



Kitsap County

Rural and Resource Lands Chapter

Community Engagement Plan



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1.0 Introduction

The Rural and Resource Lands Chapter (Chapter) of Kitsap County provides essential guidance for land use decisions in the unincorporated areas outside urban growth boundaries. It works in tandem with the Land Use Element and the Comprehensive Plan to shape the county's future land use patterns. A primary goal of the Chapter is to preserve and enhance the rural character of Kitsap County by defining what constitutes rural character and setting policies to maintain it.

Kitsap County's rural appeal, characterized by natural landscapes, low-density development, and recreational opportunities, is highly valued by residents. However, as the population grows and development pressures increase, the challenge is to safeguard these defining characteristics while accommodating change.

To ensure an inclusive and well-rounded assessment, County staff will engage with residents, community groups, businesses, and Tribes throughout Kitsap County. The purpose is to inform, involve, and gather input from the public to prepare the Rural and Resource Lands Chapter. This effort will provide essential insights for planning and policy decisions, identify potential barriers, and propose improvements to inform the County's goals, policies, and strategies.

The primary aim of this plan is to establish a unified community engagement approach for the Chapter. This includes defining community engagement goals, identifying key stakeholders, and developing a comprehensive communications strategy with a clear schedule. The plan ensures continuous, early engagement and outreach throughout the project, with a focus on historically underserved communities. The outreach process will be carried out in three phases:

- Phase 1: Initial outreach to assess a rural vision update, gather community input on focus areas, and collect information for future planning beyond the 2025 scope.
- Phase 2: Mid-project outreach to share draft goals, policies, strategies, and possible code updates. Share and present 60% complete draft of the Chapter.
- Phase 3: Present the 90% complete draft of the Chapter.

This Community Engagement Plan will guide County staff in gathering feedback and ideas related to Kitsap County's Rural and Resource Lands planning initiatives. It aims to foster positive community engagement, build trust, ensure transparency, and encourage healthy discussions about the future of rural and resource lands. Through robust community engagement, this plan seeks to ensure that the goals, policies, and strategies proposed in the Rural and Resource Lands Chapter reflect the community's input, making the plan more effective and widely accepted. The Chapter will incorporate community feedback that would otherwise be missed without comprehensive engagement.

The Community Engagement Plan is a working document and will be adjusted, as needed.

2.0 Goals and Objectives

The objective of this Community Engagement Plan is to engage equitably and inclusively, so that the resulting Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update is well-grounded in the experiences and knowledge of the public. It is important that the County's reach is broad, so that no individual group or interest dominates.

Through public engagement, the County hopes to better understand the potential negative and positive impacts of the Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update so that the full story can be presented to elected officials. Public comment may not directly result in changes, but incorporating both the concerns and ideas of the public will lead to informed policies and regulations.

While County staff does not have the power to enact policies or development regulations, by incorporating the public's voice, staff can provide the full context to elected officials as they make decisions.

This plan will guide County staff in gathering public comments and ideas on Kitsap County's rural community member's vision of rural Kitsap County, quality of life, public safety, growth, and economic development. The plan will also help create positive community engagement, build trust, and foster healthy discussion about growth management. The plan provides for robust community engagement, vital to creating a practical, inclusive, and implementable Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update. Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update topics include:

- Rural vision and character
- Land use review, inventory, and analysis
 - Rural land and distribution and inventory
 - Rural population forecast
 - Rural economies
 - Rural public facilities and services
 - Rural areas and planning by watershed
- Rural Land Use
 - MRO review
 - Agriculture policy and code review
 - Energy siting
 - Boundary line adjustment stakeholder discussion
 - Energy siting assessment
 - Open space law
- Rural Economy
 - Childcare assessment
 - Agriculture rural events and businesses
- Rural Housing
 - Mobile and manufactured home parks review

