



LAND USE ELEMENT

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Introduction

The Land Use Element provides the building blocks for creating a healthy, walkable, compact, and transit-oriented Kent that promotes equitable outcomes for all. This chapter guides the distribution, intensity, and form of land uses and is the foundation for other Comprehensive Plan elements, such as Transportation, Utilities, and Capital Facilities.

WHY THIS ELEMENT MATTERS

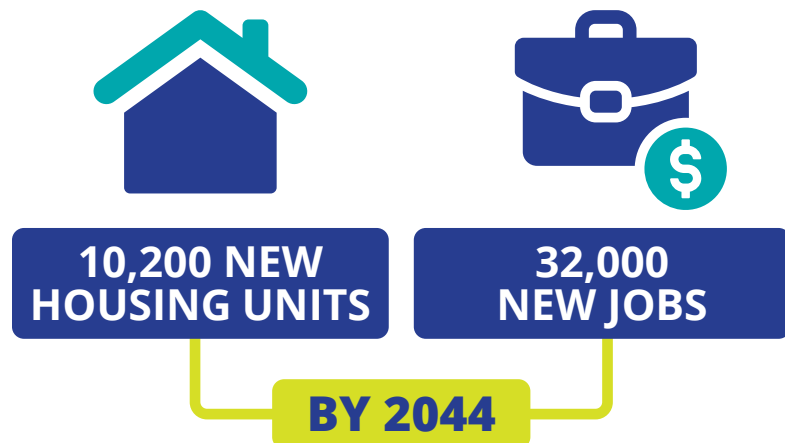
- » Provides the foundation for achieving the community's vision for future growth and promoting equitable outcomes for all.
- » Informs the general location of land uses in Kent.
- » Provides a framework for other Comprehensive Plan Elements to respond to growth and changing land use patterns.



A GROWING CITY

Kent is growing. As the largest city in south King County, Kent has historically attracted and continues to be seen as an affordable place to live with easy connections to larger cities like Seattle and Bellevue and is conveniently located near major transportation facilities like Sea-Tac International Airport. Growth in Kent also brings new challenges, requiring new approaches to accommodate future growth with limited land availability while also meeting the needs of a diverse community that already calls Kent home.

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires jurisdictions to plan for and accommodate forecasted 20-year housing unit and employment targets. For Kent, this includes accommodating **10,200 new housing units**, and **32,000 new jobs by 2044**. Much of this growth is assumed to occur in areas like Downtown that are already planning for more housing and employment. Some areas in Kent will undergo changes that utilize new high capacity transit, creating neighborhood hubs, and developing more walkable and connected neighborhoods.



GMA KING COUNTY GROWTH TARGETS

King County, in coordination with the cities in King County, adopts growth targets for the next 20-years (through 2044). Every city in King County must identify how it will meet growth targets for housing and employment growth as part of their comprehensive plan. Kent's 2044 Comprehensive Plan must show how it will accommodate an additional 10,200 housing units and 32,000 jobs by 2044, as identified in the Countywide Planning Policies in Table DP-1.

This comprehensive plan update includes policies and land use designations to ensure that the City of Kent is planning for this growth. **Table LU-1** describes the City's growth targets and capacity of the Future Land Use Map to accommodate future growth:

Table LU - 1: GMA King County Growth Targets for Kent

INCOME RANGE SERVED	2044 GROWTH TARGET	FUTURE LAND USE MAP CAPACITY	SURPLUS/ (DEFICIT)
Housing	10,200	12,688	2,488
Employment	32,000	32,563	563

Source: Dept. of Commerce, King County, City of Kent, Urban Footprint

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CITY PLANS

Technical or functional plans advance the Comprehensive Plan while providing important and specific guidance for a focused area or topic. They are an important factor in keeping the plan current and relevant over time and supplement the overall guidance provided in the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Element incorporates policy recommendations from other citywide and subarea plans and aligns these plans with Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements. Citywide and subarea plans are described below.

Kent Housing Options Plan (KHOP)

KHOP describes what Kent's housing needs are and identifies ways Kent and its partners can meet the growing demand for housing. The Land Use Element integrates KHOP strategic policy objectives to ensure the City's future land use patterns and development regulations support equitable housing growth that meets the needs of all members of the Kent community.

Rally the Valley Industrial Subarea Plan

The Rally the Valley Industrial Subarea Plan establishes a new community-driven vision for the future of Kent's industrial employment center that promotes an economically resilient industrial ecosystem, productive business, and a healthy, desirable place to work. The Kent Industrial Valley is designated as one of the region's ten manufacturing/industrial centers, which are locations for more intensive industrial activity and growth. The Plan identifies goals, policies, projects, and programs to implement this vision in the Kent Valley over the short and long term. The Land Use Element integrates key themes from the Rally the Valley planning process to ensure the City's future industrial land use patterns and development regulations align with the community's vision for the Kent Valley.

Midway Subarea Plan

The Midway Subarea Plan outlines a range of actions to prepare the Midway area for future high capacity transit investments along the existing highway corridor. The Plan's strategies aim to transform Midway into a walkable, compact, and sustainable community supported by mixed uses and a wide range of transportation options. The Land Use Element provides supporting guidance to ensure future urban development supports vibrant mixed use and pedestrian oriented communities.

Downtown Subarea Action Plan

The Downtown Subarea Action Plan (DSAP) encourages a dense, mixed-use urban center that complements transit and supports development compatible with the community's economic, environmental, and planning goals. Downtown Kent is designated as one of 30 Regional Growth Centers, which is a focal point for planned growth, economic development, and transportation infrastructure investments. The DSAP is currently being updated as the Rediscover Downtown Kent Plan. The Land Use Element provides policy guidance that will be integrated into the Downtown Plan update to support future growth and development of Kent's downtown core.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

The Land Use Element establishes the roadmap for where and how growth is planned to happen in Kent. It puts into action the state legislative requirements from the Growth Management Act (GMA), the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Vision 2050, and King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) including where and what types of housing, employment, and other development may occur. While the Land Use Element establishes the general location of land uses in Kent, it also provides guidance on how to accommodate future growth that informs other Comprehensive Plan Elements such as transportation, capital facilities, utilities, and community needs like parks, recreation, and open spaces.



Kent Today

Kent prides itself on being a unique and diverse community. Kent is the sixth largest city in Washington with a population of 140,000.¹ It is also a very diverse city, ranked by WalletHub in 2024 as the second most diverse mid-size (100,000 to 300,000 residents) city in the nation and the fifth most ethnically diverse city regardless of size.² Kent is also more ethnically diverse than other cities in King County and Washington, with 42 percent of Kent residents speaking a language other than English compared to King County (29 percent) and Washington State (21 percent). Kent’s status as a notably diverse city in terms of language spoken indicates a rich tapestry of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and identities within the community (**Table LU-2**). The unique needs of each of these communities are also important to consider when determining how Kent approaches growth and development over the next 20 years.

Figure LU -1 illustrates the general areas and land uses in Kent. The Kent Urban Growth Area is approximately 34 square miles. While denser than most neighboring communities, Kent is also at the intersection of a number of urban centers, transportation corridors, and natural features that define this part of South King County, including Green River and its tributaries, which bisect the city and empty into the Puget Sound. Mt. Rainier, or Mt. Tahoma, as it is known to some Indigenous Peoples, is a prominent geographical landmark that is viewable from many parts of the city and significant to many Pacific Northwest Tribes.

