

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015-2035



city of  
**covington**  
growing toward greatness



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015-2035

Adopted: Ordinance 02-2016, January 12, 2016

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**APPENDIX: CAPITAL FACILITIES**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all of the City Councils and Planning Commissions from 1997 to the present that created and then built upon the foundation of the original plan, and all of the citizen volunteers who served on boards, committees and commissions to help provide information and input to develop this plan.

Thank you to the members of the Covington Community.

### 2015 CITY COUNCIL

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- Jeff Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem
- Joseph Cimaomo, Jr.
- Mark Lanza
- Marlla Mhoon
- Jim Scott
- Sean Smith

### 2015 PLANNING COMMISSION

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- Soos Creek Water and Sewer District
- Covington Water District
- Kent Regional Fire Authority
- Kent School District

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- BERK Consulting, Inc.
- Heffron Transportation, Inc.
- MIG | SvR
- The Watershed Company

# PLAN FOUNDATION



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ▶ The Covington planning area.
- ▶ The Covington vision, mission, and framework goals that guide the plan.

## INTRODUCTION

*Covington believes good planning is the foundation for ensuring our community values are preserved while we proactively plan for future growth that will make us a vibrant and thriving place to live, work, play, shop, and learn.*

The City of Covington is a place where community, businesses, and civic leaders are partners in building a city that is family-oriented, has a strong business community, and is safe and pedestrian-friendly. We are a city that proudly invests in enhancing our community and natural environment and providing diverse recreational opportunities, while remaining fiscally responsible. This comprehensive plan facilitates Covington’s brand of “growing toward greatness,” and planning through the goals, policies, and implementation actions included within it.

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT GOALS

- ▶ Urban growth
- ▶ Reduce sprawl
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Economic development
- ▶ Property rights
- ▶ Permits
- ▶ Natural resource industries
- ▶ Open space and recreation
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Citizen participation and coordination
- ▶ Public facilities and services
- ▶ Historic preservation

## PLANNING MANDATE AND COORDINATION

In accordance with the Growth Management Act (GMA), the City of Covington is required to adopt and maintain a Comprehensive Plan. A comprehensive plan guides a community's physical development (land use) over the long term, addresses the entire community and all its values, activities, or functions – housing, employment, transportation, recreation, utilities, etc. – and provides a statement of policy guiding how the community's desires for growth and character are to be achieved. All City plans, budgets, decision making and regulations must be consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Voters approved Covington's incorporation in November of 1996, with cityhood effective August 31, 1997. After incorporation, Covington leaders adopted a comprehensive plan to provide guidance for public and private decision makers on future growth and development. It has been updated annually as policy direction and conditions have changed.

A major update to the Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2003. Other minor amendments have been made to individual elements during intervening years. The City updated Land Use and Downtown elements in 2012 and adopted the Hawk Property Subarea Plan (Ord. 01-14) in 2014. The Hawk Property has been subsequently renamed the Lakepointe Urban Village. Regardless of the name, the area is the same 212 acres of land that was originally studied and planned for in the Hawk Property Subarea Plan (Ord. 14-01), Hawk Property Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the Planned Action Ordinance (14-04).

The Covington Comprehensive Plan must address a 20-year planning period (2015-2035) and demonstrate an ability to accommodate future growth in the City and its planning area. The City must plan in coordination with King County and neighboring cities through Countywide Planning Policies for King County and through VISION 2040 a regional plan adopted through the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

The City must now update its comprehensive plan and development regulations to address the 2015-2035 planning period and demonstrate compatibility with state goals and regional plans. This Comprehensive Plan is designed to assess existing conditions, look forward, and plan for the next 20 years from 2015 to 2035. In other words, it describes who we are, what we want, and how we plan to achieve it. It translates the community's values and vision into a policy document to guide decisions on the quality of growth, intensity and diversity of land use, transportation modes and street networks, public facilities and services, parks and recreation, and environmental protection. As the City continues "Growing Towards Greatness," the Comprehensive Plan will guide the physical development of the City, ensure that change is consistent with the community's vision and principles, and coordinate the provision of public services and amenities to support new growth.

The 2035 comprehensive plan satisfies the requirements for periodic updates of comprehensive plans for those cities planning under the GMA, including consistency with King County Countywide Planning Policies and PSRC's VISION 2040 and the multi-county planning policies. This comprehensive plan presents eight separate but interrelated topic elements, as well as a series of appendices that provide additional detail about Covington and fulfill other planning requirements.



Covington's 2015 Comprehensive Plan Logo



Children by Covington Park

Source: City of Covington, 2015

“Living in Covington connects you by major thoroughfares to the mountains and central Puget Sound without having to compromise on small town character. We are a city that is looking ahead to ensure the improvement and vitality of transportation, parks and recreation, the downtown vision, housing options, and continued access to City Council and staff.”

Margaret Harto, Mayor, City of Covington, 2015

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## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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Between 2014-2015, the City provided several opportunities for public involvement, and the plan’s goals and policies directly reflect the input received. The City established a project web page and provided information and draft documents. A storefront studio was held over four days in July 2014, including two public workshops. A series of stakeholder interviews were also conducted during the summer of 2014, which included a mapping exercise. In general, those that provided input support the general direction of the City and, in particular, plans for the downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village. The City also held Planning Commission meetings, occasionally preceded by an open house. Planning Commission and City Council hearings were held, with published notices. These efforts built on extensive community outreach for the Town Center and Hawk Property Subarea Plans in prior years.

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## PLANNING AREA

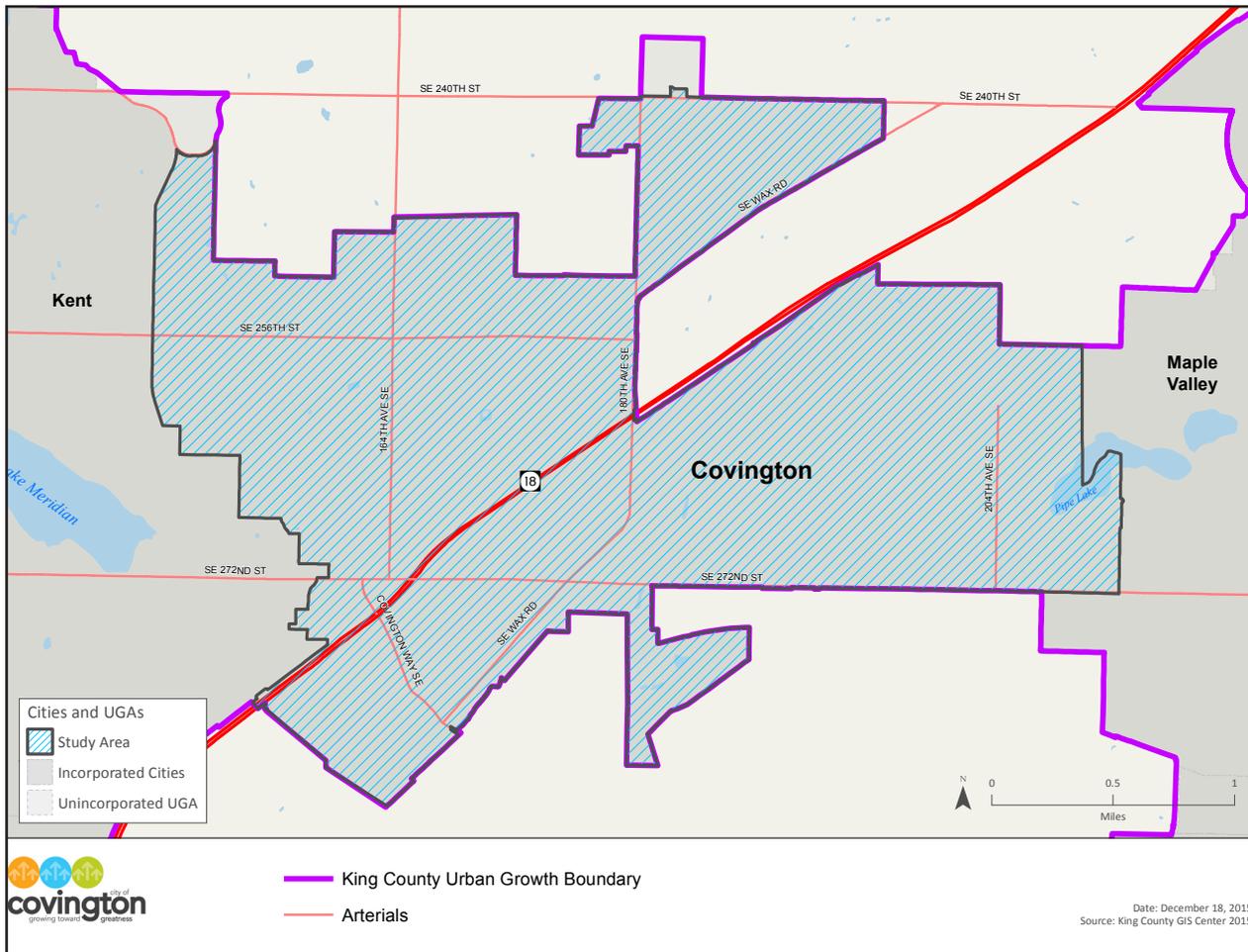
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The planning area for the Comprehensive Plan Update is the city limits and assigned Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) in the King County Urban Growth Area (UGA). The planning area for the Comprehensive Plan is depicted on Exhibit PF-1 and includes the following:

- The Covington city limits, comprise 6.66 square miles, and 4,190 gross acres, including the 2015 city limits and the January 2016 annexation of 75.6 acres that are part of the Lakepointe Urban Village.
- One Potential Annexation Areas (PAA) area is assigned to the City within the UGA - the Tahoma High School site that lies to the north on 36.8 acres.

Outside of the City's planning area in unincorporated King County there are adjacent areas of interest and concern, including the 275 acre area referred to as the northern study area and surrounded by the City's municipal boundaries on three sides just northwest of SR 18.

**Exhibit PF-1. Planning Area**



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015

**TERMS**

- ▶ **Vision:** A community’s best desired future.
- ▶ **Mission:** The role of the City as an organization in achieving that vision.
- ▶ **Framework Goal:** Framework goals are an extension of a vision in order to form the foundation for the goals and policies contained in other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ▶ **Goal:** A broad, general statement of the desired long-term future state or outcome, toward which the Plan aims. Goals indicate what ought to exist in a community or what is desired to be achieved in the future.
- ▶ **Policy:** A principle, protocol, or proposal for action that implements a related goal. Decision-oriented statements that guide the legislative or administrative body while evaluating a new project or proposed change in ordinance.
- ▶ **Regulation:** A rule or directive found in City ordinances or the municipal code.

See Exhibit PF-2 illustrating the relationship of goals, policies, regulations, and programs.

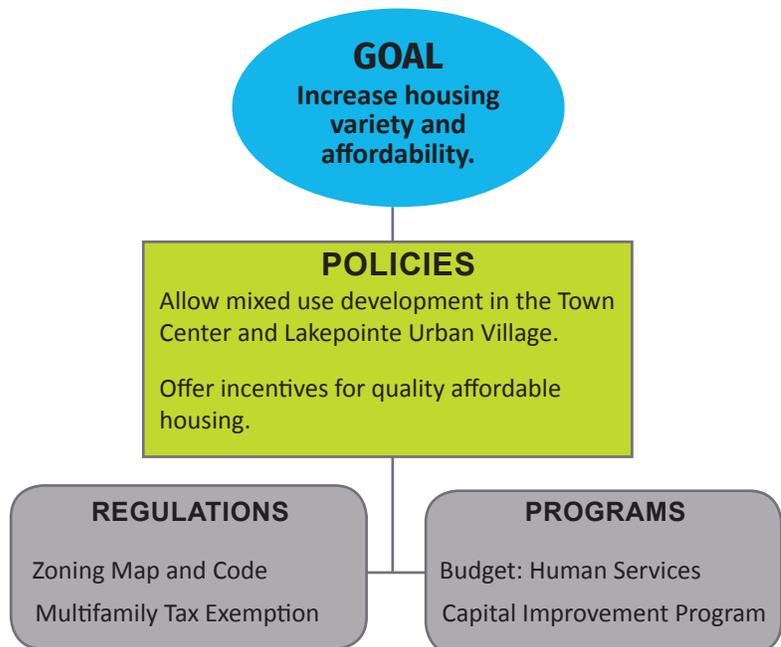
**VISION AND FRAMEWORK**

Each year, Covington’s City Council reviews and fine-tunes Covington’s vision, mission, and goals statement. This vision is the foundation for every goal, policy, and implementation action included in this plan.

This vision ensures decision making continues to respect a long-range perspective. If future changes to this vision document result in changes that need to be reflected in the comprehensive plan polices, the City will update the plan’s goals and polices as appropriate.