- Goals, policies, and strategies

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Project Team

Name	Organization	Role	Responsibility
Scott Diener	Kitsap County	PEP Division Manager	Program Management
Colin Poff	Kitsap County	Project Manager	Project Management
Heather Cleveland	Kitsap County	Project Lead	Engagement and Event Process
Jim Rogers	Kitsap County	Project Support	Project review and support
New Planner	Kitsap County	Project Support	Project review and support
Cindy Read	Kitsap County	Technology Analyst	Website, GIS support, project support
Alicia Adler	Kitsap County	Project Support	Communications & Outreach Coordinator

Engagement Matrix

Engagement Group	Project Phase & Responsibility			
	Phase 1 Rural Vision, Focus Areas and General Feedback	Phase 2 60% Draft Goals, Policies, Strategies, and Code Updates	Phase 3 90% Draft Chapter and Code Updates	Closing Finalize Chapter Code Updates
Internal Review Team (IRT)	Provide input on scope, data analysis, barriers, and opportunities	Informed on project progress, input on draft goals, policies, strategies and code updates	Informed on project progress. Provide input on draft chapter, reclassifications, and code updates.	Informed about final chapter and code updates
Planning Commission	Informed about project scope and schedule, input on Community Engagement Plan			Review Final
Board of County Commissioners	Informed about project scope and schedule, provide vision input and focus area barriers and opportunities, participate in survey			Adopt Final
Community Advisory Councils				Informed about final chapter and code updates
Stakeholders				
Public				

4.0 Internal Review Team (IRT)

The project will utilize an integrated, interdisciplinary team approach, and to achieve this an Internal Review Team will be created to guide the update. The IRT will include invitation to the following departments in Kitsap County that have relevant knowledge and skills from their community interactions, work experience, and professional development. The IRT will aid on project scope, data collection and analysis, developing and reviewing goals, policies, and strategies, reviewing the land use reclassification process and findings, and development and review of code updates.

Potential IRT members may include:

Kitsap County Dept, Program, or Organization	Leadership	Assigned
Long Range Planning - Facilitator	Heather Cleveland	Heather Cleveland
Planning & Environmental Programs	Scott Diener	Scott Diener
Long Range Planning	Colin Poff	Colin Poff
Long Range Planning	Jim Rogers	Jim Rogers
Current Planning	Darren Gurnee	Darren Gurnee
Environmental Programs	Kirvie Mesebeluu-Yobech	Kirvie Mesebeluu-Yobech
Noxious Weeds Program	Jade Jarvis	Jade Jarvis
Building, Fire, and Safety	David Lynam	David Lynam
Public Works	Chris Piercy	Rose Schaffer
Public Works	Joe Rutan	Michelle Perdue
Parks	Alex Wisniewski	Carmen Smith
Emergency Management	Jan Glarum	Brian Nielson
Public Health	Rudy Baum	Rudy Baum
Public Health	John Kiess	Eric Evans

5.0 Outreach and Engagement Approach

The County is committed to providing multiple opportunities for the public and stakeholders to engage at various phases of the project. The County will take advantage of various modes of communication to inform the public including social media, web presence, and email distribution lists. Meetings will be held virtually or in-person with a virtual option (hybrid).

The following tools will be employed to achieve widespread and ongoing involvement.

5.1 Project Website

https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/Pages/Year_of_the_Rural.aspx

The Year of the Rural webpage is where interested residents and community members may visit for status updates, draft documents, official notices, and other project information. The webpage will be the primary repository of all information related to the Year of the Rural that includes the Rural and Land Resources Chapter updates.

5.2 Internal Review Team

An internal review team (IRT) composed of Kitsap County staff from department and divisions engaged in work impacting unincorporated Kitsap County. The IRT will aid in assessing scope, data and data analysis review, code update review, and goals, policies, and strategies review, and review of the final report. The IRT will meet three (3) times (~February, June, and September) throughout the project.

