



Kitsap County Comp Plan Chapter Reviews (5-31-23)

This document provides comments to Kitsap County on **seven** of the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. It begins with overarching comments that apply to all chapters. This document was prepared by a Kitsap Environmental Coalition Work Group. The purpose is to influence the County's chapter revisions in preparation for their presentations for public comment in October. KEC is also circulating this document among KEC members to help prepare them for the public comment period in October.

We are providing this document rather than responding to the online story maps for each chapter. The format for responding online didn't give us a way to address the big picture. Thus, we are responding with this document. It begins with the general big picture and then responds to the individual chapters.

We did not have time to respond to all aspects of the chapters. *The fact that we didn't respond to certain goals, policies, strategies and more does not mean that we didn't think there were important changes to be made.* Rather, we selected a few portions of each chapter to give you a sense of our suggestions for change.

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(with input from other KEC members during development of these comments)

Overarching Comments

The following overarching comments about the vision, terminology, and Comp Plan processes apply to all chapters. When we provide a page number or other reference it is generally to the PDF version of the 2016-2036 comp plan rather than the slightly modified version presented as online story maps.

Vision

1. The comprehensive Plan 2016-2036 Vision (p. 1-7) is inadequate for the Updated plan. The vision needs the following:

- a. greater emphasis on cultural, racial, economic, and other diversity and equity.
- b. intentional treatment of nature as the foundation of life itself not simply as an asset for humans to use as it relates to each element.
- c. integration of the elements of the Comp Plan while still recognizing the need for vision statements for (roughly) each element.
- d. more explicit attention to climate change and the migration of people and all forms of life in response to changing climatic conditions and population growth.
- e. greater attention to the [planetary limits](#) within which humans (and other forms of life) operate (e.g., chemical pollution, climate change, loss of biodiversity, ocean acidification, freshwater consumption, land use change, loss of biosphere integrity)

2. We recommend **a restatement of the overall Vision** along these lines: (We have attempted to keep much of the language used in the current county and comp plan visions but update to the priorities of today that are grounded in our changing planetary environment and the changing population of our county and region.)

- a. **Inclusive and Equitable Government and Services** – Kitsap County government protects and promotes a safe, healthy, fair, and sustainable relationship among the people, cultures, and natural environment of Kitsap County for current and future generations with attention to climate change and the limits of a healthy ecosystem. Kitsap County government policies, practices, services, and infrastructure are designed to function efficiently and effectively within planetary limits; equitably serve and involve residents; enhance public trust; and promote understanding among the diverse entities of the county.
- b. **Responsible, Thriving Economy** – Kitsap County government policies, practices, services, and infrastructure promote a local and regional economy that provides a living wage and quality of life for all; the ability to live and work in one’s community; and protects and rejuvenates our ecosystems in the midst of current and anticipated future environmental conditions.
- c. **Safe and Healthy Communities** – Kitsap County government, in partnership with other community organizations and with understanding of planetary limits, ensures that all people have a connected sense of community and are treated equitably, protected, and secure with clean (non-toxic) air, water, and land where they live, work, shop, and play.

- d. **Protected and Respected Natural Ecosystems** – In collaboration with other organizations, Kitsap County government promotes *net ecological gain* and assures that the county’s ecosystems (including forests, air, soil, water, streams, and wildlife) are protected, safe, healthy, and sustainable for current and future generations of Kitsap inhabitants, human and endemic forms of life.
 - e. **Measurement, Monitoring, and Evaluation**— County government regularly assesses, monitors, evaluates, and adapts its policies, practices, services, and infrastructure to produce positive results and lasting benefits for the county’s people, cultures, and natural environment.
3. **Connections of County and Comp Plan Visions:** The Comp Plan contains two vision statements. The first one is the county’s general vision as a whole (not specifically related to the Comp Plan). The second one is specific to the elements addressed in the Comp Plan. Once revisions are made to the vision specific to the Comp Plan, the County needs to update its general vision to be congruent with the updated Comp Plan vision. Otherwise, county staff, commissioners, partners, and the general public could easily be operating from an out-of-date county vision.