To help ensure the vision and mission are extended into the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, framework goals are included in this chapter as a foundation for the element-specific goals and policies contained in other Elements of the Plan. They address cross-cutting topics that are broader than a single topic such as how the plan fosters strong neighborhoods or how sustainability and health are supported by land use, transportation, housing, parks, capital facilities, and other topics.

**Exhibit PF-2. Example Implementation Relationship**



## VISION AND MISSION

**Vision** – Covington: Unmatched quality of life

**Mission** – Covington is a destination community where citizens, businesses, and civic leaders collaborate to preserve and foster a strong sense of unity.

## FRAMEWORK GOALS

The following framework goals describe how Covington’s vision for an unmatched quality of life and mission to collaborate can be realized across a number of components to support our people, places, and prosperity. The framework goals are a bridge to the element-specific goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and cut across disciplines.

- FW Goal-I. Economic Development: Encourage and support a business community that is committed to Covington for the long-term and offers diverse products and services, family wage jobs, and a healthy tax base to support public services.**
- FW Goal-II. Town Center: Establish Covington Town Center as a vibrant residential, commercial, educational, social, and cultural gathering place that is safe, pedestrian-friendly, well-designed, and well-maintained.**
- FW Goal-III. Youth and Families: Provide City services, programs and facilities such as parks and recreation, and human services that emphasize and meet the needs of Covington’s youth and families.**



Medical Services

Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

- FW Goal-IV. Neighborhoods: Foster community cohesiveness, communications, and cooperation, and maintain neighborhoods that offer a variety of housing options that are diverse, safe, accessible, and well-designed.**
- FW Goal-V. Municipal Services: Plan, develop, implement, and maintain high-quality capital infrastructure and services that reflect the needs of a growing community.**
- FW Goal-VI. Customer Service: Recruit, support, and retain a professional team of employees, volunteers, and stakeholders who offer outstanding customer service, ensure stewardship of the public’s money, and promote the City.**
- FW Goal-VII. Covington’s People are Valued: Respect the dignity of all people as they seek to live, work, play, shop, and learn in Covington.**
- FW Goal-VIII. Community Sustainability: Advance social, educational, economic, and environmental goals in parallel to foster comprehensive community sustainability.**
- FW Goal-IX. Nature in our Neighborhoods: Honor the connection between community and environmental health by integrating nature in our neighborhoods.**

- FW Goal-X. Mobility:** Ensure all residents, regardless of age, mode, or ability, can find safe comfortable ways to travel through the city, and welcoming destinations when they arrive.
- FW Goal-XI. Active and Healthy Living:** Promote safety and well-being by creating opportunities for access to a variety of food venues, community services, and active recreation that make healthy choices easy choices.
- FW Goal-XII. Resilience:** Foster resilience by planning for community responses to unavoidable natural and man-made disturbances.
- FW Goal-XIII. Community Arts, Recreation, and Education:** Conserve cultural resources, and promote social connection and opportunities for community celebrations, and access to a variety of arts, recreation, and education opportunities for community members of all ages.
- FW Goal-XIV. Interjurisdictional Coordination:** Work with other southeast King County communities to coordinate growth in a smart, logical, market driven and environmentally-conscious manner.



Mount Rainier in the distance  
Source: City of Covington, 2014

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## USING THIS PLAN

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In the Comprehensive Plan, the City may choose to combine existing elements to streamline the plan and consolidate related information; the City may also choose to develop selected optional elements that helps it formulate policies and strategies on topics of local concern.

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to be user friendly. This plan includes eight individual elements, five of which are required to be included by GMA, and three of which are optional. These eight elements are a consolidation of the 12 elements in Covington's 2003 Comprehensive Plan, as amended; this consolidation was undertaken to eliminate redundancies and provide a more consistent and comprehensive assessment and policy guide for the City.

## CONTENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### *Plan Foundation*

### *Elements*

Land Use

Housing

Transportation

Economic Development

Natural Environment

Capital Facilities & Utilities

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Shoreline

### *Appendix*

Capital Facilities Appendix

This Comprehensive Plan provides policy guidance, identifying the issues that shape the policy response and listing the goals and policies relevant to that particular topic.

An Existing Conditions Report was prepared for the 2015-2035 Periodic Update of the Covington Comprehensive Plan and is adopted by reference. The Existing Conditions Report 2015-2035 provides a base of information to support the preparation of the Covington Comprehensive Plan and associated State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Review Documents. See also the Natural Environment Element for other adopted documents.

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## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

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Covington's Comprehensive Plan is an evolving document and will be periodically reviewed and revised over the next 20 years as better information becomes available and public attitudes, development technologies, and economic forces and legislative policy change over time. The GMA limits Comprehensive Plan amendments to no more than once per calendar year, except for certain exemptions and emergency actions. Whenever the plan is amended it is important to verify that it is "internally consistent" and that development regulations are consistent with and implement the comprehensive plan.



Covington Street Signs

Source: Studio Cascade, 2014



# LAND USE



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ A description of Covington's current land uses.
- ▶ A discussion of development trends.
- ▶ A plan for future land use and areas where new development is being directed.
- ▶ Goals and polices that guide the character and intensity of land use within Covington.

## PURPOSE

This Element guides future land use on both public and private property within Covington's planning area, comprised of the city limits and its assigned Potential Annexation Area (PAA) within the King County Urban Growth Area (UGA). The element plans for the community's rising needs for residential, employment, recreation, and other land uses. The element accommodates expected growth that is the basis for investments in transportation, capital facilities, and utilities.

This element promotes compact and well-designed neighborhoods that are served by effective public facilities, that protect environmental and cultural resources, and that provide new opportunities for



Wooded lands, Lakepointe Urban Village Property.  
Source: The Watershed Company 2013



Covington Farm.  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014



Example of Covington Home.  
Source: Coldwell Banker 2015

residents and businesses to locate in Covington to achieve the community’s vision of an unmatched quality of life. Covington’s proposed land use plan and policies also help the City grow in harmony with the goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) VISION 2040’s regional growth strategy, and King County’s Countywide Planning Policies.

## LAND USE ISSUES AND TRENDS

### CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

#### *History*

Prior to European settlement, the Stkamish, Smulkamis, and Skopamish people inhabited the Covington area. Eventually these tribes, together with other tribes along the White and Green Rivers, were resettled on the Muckleshoot Reservation, named for the prairie on which the reservation was established. (Kershner, 2013; Tribe, 2015)

Covington was originally known for lumber mills on Jenkins and Soos Creeks, and a place where irrigated berry farms and dairies were successful. As with other places in King County following World War II, the community grew from a rural farming community into a suburb. (Kershner, 2013)

In 1992, Covington was designated as an Urban Activity Center by King County. Eventually the community advocated for incorporation, and Covington became a full-fledged city in 1997.



### ***Current Land Uses***

Covington's current land use pattern is dominated by single family residential, parks and schools, and commercial uses. See Exhibit LU-1 for the current distribution and Exhibit LU-3 for a map.

### ***Current and Future Population, Housing, and Jobs***

Covington has grown since its incorporation from a population of 12,900 in 1998 to 18,520 in 2015. See Exhibit LU-2. This growth reflects Covington's attraction as a residential community with middle income home-buying opportunities.

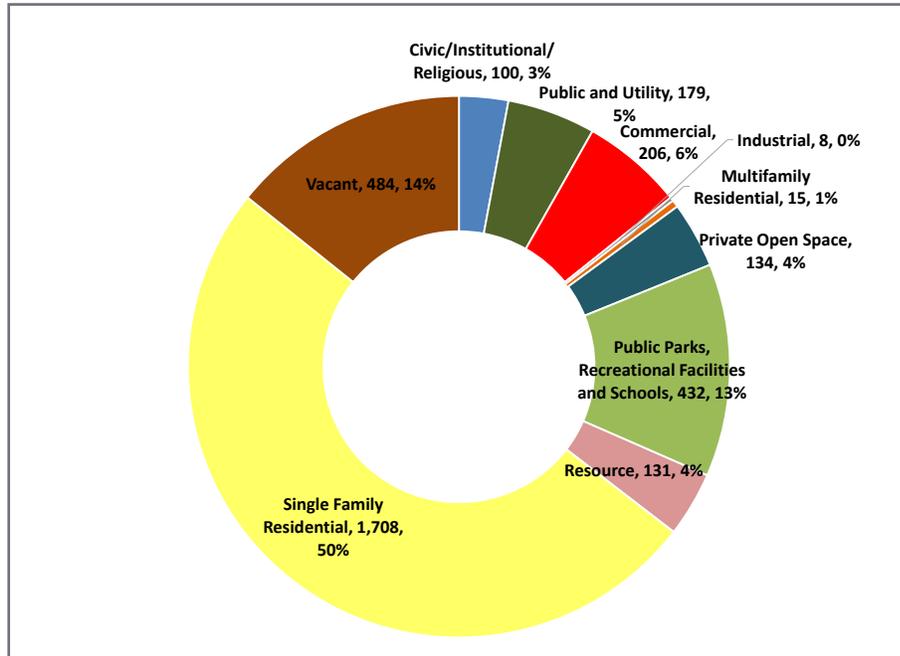
## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

Covington has traditionally been a bedroom community with modern and well-kept single family neighborhoods interspersed with parks, open space, and schools. Commercial retail and medical services have also burgeoned along suburban arterial corridors to serve Covington and surrounding areas in southeast King County.

Covington is a more mature community since its settlement with farms and rapid suburban growth between the 1960s and 2000s. Covington grew more rapidly than the County between 2000 and 2010, and its pace moderated between 2010 and 2015. Still, based on market studies Covington is poised to grow its population by 50% and its jobs by 78% over the next 20 years.

To maintain the quality of single family neighborhoods and to help protect environmentally sensitive areas, Covington has identified areas of focused growth in its Town Center with its Downtown area. There the City intends to facilitate compact mid-rise mixed-use residential, and commercial developments with gathering spaces and gridded streets. Secondly, the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea will offer an urban village with both regional and local commercial opportunities as well as mixed-use retail and multifamily, townhomes, and single family homes.

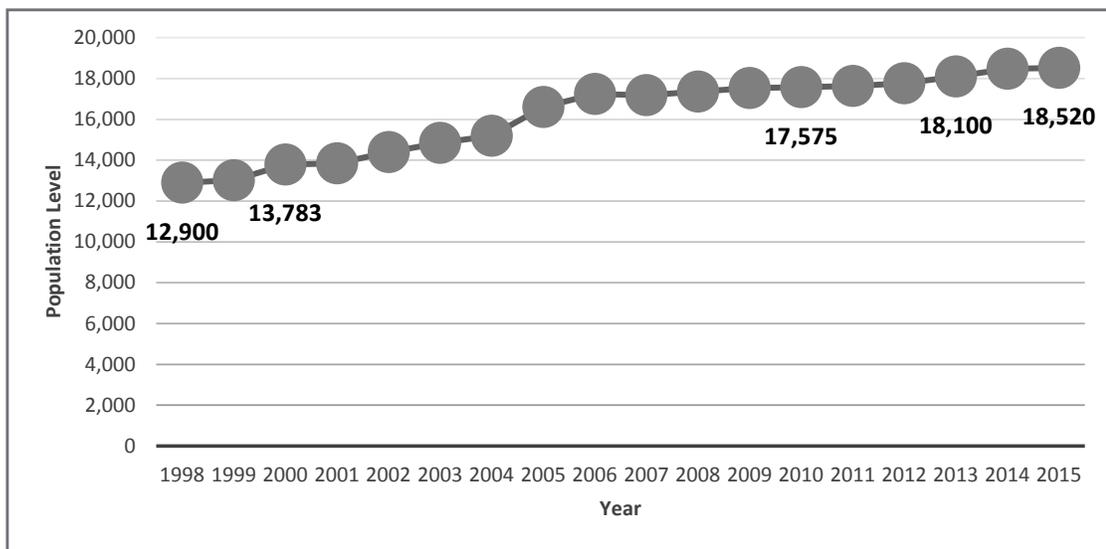
**Exhibit LU-1. Existing Land Use Shares\***



Note: \* Each data label includes: Use Description, Number of Acres, and Percent of Total Acres.

Source: King County Assessor, 2015; City of Covington, 2015

**Exhibit LU-2. Covington Population: 1998-2015**



Source: State Office of Financial Management, 2015



The City experienced a compound annual growth rate of 2.5% between 2000 and 2010, slowing to 0.5% between 2010 and 2015. Covington's growth rate was higher than King County's compound annual growth rate of 1.4% between 2000 and 2010, and is similar now to the County's rate of 0.6% between 2010 and 2015.