5.3 Survey

An online public survey will be conducted to solicit feedback on the project vision and goals and to help update the rural character and vision of Kitsap County and identify concerns, barriers, and opportunities. The survey will be hosted online and a link to the survey will be shared via digital and print flyers as well as on the project website. The survey will also be shared at events and the virtual open house to increase participation. The survey will include a project description, project goals and anticipated outcomes. The survey will ask for response to a rural and vision statement and input on specific rural and resource lands topics. The survey will include optional demographic questions to better understand who the survey is reaching.

5.4 Virtual Open House

Up to two open houses will be offered for the general community. These events may be virtual, or hybrid.

1. The first open house will be held early in the project, likely in February, to share the scope of the project and invite questions and comments and promote the survey.
2. The second open house will be held in September when the Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update is at 60% completion with draft goals, policies, and strategies and

potential code updates for review and feedback and will promote public comment on the draft.

5.5 Community Consultations

5.5.1 Presentations and Invitations

One to two presentations will be provided to the Community Advisory Councils. The County will also present to identified Community Groups (e.g. Seabeck Community Group), and any other Community Groups if requested.

Community Advisory Councils Include:

- Manchester CAC – Meets at Manchester Library
- Central KCC – Meets at Central Kitsap Fire & Rescue HQ
- Suquamish CAC – Meets at Suquamish United Church of Christ
- Kingston CAC – Meets at Village Green Community Center

The first presentation will be in the beginning of the project in January – March, and the second presentation will at the 60% completion of the project, in the September – October.

5.5.2 Interviews

Interviews with specific stakeholders may also be held to help refine the understanding of the project's needs and provide subject matter expertise on elements identified by the project team, IRT or during presentation or public meetings. Additional outreach will be facilitated with Tribes during regularly scheduled Tribal Partner Meetings. Determination of targeted outreach needs will be reviewed during IRT and project team meetings and at key decision points in the project.

5.5.3 Outreach List

The following table shows examples of community groups or individuals outside of the standard County contact list that may receive direct contact as part of the County's outreach efforts.

- Forestry Management Working Group
- Equestrian Working Group
- Agriculture and Agritourism
- Puget Sound Energy
- Naval Base Kitsap
- Greater Peninsula Conservation
- Roundup Lane residents
- Kitsap Environmental Coalition
- Kitsap Environmental Consortium
- Others as identified during the project

5.6 Educational Materials

Educational materials such as print and digital flyers will be posted digitally and physically at key locations within the community to inform the public about upcoming meetings, survey, and public comment opportunities.

The flyers will include the meeting location, date and time, overview of meeting topics, and a QR code and link to the project website. Digital flyers will be posted to the county's social media pages. Print flyers may be posted at the following locations:

Kitsap Regional Libraries

- Bremerton - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Bremerton - Sylvan Way
- Kingston
- Little Boston
- Manchester
- Port Orchard
- Poulsbo
- Silverdale
- Bainbridge Island

Volunteer/Community Libraries

- Seabeck
- Tracyton
- Bangor Navy Base Library

Community Centers

- Village Green Community Center
- Givens Community Center
- Silverdale YMCA
- Hansville Grocery or Hansville USPS
- Seabeck General Store 15384 Seabeck Highway NW, Seabeck, WA 98380
- Olalla Bay Market & Landing 13965 Crescent Valley Rd SE, Olalla, WA 98359
- Port Gamble USPS (or vicinity) 4839 NE View Dr, Ste A, Port Gamble, WA 9836

5.7 Notifications

The County will develop notification materials including press releases, email notification, and social media advertisements to ensure broad participation. Notifications will also be sent via the “Gov Delivery” system, and the County may inform media outlets of the project.

Members of the community will be able to sign up for electronic noticing (GovDelivery) by visiting the County’s project webpage. Notices will provide general information about the project, contact information for submitting comments, and times of public meetings or hearings. The County will also add interested parties to the “Constant Contact” list to ensure consistent communication.