Table LU – 2: Diversity of Kent and King County

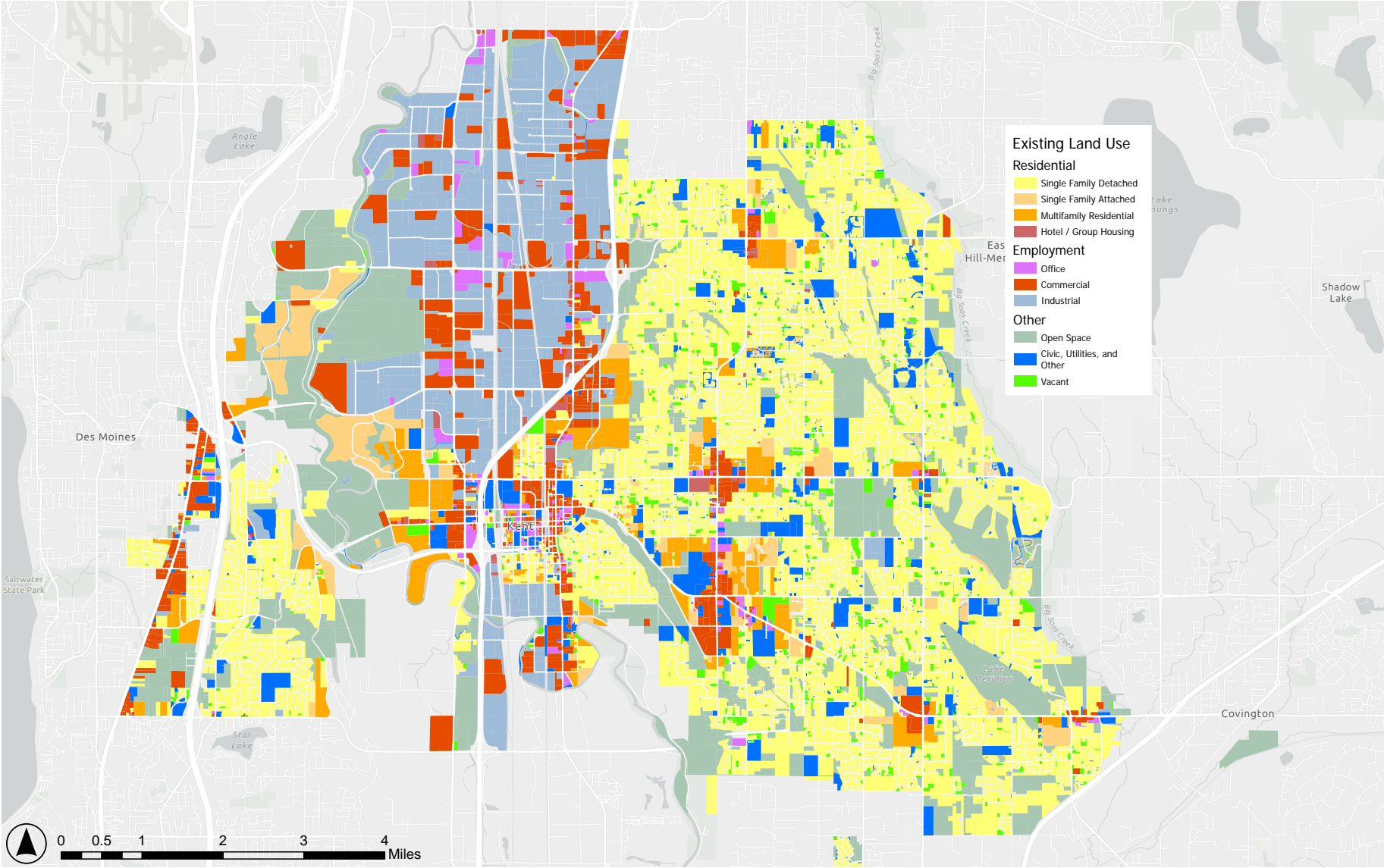
Demographic	Kent	King County
Speak Language(s) Other Than English	42%	29%
Average Household Size	2.89	2.44
Median Household Income	\$79,781	\$106,326
Foreign-Born Persons	32%	24%
Mean Travel Time to Work	31 minutes	29 minutes
Persons in Poverty	11.3%	9.3%
Median Home Value	\$414,200	\$651,900

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2020

¹ Washington Office of Financial Management, 2024.

² WalletHub annually compares 501 of the most populated cities across five key categories: 1) Socioeconomic Diversity, 2) Cultural Diversity, 3) Economic Diversity, 4) Household Diversity and 5) Religious Diversity. The methodology uses the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index method, a commonly accepted measure of market concentration that also works effectively as a general-purpose measure of diversity (e.g., race/ethnicity, occupations, languages, nationalities). <https://wallethub.com/edu/cities-with-the-most-and-least-ethno-racial-and-linguistic-diversity/10264>

Figure LU-1: Existing Land Uses in Kent



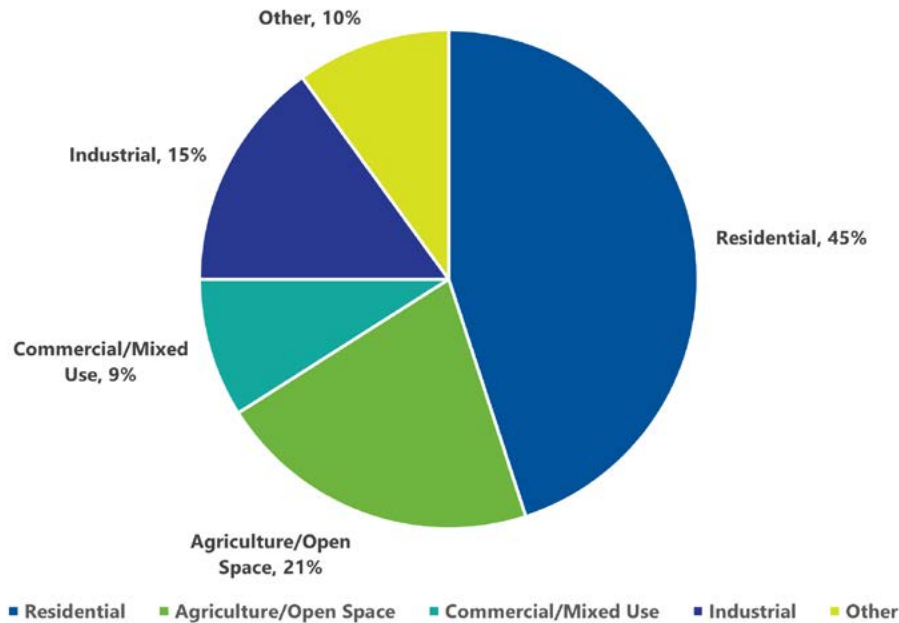
Source: City of Kent



As shown in **Figure LU-2**, approximately 58 percent of the land within the existing city limits is zoned for low density residential. Most of this land is located in the city’s West Hill and East Hill areas. Other areas include urban centers like Downtown and Midway, and the Industrial Valley.

Kent is served by multiple highways, including State Route 167, State Route 509 (Pacific Highway), Interstate 5, and State Route 516. Both Interstate 5 and State Route 167 provide access to the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. In 2028, WSDOT’s “SR 509 Completion Project” will provide additional north-south freight connections and airport access between I-5 and SR 509. This highway network supports a large manufacturing and distribution industrial base, distinguishing Kent as a major economic hub in the region.

Figure LU-2: Existing Land Uses in Kent, Percentage of Gross Land Area



Source: Urban Footprint



DOWNTOWN

Downtown Kent is the heart of the Kent community and is one of Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) designated Regional Growth Centers. Today, Downtown Kent is made up of a wide range of uses, including residential, commercial, civic, and parks and open space that varies in look and feel by location with the Downtown area.

Downtown continues to evolve with new development and infrastructure improvements as a place for all. With activity centers like Kent Station, the ShoWare Center and Historic or "old" Downtown, community gathering places like Kent Commons, Kherson Park, and shopping at the many ethnic local grocery and retail stores, Downtown Kent is a representation of the unique values that make up Kent today. Downtown is also a center for public services with the location of the City Hall civic campus and the King County Regional Justice Center.

Additionally, Meeker Street is a key commercial corridor and historic gateway in and out of Downtown Kent. Development along the street ranges from large-scale commercial developments to civic uses in Downtown's historic core, as well as new mixed-use developments and diverse housing types.

NORTH VALLEY INDUSTRIAL AREA (KENT VALLEY)

The Kent Valley is a PSRC designated Regional Manufacturing and Industrial Center and is an integral component of Kent's and the region's economic and employment bases. Recognized as one of the largest manufacturing areas in the United States, the Kent Valley covers approximately six square miles, representing nearly 20 percent of Kent's land base, hosts over 10,000 businesses, and supports over 250,000 jobs largely in the manufacturing and industrial sectors throughout the region.

MEET ME ON MEEKER

To knit all of these uses together and support incoming new development, the City initiated the Meet Me on Meeker project in 2018 to reimagine Meeker Street as a multimodal, urban street with a strong sense of place. As part of this project, the City adopted the Meeker Street Streetscape Design and Construction Standards to create an attractive and cohesive look and feel for the corridor. Since adoption, numerous improvements have been made and continue to be made to implement the identified vision for Meeker Street.