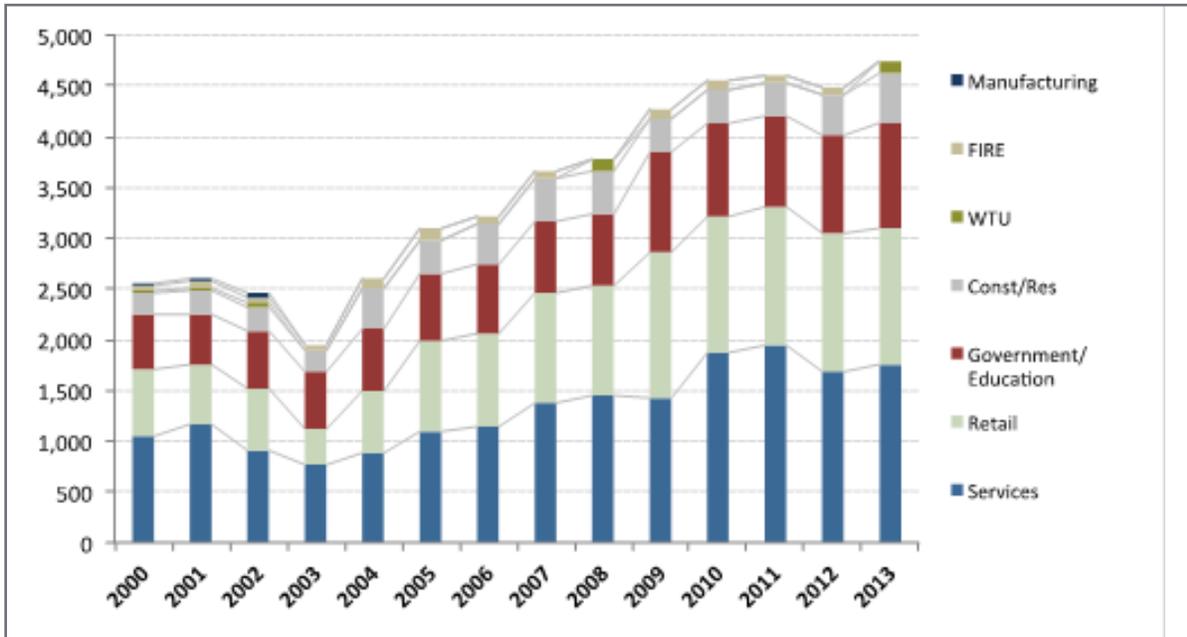
Covington also realized strong employment growth from 2003 to 2013. See Exhibit LU-4. Local-serving industries such as services, retail, and government/education make up the largest share of the City's employment base. Retail sector employment has grown the most and the fastest from 2003 to 2013.

Covington is forecast to grow nearly 50% to approximately 27,645 residents by 2035. See Exhibit LU-5. Currently, there are approximately 6,374 dwellings (OFM 2015) and most are occupied with 5,957 households (ACS 2013). Based on a market demand study (BERK 2012), it is anticipated that there will be 3,920 added dwellings. This will result in a total of 9,826 households and 10,294 dwellings by 2035.

The City has a solid base of jobs, largely retail and service oriented, equaling 4,753 jobs. (ESD, 2013). Based on a market analysis (BERK, 2012), the City would add over 1.6 million square feet of commercial space by 2035, which would support over 3,700 jobs. That would mean a total of 8,459 jobs by 2035. See Exhibit LU-5. The Economic Development Element discusses jobs and the economic outlook in more detail.



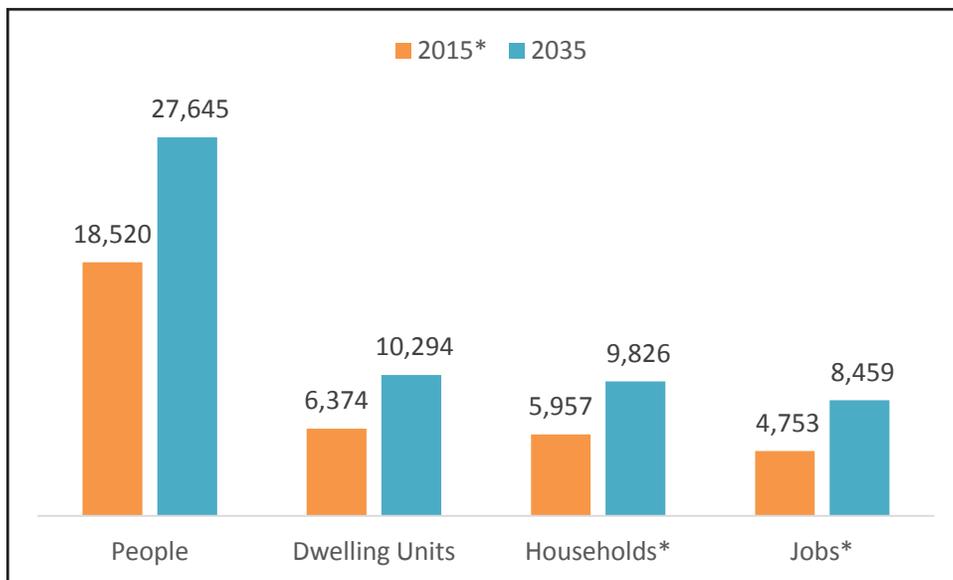
**Exhibit LU-4. Total Covered Employment, 2000-2013 (Jobs in Thousands by Year)**



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2000-2013

Note: FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate), WTU (Warehousing, Transportation, and Utilities)

**Exhibit LU-5. Estimated Population, Housing, and Jobs: 2015 and 2035**



Source: OFM 2015, ACS 2013; ESD 2013, BERK, 2015

Note: \* Households and Jobs are 2013 estimates.

## KEY TERMS

- ▶ **Growth Target:** A target is the City's assigned share of housing and employment growth for the period 2012-2035 consistent with the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The City must demonstrate its Comprehensive Plan at least accommodates its growth target.
- ▶ **Capacity:** Capacity illustrates whether the City has sufficient developable land free of constraints and zoned at urban densities to accommodate assigned growth targets. The City's capacity is measured every five years in the King County Buildable Lands Report.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### *Planning for growth that is expected to surpass growth targets.*

The City is required to show in its Comprehensive Plan how it will accommodate its fair share of growth. The City has surplus capacity to accommodate its housing and jobs targets. See Exhibit LU-6.

The City must, at a minimum, accommodate and plan for its King County issued growth targets. In 2012, the City commissioned a market study, which shows robust growth that exceeded its growth targets but was less than capacity (as measured in 2012 and in 2015 for the Comprehensive Plan Update). See Exhibit LU-7. If the City were to plan for its remaining growth target, it may “under plan” for the infrastructure and services needed to support the community's desired levels of service. If the City were to plan for its growth capacity it may “over plan” and service providers and the City might invest scarce resources in infrastructure and services that are not yet needed.

The City is basing its Comprehensive Plan Update on the market demand study that not only accounts for the City's growth targets, but also the likely level of growth in order to plan for capital facilities, utilities, and services that will help maintain Covington's quality of life.

The Regional Growth Strategy in VISION 2040 sets out growth figures for the four county region and for counties. City-specific allocations are not included in VISION 2040. However, Covington is considered a Small City and, along with other Small Cities, are not seen as having as great a share of growth as other categories of cities.



**Exhibit LU-6. King County Targets and Covington Capacity: 2012-2035**

Targets and Capacity		Housing	Jobs
Housing Growth Target (2006-2031)		1,470	1,320
Permits 2006-2012 (issued/finaled)	-	163	1,148
Remaining Target 2012-2031	=	1,307	172
Extended Target 2031-2035	+	235	211
Remaining Target 2012-2035	=	1,542	383
Pending Development 2012, updated	+	622	514
Lakepointe Urban Village Capacity**	+	1,500	1,889
Parcel Capacity 2012, updated 2015	+	2,164	2,093
Total Capacity	=	4,286	4,496
Capacity Surplus (Deficit) versus Target		2,744	4,113

Source: City of Covington; BERK Consulting 2015

Note: \*\*Based on the Hawk Property Planned Action EIS and the Hawk Property Subarea Plan (Ord 01-14)

Sources: City of Covington and BERK Consulting 2015

**Exhibit LU-7. King County Growth Targets, Market Demand, and Covington Land Capacity**



Source: BERK Consulting, 2015

Yet, the City has had market interest and demand and there is unavoidable growth as seen in the already permitted pending development and the approved Lakepointe Urban Village – a planned development authorized with the Hawk Property Planned Action Ordinance. The City will exceed its jobs target just with pending development. With both pending development and the Lakepointe Urban Village, the City will exceed its housing target.

In sum, the City has chosen to plan efficiently within its city limits and newly annexed Lakepointe area in a compact mixed use pattern consistent with Growth Management Act (GMA) goals, VISION 2040 policies, and the Covington framework goals. The City will also work with King County to update its growth target in light of its local circumstances in future plan update cycles.

***Promoting Covington as a hub for medical services and family wage jobs.***

Covington now contains an urgent care facility, and is becoming a hub for medical services in the southeast King County area. A hospital is planned.

Continuing to attract professional services, medical services, and other jobs that have the potential to support living wages is important to the City's overall economic development goals and would promote sustainable living by helping reduce single occupancy vehicle driving.

***Protecting and improving Covington's existing single family neighborhoods while encouraging vibrant mixed-use development.***

The predominant land use within Covington's city limits is single family residential. While this will remain Covington's predominant land use, there is limited

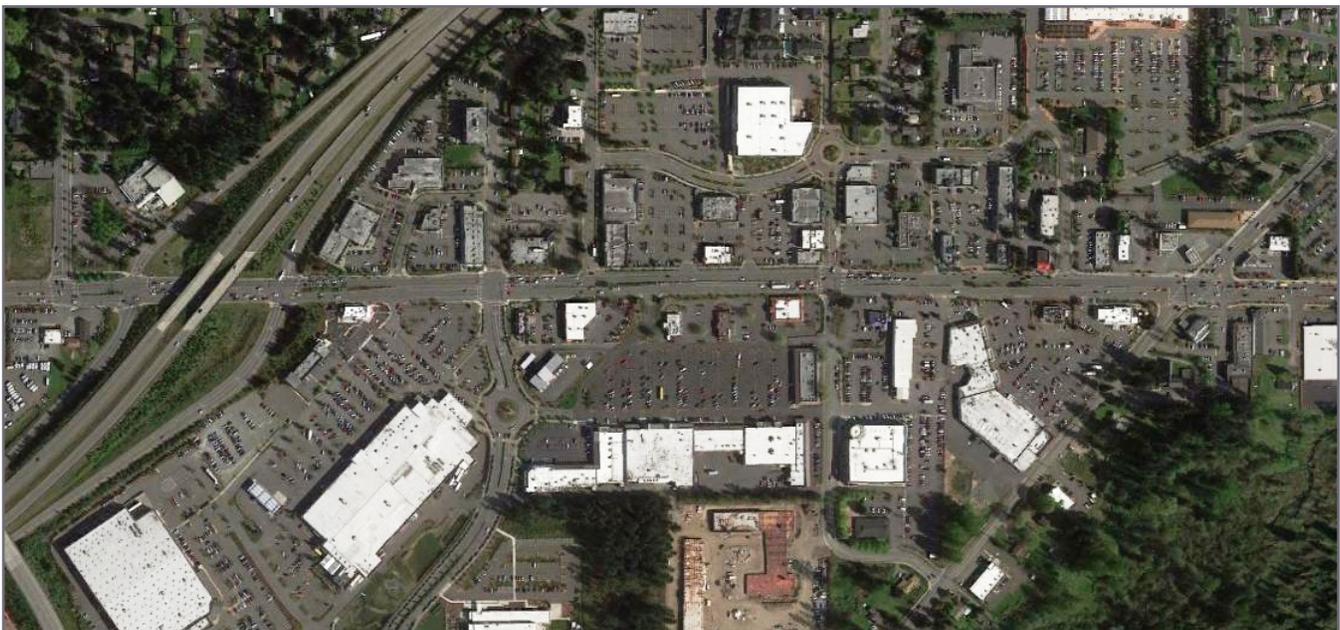


vacant land left to develop for single family residential uses. Covington's population is growing and changing, with more senior citizens and with households that are cost-burdened, meaning they are spending more than 30% of their income on housing and utilities and earning below the County median income. Thus, Covington is in need of greater housing variety such as townhomes and mixed-use residential, as noted in the Housing Element.

Similarly with Covington striving to become a commercial, professional, and medical services hub for southeast King County, more jobs are expected, and the City's suburban commercial areas are expected to experience new development and redevelopment over the next 20 years.

The City is actively planning for well-designed, high quality mixed-use development focused in the Town Center zone and within portions of the Lakepointe Urban Village.

**Exhibit LU-8. Covington Downtown Aerial**



Source: Google Earth, 2015



Covington Commercial Center.