The project website will be regularly updated, including posting official notices prior to public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

5.8 Public Comments and Testimony

There will be two opportunities to provide formal public comments on the project. It should be noted that the initial outreach period in phase one is meant to be more broad than public comment periods and will have a larger impact on scope. Formal comment periods are more focused on review of draft materials.

- Targeted for September 2025 a 60% draft will be shared for a formal public comment period. County staff may not respond directly to all public comments but will summarize themes and may make edits to draft documents as appropriate.
- Prior to adoption, a 90% draft will be shared with an opportunity for public testimony during the Planning Commission Hearing and Board of County Commissioners Hearing. County Staff will forward all comments to the Planning Commission and Board for consideration.

5.9 Planning Commission

The Kitsap County Planning Commission is an advisory body that assists the Department of Community Development in carrying out its duties, including providing Findings of Fact and recommendations on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. These Findings of Fact and recommendations are submitted to the Department of Community Development and are then forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners. Official notices will be published as required by Kitsap County Code.

- The Department will facilitate work study sessions with the County’s Planning Commission to refine the Department’s initial project scope and again to review the draft Plan. These meetings are open to the public.
- The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing prior to making a recommendation on the draft Plan to the Board of County Commissioners.

5.10 Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners will be the final local decision authority on the Chapter update. Interested community members are encouraged to participate in Commissioner public

hearings. The Commissioners will have a comment period and public hearing that will encourage verbal and written comments, as described in Section 4, Public Comment, below. Official notices will be published as required by Kitsap County Code.

- The Department will facilitate work study meetings with the Board of County Commissioners to review the proposal(s) forwarded by the Planning Commission.
- The Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the final draft Plan prior to adoption. Written and oral comment will be accepted at the public hearing.

5.11 Ad-Hoc Agriculture Working Group

The purpose of the group is to discuss additions, deletions or edits to the goals and policies related to agricultural uses and businesses and development regulations.

The group has a steering committee to assist in topic priorities and outreach and includes the following members:

- Jess Sappington, WSU Kitsap Extension Director
- Diane Fish, Kitsap Conservation District Resource Planner
- Joy Garitone, Kitsap Conservation District Coordinator
- Brian Stahl, Kitsap Conservation District Coordinator
- Bob Geballe, Kitsap Community & Agricultural Alliance (KCAA) Board President
- Jeremy Anunson, Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau, President
- Stacy Marshall, Kitsap Farmland Preservation Coalition, Official Representative

6.0 Inclusive Outreach

Based on demographic data pulled from the 2020 U.S. Census, Kitsap County is 75% White, 9% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 3% Black, 1.5% American Indian, 1% Pacific Islander. Census data also shows that 12% of households make less than \$25,000 a year.

To reach out to all demographic segments, including outreach to minority and low-income groups, the County will offer consultations to community organizations. Some examples of relevant organizations include Kitsap Community Resources, League of Women Voters, and Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center.

The County will invite younger County residents to participate in the surveys, events, meetings, and formal public comment periods. This will include schools, college, and university programs associated with the County.