Terminology

1. **Guiding Directives, Goals, Policies, and Strategies:** Clarify the definitions of (and distinctions between) guiding directives, goals, policies, and strategies. Use the terms consistently throughout the chapters and other parts of the plan. Show how they relate to one another.
2. **Strategies:** The plan quite consistently states that strategies are to be achievable and can be done through the efforts of the county (sometimes with partners). The individual strategies or certain collections of strategies need to include a statement of what constitutes accomplishment of the strategy. The assessment, measurement, monitoring and evaluation approaches need to be specified. Include the delivery of an assessment, measurement, monitoring and evaluation system as a strategy within each chapter.
3. **Goals:** We understand that goals are “aspirational”, that is, meaning that they are not specific line items to do in 5-10 years. However, the goals need to be aspirational within the planetary and population parameters that are the reality for our county. No goals should be included that are unrealistic wish lists that are not attending to our changing climate and the limits of our planet. Such goals distract people’s attention from recognizing the reality of the conditions in which we are living.
4. **Development regulations:** Clarify that “development regulations” are things that are in code or are programs that the county does. Clarify other uses of the comp plan.
5. **Measurement, Monitoring and Evaluation:** Clarify the terms “assessment”, “measurement”, “monitoring”, and “evaluation”.

6. **Glossary:** Provide a glossary of terms for the above terms as well as other terms (e.g., built environment) that may not be familiar to the general public.

Comp Plan Processes

1. **Adequacy of Data:** Ensure that if inadequate data are available about a critical environmental condition, no goal is stated in its regard until there is adequate data to show that the goal is realistic and stays within the environmental limits of nature. For example, if very limited or no data are available about wetlands in a park or area of potential development, it does not mean that an assumption can be made that it is OK to set an “aspirational goal” for development or use. It should be the opposite. That is, no goal can be stated until there is sufficient data to ensure that it can be reasonably met within the capacities of the county and the environment. A stated goal sets in motion expectations that something can be done. Remember that **absence of evidence is not the same as evidence of absence**.
2. **Reporting:** Clarify what and when the county is responsible for gathering and/or reporting to commissioners, staff, and the public for use in decision-making.
3. **Use:** Clarify how the comp plan is actually used. Ensure that the Comp Plan is the guiding document for all County planning actions (e.g., guiding the Transportation Improvement Plan) as well as being used at a more granular level (e.g., when there is a question of “conditional use”). At the granular level, we understand the statements in the comp plan are used as support. For example, a planner in a dept can look at the strategies in the comp plan. Those would be used by a planner to support a conditional use permit to the hearing examiner. For example, some type of event venue in a rural area might be permitted or not based on how the comp plan talks about the character of our rural areas and environmental impacts. (Are we understanding this correctly?)
4. **Internal Review Team:** Explain in the comp plan the ongoing role of the Internal Review Team in interconnecting the elements of the plan including their process of internal meetings, interacting with the public, Commissioners, and others. Also explain how they continue to review and make changes once the plan is approved.

Chapter 1: Land Use

Executive Summary

We support the following: In collaboration with other organizations, Kitsap County government promotes net ecological gain and assures that the county’s ecosystems (including forests, air, soil, water, streams, and wildlife) are protected, safe, healthy, and

sustainable for current and future generations of Kitsap inhabitants, human and endemic forms of life.

Throughout this chapter the critical habitats for wildlife are neglected in favor of human oriented resources, such as urban areas, human factors and agricultural resources.. One of the most attractive features of Kitsap County is our natural environment, and it deserves more attention in the Comp Plan. The Plan needs to treat nature as the foundation of life itself not simply as an asset for humans to use.

Specific Review Comments

Below are a few examples of the need for more environmental protections:

1. Land Use Goal 2, Promote Health in the Built Environment. Land Policy 12. Trails, paths, and sidewalks should not lead to harm of critical habitats for forest and other natural ecosystems. (See contrast to existing Land Policy 12)
2. In addition, there should be a Land Use Goal titled “Promote Health of the Natural Environment”. Examples of needed policies would include prevention of stream obstructions, such as culverts, that would prevent the movement of wild aquatic organisms; and management of forests to minimize wildfires.
3. Strategy 3. Recognize Diversity in Land Uses. Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluation: Analyze rural lands to determine appropriate zoning based on prime soils for agriculture or timber and the needs of wildlife. A few words are given in Land Use Goal 13, Protect Kitsap County’s Rural Unique Character, Land Use Policy 54; for example, the word “forest” is mentioned, but no mention of what aspects of the “forest” are to be protected, such as the need for wildlife corridors and free flowing streams and wetlands. Also, Land Policy 54 is very general and deals primarily with habitat types; additionally, it needs to address beach habitats and the wild plants and animals that use these habitats.
4. KC lost 61% of its farmland between 1997 and 2017. We need to do better in this area in this time of climate change. We need local source of food. Better stewardship and protecting Kitsap farmland that will feed future residents in this era of climate change is needed.
5. Give more attention to how people globally as well as in our state are moving due to climate change just to survive (e.g., escaping extreme heat). How will this affect land use here? (See Environmental chapter comments for more information.)
6. Land Use Goal 4, which addresses coordination with other entities, needs to include the requirements of the recent Washington State House Bill 1110 which deals with the need for more affordable housing in cities larger than 25,000 and smaller than 75,000. The law would apply to Bremerton and very soon Bainbridge Island, and would basically require zoning regulations to add additional units per lot. How will this affect the unincorporated county?

Chapter 2: Economic Development

Executive Summary

1. This description focuses on Kitsap County's role in the region's economy. While this is fine, more attention needs to be paid to the value and importance of building a robust locally-based economy that includes farming, locally developed products and services and the nature of an economy that addresses building a net ecological gain for our county and thus the region.
2. The introduction tends to treat nature as something to be consumed and used to attract tourists. It needs to be reframed to see how an economy can be built that sustains it and creates a net ecological gain within this county. Such a role can support the economy of the region as a whole. Its farms and the healing capacities of our rural areas and public natural spaces have their own value for healthy living. The introduction should set the stage for proposing economic opportunities that bring humans and nature together in ways that rejuvenate both nature and humans for healthy living, first and foremost.

Specific Review Comments

Our comments here only scratch the surface of what could be said about economic development in line with our perspective.

Guiding Directives

1. The guiding directives focus on industry sectors for longevity or potential for growth. While these are important, the guiding directives need to include balancing these industries with the development of economic options that are intentionally designed to build net ecological gain and natural healing for people. For examples, the value of family and other small farms, health care focused on natural healing, engagement with nature for healing (not tourism). Adjusting one's expectation of what a meaningful life is in a changing planet is important to build up.
2. The implications of the presence of several sovereign tribal nations in our county should be addressed in regard to economic opportunities.

Economic Development Goals and Policies

1. In the goals and policies, incorporate the importance of retaining wealth within our county rather than the building up of businesses whose headquarters and stockholders are external to the county. Such businesses/industries extract resources from the people and nature of the county but benefits/wealth accrue to those external to the county. While this has its place, more attention needs to be given to economic development that supports a circular economy within the county/region, that maintains our wealth and livelihood overall. While large externally-based businesses may be contributing to a strong and diverse tax base, the long term consequences of the overall extraction of human and natural resources from the county needs to be recognized.
2. Put an emphasis on businesses that support natural health care and healing including education about alternative health care. There are many national and international business networks that support online consultation, natural healing products. There are opportunities to build connections with the tribes around natural healing medicinals, farming and forestry practices, housing construction practices that support ecological health and human health through reduction of toxins and more.
3. Emphasize that globally, we must move to net ecological gain, not riding on the edge of how much destruction, extraction we can do and still survive. It's like keeping people alive through life support instead of helping them to thrive and support their own health.
4. The goal around supporting the local food economy needs to emphasize the role and importance of small farms more explicitly. They have been too often treated as hobbies rather than a fundamental part of the food economy. Give attention to supporting farmland through subsidies and incentives instead of tax breaks and incentives for big corporations.

Economic Development Strategies

1. We strongly support strategy 2 (related to food policy). Put in place an assessment, monitoring, and evaluation process for this strategy that brings greater attention to its importance and shows progress on this strategy.
2. Add a strategy related to building healthy living businesses that connect people with the natural healing and benefits of being in nature and seeing ourselves in a healthy relationship to nature.
3. Add other strategies that broaden the kinds of industry and development we should encourage here. For example, the expansion at Olympic College for training nurses, local products including breweries, tech startups that support remote work. Overall, focus on ones that are local and with little environmental impact while creating living wage jobs.