MIDWAY

Located along the westernmost border of Kent, the Midway Subarea acts as the commercial spine for Kent's West Hill residents, as well as for residents from the neighboring city of Des Moines. Development in Midway is guided by the Midway Subarea Plan and the Midway Design Guidelines, which aim to transform the area into a mixed-use and compact community supported by high capacity transit. Midway is already served by the Metro RapidRide A Line along Pacific Highway and light rail train service is expected to begin in 2026.

EAST HILL

East Hill is primarily composed of detached residential neighborhoods with some dispersed multifamily development. It is also home to most of Kent's subsidized housing. There is one Racially/Ethnically Concentrated Area of Poverty (as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development) in East Hill in a primarily multifamily area.²

There are two major thoroughfares connecting East Hill to the rest of the city and the Region. Benson Corridor/SR-515 is a north/south route that connects Kent to Renton and Auburn. It is also a future bus rapid transit corridor (Metro RapidRide I Line), which is anticipated to open in 2026. Kent Kangley/SR-516 is the more east-west thoroughfare that connects Kent to Covington to the east. The Benson Corridor intersects with Kent-Kangley/SR-516 at the Countywide Growth Center Candidate area located at Kent-Canyon Ridge. The future Countywide Growth Center is assumed to become a center for jobs, housing, shopping, and recreational opportunities.

² These areas are defined by the following.

- More than half the population of a census tract is non-white and 40 percent or more of the population is in poverty; or
- Where the poverty rate is greater than three times the average poverty rate in the area. Nodes of neighborhood-serving commercial at key intersections provide convenient goods and services for East Hill neighborhoods.

WEST HILL


West Hill is a primarily residential area along the I-5 corridor in southwest Kent. Neighborhoods east of I-5 are predominately low density residential while areas west of I-5 include a greater range of uses including multifamily residential and a variety of commercial-manufacturing development.

NATURAL AREAS

Kent contains numerous areas that can be identified and characterized as critical or environmentally sensitive. These include wetlands, streams, wildlife and fisheries habitat, geologic hazard areas, frequently flooded areas and critical aquifer recharge areas. Kent also has "Resource Lands" within Kent that support agricultural uses and may have long-term commercial significance. The development rights for the Agricultural Resource Lands in Kent were purchased under King County's Agricultural Preservation Program during the 1980's, ensuring they will remain in agricultural land use in perpetuity.

The City has adopted policies and development regulations to protect these areas. The Green River, a notable natural feature in Kent, is considered a Shoreline of Statewide Significance and falls under the jurisdiction of the City's Shoreline Master Program (SMP). Other water bodies subject to SMP policies and regulations are Lake Meridian, Lake Fenwick, the Green River Natural Resources Area, Panther Lake and portions of Big Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek and Springbrook Creek.

Goals and policies that protect these natural areas and details on the regulatory requirements can be found in the Shoreline Element.



The unique needs of each of these communities are also important to consider when determining how Kent approaches **growth and development over the next 20 years**

Kent Tomorrow

Kent is a varied and vibrant community that is home to residents and businesses, civic amenities and natural areas, and infrastructure to support daily life. The Comprehensive Plan provides direction for future growth through the Future Land Use Map and Future Land Use Designations.

The City of Kent’s “Future Land Use Map (FLUM)” establishes the framework for more detailed zoning designations, which in turn have specific allowances for use, scale, and design. The City of Kent uses these Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Designations to protect environmental resources, guide the location and form of new development, and ensure land is available to accommodate needed housing and employment growth.

Although important for providing land use direction at the parcel level, the Future Land Use Map Designations illustrated on the Future Land Use Map does not provide guidance on all the aspects of development such as building character and form, multimodal connectivity, and amenities such as open space, parks, and community gathering spaces. Those are implemented through the City’s Development Code and other plans such as the Parks and Open Space Plan.

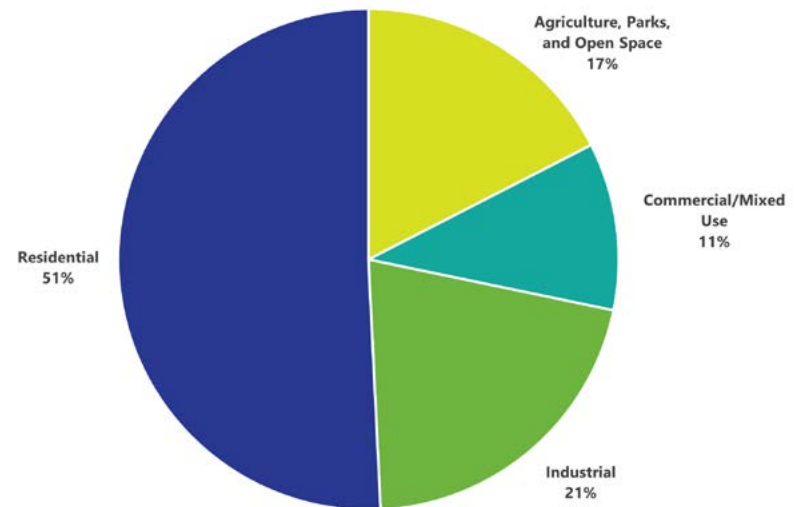
Figure LU-4 depicts the City’s Future Land Use Designations.³ Future Land Use Designations in each area within Kent play a role in defining its function and characteristics. Some areas, such as Downtown, allow for a wide variety of uses in close proximity with one another, while other areas are defined by a more restrictive set of land uses (the Industrial Valley or residential neighborhoods, for example). Future Land Use Designations are described in **Table LU-3**. The proportion of the City that is within these categories are identified in **Figure LU-3**.

³ The official map of this information is accessible through the City’s GIS portal.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND ZONING

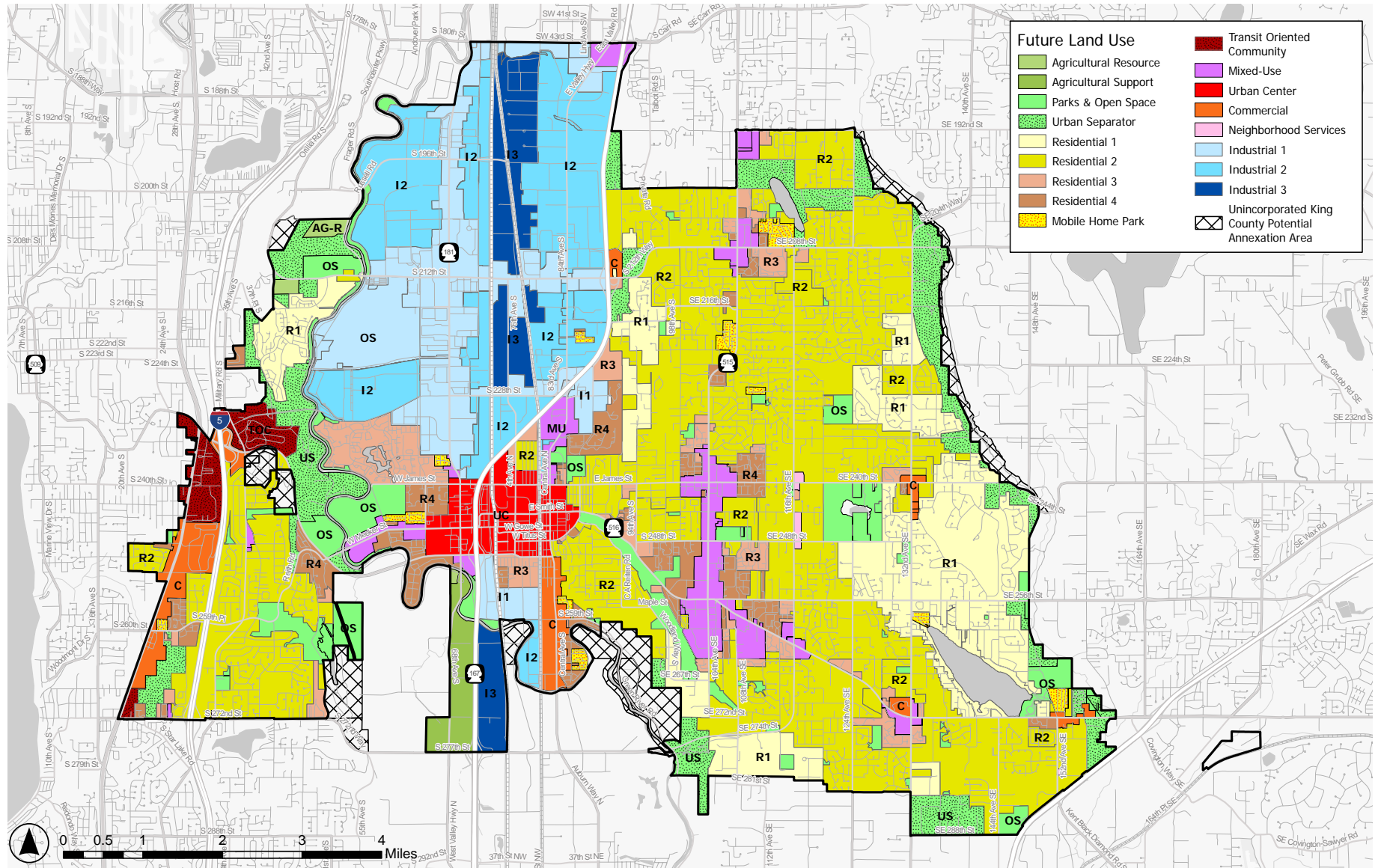
Future Land Use Designations shown on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) establish the long-term direction for how Kent will grow and change over the next 20 years. Kent’s zoning classifications and Zoning Map implement the future land use designations through specific land use and design requirements, guiding how properties are developed today.