Source: commercial-development.com 2015



Covington, Medical Uses

Source: Studio Cascade 2014

By focusing most growth in these two areas, the City can maintain the quality and character of existing residential neighborhoods while meeting the community’s changing needs for housing variety and offering more pedestrian amenities, public gathering spaces, and gridded streets. New development, whether it locates in the downtown, the Lakepointe Urban Village or within the community’s established neighborhoods, must be compatible with its surroundings and enhance Covington’s community identity and the character of the neighborhood in which it is located.

### Downtown and Town Center

Covington’s Downtown area is presently in a low rise development pattern, with commercial shopping centers predominating. See Exhibit LU-8 on prior page.

In 2009, Covington completed a Downtown Plan and zoning study to set a new course and vision for the community. The plan addresses core economic development and land use goals:

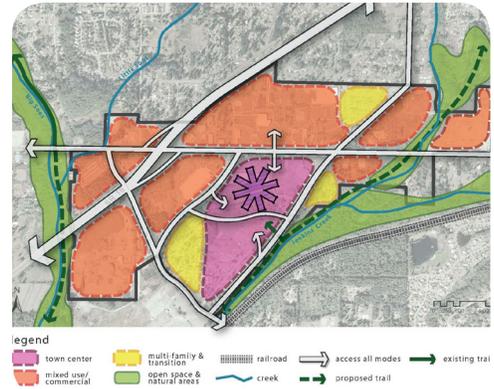
- Identify a new town center site
- Make strategic town center investments
- Improve vehicular linkages
- Develop a parking study
- Provide greater pedestrian connections
- Establish new street and building design standards
- Consider and support Covington as a regional transportation focal point

The proposed land use pattern is based on a dense, pedestrian-friendly core surrounded by several districts:

The future downtown area should consist of a central Town Center District developed around a central civic plaza and open space, a new City Hall and/or other community facilities, and a public parking facility/transit center. Surrounding this Town Center core should be other Mixed Commercial and/or General Commercial



districts permitting a wide variety of retail, residential, office, service, and public uses. Surrounding the retail, residential, office, service and public uses should be a less intensive Mixed Housing and Office district with a variety of housing and office uses at various levels of density and height. These four inter-related but discreet land use districts are described below. They are (a) Town Center; (b) Mixed Commercial; (c) Mixed Housing and Office; and (d) General Commercial.



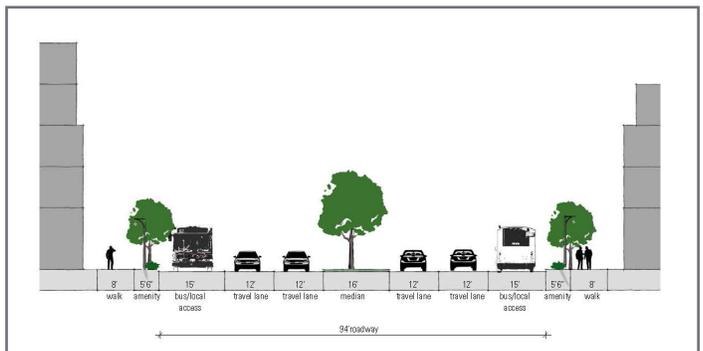
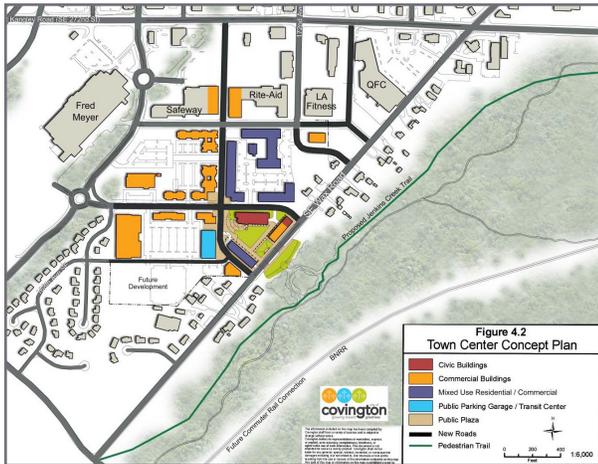
### Downtown Vision

The vision is to create a dynamic Town Center that includes retail, office, residential, and communal gathering spaces, and provides for development-friendly zoning and transportation requirements as well as improved surrounding areas. See Exhibit LU-9.

Covington Downtown Land Use Concept

Source: Covington Downtown Plan and Zoning Study, 2009

### Exhibit LU-9. Town Center Vision



Sources: City of Covington Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards, 2014; Pannattoni 2015

### Lakepointe Urban Village

The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea (formerly known as the Hawk Property Subarea Ord. 01-14) lies in the northern gateway area of the city, and encompasses approximately 212 acres southeast of SR 18. The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea primarily consists of the former Lakeside gravel mine, an asphalt batch plant, vacant land, and a highway interchange. Resource extraction operations at the mine site have ceased, and reclamation is in progress. Approximately 76 acres of the subarea was annexed to the city limits on January 12, 2016 (Ord. 01-16).

The community vision for the subarea is a mixed-use urban village secondary to the Town Center:

*The vision for the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea is the creation of an Urban Village at Covington's northern gateway that provides a mix of commercial development focused on regional uses and a variety of housing types. This village would provide regional shopping and employment opportunities for residents of both Covington and neighboring communities, as well as new housing opportunities for the Covington community. In addition to commercial and residential development, the village would offer public recreational amenities, such as parks, natural open space, a pond, and bicycle and pedestrian trails that link to the regional trail system. The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea, while providing both economic and lifestyle benefits would be a secondary center within Covington, providing an experience that is distinct from Covington's town center, not competing with it. (Ord. 01-14)*

The City adopted a range of concepts for the subarea allowing 1,000-1,500 dwellings and 680,000 to 850,000 square feet of commercial development. See Exhibit LU-10.



Lakepointe Site 2013, Pre-reclamation

Source: The Watershed Company 2013



### Exhibit LU-10. Lakepointe Urban Village Minimum and Maximum Concept Plans\*



Source: City of Covington, 2014 (Hawk Property Subarea Plan Ord. 01-14, Hawk Property Planned Action Ord. 04-14)

Note: \*Formerly Hawk Property Subarea

*Maintaining Covington's small town feel and the natural environment.*

Covington recognizes the value and need to preserve and protect the natural environment in a manner that balances growth, economic needs, and quality of life. Development can be designed to protect environmental functions and values.

Potentially constrained lands typically include critical areas containing frequently flooded areas, wetlands, streams and associated buffers, wildlife habitat, critical aquifer recharge areas, as well as landslide, seismic, and erosion hazard areas. Other constrained areas include power line easements and gas line easements.

Some potentially constrained lands are managed for health and safety (e.g. geologic hazards and flood hazards) and the amount of development within or abutting the area may be restricted. Some areas are protected for their water quality and habitat functions and values (wetlands, streams and lakes, critical aquifer recharging areas, wildlife habitat, and floodplains), and may be protected from development by buffers and setbacks. Permanent structures are limited in utility corridors.

Low-impact development methods that mimic natural stormwater systems are now required, where feasible, by the City's stormwater manual. These standards not only have value to manage water quality and quantity but also can be designed to contribute to open space systems and to soften streetscapes.

More detailed discussion and policies related to the city's natural environment can be found in the Natural Environment and Shoreline Master Program Elements.

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# OUR LAND USE PLAN

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## FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND DESIGNATIONS

Covington's Future Land Use Plan is oriented around two centers: downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village. Around these two destination centers with mixed uses are single family neighborhoods at low, medium, and high densities, interspersed by a green network of parks, trails, open space, and schools. See Exhibit LU-11 and Exhibit LU-12 for a distribution graph and a map.

In the future Land Use Plan, single family residential uses continue to predominate, at 65% of parcel acres, followed by public parks, recreation, and schools, at 14%. The downtown would make up 11% of parcel acres, and the Urban Village 6% of parcel acres. Matching the graph and map in Exhibits LU-11 and LU-12, the table in Exhibit LU-13 provides definitions of Covington's Future Land Use categories and allowable densities in dwelling units per acre (du/acre), describing each in terms of intended use and overall character. These future land use designations allow for growth to occur in a sustainable development pattern, maintaining Covington's quality of life and enhancing Covington's identity.

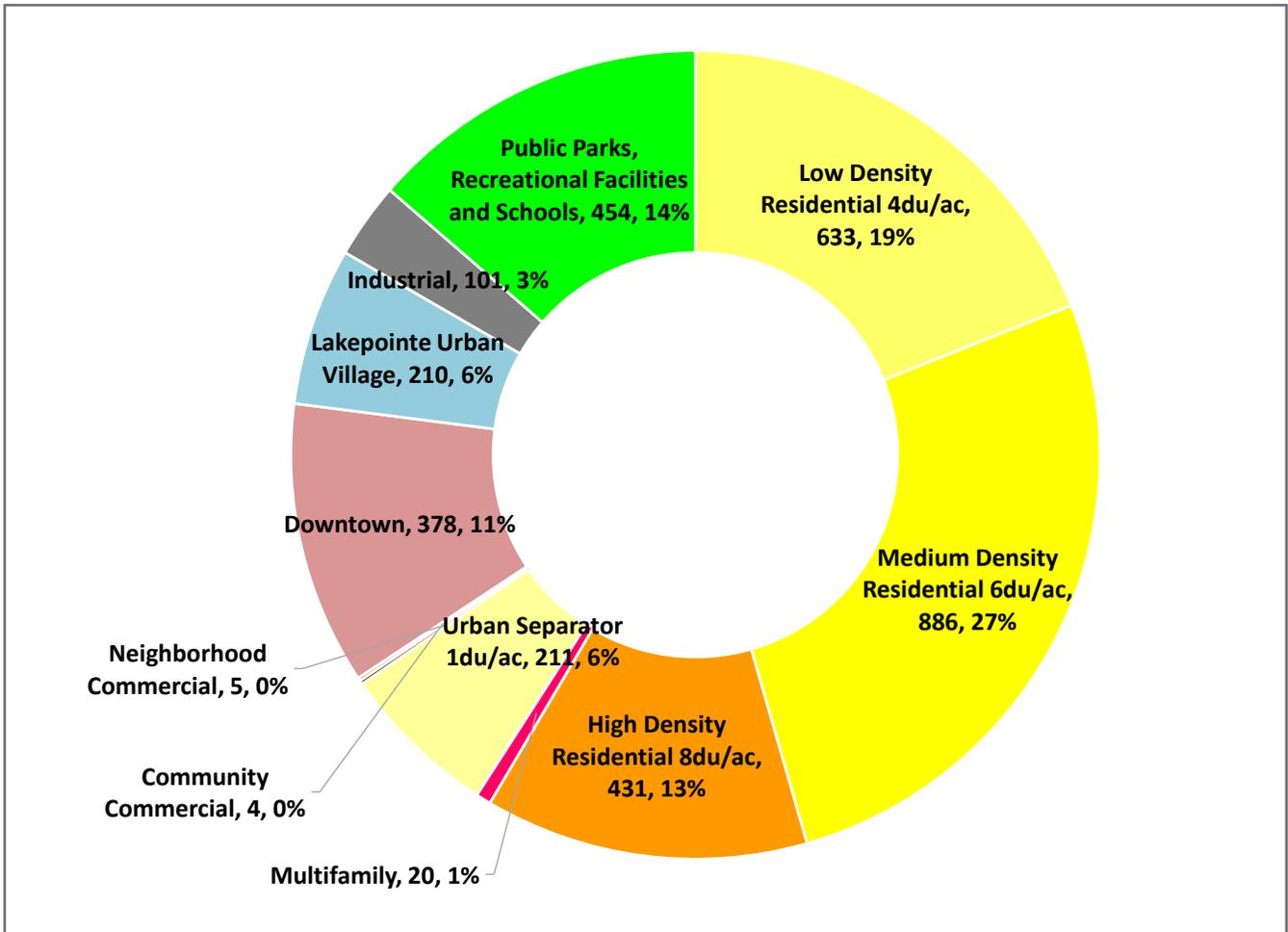
The Land Use designations are implemented by detailed zoning in Exhibit LU-14.



Stormwater Facility in Covington.

Source: City of Covington Stormwater Management Plan 2015

Exhibit LU-11. Future Land Use Distribution\*



Note: \* Each data label includes: Use Description, Number of Acres, and Percent of Total Acres.

Source: City of Covington, 2015; BERK, 2015



**Exhibit LU-13. Future Land Use Map Descriptions**

**Urban Separator**

The Urban Separator category exists to foster identifiable boundaries between Covington and Kent, helping each develop as a distinct community with individual identities and a sense of place. Much of Covington’s Urban Separator includes Soos Creek Park along the western portion of the UGA. Low-density residential development of up to one dwelling unit per acre is also appropriate for Urban Separator lands.