Chapter 3: Environment

Executive Summary

In 2016, the County had policies that could have been implemented and effective to protect the natural environment, but several were not. Scientific data and knowledge were either ignored or not acquired. Open dialogue with the public concerning the environment was either restricted or avoided. Strategies should contain measurable end-points with a 5-10 year time horizon. Yet, the strategies listed in 2016 were either almost impossible to achieve or barely implemented over the past seven years.

The Kitsap Environmental Coalition supports the following points.

1. Natural environments are essential for nature and for Kitsap County's residents. Human beings are not above or outside nature. We are products of nature and are deeply connected.
2. Our group and other volunteers are important to the success of environmental initiatives.
3. Functions of the natural environment must receive first consideration in planning and review. Kitsap County is facing the intersection of increasing human population and climate change. Planning must focus on both at the same time.
4. Many biotic and abiotic (biological, chemical, and physical) factors in the environment must be monitored to better manage and protect the natural environment.
5. Kitsap County needs to adopt a "net ecological gain" approach so that our environment can be improved in both structure and function.

Specific Review Comments

Goals

Goal 1 Treat natural environments as an essential asset

This goal and the policies under this goal suffer from the vague and uncertain definition of "essential asset." The natural environment is essential for its structure and function beyond its simple use as open space available for human recreation, dumping wastes and providing more cemeteries? If the focus here is on ecosystem services for humans, with the definition of ecosystems services provided in an updated glossary, then that should be explicitly stated. If the emphasis is also on the natural environment being essential for nature, wild plants and animals (such as salmon), then that should also be stated clearly.

Goal 2 Coordination

The Kitsap Environmental Coalition would like to help identify priority environmental issues.

Goal 3 Utilize incentive-based approaches and regulations to reduce risk of damage to natural environments

Policy 13 states that the best scientific information available will be used to preserve and enhance critical areas. However, we know of multiple cases in which the County has ignored or not attempted to find or use the best scientific information about wetlands, wildlife, and paved roads in its evaluation of critical areas in Heritage Parks. Yes, money must be spent for surveys and delineations, but they are obvious choices when protection of critical areas is a policy and goal. Literature reviews are valuable and cheap.

In other policies, training of staff and mapping (geographic data acquisition and interpretation) are discussed along with mitigation. While the county has many very competent staff, we believe that much more effort and money should be spent on ongoing training, scientific data collection, and reading the scientific literature. Staff with updated scientific understanding based on new knowledge and data will avoid simplistic assumptions and policies about mitigation. Effective mitigation is very difficult. Policies and practices need to reflect this complexity.

We support Policy 19 which is the exploration of possible tax incentives to protect beneficial areas.

Goal 4 Continue to provide opportunities for stewardship, education and public dialogue on management and protection of natural environment

We support this goal and its policies but note that the County has not always sponsored open public dialogue regarding natural areas and Heritage Parks. In Kitsap County, open public dialogue has been curtailed in recent years. During County meetings from the Board of County Commissioners, to Parks Advisory Board, to the PGFHP Stewardship Committee, and the Poulsbo City Council, the public is strictly limited to 2-3 minute comments. Exchange between officials and county residents during meetings has been discouraged.

Strategies

Strategy 1 Ecosystems services and life-cycle cost analysis

Please define ecosystems services in the glossary so everyone will know what you mean. Redo this strategy to be attainable. It is too broad. It needs to be concrete enough to implement within the resources of the County.

Strategy 2 Calibration of ecosystem service valuation for urban and rural lands

Again, the grandiose and vague description of this effort will likely take two human generations to accomplish.

Strategy 3 Ensure that the functions of the natural environment receive first consideration in planning and review

Again, we support this strategy but the evidence we have suggests that this has not occurred in the past 5 years. Ensure commitment of the county to actually do this.

Strategy 4 Compliance reporting for FEMA

No comment.

Strategy 5 Develop monitoring program to report on changes to natural environments

This is the most achievable strategy and possibly the most important. Public Works makes a good effort to record and report measurable indices for streams in Kitsap County. We need many more similar monitoring activities and the sharing of data.

The strategy should state what will be measured over the next 5 years and when and where they will be measured. The organization that will measure them must be identified (i.e., Kitsap County, Tribe, KPUD, KPHD, Wild Fish Conservancy).

Strategy 6 Create an adaptive management plan

This is reasonable.