Figure LU – 3: Breakdown of 2044 Land Use Designations, By Acres



Source: City of Kent

Figure LU-4: Kent Future Land Use Map



Source: City of Kent

2044 FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

In addition to informing how Kent grows over time, Future Land Use Designations also identify the desired connectivity, amenities and urban form. These designations represent the types of development and land uses that currently exist in Kent as well as the desired land and urban form mix that was identified through the extensive community engagement process. These design elements include

- » **Land Use** describes the desired mix of uses (i.e., lower density homes, manufacturing centers, playgrounds and ball fields) that are typically found in each Future Land Use Designation.
- » **Character and Form** addresses the desired built characteristics, such as the general building type, lot size, architectural style (as applicable) and street orientation.

- » **Connectivity** summarizes the typical transportation network that supports the desired Future Land Use Designation, including desired multimodal transportation opportunities.
- » **Amenities** describes the types of features desired with the Future Land Use Designation that support the daily experience of residents, employees, and visitors.
- » **Implementing Zone** describes the zoning designation that could be applied within the Future Land Use Designation. Some zones could be implemented under more than one designation.

Together, these elements provide design and policy direction for future development, or protection from development, which will be necessary to meet community expectations and set clear direction for development in Kent over the next 20 years.

Figure LU-5: Residential Land Use Designations Concepts



Table LU-3: 2044 Future Land Use Designations

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS	LAND USE	CHARACTER & FORM	CONNECTIVITY	AMENITIES	IMPLEMENTING ZONING
Residential - 1 (R-1)	Generally detached residential development; low density middle housing	Traditional lot pattern in subdivisions or grid-style neighborhoods	Local streets connected to collectors/arterials with sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure; Ideally within a 15-minute walk of transit options	Parks and open spaces, churches and fraternal organizations	SR-3 SR-4.5
Residential - 2 (R-2)	Detached residential development; medium density middle housing; multifamily where appropriate	Traditional lot patterns in subdivisions, varied lot sizes of detached residential, attached residential, and lower density multifamily units	Local streets connected to collectors/arterials with sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure; Ideally within a 15-minute walk of transit options	Parks and open spaces, churches and fraternal organizations, neighborhood commercial uses	SR-6, SR-8
Mobile Home Park (MHP)	Mobile and manufactured homes and recreational vehicles within commercial mobile home parks	Mobile homes and other residential units connected by an internal circulation system	Internal, private circulation system connected to a collector or arterial.	Open spaces and community facilities	MHP
Residential - 3 (R-3)	Multifamily and detached residential development with varied densities and housing types up to 16 dwelling unit/acre	Varied lot sizes detached residential and multifamily units, including middle housing options	Gridded street network with internal circulation connected to local streets or collectors with sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure; Ideally within a 20-minute walk of transit options	Neighborhood parks, small-scale neighborhood commercial uses, and religious and fraternal institutions	SR-8, MR-D, MR-G, MRT-12, MRT-16, MHP
Residential - 4 (R-4)	Multifamily and detached residential development with varied densities and housing types up to 40 dwelling unit/acre	Varied lot sizes detached residential and multifamily units, including middle housing options	Gridded street network with internal circulation connected to local streets or collectors with sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure; Ideally within a 20-minute walk of transit options	Neighborhood parks, small-scale neighborhood commercial uses, and religious and fraternal institutions	MR-D, MR-M, MR-H, MRT-12, MRT-16, MHP

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS	LAND USE	CHARACTER & FORM	CONNECTIVITY	AMENITIES	IMPLEMENTING ZONING
Mixed Use (MU)	Mixed use buildings, standalone residential uses, offices, retail establishments, other commercial uses, and public facilities	Mixed use structures with varied architectural styles and amenities at the ground level to support vibrant districts	Adjacent to collectors or in an urban area such as Downtown or near transit. Highly walkable. Multiple transportation options	Parks, plazas, and a variety of businesses and civic institutions	GC, GC-MU, CC, CC-MU, MRT-16, I2
Urban Center (UC)	High-density, mixed-use development. Retail, office, multifamily residential and public facility	Mixed use structures with varied architectural styles and amenities at the ground level to support vibrant districts	Adjacent to collectors or in an urban area such as Downtown or near transit. Highly walkable. Multiple transportation options	Parks, plazas, and a variety of businesses and civic institutions	DC, DCE, GC, GC-MU, MRT-12, MRT-16, MHP, MR-M
Transit Oriented Community (TOC)	Retail, office and multifamily residential uses together in the same area or as standalone use in support of high capacity transit investments	Mixed use structures (horizontal and vertical options)	Grid street network with extensive bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Multiple transportation options	Parks, plazas, and a variety of supportive services and businesses	MTC-1, MTC-2, MCR, MHP
Neighborhood Services (NS)	Food and drink establishments, locally serving retail, and creative office uses	Neighborhood mixed use areas support the neighborhood fabric in their site layout, transportation access, and architectural variety	Multi-modal connections support businesses in these areas and support walkable neighborhoods	Open spaces such as plazas and parks along with retail establishments to support a varied and livable neighborhood	NCC
Industrial (I)	Manufacturing and warehouse uses, with office and business park development and limited retail to serve the surrounding uses	Large format development on larger parcels focused on manufacturing and other industrial-related uses	Primarily arterial and access roads. Sidewalks with interconnected trails to reduce conflicts with large vehicles	Small plazas and public/private spaces. Employee-serving amenities	I1, I2, I3

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS	LAND USE	CHARACTER & FORM	CONNECTIVITY	AMENITIES	IMPLEMENTING ZONING
Manufacturing/ Industrial Center (MIC)	Manufacturing, industrial and advanced technology uses, or those uses closely related to industrial development such as warehousing. Office and retail uses are limited.	Large format development focused on manufacturing and other industrial-related uses	Primarily arterial and access roads. Sidewalks with interconnected trails to reduce conflicts with large vehicles	Small plazas and public/private spaces. Employee-serving amenities	I1, I2, I3
Commercial (C)	Retail, office and service uses located along major thoroughfares that serve local residential neighborhoods or regional customers	Large commercial uses, generally with a significant amount of automobile parking	Generally located along arterials. Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, including internal circulation. Near transit	Public parks and plazas	GC, GC-MU, CC, CC-MU, CM, MRT-12, MRT-16
Agricultural Resource (AG-R)	Long-term agricultural uses with some detached residential uses	Open space and active farm uses; some detached residential	Rural roads and highways	Open spaces and views; May be near regional recreation amenities	A-10
Agricultural Support (AG-S)	Agriculturally related industrial and retail uses near agricultural areas	Retail and light industrial uses related to adjacent agricultural uses	Rural roads and highways	Supportive uses to maintain agricultural feasibility	AG
Urban Separator (US)	Very low density rural residential uses, agricultural uses, active and passive open space	Limited detached residential uses; open space and natural or rural conditions	Rural roads and highways	Open spaces and views; may be near regional recreation amenities and natural areas	SR-1
Park and Open Space (OS)	Publicly owned land that is either large active park area or undeveloped or developed passive recreational open space land that may have environmental sensitivities	Developed and undeveloped recreation areas, natural areas. In developed and US areas	Connected to the road network. May or may not have internal circulation	Open spaces and views. Recreation amenities such as fields, playgrounds	All zones

Big Moves

Extensive discussions with the Kent Community revealed a desire to establish a sense of identity for Kent and its neighborhoods. While Downtown Kent is a destination for many people, the Kent community was clear in its desire to create more walkable neighborhoods near services and amenities. The Kent community saw several

opportunities to achieve this, including reimagining Benson Corridor and Kent-Kangley as activity centers and developing neighborhood responsive local commercial hubs east of Benson in predominantly residential areas of East Hill where there are few services available to surrounding neighborhoods without driving.

