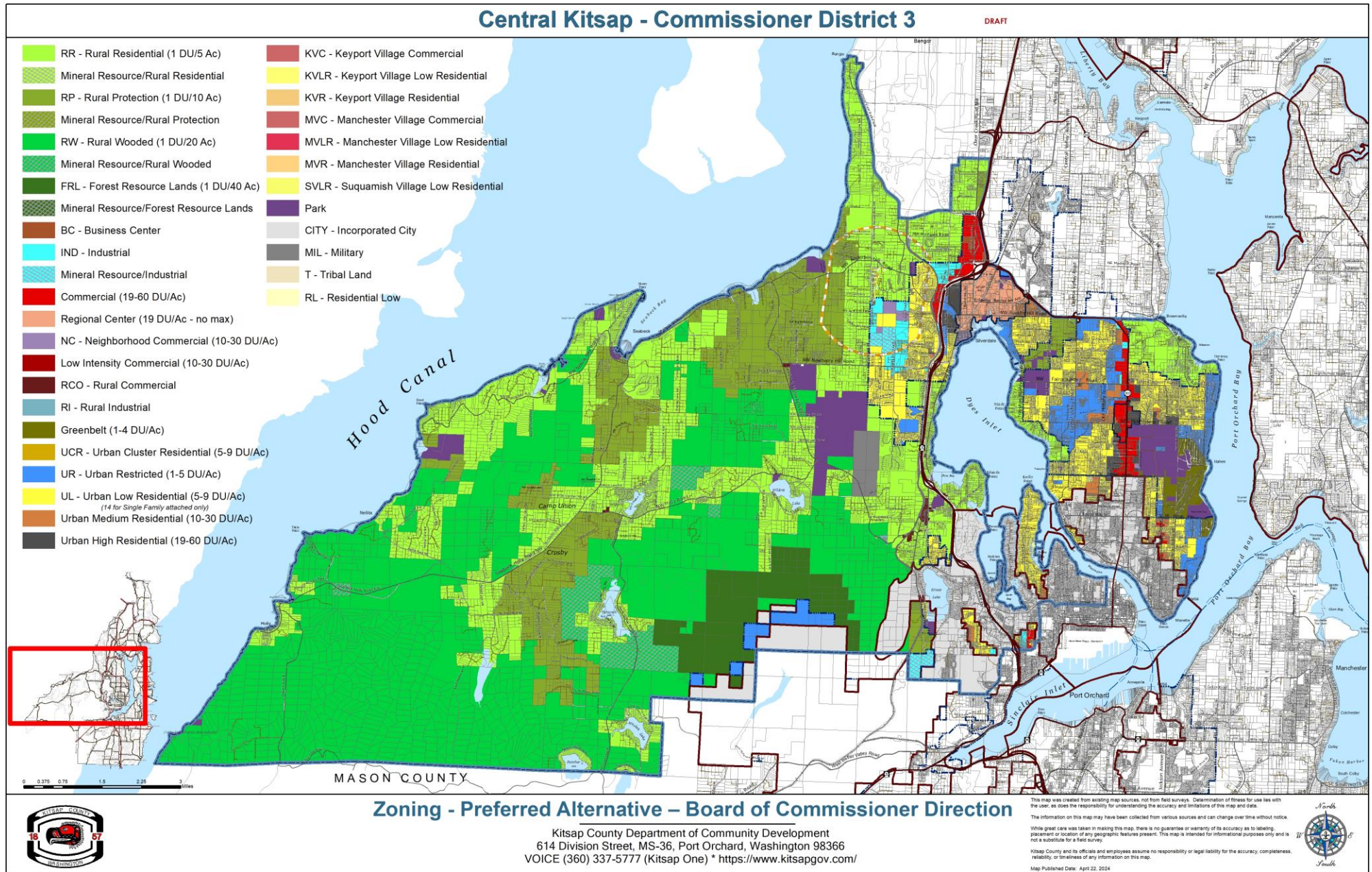
a. District 1 Preferred Alternative Map



b. District 2 Preferred Alternative Map



c. District 3 Preferred Alternative Map



d. Land Use Element

The Land Use Element's intent is to direct the majority of growth toward urban areas, provide greater distinction between urban and rural areas, guide land use patterns to allow for the efficient provision of urban services such as sewers and transportation systems, preserve open space, recognize and preserve historical and archaeological resources, and ensure compatibility between adjacent zones. Major themes include:

- Ensuring Urban Growth Areas are accessible by multi-modal transportation and include a mix of services, shopping, entertainment, recreation, educational facilities, and housing of different types and at different levels of affordability
- Protection of rural character by directing development to Urban Growth Areas
- Providing for small agricultural activities throughout the County
- Protection of mineral and timber resource lands
- Ensuring land use decisions have equitable impacts and outcomes
- Promotion of a built environment that enables healthy living



e. Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element aims to encourage economic development in Kitsap County that considers the regional economic context and is suited to the unique conditions of the county. The element is designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of Kitsap County. The Economic Development goals, policies, and strategies provide the framework to improve and sustain Kitsap County's fiscal, economic, and social conditions utilizing local resources, partnerships, and economic opportunities. Major themes include:

- Retention and recruitment of family-wage employers while leveraging the Navy's presence
- Encouragement of women-, and minority-owned small businesses and start-ups
- Exploration of emerging industries, technologies, and services that promote environmental sustainability
- Expansion of strategies to expand access to business and employment opportunity
- Expansion of strategies to address and prevent commercial displacement of small minority-owned businesses



f. Environment Element

The purpose of the Environment Element is to provide the goals, direction, and path for the future of sustaining natural environments in Kitsap County. Kitsap County recognizes the importance of protecting the natural environment while providing for the needs of the growing number of residents and businesses that call this place home. Ecosystems such as forest lands, shorelines, freshwater systems, and other areas all make up the natural environment of Kitsap County. Human well-being depends on a healthy, natural environment to provide for clean air, clean water, food, and overall high quality of life. The quality and abundance of Kitsap County's natural environments are well documented and are what define Kitsap County as the "natural side of Puget Sound."

Major themes include:

- Treating Natural Resources as an Asset, and policies that define and promote the Kitsap Natural Resource Asset Management Program (KNRAMP)
- Emphasis on the importance of the ecosystem and critical areas throughout the County
- Ensuring environmental regulations are consistent with best available science
- Recognition of the health benefits of natural systems and aims to reduce adverse environmental impacts on vulnerable populations
- Enhancement of urban tree canopy and recognize the benefits of urban forests (replacement or retention)



g. Climate Change Element

Climate Change is the only element in the 2024 Update that is brand new. Climate Change was added as a goal of the Growth Management Act during the 2023 legislative session, bringing the total number of goals to 15.

Climate change has already affected and will continue to affect the infrastructure, natural systems, economy, culture, safety, and livelihood of people who live, work, and play in Kitsap County. Kitsap County has experienced measurable and observable climate change trends and impacts including extreme heat, coastal flooding, and wildfire smoke. The intent of this chapter is to provide a consolidated policy framework related to climate issues that is essential to facilitating planning for our county and to assist in meeting the planning goals of the Growth Management Act.

Major themes include

- Emphasis on reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, based on a 2022 Community Wide Geographic Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Analysis
- Adoption of PSRC's VISION 2050 goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Puget Sound Region to 80% below 1990 levels by the year 2050
- Climate Resilience and Adaption Sub-Chapter, focused on various areas impacted by Climate Change, such as Public Health, Economy, Infrastructure, and Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Establishes a foundation for meeting new State climate planning legislation (required by 2029)



h. Housing Element

The Housing Element recognizes that housing is a fundamental need. The County is responsible for providing policy direction that facilitates housing for residents in all economic segments. The goals and policies of this element set the stage for development regulations that allow for and encourage different types of housing affordable to all population segments, avoid concentrating housing in environmentally sensitive areas, and guide intergovernmental coordination that makes the most efficient use of resources to provide housing, while reducing or eliminating housing barriers.

Major themes include:

- Ensuring sufficient housing stock is available, affordable, and accessible at all income levels and in a variety of housing types
- Encouragement of multi-family and missing-middle housing, specifically focusing on in existing urban centers
- Promotion of infill housing in new and existing neighborhoods and preservation of existing affordable housing stock
- Mitigation of displacement risk and ensuring equitable treatment and outcomes



i. Transportation Element

The Transportation Element presents a plan for transportation facilities and services needed to support the County's land use strategy over a 20-year planning horizon and recommends transportation projects for the County's unincorporated area to meet safety, capacity, and connectivity needs—for automobiles, freight, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Major themes include:

- A shift to multi-modal transportation planning, emphasizing moving people rather than vehicles through support of high-capacity transit and other modes of transportation
- Increased emphasis on public health, equity, safety, and climate change
- Improved planning for active transportation (bicycles and pedestrians), including policies to support the development of new methodologies to analyze the level of service for multiple modes of transportation, not just cars
- Increased policy emphasis on multi-modal transportation support for mixed-use transit-oriented development and increased densities in Regional and Countywide Centers
- New policies to support the efforts to decarbonize the transportation system and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- New policies to enhance the transportation system's resilience to a changing climate
- New policies to support an increase in electric vehicle infrastructure



j. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

The Parks Element serves as a reference and foundation for future updates of the County's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. It will identify opportunities for partnerships and funding and foster collaboration with stakeholders to ensure equitable access, environmental stewardship, and diverse recreational opportunities for the Kitsap community.

The goals and policies in this element recognize the need to enhance the wellbeing of all county residents and visitors through accessible and inclusive parks, facilities, and educational programs in promoting pedestrian use, bicycling, and accessibility through the provision of trails in the park system as well as the desire to institute management programs for habitat value, forest health, groundwater recharge, water quality, climate resiliency, and safety.

Additionally, the goals and policies emphasize the need for coordination among agencies and organizations and the promotion of the many benefits of green infrastructure to support mental and physical health, recreational opportunities, habitat preservation, and stormwater management.

Major themes include:

- Updates to existing inventories, and forecasts of future needs for active (fields, facilities) and passive recreation (trails and open space)
- Increased emphasis on support, enhancement, and use of green infrastructure
- Increased emphasis on preserving and enhancing tree canopy
- Explores new funding mechanisms to better support Parks development and maintenance
- Enhances the Park system's sustainability and resilience to a changing climate
- Increased emphasis on public health and equity



k. Capital Facilities and Utilities

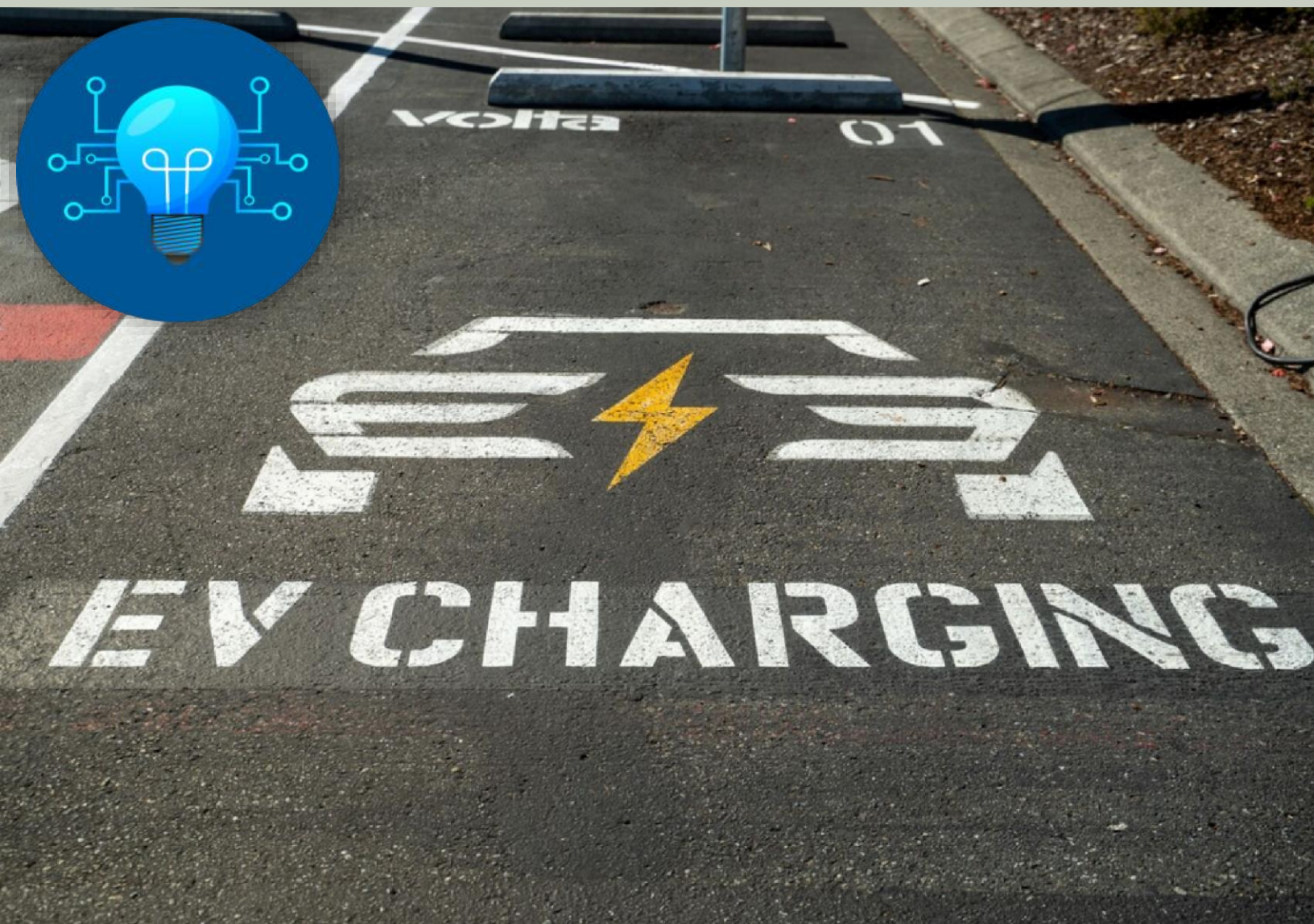
The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element provides policies for public facilities and services to serve the projected growth based on the County's adopted growth targets and future planned land use map.