Strategy 7 Coordination on conservation and restoration strategies

We support the acquisition, restoration, and management of public lands for conservation. The County needs to adopt a “net ecological gain” approach so that our environment can be improved in both structure and function.

Chapter 4: Housing and Human Services

Executive Summary

The Housing aspect of this chapter is generally well written and useful in outlining the parameters needed to provide more affordable housing and improved quality of life for the residents in Kitsap County. Our review primarily resulted in suggestions for facilitating these goals.

Our review here addresses the statements about housing but please note that this chapter is supposed to address Housing and Human Services. There is little or no attention to Human Services. Human Services is the name of the county Department. Housing, while highly important should not replace attention to other aspects of Human Services.

Specific Review Comments

- 1. Goal 1, Policy 2. -- Remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing models. Regulatory changes need to take into consideration the smaller sizes of affordable non-traditional housing units. Currently, even the smallest sizes of affordable housing need to conform to permit requirements for standard sized single family dwellings, such as energy credits and floor insulation.
- 2. Goal 2, Policy 7. -- See Policy 2 (above).
- 3. Goal 2, Policy 8 – Wherever possible and appropriate use unused County properties for affordable housing. The construction of affordable housing on these properties should not include the value of the properties in the price of the housing. The County should treat these lands as long-term trusts, or similar arrangements. (See relevant info in the Land Use chapter.)
- 4. Goal 4, Policy 14. Disperse affordable housing opportunities throughout the County. This housing should be concentrated in cities, growth management areas, and rural villages. (See relevant info in the Land Use, Transportation, and Capital Facilities chapters about protecting rural areas.)

Chapter 5: Transportation

Executive Summary

Aligning with the vision laid out by KEC, the Transportation Chapter for the Comprehensive Plan needs to provide for the needs of the community in a manner that is inclusive and protects the environment while planning for the future, taking into account anticipated changes both in population as well as the environment. To do this well requires not just aspirational “goals” but specific strategies and tools to measure actual achievement of those goals. The goals and measurable strategies must be clearly related so their connection is easily understood. Shown below are *examples* of how this might be done; it does not cover all the needs and gaps of the Transportation Chapter. Goals also need to include discussion of how future changes may require a reassessment of some of the assumptions that were made in the plan. For example, if remote work becomes an established routine for many employees, the predominant focus on ferry commuters may be less important, but on the other hand, high speed internet access is more important. See the section on Capital Facilities for more discussion of this.

Specific Review Comments

Goal 8 Encourage non-motorized transportation by offering multiple trail access points and safe, reasonably direct routes between Kitsap communities, local ferries and bridges, and popular destinations within each community.

Strategies:

1. Increase the percentage of arterials with facilities for bikes and pedestrians to 50% within the non-incorporated County by 2044.¹
2. Expand the system of non-motorized transportation facilities that are constructed primarily within the right-of-way of existing and proposed public streets or roads.
 - a. All new or improved streets or roads are designed with right-of-way to accommodate bikes and pedestrians.
 - b. Key hub points² are identified and right-of-way improvements are constructed to provide non-motorized access to these destinations.
3. County-wide surveys show the level of public satisfaction with the availability and access to non-motorized options exceeds 50% by 2044.

Goal 9 Increase the use of public transit by improving access and service levels to the public.

Strategies:

1. Ensure that no one in urban areas has to walk farther than a 10th of a mile to access a bus or transit station by 2044.
2. Re-establish Sunday service on all bus routes serving population or community centers.
3. Ensure that all bus stops are served on no less than a half hour schedule by 2044.
4. Increase the service level for passenger-only ferries to include Saturday service.
5. Improve the level of safety to the public through transit use as measured by 75% reduction in accidents involving transit users (either on transit or going to access transit) by 2044.

1 The Transportation Inventory done by PSRC in 2022 showed that only 26% of arterials in Kitsap County had any pedestrian facilities including such things as sidewalks, improved shoulders, etc.

2 Hubs would include Urban centers, colleges, ferries, key employment centers, etc.

6. Improve bus service for population sectors dependent on transit including students, low-income, and disabled by ensuring that key destinations such as schools, medical facilities, community centers have frequent, regular service.
7. Evaluate the potential for fee-free service for all users or for categories in addition to youth such as elderly or disabled. Include assessment of the relationship between use and public fares.
8. Determine whether public transit is to be oriented to service ferry commuters or service additional populations. Allocation of funding should reflect that orientation (e.g. providing for Sunday service rather than increasing the number of commuter buses).