BENSON AND KENT-KANGLEY CORRIDORS

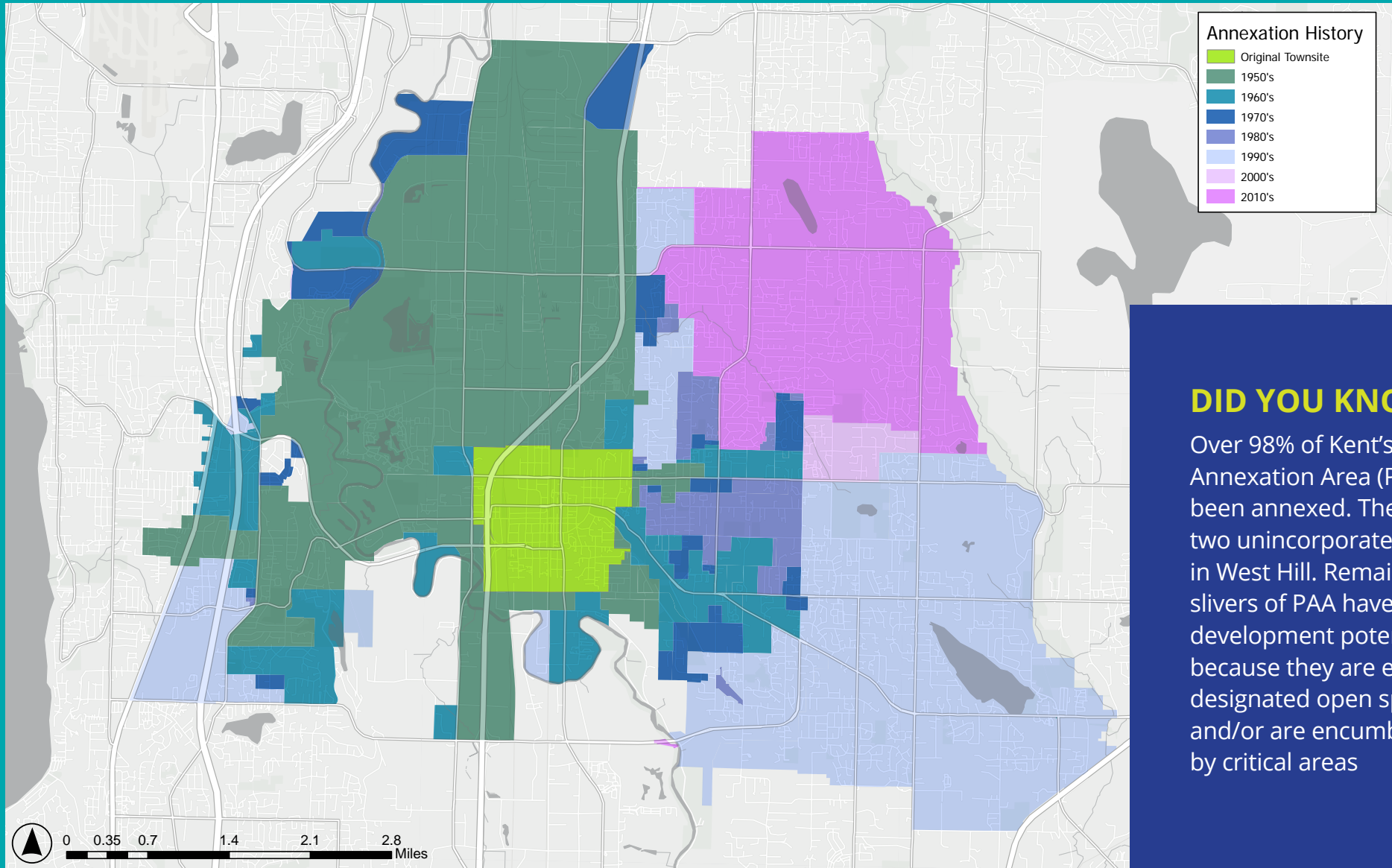
Prior to the 1990's Kent was primarily made up of Downtown, the Industrial Valley, and the West Hill. In the 1990's and 2000's much of the area now known as East Hill was annexed into the City Limits (**Figure LU-6**). Because of the topography changes from the valley to the East Hill, much of this annexation area was designed to favor auto-centered development. **Kent has worked to fulfill GMA requirements by annexing much of its planned annexation area. Aside from two unincorporated islands on the West Hill, the remaining areas are environmentally sensitive or open space with limited development potential.** Outreach during the Comprehensive Plan process revealed a desire by residents to have neighborhood services integrated into East Hill instead of having to travel to downtown or outside of the city.

Future high capacity transit investments in Kent are being implemented along Benson corridor (SR-515). Metro Connects, King County Metro's long term transportation plan, calls for additional rapid ride service to further connect Kent's East Hill community to Downtown and new light rail stations on the West Hill over the next 30 years. New bus rapid transit has the potential to transform Benson Corridor into a more walkable destination with mixed-use, commercial, and residential development. These transit investments also support the

planned Kent-Canyon Ridge Candidate Countywide Growth Center located at the intersection of Kent-Kangley and Benson. These public investments and the community's desire for more services in East Hill point to focused change in select areas that will provide the desired services while also maintaining East Hill's residential focus.

Change will come over time. Currently, Benson Corridor is made up of detached residential and multifamily development as well as auto-oriented commercial development with large parking areas. The Future Land Use Map and accompanying goals and policies reimagines Benson and Kent-Kangley with active centers of mixed-use development supported by commercial and retail uses that provide opportunities for local businesses. Benson Corridor is also currently the location of many culturally significant retail and restaurant uses, which is envisioned to continue to grow as a destination. New housing options along the corridor will leverage public transit investments and support local businesses.