<b>Single family Urban Residential:</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
	4 dwelling units/acre	6 dwelling units/acre	8 dwelling units/acre

Covington’s existing neighborhoods are primarily characterized by single family urban residential development often platted at four to eight units per acre. Accordingly, the Future Land Use map divides the Single Family Urban Residential category into “Low” “Medium” and “High” sub-categories, assigning minimum densities at four, six, and eight units per acre respectively. Undeveloped or underdeveloped areas within this designation will develop at the densities associated with each category, maintaining compatibility with existing neighborhoods and open space corridors.

**Multifamily (Residential 18 du/acre)**

The 35-acre Multifamily area located to the north of the Downtown land use designation allows higher density urban residential development typified by structures designed to accommodate several unrelated households, including duplexes, apartments, townhomes, and condominiums.

**Neighborhood Commercial**

The Neighborhood Commercial category includes small-scale commercial uses that provide convenience goods and services to serve the everyday needs of the surrounding neighborhoods while protecting neighborhood character. Neighborhood Commercial development can help reduce automobile trip lengths and frequency by providing dispersed commercial uses closer to resident homes. Second-floor residential uses are encouraged in Neighborhood Commercial buildings, and it’s critical that regulations ensure that the design and scale of Neighborhood Commercial development maintain compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

**Community Commercial**

The Community Commercial category is intended to provide for a broader range of commercial activities and services than those envisioned for Neighborhood Commercial areas. Community Commercial development should be designed and scaled to serve a range of day-to-day needs for residents of nearby neighborhoods, but not intentionally addressing needs of those living outside those areas. Uses should be sized and permitted accordingly to maintain compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhoods, and the design and scale of Community Commercial development should be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.



## Downtown

The Downtown category is intended to provide the majority of the retail commercial and office opportunities within the city, as well as various civic, social, residential, and recreational uses. The Downtown designation is intended to accommodate economic growth in a compact form with a mix of uses that lessens automobile trip lengths and promotes travel modes other than single-occupancy vehicles. Residential uses integrated with commercial uses in mixed-use buildings are encouraged.

The Downtown area is envisioned to grow as the “heart” of Covington, characterized by:

- Places for community events
- Vibrant, active streetscapes with sidewalk vendors and street trees
- Higher-intensity development (over time) with reuse of parking lots for new buildings
- High-quality development
- A scale and form that’s walkable and comfortable for pedestrians
- Connections to nearby parks and natural spaces
- Distinctive landmarks to ensure people can easily find their way

The Downtown category includes four interrelated districts as follows:

- **Town Center:** Encompassing 81 acres is an area envisioned as the heart and core of downtown, characterized by an intensive mix of uses, a vibrant and active streetscape, the most pedestrian-scaled land use and circulation system downtown, and includes an important public gathering space.
- **Mixed Commercial:** These “gateways” to downtown Covington on the west and east encompass 231 acres. They accommodate a diverse mix of uses, emphasizing retail and employment, with increased walkability and access for all modes of travel. Large format retail, auto-oriented uses and public uses may be part of the mix, provided they’re compatible with the area’s pedestrian-oriented scale and character.
- **Mixed Housing & Office:** Totaling 67 acres, this category includes infill housing and office development designed to be compatible with surrounding residential uses. Cottage housing types or single family detached housing may also be part of this category.
- **General Commercial:** This 95-acre area is envisioned to include the broadest range of uses of any in the downtown, including commercial, light manufacturing, office, transportation and utility uses, as well as residential uses buffered from more intensive uses to ensure compatibility.

**Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea**

The Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea (formerly the Hawk Property) category is intended to provide commercial and residential opportunities in an “urban village” setting (formerly referred to as Hawk Property Subarea) with associated recreational and open space amenities. The adopted Hawk Property Subarea Plan (Ord. 01-14, as amended), clearly envisions mixed-use development in this area. Future development of the Lakepointe Urban Village is intended to provide regional and local commercial opportunities, as well as housing options not widely available in Covington including multifamily, townhome, and small-lot residential development.

**Industrial**

This category is intended to provide for industrial enterprises and activities involving manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, processing, bulk handling and storage, research facilities, warehousing, and heavy trucking. The purpose of this designation is also to protect the industrial land base for industrial, economic development and employment opportunities. It is applied largely to the Bonneville Power Administration Substation.

**Public Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Schools**

This category is only placed on properties currently developed with a public park, and recreational facilities, and land owned by the Kent or Tahoma School District.

Future Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Schools may occur throughout the city, consistent with comprehensive plan goals and policies as well as development regulation provisions, which reduce impacts on surrounding land uses. Although mapped as a specific land-use designation, lands within this designation may occur in any zone, as this land-use designation does not affect underlying zoning.



### Exhibit LU-14. Future Land-Use Designations & Corresponding Zoning Districts

Land Use Designation	Zoning District
Urban Separator	US(R-1) Urban Separator
Single Family Urban Residential (Low, Medium, High)	
Low Density Residential	R-4 Urban Residential 4 Units Per Acre
Medium Density Residential	R-6 Urban Residential 6 Units Per Acre
High Density Residential	R-8 Urban Residential 8 Units Per Acre
Multifamily	R-18 Residential 18 Units Per Acre
Neighborhood Commercial	NC Neighborhood Commercial
Community Commercial	CC Community Commercial
Downtown	TC Town Center
	MC Mixed Commercial
	MHO Mixed Housing/Office
	GC General Commercial
Lakepointe Urban Village (formerly called the Hawk Property Subarea)	<p>Pending a rezone consistent with Hawk Property Subarea Plan, the Mineral zone applies on an interim basis. Future zoning consistent with approved Hawk Property Subarea Plan Ord 01-14 includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ R-6 Urban Residential 6 Units Per Acre</li> <li>▪ R-12 Urban Residential 12 Units per acre</li> <li>▪ MR Mixed Residential</li> <li>▪ RCMU Regional Commercial Mixed Use</li> </ul>
Industrial	I Industrial
Public Parks, Recreation, and Schools	All Underlying Zones

## VISION CONNECTION

The land use element most directly supports Covington's vision for an unmatched quality of life and the framework goals around fostering well-designed and diverse neighborhoods, promoting economic development, establishing a vibrant downtown, encouraging active and healthy living by design, promoting sustainable development patterns, and integrating nature into neighborhoods.

## CONSISTENCY WITH STATE GOALS AND REGIONAL PLANS

The City plans in conformance with the GMA and the PSRC VISION 2040, which sets a regional growth strategy.

State GMA goals are implemented in this Land Use Element by promoting a compact urban development pattern served by adequate transportation, parks, and other capital facilities and services. The Land Use Element also encourages a variety of housing choices and economic development opportunities. The Element promotes the protection of environmental, natural, and cultural resources. Each property in Covington is allowed a reasonable use consistent with the land use plan and development regulations. The City's land use permit procedures allow permits to be addressed in a fair and predictable manner. (RCW 36.70A.020)

VISION 2040 contains multicounty planning policies and a regional growth strategy applicable to King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. The PSRC conducts consistency reviews of comprehensive plans and certifies transportation elements for consistency with VISION 2040. VISION 2040 requires a statement of consistency with VISION 2040's multicounty planning policies and conformity to relevant planning requirements in the GMA.

### ***Covington's State of Consistency with VISION 2040 and Coordinated Regional Planning Efforts.***

***Covington plans commit to a sustainable and vibrant future through implementation of a downtown-focused on a Town Center with mixed-use commercial and residential mid-rise development patterns, gathering spaces, and connected multi-modal streets. A mixed use urban village is planned in Covington's northern gateway in the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea where a variety of housing types and densities are planned***



*together with large format and community-based retail around natural and recreation amenities. Compact growth in the Town Center and Lakepointe Urban Village allows the City to reduce vehicle miles traveled, retrofit stormwater systems in a low-impact manner to improve water quality, avoid impacts to ecological functions and values, and reduce air quality emissions over standard development patterns. The City will leverage special district and private investment in these places and make wise, efficient public investments in infrastructure and services within already developed or altered environments.*

*This compact mixed-use strategy also allows the City to protect the character and vitality of its residential neighborhoods where a variety of homeownership opportunities are available on a range of lot sizes, served by a network of parks, open space and schools.*

*As a community with a mission of unity, Covington plans together with neighboring jurisdictions and special districts serving the City on infrastructure, transportation, human services, hazard reduction, and shoreline and critical area protection.*

*Covington's plan promotes a quality development pattern able to accommodate the community's fair share of housing and employment growth targets in conformance with the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The City will work with PSRC, King County, and its peer cities to grow responsibly consistent with VISION 2040 policies.*

*To address 1) Covington's unique market circumstances as a commercial and services hub in southeast King County, 2) its attraction of compact, mixed use development at an unprecedented pace, 3) its reliance on urban sewer and water services with special districts, and 4) its commitment to ongoing transportation coordination with state, regional, and local governments, the City will work in partnership with King County and PSRC to monitor growth and to revise growth targets, in order to manage anticipated and unavoidable growth in a compatible and environmentally sensitive manner.*

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### LAND USE GOALS



Senior Housing in Covington  
Source: Studio Cascade 2015

**Goal LU-I.** Covington contains a diverse mix of uses and densities that are sustainable and support the community’s desire to provide a high-quality environment for residents, businesses, employees, and visitors.

**Goal LU-II.** Covington’s zoning, design guidelines, and other strategies promote development that provides a variety of land use types, densities and building forms, while discouraging sprawl, protecting critical areas, and minimizing exposure to natural hazards to support a healthy economy and promote living wage job growth.

**Goal LU-III.** Covington’s vibrant mixed-use and commercial areas are places current and future residents and businesses want to live, work, play, shop, and learn and locate their businesses. These centers incorporate a range of housing types, commercial spaces, public spaces, parks and recreational facilities that accommodate a variety of families and individuals, income groups, and types of businesses.

**Goal LU-IV.** Covington’s downtown is the economic and entertainment heart of the community, flourishing from the investment in infrastructure, mixed-use development, and high quality urban design.



Covington Medical Uses.  
Source: Studio Cascade 2015

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- Goal LU-V. The Lakepointe Urban Village is thriving and accessible by multi-modal transportation at the northern gateway to the city, providing regional shopping and employment, new housing opportunities for the community, and a mix of recreational amenities.**
- Goal LU-VI. Covington is a walkable community with access to healthy local foods, active living facilities, and well-designed and accessible multi-modal connections between and within neighborhoods and commercial areas.**
- Goal LU-VII. Covington residents and business owners are informed and involved in the on-going land use decision-making process and have opportunities to participate in the implementation, review, and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, zoning code, and development permits.**



Soos Creek Trail.

Source: Studio Cascade 2015

## LAND USE POLICIES

### *Citywide Sustainable Growth Management Strategy*

- Policy LU-1.** Plan and manage community growth and redevelopment to ensure an orderly pattern of land use that is interconnected and accessible to the community while maintaining and improving the city's existing character.
- Policy LU-2.** Maintain sufficient land designated to accommodate appropriate commercial, office, healthcare, and educational uses proximate to adequate transportation and utility infrastructure.

- Policy LU-3. Work with King County and other urban cities to adjust and align individual city and King County growth targets and the PSRC Regional Growth Strategy. Covington’s target should be updated, and consider:
- A. Existing land capacity, demand, and market conditions including Covington’s niche in southeast King County.
  - B. Available and planned infrastructure.
  - C. The community’s compact growth pattern and standards for environmental protection.
  - D. State population projections and local trends.
- Policy LU-4. Maintain land use designations that ensure an adequate supply of housing units and employment space to meet required growth targets and market demand.
- Policy LU-5. Encourage maximum permitted density of land development while requiring high-quality design, avoiding natural and manmade hazards, and protecting critical areas and environmental quality to avoid unnecessary public and private costs.
- Policy LU-6. Encourage new development to be sited and designed to:
- A. Limit impact on the natural environment.
  - B. Be compact and contiguous to existing development.
  - C. Protect critical areas.
  - D. Protect cultural resources.



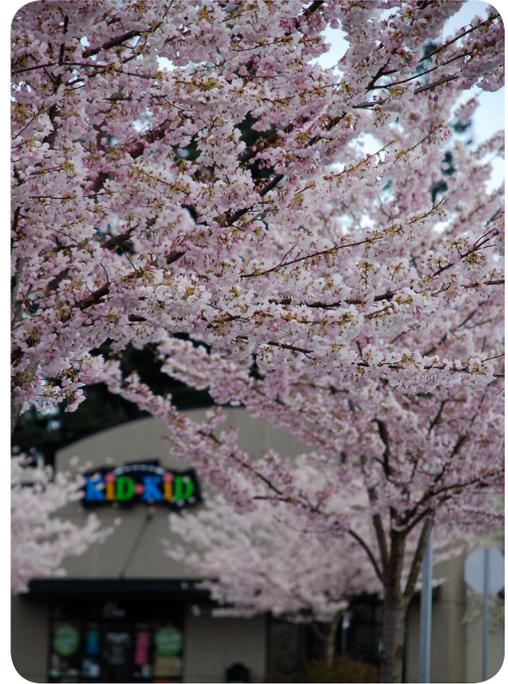
- E. Promote water quality, incorporation of renewable energy, green infrastructure, urban forests, green roofs, and natural drainage systems.
- F. Incorporate energy and water conservation practices, and reduce heat absorption.
- G. Encourage walking, bicycling and transit use.