Chapter 6: Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Executive Summary

Our comments address the three areas of (a) wildlife and habitat; (b) Parks Department structure; and (c) public needs and desires, multi-use concept, and user conflicts.

Wildlife and Habitat

1. Identify and establish *wildlife* corridors to interconnect county parks, county properties, and non-county preserves and properties.
2. Prioritize protection and enhancement of all critical areas in Parks' properties, including but not limited to heritage parks, waterways and waterfront parks, open space, and greenway areas.
3. Implement a significant wildlife monitoring program for heritage parks and other Parks' properties with habitat areas.
4. Clarify policy that heritage parks be managed for nature and not for logging or harvest.

Park's Structure

1. Identify the Parks Department as the senior agency in managing county parks.
2. Adequately fund the Parks Department.
3. Formal include citizen stewardship groups in Parks' management structure and modify the Parks Advisory Board to better represent park users and stewardship groups.

Public Needs & Desires, Multi-use Concept, and User Conflicts

1. Identify community needs and desires for county parks, including comparison of future demands with current carrying capacities, characteristics, and limitations.

2. Continue the current policy of non-motorized parks.
3. Address non-compliance of bicyclists with right-of-way rules and speed limits. Include analyses of limitations of the multi-use concept, user experiences, user conflicts, and safety.
4. Determine policy for powered mobility devices (excluding devices for disabled persons). These devices are not currently approved in the county code. Address impacts to user experiences, user conflicts, speed, safety, enforcement, and liability.

Specific Review Comments

Goal 1 Provide regional parks and open space to meet active and passive regional recreational needs, as well as the needs of wildlife.

1. Policy 3. Modify the PAB to better represent park users and stewardship groups.
2. Policy 4. The Kitsap Environmental Coalition would like to partner with the County Parks Department to improve parks and support nature within the parks.
3. Policies 5 and 6 promote multiple uses of parks and the equitable offering of services and activities. Equity must be defined. Is it based on income of county residents, physical abilities or disabilities, age, distance of homes from parks, or several other possible factors? Park uses must be consistent with park purposes, e.g., heritage parks have mandates for both access and wildlife and habitat protection.
4. Policy 7. Requires definition and recognition that weather does limit activities.
5. Policy 8. The term destination park is not a defined category in the PROS Plan. County parks should be developed to meet the needs of its residents.
6. Policy 11. Support development of a non-motorized trail system throughout the County and recognize that some trails, when built, may have adverse impacts to needs of wildlife. Trails in parks should not compromise critical areas; materials used for trails should be non-toxic.
7. Policy 19. There must be an economic cost benefit analysis. Parks policies must be paramount over economic benefits.

Goal 2 Provide appropriate and necessary funding and resources to support the management and maintenance of parks, facilities, and open space lands of the highest quality possible.

1. Policy 20. Provide visitor accommodations including trailheads, parking and restrooms. Much work needs to be done for this policy. Parking areas and restrooms have not been developed as fast as needed at Heritage Parks. Restrooms are the most basic amenity and have been inadequately provided. **The provision of such resources needs to be distributed to ALL heritage parks, and not concentrated in just one.**

2. Policy 21. The county's reduction of parks funding in 2020 demonstrates a lack of stability.
3. Policy 22. The capital improvement plan for the parks department has been in disarray since 2019.
4. Policy 23. Properties of acquisition exist but have not been pursued.
5. Policy 25. This does not appear to significantly support Goal 2

Goal 3 Establish a land acquisition strategy including the necessary funding that will facilitate a more efficient service delivery model

1. We are not clear what this goal means. The policies under this goal need to be more specific and need to be developed in conjunction with broad public input.

Goal 4. Provide physical and visual public access opportunities and space for diverse forms of water-oriented recreation in such a way that private property rights, public safety, and shoreline ecological functions and processes are protected in accordance with existing laws and statutes.