Figure LU-6: Annexation History in Kent

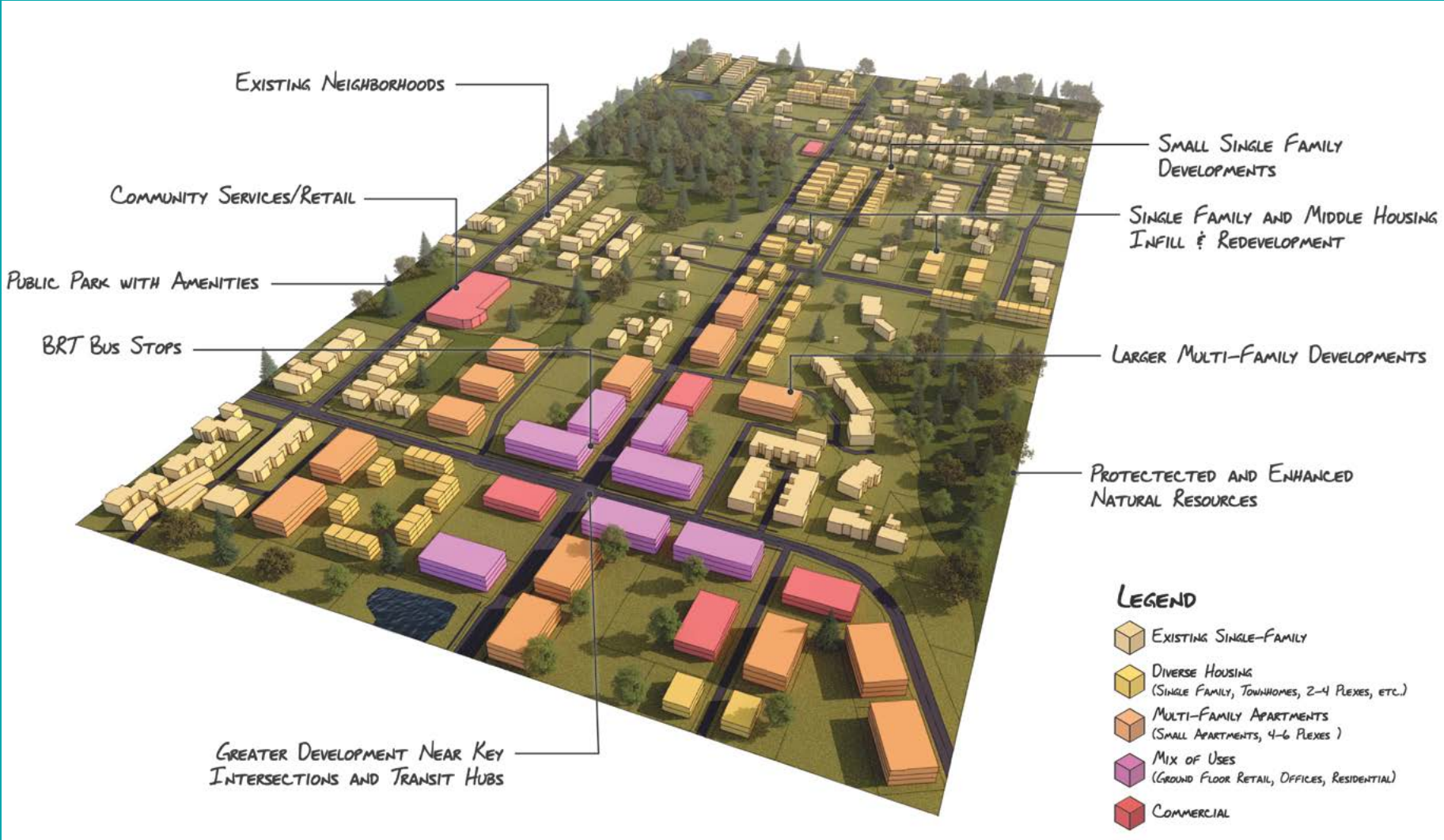


DID YOU KNOW?

Over 98% of Kent's Planned Annexation Area (PAA) has been annexed. There are two unincorporated islands in West Hill. Remaining slivers of PAA have limited development potential because they are either designated open space and/or are encumbered by critical areas

Source: City of Kent, 2024

Figure LU-7: Future Benson and Kent-Kangley Corridor Concept



Source: MIG, Inc.

EAST HILL NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES NODES

East Hill was mostly developed under unincorporated ing County rural standards and is a series of predominately detached single family neighborhoods with few services within walking distance from homes. Community conversations revealed a desire to create small, locally serving community nodes within residential areas where small scale retail would provide essential services and amenities in those areas. To address this desire, the Comprehensive Plan introduces neighborhood nodes that

could meet some of the daily service and shopping needs, spur small scaled development, and permit new types of housing and active places outside of Downtown. These nodes are located in select areas in East Hill at major intersections where future development would create a defined neighborhood center. **Figure LU-7 and LU-8** shows an example of what Neighborhood Services could look like in the East Hill Nodes.

Figure LU-8: Future Neighborhood Services in East Hill Concept



Goals and Policies

Kent will continue to grow and change over the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan's Guiding Principles establish the foundation for the land use goals and policies that set to achieve the community vision. Land Use goals and policies are organized into four broad categories:

- » **Growth and Development** establishes the foundation for how land use decisions will be evaluated, based on growth targets, desired design elements for future development, and alignment with decision-making for land use decisions.
- » **Community-Centered Design** focuses on how urban spaces, such as streets, public spaces, and future development contributes to the well-being and prosperity of Kent. This category organizes goals and policies that address how the built environment interacts with the natural environment and the people who live and work in Kent.
- » **Essential Public Facilities** identifies specific goals and policies necessary to achieve the desired land use vision. This includes community services, utilities, and other elements necessary to foster community-focused development.
- » **Innovation & Shared Prosperity** addresses the need to be inclusive and accessible for all existing and future members of the Kent Community. This category includes goals and policies that highlight economic development related to future development and land use.

Together, the Guiding Principles, the Future Land Use Map, goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, and community voices establish the policy framework for Land Use.

DESIGNATED ACTIVITY CENTERS...

are areas with concentrated housing, economic development, transportation, and infrastructure investments for efficient growth. While a city can choose to prioritize these growth areas through a specific or area growth plan, or subarea, the County and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) have developed a process to designate these areas for additional funds to assist in the implementation of this growth.

Kent has four areas with the goal of implementing and providing for this concentrated growth:

- » Downtown Kent - A Regional Growth Center
- » Industrial Valley - A Manufacturing and Industrial Center
- » The Canyon Ridge County-Designated Growth Center
- » Midway Subarea
- » Benson (SR 515) Corridor
- » Kent-Kangley (SR 516) Corridor



Growth and Development



GOAL LU-1: Kent will ensure an adequate land use pattern with densities that efficiently support a range of public facilities and urban services, housing options, and economic opportunities to meet Kent’s diverse needs.

- » **LU-1.1:** Establish land use map designations that accommodate the City’s 2044 growth targets.
- » **LU-1.2:** Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and King County as needed to align annexation boundaries, complete a public engagement process that involves affected parties, facilitate the provision of future urban services including public transit, and minimize the potential for creating urban unincorporated islands.

- » **LU-1.3:** Support joint planning between Kent, adjacent cities, King County, and service providers to work cooperatively in planning for urban unincorporated areas to ensure an orderly transition to city governance, including efforts such as: (a) establishing urban development standards, (b) addressing service and infrastructure financing, and (c) transferring permitting authority.
- » **LU-1.4:** Coordinate with King County on land use decisions that may impact surrounding Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands to ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are in place prior to the issuance of land use approvals.
- » **LU-1.5:** Monitor household and employment growth trends and consider changes to the land use map and development regulations to ensure Kent meets the density on net buildable acreage allowed by the zoning district the level of development intensity established by the Land Use map and zoning designations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES



THRIVING CITY



SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY



INNOVATIVE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT



EVOLVING INFRASTRUCTURE



GOAL LU-2: Kent will focus household and employment growth in Designated Activity Centers to provide adequate land and densities to accommodate a large portion of the adopted 20-year housing and employment targets.

- » **LU-2.1:** Continue to encourage mixed-use development that combines retail, office, or residential uses in innovative configurations to provide a diverse and economically vibrant Downtown Kent (the Regional Growth Center) and designated activity centers.
- » **LU-2.2:** Plan for densities that support the development and maximize the benefits of public transit as well as walking, rolling, and biking circulation within compact urban settings.
- » **LU-2.3:** Continue to encourage medium- and high-density residential development in Downtown Kent (the Regional Growth Center) that is affordable to all income levels.
- » **LU-2.4:** Utilize the ReDiscover Downtown Kent Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines to ensure development in the Regional Growth Center is attractive, constructed with high-quality materials, maximizes livability for all residents, and reinforces a sense of place that reflects the diversity of the community while focusing on minimizing displacement.
- » **LU-2.5:** Support designated activity centers and identify new areas with concentrations of commercial development and surrounding medium-density housing that are supported by high capacity transit or have an existing subarea plan.
- » **LU-2.6:** Monitor economic trends and consider land use changes and incentives to maintain the vitality of Downtown Kent (the Regional Growth Center) and designated activity centers, with special consideration and strategies for communities at risk of displacement.
- » **LU-2.7:** Support the transformation of key underutilized lands, such as surplus public lands or environmental contaminated lands, to higher density, mixed-use areas to complement the development of the Regional Growth Center and designated activity centers, as well as the enhancement of existing neighborhoods.



GOAL LU-3: Kent will plan and finance transportation and other public infrastructure investments that support medium- and high-density mixed-use development.

- » **LU-3.1:** Focus future public transportation investments in areas with medium and high density residential and/or mixed-use development, with special consideration given to connecting underserved areas and areas at risk of displacement with job opportunities, especially in the Industrial Valley.
- » **LU-3.2:** Enhance pedestrian circulation systems, bicycle lanes, and pathways with an emphasis on circulation systems that link adjacent neighborhoods to high capacity transit and mixed use centers.



GOAL LU-4: Kent will promote orderly, efficient, and equitable commercial growth within existing commercial districts to maintain and strengthen commercial activity and maximize the use of existing public facility investments while mitigating potential displacement.

- » **LU-4.1:** Develop regulatory incentives to encourage infill development and reuse of existing buildings and underutilized lands in existing commercial areas.
- » **LU-4.2:** Develop City investment incentives to encourage infill development in existing commercial areas, which may include improved sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting and outdoor public spaces.
- » **LU-4.3:** Identify anti-displacement measures and partnership opportunities, such as community land trusts, financial assistance programs, and zoning policies to support small commercial businesses and proprietors from historically marginalized groups in the community. Engage directly with affected communities to ensure policies are tailored to their needs and priorities.