Policy LU-7. Direct growth, including redevelopment and infill, to locations that take advantage of existing service capacity and infrastructure.

- A. Coordinate with all public service providers to ensure services can support Covington's planned growth and shifts in demand while maintaining acceptable levels of service.
- B. Implement City transportation level of service standards, concurrency, and impact fee requirements to support future land development. Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation and adjacent jurisdictions to manage transportation demand and facilitate improvements.

Policy LU-8. Ensure new development complements community character and neighborhood quality, encouraging attractive site and building design that is compatible in scale and in character with existing or planned development.

Policy LU-9. Support development patterns that promote the community's health by:



Landscaping in Commercial Center.  
Source: Studio Cascade 2015

- A. Providing opportunities for safe and convenient physical activity and social connectivity.
- B. Promoting safe routes to and from public schools.

Policy LU-10. Promote residential and other forms of mixed-use development in commercial areas to allow people to live, work, play, shop, and learn while reducing vehicular traffic and providing for shared parking in a pedestrian-friendly setting, including eventual transition to structured parking at high demand locations, and maintain development capacity for active ground-level commercial use.

Policy LU-11. Require the incorporation of features in new development projects that support transportation choices.

Policy LU-12. Promote the use of landscaping that can thrive in urban settings, conserve water, retain desirable trees, and is comprised of native plant materials.

Policy LU-13. Promote farmers markets and urban agriculture as a way to access healthy, affordable local foods.

Policy LU-14. Encourage the development and strategic placement of public art features throughout the city.

Policy LU-15. Encourage public open spaces or community plazas where appropriate in commercial areas, for the congregation of people.



Agricultural Use in Covington.  
Source: Studio Cascade 2015



- Policy LU-16. Allow, through appropriate zoning and siting, a variety of public and quasi-public uses serving the community, including parks, schools, libraries, churches, community centers, fire and police stations, and other municipal facilities in a well-designed manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses.
- Policy LU-17. Manage and design public utility land uses and structures in a manner that is compatible with nearby uses, using techniques such as buffers, increased setbacks, easements, landscaping, and other innovative forms of screening.
- Policy LU-18. Site essential public facilities countywide in coordination with King County, the State and/or other cities and tribes considering environmental and social equity, fair-share burden, and environmental, technical and service area factors to reduce incompatibility with adjacent uses.
- Policy LU-19. Coordinate planning efforts with State agencies, King County, and neighboring cities to address shared areas of interest and concern such as transportation systems and concurrency, regional trails, health and human services, shorelines of the state, surface and groundwater systems, watersheds, and other topics.



Downtown Area Commercial and Streetscape.  
Source: Studio Cascade 2015

### *Urban Growth and Annexations*

Policy LU-20. Continue to support the expansion of the City's Urban Growth Area in the northern gateway to include land east of 180th Ave SE between SE Wax Road and SR 18 to correct illogical boundary lines. Pursue changes to the Urban Growth Area based on criteria in the Countywide Planning Policies and in coordination with King County.

Policy LU-21. Annex potential annexation areas assigned to the City within the King County urban growth area into Covington's city limits only after carefully studying the fiscal impacts and planning for the future development of the area.

Policy LU-22. Monitor the City's growth in relation to the Countywide Planning Policy growth targets and the countywide growth assumed in VISION 2040.

Policy LU-23. Consider Countywide Planning Policies, the VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy, and Covington's Comprehensive Plan Vision and Framework Policies when evaluating new land use designation requests during the 2015-2035 planning period.

### *Public Services and Responsiveness*

Policy LU-24. Ensure timely, thorough, consistent, fair, and predictable project review by allocating adequate resources to the permit review process, and minimizing review time.

Policy LU-25. Promote public involvement in the planning process.



Policy LU-26. Establish and maintain positive and proactive inter-jurisdictional relationships with outside service providers, such as water, sewer, gas, electric, fire, schools, phone, and cable entities, throughout the permitting process.

### **Downtown**

Policy LU-27. Encourage a variety of development in the downtown with an emphasis on multi-story mixed-use, while allowing existing, major retail components to remain until market conditions support redevelopment; allow limited, regulated, and high-quality designed large format retail while minimizing impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Policy LU-28. Encourage the integration of new office, service, health care, educational, and residential uses into the downtown area to support high quality business/retail activities and to increase the vitality of the downtown.

Policy LU-29. In the Downtown Mixed-Housing and Office designation, encourage infill development and redevelopment that provides a variety of housing types and professional office uses that may include innovative ideas and designs.

Policy LU-30. Promote a mix of uses, building forms, and public realm improvements within the Town Center, consistent with the current version of the Town Center Design Standards and Guidelines.



Site of the future Lakepointe Urban Village

Source: Studio Cascade 2015

Policy LU-31. In the Mixed Commercial area of the downtown, encourage diverse employment opportunities and increased walkability and connectivity to portions of the downtown outside of the Town Center, while encouraging a mix of commercial and multi-story residential uses, with mixed-use buildings, public uses and spaces, compatible food-related uses, still allowing for large format and auto-oriented retail, provided they are designed consistent with the current version of the Town Center Design Standards and Guidelines.

Policy LU-32. In the General Commercial designation, encourage a complete variety and mix of commercial and office uses, appropriate low-impact manufacturing and storage, transportation-related and utility facilities and limited residential use that can be buffered to ensure compatibility.

Policy LU-33. Encourage a development pattern that places buildings near the street and makes surface parking a non-dominant use.

Policy LU-34. Provide for a sense of gateway and entry to the downtown area through the development of key distinctive focal points, such as special signs, and architectural, water and/or landscaping features.

Policy LU-35. Encourage interconnected walkway systems to accommodate areas for landscaping and wide sidewalks that provide the opportunity for appropriate outdoor commercial and



civic activities, including seating for food and beverage establishments.

### *Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea*

Policy LU-36. Encourage a variety of commercial, residential, and recreational development types in the Lakepointe Urban Village.

Policy LU-37. Encourage a variety of housing types at various densities in the Lakepointe Urban Village to provide housing choices not currently available in one location within Covington.

Policy LU-38. Ensure that the public realm in the Lakepointe Urban Village provides places for a variety of ages, interests, and experiences and is easily accessible.

Policy LU-39. Implement design standards that facilitate development in the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea as the northern entrance to Covington.

Policy LU-40. Ensure that the pond in the Lakepointe Urban Village serves as a major public amenity with extensive public access and a surrounding area with a mix of residential and commercial uses that offer a place for the community to gather, stroll, dine, shop, and live.

Policy LU-41. Encourage the preservation of a green space buffer, which may include public trails, along the southern border of the Lakepointe Urban Village adjacent to existing residential development.



Town Center Concept

Source: City of Covington, 2015

Policy LU-42. Encourage development of larger public park and greenspace amenities in the Lakepointe Urban Village that are accessible to all residents and visitors, as opposed to small, fragmented, private park facilities.

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## ACTION PLAN

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The Land Use Element is implemented by related elements, plans, regulations, and programs, including:

- Covington’s Zoning Code, which provides permitted uses, density and dimensional standards, and design guidelines for new development.
- Covington’s Comprehensive Plan Housing Element, which provides strategies for integrating a diversity of housing types and more affordable housing.
- Covington’s Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element, which provides policies and strategies for growing businesses in the community.
- Covington’s Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, which guides parks, trails, and recreation acquisition and improvements.
- Covington’s Transportation Plan, which provides motorized and non-motorized plans and promotes coordination of transit with regional providers to serve local residents, workers, and visitors.
- Covington’s Natural Environment Element, which protects sensitive areas and provides open space that frames and links neighborhoods.



This Element also includes policies promoting new initiatives during the regular eight-year Growth Management Action Comprehensive Plan review cycle. See Exhibit LU-15.

### Exhibit LU-15. Land Use Action Plan

Implementation Action	Responsibility
Prioritize strategic investments in parks, trails, sidewalks, streetscape, gathering spaces, streets, and other infrastructure to facilitate the downtown vision.	Community Development, Parks, and Public Works Departments
Complete a development agreement and associated development and infrastructure standards for the Lakepointe Urban Village.	Community Development Department
Coordinate the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, Transportation Plan, and Stormwater Plan to provide for a system of green infrastructure, gathering spaces, and non-motorized connections between neighborhoods and schools, parks, and shopping areas.	Community Development, Parks, and Public Works Departments



# HOUSING



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ Characteristics of Covington's households, housing stock, and affordability.
- ▶ Conditions and trends in housing variety and jobs-housing balance.
- ▶ Policy directions to meet Covington's housing needs now and in the future.

## PURPOSE

Quality housing is basic to every person's need for shelter and necessary for cohesive communities. Covington residents place a high value on having a safe place to live, and a home that is affordable, and located within an accessible, attractive, and connected neighborhood. This element describes the community's housing needs and characteristics, key issues and trends, and housing goals and policies that support Covington's values and the Growth Management Act (GMA) goal for housing:

*Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock. (RCW 36.70A.020 (4))*

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Covington is a family-oriented community with a predominance of single family homes, a larger household size, and a higher percentage of children than King County as a whole. Covington's share of senior citizens is expected to quadruple over the life of the Comprehensive Plan; to accommodate this population segment, opportunities for seniors to age in place, quality apartments and condominiums, assisted living and day health, and other services will be needed. Covington is and will need to be a place for both the young and the elderly.

Covington offers a high quality place to live with homes typically affordable for households at moderate and middle incomes. While most households are living in homes affordable to them, about one third of households are cost-burdened. Offering a variety of housing choices affordable to all economic segments would allow Covington's current and next generation to have a place in the community.

Today, Covington's housing pattern is largely single family. Over time, the mixed use nature of the Town Center and the new Lakepointe Urban Village will mean a greater share of housing styles and variety for families and households.

Residents value Covington because of its location in southeast King County, its housing stock offering relatively affordable homeownership, and its quality schools. Presently, most residents commute to work in other locations. While continuing to offer a high quality of life in its residential neighborhoods, Covington will also continue its transformation from a bedroom community to a community with a commercial and employment core, a trail and park network, and a variety of housing choices.

Covington's projected increase in jobs will not only provide more opportunities for working and shopping in the community, but it may also improve the community's jobs-housing balance and reduce transportation costs, allowing more home and recreation time in Covington. While changes in travel patterns will depend on attracting jobs that match the community's education and offer living wages, some residents may continue choosing to commute.

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# HOUSING ISSUES AND TRENDS

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## CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Covington's housing conditions and needs are summarized in this element, with more detailed information available in the Existing Conditions Report prepared for the 2015-2035 periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan. Key conditions and trends include:

- A population with a high proportion of children today that will have a much higher proportion of senior citizens over the next 20 years.
- A community offering homeownership opportunities, but with a third of the community cost-burdened and in need of affordable housing choices.
- A predominant single family pattern that will offer greater housing variety in the future.
- A commuter-oriented bedroom community that is attracting more jobs and a greater jobs-housing balance.

### *Covington is a community of families.*

Covington has a higher proportion of children and a larger household size than King County. See Exhibit HO-1. According to American Community Survey (ACS) 2009-2013 estimates:

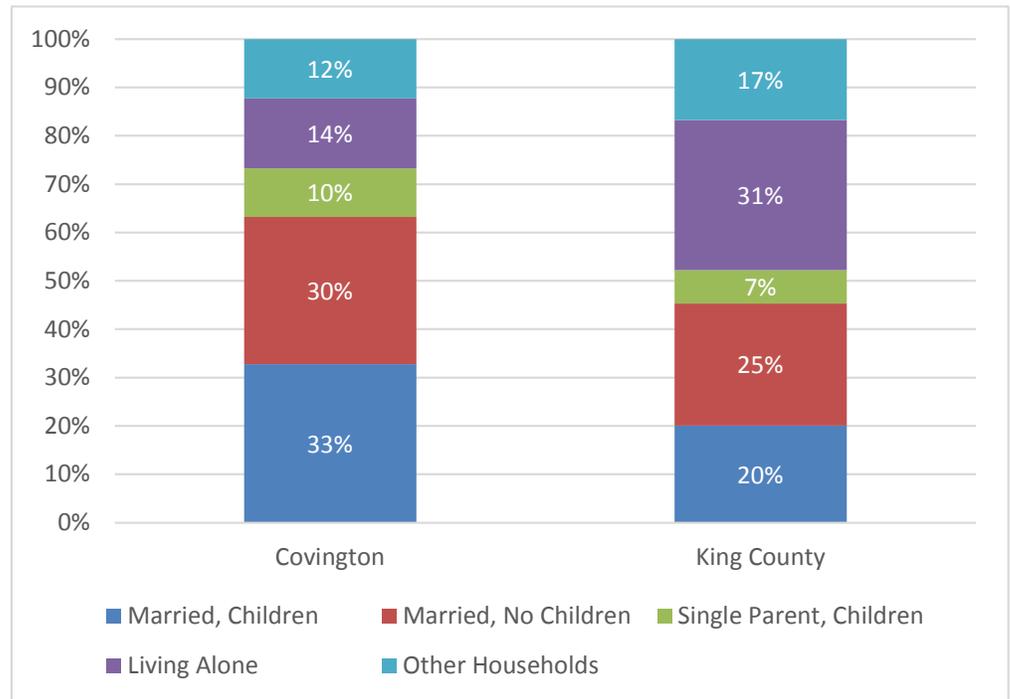
- Covington has a larger percentage of population under 20 years old (31%) than King County (23.6%).
- Covington has an average household size of 3.02 persons compared to at 2.42 persons for King County.