The Element covers capital facilities and services provided by the County and external agencies, underscoring the need for coordination between and among municipalities, special purposed districts, and other providers.

The Element also guides planning, funding, and project decisions for unincorporated Kitsap County. With rapid population growth in the county, guidance to plan for sufficient capital facilities and utilities is crucial. The goals, policies, and strategies within this element direct the County and utility providers to stay updated on facility levels and demands to meet specific level of service standards and forecasted future needs for public facilities laid out in the Capital Facilities Plan.

Major themes include:

- Updates to existing inventories, and forecasts of future facility needs (pipes, pavement, and facilities)
- Ensuring capacity and funding source for future facilities and utilities
- Increased emphasis on public health and equity
- Increased emphasis on support, enhancement, and use of green infrastructure
- Acknowledgement of Park lands as natural assets to be preserved, restored, and enhanced



I. Subarea, Neighborhood and Regional Center Plans

Sub-Area Plans provide geographic-specific goals, policies and strategies for a community that complement the overall plan. The following subareas plans are outlined in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update:

- Silverdale Regional Center and Sub-Area Plan
- Kingston Sub-Area Plan
- Manchester Sub-Area Plan
- Suquamish Sub-Area Plan
- Gorst Neighborhood Plan
- Illahee Neighborhood Plan
- Keyport Neighborhood Plan



5. Revised Regulations and Incentives

To implement these important goals, Kitsap County proposes to update regulations to remove barriers to success. The major changes to zoning, subdivision and the environment chapters of County Code include:

- **Increased Density Allowances**
 - Increased maximum densities in Urban Low zone from 9 dwelling units (DU)/acre to 14 DU/acre for projects with attached or multifamily housing types
 - Increased maximum densities in Urban Medium zone from 19 DU/acre to 30 DU/acre
 - Increased maximum densities for many Urban High and Commercial zones from 30 du/acre to 60 du/acre
 - No density limit in the Silverdale Regional Center zone
 - No density limit in Kingston's Urban Village Center and Commercial zone
- **Increased Heights and Site Design Changes**
 - Reduced or removed lot size/lot dimension requirements in Urban Residential zones
 - Allow zero-lot line setback for attached housing
 - Increased maximum height in Commercial zone to 55' in Silverdale and Kingston UGA
 - Increased maximum height in Silverdale Regional Center zone to 65' (or up to 85' or 125' w/ public benefits)
- **Reduced Parking Requirements**
 - Reduced parking requirements for single family dwellings to allow one garage space to count toward parking requirement
 - Reduced parking requirements for multifamily housing based on the size of units.
 - Reduced parking requirements for various commercial uses.
- **Tree Canopy Code**
 - New tree requirements to require developments over a certain size to include a minimum tree canopy through tree retention or replacement.
- **Green Building**
 - C-PACER program to incentivize green building in multifamily and commercial construction