GOAL LU-5: Kent will promote the Kent Valley and Manufacturing and Industrial Center as a manufacturing and industrial hub through a wide variety of manufacturing, warehousing, and related industrial land uses, as well as appropriate supportive uses that promote economic activity.

- » **LU-5.1:** D Ensure the Manufacturing and Industrial Center provides accessible connectivity to highways and rail corridors.
- » **LU-5.2:** Discourage and limit land uses other than manufacturing, high technology, and warehousing within the boundaries of the Manufacturing/ Industrial Center.
- » **LU-5.3:** Provide for a mix of land uses that are supportive of and compatible with manufacturing, industrial, and warehouse uses, such as appropriate office, retail, commercial, and service uses to provide amenities for workers.
- » **LU-5.4:** Continue to implement the “Rally the Valley” Subarea Plan for the Manufacturing and Industrial Center and ensure growth in the Kent Valley remains consistent with the regional growth strategy.



GOAL LU-6: Kent will plan and finance transportation and infrastructure systems that can accommodate high-intensity manufacturing, industrial, and warehouse uses that support the financial resilience and economic productivity of the Kent Valley.

- » **LU-6.1:** Work with the Regional Transit Authority and King County to facilitate safe and accessible mobility to and within the Kent Industrial Valley for goods, services, and employees.
- » **LU-6.2:** Consider multimodal needs in the Kent Industrial Valley, particularly focusing on increased connections for commuters utilizing active transportation, ride-share, and public transit.

- » **LU-6.3:** Upgrade water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management facilities and partner with external utility providers such as Puget Sound Energy, fiber optic communications providers and others to support development and job growth in the Kent Valley as necessary.



GOAL LU-7: Promote a reasonable balance between parking supply and parking demand.

- » **LU-7.1:** Develop parking ratios that take into account existing parking supply, minimums and maximums, land use intensity, transit and ride-sharing goals.
- » **LU-7.2:** Incorporate ground-level retail or service facilities into any parking structures that are constructed within the Downtown Regional Growth Center.
- » **LU-7.3:** Provide an option for developers to construct the minimum number of parking spaces on-site or pay an in-lieu fee to cover the cost of the City’s construction and operation of parking at an off-site location.
- » **LU-7.4:** Evaluate parking requirements for all uses within the Regional Growth Center and designated activity centers in accordance with the following factors:
 - The potential of shared parking and transit facilities in proximity to the site;
 - The employee profile of a proposed site, including the number and type of employees and the anticipated shifts;
 - The potential for “capture” trips that will tend to reduce individual site parking requirements due to the aggregation of uses within concentrated areas;
 - The Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation report and other publications that provide;
 - Parking generation indices; and
 - Any studies of similar specific uses conducted either by the City or the applicant.
- » **LU-7.5:** Develop bicycle parking standards for remodeled and new commercial, office or industrial development.



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GOAL LU-8: Kent will coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions, regional and federal entities, and tribal partners to retain the unique sense of place provided by the City's natural features. Coordination may include approaches and standards for the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, protection of cultural resources and water quality, and provision of open space.

- » LU-8.1: Ensure the City's regulations designating and protecting critical areas are consistent with the Growth Management Act.
- » LU-8.2: Coordinate with King County to produce critical area maps of the Potential Annexation Area consistent with the City of Kent Critical Areas Maps and to manage natural resources in the Potential Annexation Area.
- » LU-8.3: When jurisdictional boundaries are involved, coordinate wetland protection and enhancement approaches, plans, and actions with adjacent jurisdictions and Tribes.
- » LU-8.4: Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas through City regulations, programmatic plans, and capital improvement programs that encourage well-designed and compact land use patterns such as higher urban density, clustering, and planned unit development.
- » LU-8.5: Conserve energy resources, improve air and water quality, and support healthy lifestyles by establishing well-designed, compact mixed-use land use patterns that provide comfortable and convenient opportunities for travel by transit, foot, and bicycle.
- » LU-8.6: Develop strategies and utilize funding opportunities to protect environmentally sensitive areas that contribute to wildlife habitat, open space and the livability of Kent.
- » LU-8.7: Ensure that the City's environmental policies and regulations comply with state and federal environmental protection regulations regarding air and water quality, hazardous materials, noise, and protection of fish and wildlife resources and habitat.

- » LU-8.8: Maintain accurate and up-to-date environmental data and support environmental management programs, park master programs, and environmental education and incentive programs to protect and enhance Kent's natural resources and environmental health.
- » LU-8.9: Protect established greenbelts to preserve existing natural vegetation in geologically hazardous areas, along stream banks, and wetlands.



GOAL LU-9: Collaborate with the Puget Sound Partnership to implement the Puget Sound Action Agenda and to coordinate land use and transportation plans and actions for the benefit of Puget Sound and its watersheds.



GOAL LU-10: Evaluate and continue to implement Urban Separators to protect ecologically sensitive areas and to create open space corridors that provide visual, recreational, and wildlife benefits within and between urban growth areas.

- » **LU-10.1:** Ensure Urban Separators are low-density areas of no greater than one dwelling unit per acre.
- » **LU-10.2:** Link Urban Separators within the City of Kent to those of adjacent cities and unincorporated King County.
- » **LU-10.3:** Provide open space linkages within or to designated Urban Separators when new development occurs.
- » **LU-10.4:** Encourage well-designed land use patterns, including clustering of housing units, zero lot lines, and other techniques to protect and enhance Urban Separators.

Community-Centered Design



GOAL LU-11: Kent will emphasize the importance of high-quality design, streetscapes, and site planning, multi-modal connectivity, pedestrian-centered transportation infrastructure, and elements that support local culture, climate resilience, and healthy living.

- » **LU-11.1:** Adopt and maintain policies, codes, design guidelines, and land use patterns that promote walking, rolling, biking, public transportation use, and social interaction to increase public health, community wellbeing, and a sense of place.
- » **LU-11.2:** Ensure that the Kent Design and Construction Standards support the community-based vision for the Regional Growth Center and designated activity centers, including safe and accessible multimodal connectivity, housing options for all, access to employment opportunities, and an emphasis on community wellbeing, inclusivity, and health.
- » **LU-11.3:** Continue to undertake beautification projects in the Regional Growth Center and designated activity centers that enhance quality of life, support local culture and history, promote community health, and contribute to economic resiliency. Potential projects may relate to improving or increasing pedestrian amenities, street trees, public art, and parks.
- » **LU-11.4:** Periodically evaluate design review standards for designated activity centers to ensure clear and equitable direction that aligns with the community-based vision and market realities. Implement standards for new and emerging centers.

- » **LU-11.5:** Encourage development of public or semi-public spaces as part of retail, office, or residential developments in designated activity centers.
- » **LU-11.6:** Develop clear and objective site and parking design standards in designated activity centers that support public transit connections and a safe and accessible pedestrian environment.



GOAL LU-12: Develop vibrant, walkable, and accessible commercial areas that serve as focal points of community activity, promoting inclusivity, diversity, and social connectivity.

- » **LU-12.1:** Establish design standards for commercial and mixed-use development that are complementary to surrounding neighborhoods and accommodate transit, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- » **LU-12.2:** Prepare comprehensive multimodal streetscape plans for commercial nodes and corridors to create a safe, inviting, and accessible pedestrian environment.
- » **LU-12.3:** Identify and establish additional gateways into and within Kent that highlight the diverse and unique identity of the community.
- » **LU-12.4:** Continue to evaluate opportunities for neighborhood nodes where appropriate to add convenient commercial opportunities, amenities for residents, and gathering places.



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GOAL LU-13: Kent will recognize the significant role the natural environment plays in shaping a healthy, sustainable, and resilient community by contributing to human health, environmental justice, economic vitality, local culture, and sense of place.

- » **LU-13.1:** Minimize the loss of vegetation as new development occurs. Continue to recognize the value of trees and other vegetation in increasing the resilience, community health, and livability of Kent.
- » **LU-13.2:** Consider the potential impacts of development to culturally significant sites and tribal treaty fishing, hunting, and gathering grounds. Work with Tribes to incorporate appropriate educational elements and interpretive features to honor local history and culture.
- » **LU-13.3:** Identify, mitigate, and remediate harmful environmental impacts, pollutants, and hazards, including light, air, noise, soil, and structural hazards, where they have contributed to racialized health or environmental disparities, and increase environmental resiliency in frontline communities.
- » **LU-13.4:** Support and encourage environmental stewardship on private and public lands to protect and enhance habitat, water quality, and other ecosystem services, including the protection of watersheds and wellhead areas that are sources of the region's drinking water supplies.
- » **LU-13.5:** Encourage participation in innovative environmentally sensitive development practices, such as green builder programs and approaches developed using a watershed planning framework for managing stormwater, protecting water quality, minimizing flooding and erosion, protecting habitat, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- » **LU-13.6:** Adopt development standards that minimize environmental impacts of development through an appropriate balance of regulations and incentives.