Covington KidsFest

Source: City of Covington, 2015

Exhibit HO-1. Household Composition 2010



Source: US Census 2010

Note: Due to rounding, the graph on the left does not total 100%

### *Senior Citizens will increase in number over the 20-year life of the Comprehensive Plan.*

- Those in the 45-59 age range make up about 23% of Covington's total population and would become senior citizens during the planning period. This is almost four times the current proportion of seniors, around 6%. (2009-2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates)
- Seniors tend to have a greater likelihood of disability. Currently, about 34.5% of adults 65 years and older have a disability, and many have hearing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living difficulty. (2009-2013 ACS data)
- Senior citizens may need alternative forms of housing, such as smaller units with less maintenance responsibilities and universal design features, assisted living units, and supportive services.



***Covington households have higher incomes than the County as a whole, but there are some affordability gaps.***

Covington’s median household income in 2013 is 26% higher than King County’s area median household income (AMI). Nevertheless, there are some challenges:

- Based on 2012 ACS data, about 35% of Covington’s households were cost-burdened or severely cost burdened – spending more than 30% or 50%, respectively, of their incomes on housing and associated utilities, respectively, and earning less than 80% of the AMI. Forty-seven percent of renter households and 33% of homeowners have a cost burden.
- Considering 2013 household incomes and unit rents, there is a gap in the availability of rental units affordable to households in Covington earning 0-80% of the countywide AMI. The gap in 2013 is about 560 dwellings. As of 2015, a mixed-use housing proposal in the Town Center is under construction and will offer 200 affordable family housing units and 156 senior units, helping to fill the current gap.

***Housing variety is expected to increase.***

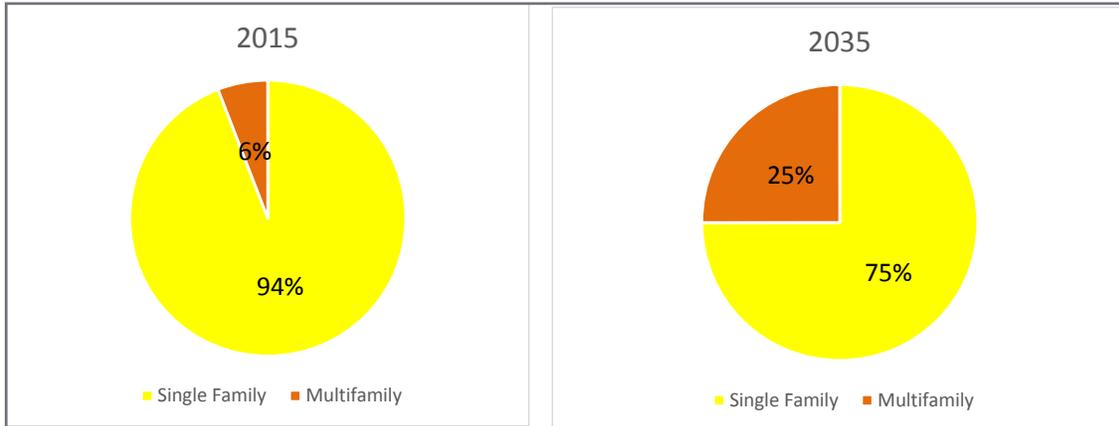
Covington’s attractive and affordable housing inventory is an important component of the city’s healthy and thriving environment. Still, Covington has recognized that it needs – and there is an unmet demand for – more diversity in housing types. Covington’s share of single family homes is about 94% today, but is expected to transform to be 75% single family through a greater share of attached housing in mixed-use developments in the Town Center and Lakepointe Urban Village. See Exhibit HO-2.

**KEY TERMS**

“Housing cost burden” is defined by HUD CHAS as: when monthly housing costs (including utilities) exceed 30% of monthly income. Please see [http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/cp/CHAS/bg\\_chas.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/cp/CHAS/bg_chas.html).



Senior Mentor at Kent School District  
Source: Kent School District, 2015

**Exhibit HO-2. Current and Future Share of Single Family and Multifamily Housing**

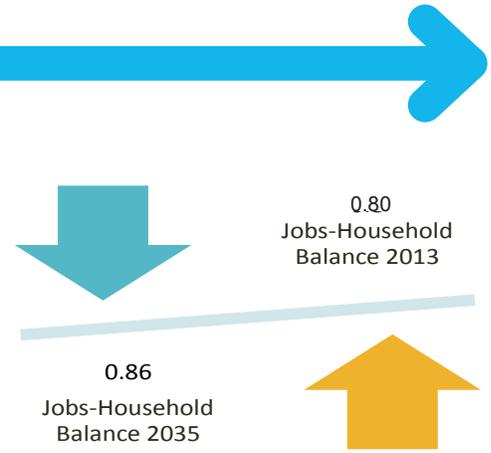
Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2015; BERK, 2012 and 2015

***The jobs-housing balance is expected to improve over the next 20 years.***

While the traditional measure of housing cost burden looks at the cost of housing alone, transportation costs can also be factored into housing affordability. Transportation costs are usually a household's second largest expense, making location an important part of the affordability equation.

- As of 2013, Covington has a higher percentage (78%) of workers over 16 years old who travel to work via car, truck or van alone compared to King County overall (65%).
- According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology's H+T index, Covington households on average spend about 56% of their income on housing and transportation costs combined. This is slightly more than King County households overall, which on average spend 51%. See Exhibit H-3.

Currently, Covington has fewer jobs than households at a ratio of 0.80, but with the projected market demand for commercial and residential uses, the ratio is projected to be closer to a balance of 0.86 in 2035; the true balance would be determined by the type of jobs and wages the marketplace offers. Continued service and retail job growth would be beneficial for the community's tax base but generally offer lower-wage jobs. The Economic Development Element identifies some areas of focus such as regional businesses and professional services, including healthcare and educational institutions that could offer family wage jobs. This may allow for less vehicle miles travelled, with jobs and services more available to Covington residents. A greater jobs-housing balance could also help reduce the share of household expenses for transportation. Covington has a greater transportation cost than King County as a whole. See Exhibit HO-3.



**Exhibit HO-3. Housing + Transportation Costs as Percent of Income**

	Covington	King County
Housing	35%	33%
Transportation	21%	18%
Housing + Transportation	56%	51%

Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology, H+T Affordability Index, 2015

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### *Planning for growth that is expected to surpass growth targets*



Source: Berk, 2015

Covington has traditionally offered neighborhoods with stand-alone single family residences. A challenge and opportunity is to encourage development of a wider variety of housing types for different economic levels. With City investments in planning and local service providers investing in necessary infrastructure and requiring mixed-use development in the Town Center, the City of Covington is already seeing market interest through permit applications. Future development of a mix of housing types is expected to be developed within the Lakepointe Urban Village within the next 15 years.

The City also has built-in flexibility in housing choice in existing single family neighborhoods by allowing accessory dwelling units, though little permit activity has occurred.

The City will continue to attract more family wage jobs as it becomes a medical services hub for southeast King County, but many of Covington's existing jobs are retail- and service-oriented, with lower wages. For an improved jobs-housing balance, the projected new jobs will need to include family wage jobs better suited to Covington's well-educated households.

As described previously, Covington has a higher percentage of workers over 16 years old who travel to work alone compared to King County overall (65%). Covington also has a lower percentage of workers who use public transportation. Because Covington does not have a lot of transit options, the City is planning for development of mixed-use activity centers in the Town Center and in the Lakepointe Urban Village. This is anticipated to reduce the



length of car trips and support walking or biking to these activity centers.

While King County has a large percentage of households living alone, at 31%, Covington has only 14%. It may be that young Covington residents move away from the city and return as married householders seeking homes in proximity to quality schools and recreation areas. By attracting more family wage jobs, the City plans to retain more young households in Covington.

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## OUR HOUSING PLAN

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Covington's plan for housing is to create opportunities for new residences that meet the needs of Covington's expanding population, preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods, and facilitate a healthy and thriving environment that promotes individual well-being, with design that encourages active living.

### INVEST IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

Covington seeks to protect the character of its vibrant residential neighborhoods through an investment in amenities such as parks and multi-modal transportation facilities and through maintaining infrastructure such as stormwater and streets.

### PROMOTE HOUSING VARIETY IN TOWN CENTER AND LAKEPOINTE URBAN VILLAGE.

Covington will continue to implement its vision for the Town Center and Lakepointe Urban Village. The Vision promotes compact, affordable, and well-designed mixed-use development, with public spaces, vibrant centers, and neighborhoods.



Town Center Mixed Use  
Source: Panattoni, 2015



Covington adopted design standards to ensure new, higher-intensity housing looks good and is compatible with its surroundings.

Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

## PROMOTE EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN AND COMPATIBILITY IN NEW HIGHER-DENSITY HOUSING AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT.

Covington has implemented design standards and guidelines for townhouses, condominiums, apartments, and mixed-use development, reflecting the community's wish for higher-intensity development to be constructed of high quality material and design. Covington's neighborhoods and households have invested time and money into their homes, and they want to see their property values maintained. There is community support for housing all of the community's economic segments; this is coupled with community support for high quality design, to assure that new development at higher densities maintains or enhances the value and connection with nearby residential areas.

## PROMOTE EXPANDED TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY.

Implementation of the City's Housing Element will be accomplished in tandem with the Economic Development and Transportation Elements to improve the City's jobs-housing balance, offer mobility options, and reduce combined housing and transportation costs.

## OFFER EFFECTIVE HUMAN SERVICES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS.

Covington's Human Services department implements grant and assistance programs to improve living conditions in the community's lower-income housing units. The Human Services Master Plan outlines the department's priorities and programs. The City of Covington currently provides grant funding to 16 agencies for 21 different programs. Services provided include emergency assistance for



food, shelter, utility bills, health care, victim assistance, counseling, and transportation. Programs include:

- *Access to basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing.* For example, the joint home repair program with Covington, Des Moines, SeaTac and Tukwila provides free grant money for the cost of minor home repairs. Another program is the Auburn Youth Resources (AYR) Street Outreach Team, which provides mobile street outreach services to Covington and Maple Valley.
- *Safety for children and adults through domestic violence services, safe housing options, and crime prevention programs.* For example, when emergency and transitional shelters for victims of domestic violence are full, the Covington Domestic Violence Task Force has been able to bridge this gap by providing motel vouchers to the victims. The Task Force has partnered with Project U(th) to provide teen dating violence prevention in the Covington and Kent junior and senior high schools.
- *Access to affordable health and dental care, substance abuse treatment, and suicide prevention.* The City has supported a number of agencies to provide health and dental care for low- to moderate-income residents.
- *Youth and recreation activities available to all income levels.* The City has provided funding to agencies for mentoring, education, recreation programs, and more. The City has expanded its recreation offerings and is planning for a connected trail and park system.

Covington's Human Services program is unique for a community of Covington's size, demonstrating the community's commitment to providing safe, affordable, and suitable housing for its residents. Covington's continued partnership with local and regional housing organizations helps to provide safe and affordable housing



Kids Fest in Covington  
Source: City of Covington, 2015

### VISION CONNECTION

Fostering housing variety and affordability will help meet citywide goals to maintain and create neighborhoods that offer a variety of housing options. Housing choices will also meet the goal of developing the Town Center as a vibrant, human scale, mixed-use center with public gathering spaces. Housing with supportive human services respects the dignity of our people as they seek to live, work, play, shop, and learn in Covington.

for all of the City's residents, and this plan underscores and supports the City's work to build and maintain these partnerships.

### CREATE SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS THAT PROMOTE ACTIVE LIVING.

Ensuring that dwellings have on-site open space or are close to public parks and trails, and promoting an interconnected street system will encourage walking and biking, reduce driving, and provide more green space, pervious area, and other features beneficial for health, and water and air quality.