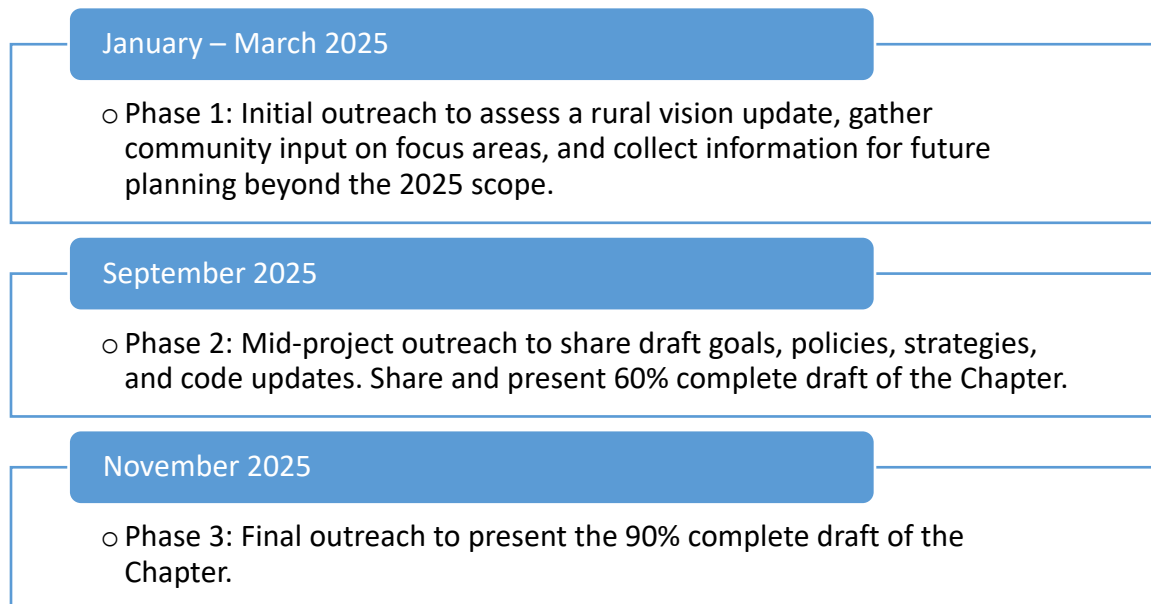
The County is also committed to providing accommodations to people with disabilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The County offers listening devices in the Board of Commissioners' Chambers in-person meetings and live captions on Zoom virtual meetings.

To request ADA accommodation for disabilities and/or materials in a format for the visually impaired, please reach out to the County using the contact information below.

Organization	Contact information
Kitsap County Department of Community Development	Tina Rice 360-337-5777 TRice@co.kitsap.wa.us
Kitsap County Commissioners Office	360-337-7080 kitsapcommissioners@co.kitsap.wa.us

7.0 Engagement Timeline

The plan ensures continuous, early engagement and outreach throughout the project, with a special focus on historically underserved communities. The outreach process will be carried out in three phases:



Appendix A: Survey Questions

Survey available from February 1 – March 7, 2025

Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update Survey

We are looking for your input on rural and resource lands in Kitsap County as we update the Rural and Resources Lands Chapter of the recently updated Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Rural and Resource Lands Chapter is to define and provide policy direction to preserve and enhance the rural character of Kitsap County. This chapter designates areas in Kitsap County as appropriate for rural and resource activities, both residential and non-residential. The Plan intends to preserve and protect rural character by providing a definition of rural character in Kitsap County and establishing measures to preserve it, and we need your feedback! The survey will be anonymous unless you choose to add your name and contact information at the end of the survey. The survey is open from February 1 - March 7, 2025.

[Year of the Rural](#) Use this link to see more information about the project and to stay up to date on progress, public meetings, and hearings.

[Newsletter Signup](#) Use this link to sign up for project specific updates. Be sure to check the box "Year of the Rural" when signing up.

Living Accommodations

Which Commissioner District do you live in?

- North Kitsap (District 1)
- Central Kitsap (District 3)
- South Kitsap (District 2)
- I do not live in Kitsap County
- I do not know

Which of these communities do you live nearest?

- Bainbridge Island
- Kingston
- Poulsbo
- Bremerton
- Seabeck
- McCormick Woods
- Port Orchard
- Manchester
- Suquamish
- Port Gamble
- Southworth
- Sunnyslope
- Indianola
- Driftwood Keys
- Hansville
- Keyport
- Central Valley
- Olalla
- I do not live in Kitsap County
- Other

How long have you lived at your current location?

- 0-3 years
- 4-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 20+ years

Do you own or rent your home, apartment, or room?