GOAL LU-14: Implement design and development standards in the Kent Industrial Valley to minimize or mitigate potential impacts of development and industrial activities on adjacent uses and communities, create an attractive employment center, elevate the human experience, increase climate resiliency, and support multimodal transportation options.

- » **LU-14.1:** Support commute trip reduction goals and multimodal forms of transportation via investments in improved multimodal connections and development standards pertaining to building setbacks, location of parking, parking standards, as well as increased amenities for pedestrians, cyclists, and trail users.
- » **LU-14.2:** Mitigate potential impacts of large industrial projects on adjacent uses through intentional design methods such as sensitive massing, articulation site layout, color and material choices, and landscape screening.
- » **LU-14.3:** Where appropriate, encourage context-sensitive design for the development or redevelopment of live-work units on smaller parcels within or adjacent to industrial districts.
- » **LU-14.4:** When new development, re-development or maintenance of industrial, manufacturing, and built retail complexes occur adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas, residential communities, schools, or other public facilities, require landscaping improvements that will maintain or strengthen existing aesthetic qualities, community health, climate resiliency, and other environmental functions.
- » **LU-14.5:** Increase visibility and accessibility of existing recreational amenities in the Kent Industrial Valley such as parks, trails, and other non-motorized transportation amenities.



GOAL LU-15: Promote safe and healthy communities to reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes for all.

- » **LU-15.1:** Be a resource for children, youth, and families that need to be connected with community resources needed to support their positive development, including early intervention and prevention services.
- » **LU-15.2:** Support efforts to strengthen neighborhoods and ensure individuals and families feel connected to their community and build support systems within neighborhoods.
- » **LU-15.3:** Increase community participation from traditionally under-represented populations, including youth, communities of color, immigrants, and limited English speaking populations.
- » **LU-15.4:** Support programs to ensure that all residents, regardless of race, social, or economic status, have clean air, clean water, and other elements of a healthy environment.
- » **LU-15.5:** Identify and prioritize mitigation of negative environmental impacts of public actions that disproportionately affect communities of color, low-income populations, and other vulnerable groups.
- » **LU-15.6:** Promote access to healthy and culturally relevant food through equitable distribution of grocery stores and urban agriculture activities such as farmers markets, farmstands, community supported agriculture (CSA) drop-off sites, community gardens, and urban farms, especially in areas with limited access to fresh, healthy food.



GOAL LU-16: Support equitable access to services, through a service network that meets needs across age, ability, culture, and language.

- » **LU-16.1:** Promote services that respect the diversity and dignity of individuals and families and are accessible to all members of the community.
- » **LU-16.2:** Encourage service enhancements that build capacity to better meet the needs of the community, reduce barriers through service design, and are responsive to changing needs.
- » **LU-16.3:** Ensure that services are accessible and responsive to a wide range of individuals, cultures, and family structures and are free of discrimination and prejudice.
- » **LU-16.4:** Target investments that allow for affordable, fair, and equitable delivery of services that provide a safe, resilient, efficient, and functional system.



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Essential Public Facilities



GOAL LU-17: The City shall participate in inter-jurisdictional efforts to site essential public facilities and pursue efforts to mitigate against the disproportionate burden that may fall on the jurisdiction which becomes the site of a facility.

- » **LU-17.1:** Proposals for siting essential public facilities within the City of Kent or within the City's urban growth area shall be reviewed for consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Kent City Code during the initial stages of the proposal process.
- » **LU-17.2:** The City will work to site essential public facilities in ways that equitably balance social, environmental, and economic impacts to achieve citywide, regional, and state planning objectives.
- » **LU-17.3:** In reviewing proposals to site new or expanded essential public facilities, the City shall accept its regional share of facilities, provided it does not result in an overconcentration of facilities in Kent. The City should consider similar facilities in other jurisdictions to determine whether the proposal may result in a disproportionate share in Kent.
- » **LU-17.4:** Maintain a process to site essential public facilities. Review and revise Title 15 Kent City Code requirements for essential public facilities to emphasize public involvement, especially from historically marginalized communities, ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses, and mitigate potential adverse impacts.
- » **LU-17.5:** Impose conditions of approval or other measures within the scope of the city's authority to mitigate environmental, public safety, and other impacts of the essential public facility.

WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES?

Essential public facilities are uses that address needs of the state, region, or community and are typically difficult to site. They are defined in RCW 36.70A.200(1) to include "airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities as defined in RCW 47.06.140, regional transit authority facilities as defined in RCW 81.112.020, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, opioid treatment programs including both mobile and fixed-site medication units, recovery residences, harm reduction programs excluding safe injection sites, and inpatient facilities including substance use disorder treatment facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, community facilities as defined in RCW 72.05.020, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020."

State law requires that cities and counties, including Kent, must allow essential public facilities in their jurisdiction. However, the City retains significant discretion to identify the allowed locations and development conditions for such facilities. Kent has established processes for essential public facilities to ensure that their siting and construction are not precluded.

While essential to meeting community needs, essential public facilities can disproportionately affect the communities in which they are located. It is important that all jurisdictions work collaboratively and consider environmental justice principles when siting these facilities to foster the development of healthy communities for all. The City of Kent is committed to supporting regional collaboration and accountability to equitably meet needs and services while considering and balancing the impacts to the city where facilities are located. The following goals and policies reaffirm Kent's commitment to a fair process for locating essential public facilities and minimizing impacts to the community.



GOAL LU-18: Where appropriate, protect the viability of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport through development regulations consistent with RCW 36.70.547, Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation Airport and Land Use Compatibility guidelines, Federal Aviation Regulation Part 77 guidance and other best management practices.



GOAL LU-19: Support coordinated emergency management planning efforts to increase disaster resiliency and system recovery of public facilities and services.



Innovation and Shared Prosperity



GOAL LU-20: Build community collaborations and seek strategic approaches to meet the needs of Kent residents.

- » **LU-20.1:** Lead efforts to improve the ability of human services systems to meet demands and expectations by increasing capacity, utilizing technology, coordinating efforts and leveraging resources.
- » **LU-20.2:** Collaborate with churches, employers, businesses, schools and nonprofit agencies in the community.
- » **LU-20.3:** Encourage collaborative partnerships between the City and the school districts to align resources to accomplish mutual goals that meet the needs of children and families.



GOAL LU-21: Periodically examine the City's commercial districts based on regional, community, and neighborhood needs to support economic vitality, livability, and equitable outcomes for all.

- » **LU-21.1:** Examine commercial nodes, corridors, and subareas for opportunities to reinvigorate commercial uses, improve neighborhood amenities, and connect with surrounding areas. Identify opportunities in collaboration with the local community to mitigate displacement and enhance accessibility and inclusivity.
- » **LU-22.2:** Ensure opportunities for residential development within or nearby existing business districts to provide support for shops, services, and employment within walking or rolling distance.
- » **LU-22.3:** Promote redevelopment of existing commercial properties by evaluating the necessary conversion of additional residential land use plan map designations to commercial land use map designations against the community need.



GOAL LU-22: Support residents in attaining their maximum level of self-reliance.

- » **LU-22.1:** Ensure that people facing hardship have access to resources to help meet immediate or basic needs.
- » **LU-22.2:** Improve access to services that allow individuals to improve their mental and physical health, overall well-being and ability to live independently.
- » **LU-22.3:** Promote access to jobs and services, especially for lower income individuals, when planning local and regional transportation systems and economic development activities.



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GOAL LU-23: Oversee City resources with consistent ethical stewardship, fairness in allocating funds, and strong accountability for ensuring services and programs are effective at meeting diverse community needs.

- » **LU-23.1:** Seek opportunities and ways, including but not limited to funding, the City can support nonprofit human services providers to improve the quality of life for low and moderate income residents.
- » **LU-23.2:** Continue the City's active participation in subregional and regional planning efforts related to human services.
- » **LU-23.3:** Continue to coordinate policies, legislation and funding at the local, regional, state and federal levels to support new and existing human service programs to meet community needs and ensure equitable access to parks and human services.