1. Policy 30. It's unclear how this "priority" is to be interpreted with respect to Goal 1, Policy 1, and Goal 3.

Comments on New Comp Plan/PROS Plan

PROS Plan, Public Outreach (p. 7)

Future planning and needs must consider the goals and capacities of the different types of our current parks. User surveys and visitor counts have been limited. Identify community needs and current capacities of County parks and facilities with respect to different categories (e.g. active recreation, passive recreation, nature habitat). Develop a plan for determination of carrying capacities and limitations, comparison of capacities with needs, and identification of future needs. Include purposes and goals of different types of park facilities. For example, heritage parks have the dual mandates of environmental protection and visitor access.

Key Interest (p. 8)

Preserve and restore environment and wildlife habitat as key components for management of Heritage parks and enhancement of quality user experiences.

PROS Plan, Stewardship Program (pp. 8, 37-38)

Trust is the foundation for success of the Parks Department's Volunteer Stewardship program as the following statement from the 2018 PROS Plan indicates "The Stewardship program's success is largely due to the empowerment that Kitsap County gives to the

volunteers within this program. Empowerment equates to trust, which equates to a positive working relationship between the volunteers and the agency.”

The County has relied extensively on citizen-stewards for operation, management, and policy direction for County parks, especially the large heritage parks. The management structure for the Parks Department entirely omits stewardship groups. The number and size of county heritage parks is unique in the country. The dependence on citizen-stewards is likewise unique. The Parks Department does not have resources sufficient to operate the heritage parks. Revise the Parks Department structure to formally include and leverage the efforts and abilities of stewardship groups. Consider modification of the Parks Advisory Board as part of their structuring to better represent the community and the stewardship groups.

PROS Plan, Environment and Wildlife Protection, and Forest Stewardship (pp. 24-29)

Implement a significant monitoring plan to survey plants, vertebrates and invertebrates and habitat characteristics to detect patterns over the next several decades. Conservation plans require use of metrics and monitoring to protect habitat and species. The 2018 PROS Plan contains important goals for wildlife and habitat protection and stewardship.

PROS Plan, Funding (pp. 40-43)

The current and foreseeable financial situation includes low Parks funding and high costs for managing existing and planned clearcuts. This situation may pressure Parks to use heritage parks for income generation, i.e. to effectively turn heritage parks into working forests. The new Plans must state that Heritage Parks will be managed for nature not for logging, harvest, or other income-producing or recreational purposes that undermine protection of habitat and species.

Chapter 7: Capital Facilities and Utilities

Executive Summary

While efficient, high-quality, and timely provision of public services and facilities is important, it is equally important that attention is given to building, maintaining, and remodeling facilities and utilities in a way that reverses the trend of degrading our natural environment. Investment needs to be made in upgrading existing facilities in line with protection and moving toward net ecological gain.

The provision of Capital Facilities and utilities should emphasize service and healthy living over making money.

Specific Review Comments

Guiding Directives

1. Strong attention needs to be given to ensuring that the capital facilities are located, designed, and maintained to support the full economic range of county residents. The facilities need to show respect for and encourage use by all interest and stakeholder groups.

Goals and Policies

1. Most of the goals and policies in this chapter are too vague and do not allow for accountability on the part of the county. They talk about the county goals in terms of processes they will engage in (e.g., "... continue to support public art..." "encourage siting...use...designation...") but with no commitment to results. Change these to commitments around goals and policies that can be measured and monitored to determine extent and nature of results and benefits.
2. Give greater attention to the implications of people working remotely and the rapid advancements in technology. Build out electric capacities that affect our ability to be environmentally response in our energy uses.
3. Build out the internet for fast, seamless connections, doing so with strong attention to equity. At the same time, be attentive to how a focus on this issue could unintentionally undermine our natural environment. Intentionally look at this issue in a systemic and holistic way.
4. While attending to remote workers, also recognize that many people have service jobs that are low paying and may require them to use costly transportation. Consider how their expenses can be reduced or subsidized.
5. Enact policies that strongly support critical area ordinances and reduce the use of variances to these policies.
6. Ensure that policies support sewer and stormwater improvements that offer high quality environmental protection.
7. Ensure that policies provide support for people of median and low income levels in the use of public facilities and utilities.
8. Put in place strong measurement, monitoring, and evaluation policies that ensure that decisions are data-based and the public is informed of trends over time. Use strong criteria of protection of natural environment and moving to net ecological gain related to public facilities and utilities.

Chapter 8: Subarea Plans

We did not address this chapter due to time constraints.