Rent

Own

Other

Do you own the land where your home is located in Kitsap County?

Yes No

Workplace Information

Do you work in Kitsap County?

Yes No Other

What is your work status?

Working Retired Student Looking for work Other

Rural and Resource Lands Chapter

Rural Character as defined by RCW 19.405.020(35)

"Rural character" refers to the patterns of land use and development established by a county in the rural element of its comprehensive plan:

- (a) In which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment;
- (b) That foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas;
- (c) That provide visual landscapes that are traditionally found in rural areas and communities;
- (d) That are compatible with the use of the land by wildlife and for fish and wildlife habitat;
- (e) That reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
- (f) That generally do not require the extension of urban governmental services; and
- (g) That are consistent with the protection of natural surface water flows and groundwater and surface water recharge and discharge areas.

Which of these descriptions best fit you? (Select all that apply.)

Farm owner

Forest Land owner

Home owner/land owner

Developer

Conservationist / Environmentalist

None of the above

Do you own land within 200ft a stream?

Yes No

Do you own land within 200ft a shoreline?

Yes No

Rural Character

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Less Important than Other Issues	Not Important	N/A
How important to you is preserving the rural character of Kitsap County?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is important for maintaining rural character to you?

	Very important to me	Important to me	Neutral	Not important to me
Drinking water system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salmon habitat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Land supply for housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very important to me	Important to me	Neutral	Not important to me
Green areas separating urban areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timber production	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural based economies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scenic areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is most important for maintaining rural character? (Check all that apply.)

- Drinking water system
- Salmon habitat
- Natural environment
- Land supply for housing
- Green areas separating urban areas
- Urban uses in urban areas
- Timber production
- Scenic areas
- Other

Do you believe land use regulations impact you?

Please share your concerns in favor and against land regulation.

Housing

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The number of homes built in rural areas should be limited.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is the main attraction of a more rural setting?

	Main attraction	Somewhat attraction	Neutral	Not an attraction	Not attractive at all
Nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Resource Lands

Timber

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
More incentives should be offered to encourage timber production in Kitsap County.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is your vision for forestry and timber activities in Kitsap County for the next 20 years?

Farming

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Policies and strategies to should be developed to ensure the right to farm in Kitsap County?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is your vision for farming and agriculture activities in Kitsap County for the next 20 years?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A
Trees - timber land	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trees - wooded areas on rural parcels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shoreline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What can improve your quality of life in Kitsap County?

Demographics

This information is optional but will help us understand the perspective of the person completing the survey.

Age

- < 18 years old
- 19-25 years old
- 26-45 years old
- 46-60 years old
- 61-75 years old
- 75+ years old

Which category best describes you? (Check all that apply)

- White (Eg: German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc)
- Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (Eg: Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc)
- Black or African American (Eg: African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somalian, etc)
- Asian (Eg: Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (Eg: Squaxin Island Tribe, Suqusamish Tribe, Skokomish Tribe, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, etc)
- Middle Eastern or North African (Eg: Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Eg: Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, etc)
- Other

Educational Attainment

- High school or equivalent degree
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree

Do you identify with any of the following groups? (Check all that apply.)

- Veteran
- Active-Duty Military
- Farmer
- Student
- Health Care Worker
- Looking for Work
- Business Owner
- None of the above

Other

Optional

Please provide contact information if you would like to as we may follow-up with you directly.

Name

Address

Email

Phone

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Additional groups will be identified, and questions will be topic specific and developed.

Agriculture Community

- Review recommendations from the plan
- Assess and prioritize
- Identify partners (e.g. Public Health)
- Discuss next steps.

Kitsap Environmental Coalition

- Review comp plan comments.

Kitsap Economic Development Alliance

- Resource lands and industrial lands
- Childcare

Kitsap Public Utilities District (PUD)

- Energy siting

Appendix C: Rural Comments from 2024 Comp Plan

Insert comments related to rural that were submitted