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## GOALS AND POLICIES

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### HOUSING GOALS

- Goal HO-I.** Covington fosters livable neighborhoods with green space and recreation opportunities, multi-modal connections between and within neighborhoods and commercial areas, and access to healthy, local food and services.
- Goal HO-II.** Covington encourages the preservation, maintenance, and improvement of the city's existing neighborhoods.
- Goal HO-III.** Covington assures that the full range of incomes and special needs populations are provided with sufficient, appropriate, accessible and affordable housing and services.
- Goal HO-IV.** Covington participates in a coordinated and regional response to providing affordable housing, based on local understanding of Covington's housing needs, issues and strategies and high quality urban design.

### HOUSING POLICIES

#### *Healthy Community*

- Policy HO-1.** Maintain future land use designations that accommodate Covington's regionally determined housing growth target and market demand, that support regional objectives for walkability, housing diversity, affordability, jobs-housing balance, and flexibility.



Covington Neighborhood  
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014



Parks in proximity to neighborhoods for active living  
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014



Walking to shopping and services.

Source: Studio Cascade 2014

- A. Work in partnership with King County and other cities to meet the countywide need for very-low-, low-, and moderate-income households.
- B. Promote individual and collective action by Covington, King County, other cities, and the state and federal government to provide housing affordable to very low-income households (30% of area median income), where the greatest need exists.
- C. Provide for higher-density housing in proximity to multi-modal transportation options and job centers.
- D. Promote social connections and access between neighborhoods and to parks, recreation, and educational opportunities, as well as healthy food choices through the design of residential environments (e.g. adding trails, sidewalks, allowing community gardens, and the incorporation of landscaping and other features).

Policy HO-2. Allow for a variety of housing types, densities, and lot sizes, including mixed-use development, small and large lot single family development, manufactured housing, accessory dwelling units, townhomes, duplexes, apartments, and condominiums.

- A. Encourage mixed-use developments with apartments and condominiums above commercial uses in the Town Center and the Lakepointe Urban Village. Promote market-rate, affordable, and special-needs housing with quality gathering space, transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and other amenities to meet community needs.



- B. Promote a range of lot sizes in residential land use designations implemented by associated zones.
- C. Allow accessory dwelling units in single family areas to support compatible affordable housing that benefits homeowners and tenants.
- D. Allow for designated manufactured homes on single family lots.
- E. Allow housing that provides quality homeownership and rental options such as cottages and townhomes.

Policy HO-3. Ensure that community and public services, including, but not limited to, fire, emergency medical services, police, library facilities, healthcare, educational facilities, shopping, childcare, healthy food sources, and recycling, are easily accessible to Covington's residents.

Policy HO-4. Support the development of senior housing and long-term care/assisted living facilities in the downtown and other areas, in combination with or in close proximity to commercial uses and medical services and facilities.

Policy HO-5. Ensure development regulations allow for and have suitable provisions to accommodate housing opportunities for all economic segments and special needs populations in Covington. When developing new regulations or amendments, consider the cost of City regulations and rates together with non-City utility provider costs and rates on the affordability of housing in the community.



Residential Street and Landscaping  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014



Shiloh Condominiums, Housing Variety  
Source: Google Earth, 2015

- Policy HO-6. Promote energy-efficient housing and the use of renewable energy.
- Policy HO-7. Encourage innovative and environmentally sustainable development and universal design techniques.
- Policy HO-8. Promote infill and redevelopment designed to be compatible with existing neighborhoods while creating new housing opportunities.
- Policy HO-9. Maintain a strong code enforcement program, transportation service capacity, and infrastructure.
  - A. Coordinate with all public service providers to ensure services can support Covington's planned growth and shifts in demand while maintaining acceptable levels of service.
  - B. Implement City transportation level of service standards, concurrency, and impact fee requirements to support future land development. Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation and adjacent jurisdictions to manage transportation demand and facilitate improvements.

### *Housing Affordability, Choice & Preservation*

- Policy HO-10. Support both rental and ownership forms of affordable housing, in a variety of locations, types, and sizes.
- Policy HO-11. Support affordable housing throughout the city for all economic segments and special needs populations, especially in areas



with good access to transit, employment, healthcare, education, and shopping.

Policy HO-12. In partnership with service providers, implement the City's Human Services Master Plan to promote stable housing outcomes, including, but not limited to:

- A. Homeless individuals and families will have access to transitional housing and emergency shelter.
- B. Provider agencies are financially supported to prepare for emergency assistance to pay rent, mortgage, or utility bills.
- C. Families or individuals, including low- and moderate income, have access to affordable housing.
- D. Life skills guidance and education are provided for long-term sustainability.
- E. Provider agencies are financially supported as resources to the elderly and the disabled to sustain independent living.
- F. Families have access to domestic violence services and safe housing options.
- G. Veterans have access to housing assistance services.

Policy HO-13. Promote educational and outreach efforts regarding preservation, improvements, maintenance, and rehabilitation of existing residential structures. Support non-profit organizations involved in housing repair and rehabilitation through the Human Services Program.

Policy HO-14. Support housing options, programs, and services that allow seniors and people with disabilities to stay in their homes or neighborhood as their housing needs change, such as encouraging universal design or retrofitting homes for lifetime use.

Policy HO-15. Provide incentives and work in partnership with non-profit and private developers to build affordable housing.

Policy HO-16. Coordinate with public and private lending institutions to find solutions that reduce housing financing costs for both builders and consumers.

Policy HO-17. Promote equal and fair access to housing through application of federal and state fair housing laws.

### *Regional Partnerships & Education*

Policy HO-18. Promote education and guidance for low- and moderate-income households on financing assistance, home purchasing techniques, and assistance in locating affordable rentals.

Policy HO-19. Participate in local and regional resource, education, and lobbying programs regarding housing data, housing programs, design alternatives, and funding sources.

Policy HO-20. Participate in educational campaigns in the community that support low-income and special needs housing.

Policy HO-21. Participate in the development of countywide resources, funding, and programs to assist low- and moderate-income households in obtaining affordable and appropriate housing.

Policy HO-22. Work cooperatively with regional and federal programs and with private and nonprofit developers and social and health service agencies to address local housing needs.

Policy HO-23. Use housing and community development block grant funds to provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households.

Policy HO-24. Work with affordable housing providers on the acquisition and rehabilitation of housing for long-term affordability.

Policy HO-25. Monitor housing supply, affordability, and diversity as part of Comprehensive Plan Updates and at the time of the Buildable Lands Report. Consider adaptive management measures and removal of identified barriers to meet the jurisdiction's share of the countywide need.

Policy HO-26. Support veterans and their families by facilitating information such as business incubation and housing opportunities, as well as available health and human services.



Community Parade, Advertisement of Human Service Programs

Source: City of Covington

## ACTION PLAN

The Housing Element is implemented by related elements in this Comprehensive Plan as well as regulations in the Covington Municipal Code and programs, including:

- Covington’s Comprehensive Land Use Element and Zoning Code, the adopted Town Center Design Standards and Guidelines, and the Hawk Property (Lakepointe Urban Village) Subarea Plan, all of which provide for capacity and variety in housing,
- The Human Services Master Plan that provides direction on how the City’s resources should be targeted to help Covington’s families secure housing, food, and other basic needs.
- Covington’s Parks and Recreation Element and Transportation Element that provide non-motorized pedestrian, bicycle, trail, parks, and recreation improvements to promote a healthy and active community.

See Exhibit HO-4 for a summary Action Plan.

### Exhibit HO-4. Housing Action Plan

Implementing Action	Responsibility
Monitor housing supply, affordability, and diversity as part of Comprehensive Plan Updates and at the time of the annual Office of Financial Management building permits report, Multifamily Tax Exemption annual reporting to the State Department of Commerce, and the King County Buildable Lands Report. Adapt plans and codes as needed to meet the local housing need and share of the countywide need.	Community Development Department
Consider updates to zoning and design standards to implement principles of universal design, environmental sustainability and site design to encourage active living.	Community Development Department

# TRANSPORTATION



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ A description of Covington's existing multi-modal transportation facilities, including those that serve pedestrian, bicycle, transit, freight, and automobile traffic.
- ▶ A description of Covington's existing transportation conditions and issues, as well as transportation conditions expected to result from Covington's planned future land use. *(Continued on next page)*

## PURPOSE

The transportation element includes policy direction to guide local, regional and state action on design and investment in the transportation system for the safe, efficient, appropriate, and sustainable movement of people and goods within and through Covington.

## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

(Continued)

- ▶ Planned projects and strategies to support existing and future transportation needs.
- ▶ Goals, policies, and implementation actions that reflect Covington’s transportation vision and priorities, and build on statewide, regional, and local planning processes.
- ▶ A transportation financing plan that reflects the community’s decision-making and budgeting priorities.

## TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND TRENDS

### CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

#### *Current Travel Characteristics*

Exhibit T-1 shows the ways people who live and work in Covington typically travel. The majority of travel occurs by automobile, but residents and employees also walk, bike, telecommute, and use the limited public transit service available in the city.

#### *Current Transportation System*

Covington’s transportation system connects homes, businesses, services, and recreational facilities within and beyond the city. It is a layered multi-modal network that includes highways and streets, walkways, bicycle facilities, and bus service.

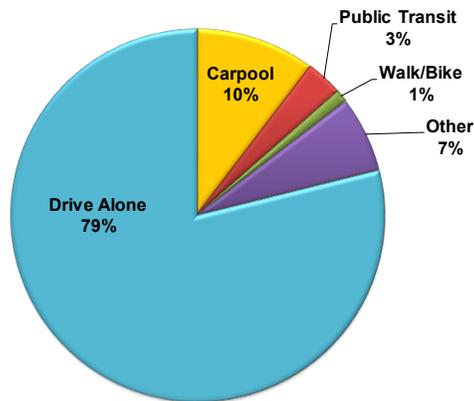
### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The majority of travel in Covington occurs by automobile, but residents and employees also walk, bike, telecommute, and use the public transit service that is available in the city. Arterial streets also support freight movement to and through Covington. Improvements to the transportation system needed to support future growth include connecting gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle networks, improving existing facilities to further encourage walking and biking, and providing targeted street improvements to support vehicle and non-motorized travel, and to improve safety for all users. However, as Covington grows, some vehicle congestion will be tolerated along streets that have been built to their ultimate planned capacity. The City’s Future Land Use Map in the Land Use Element identifies areas of higher density mixed-use growth, which further encourages walking and biking, and supports potential improvements to transit service in the future.

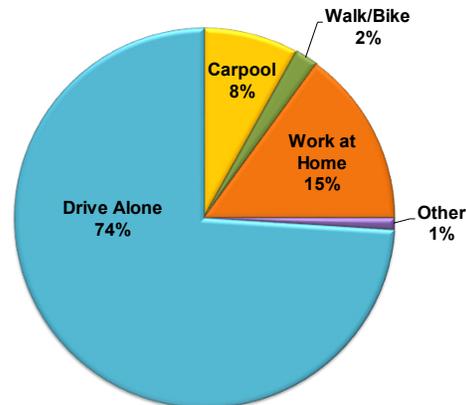
The City seeks to provide a multi-modal transportation network within a balanced financial strategy, improving travel choices and the travel experience for all community members.

## Exhibit T-1. Existing Travel Choices in Covington

### Covington Residents



### Covington Employees



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), 2014, Journey-to-Work Data from 2010 Census, Transportation Analysis Zones 462, 464 and 481

### State Highways

Regional access to and from Covington is provided by State Route 18 (SR 18), which has existing full access interchanges at SE 256th Street and at SE 272nd Street (SR 516). SR 18 is designated as a Highway of Statewide Significance, which are those highways and other transportation facilities needed to promote and maintain significant statewide travel and economic linkages in Washington State; the legislation emphasizes that these significant facilities should be planned from a statewide perspective, and they are not subject to local city standards. Planning for Highways of Statewide Significance is led by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).



Example Road with Shoulder and Ditch System

Source: Studio Cascade 2014



Traffic Congestion

Source: City of Covington

SR 516 (also known as SE 272nd Street and Kent-Kangley Road within the city) serves as the primary east-west roadway through Covington. It provides direct connection between Covington and the City of Kent to the west, and the City of Maple Valley to the east. Currently, it is five lanes wide to the west of Jenkins Creek. To the east of Jenkins Creek, it is primarily three lanes wide (one travel lane in each direction plus a center left-turn lane), but the City has plans to widen the street between Jenkins Creek and the east city limits to five lanes. SR 516 is a Highway of Regional Significance, which applies to all state highways that are not designated as Highways of Statewide Significance, and as such, it is subject to local City standards. However, the City still coordinates closely with WSDOT on future planning for SR 516.

### *City Streets*

The different types of streets that serve different mobility and access functions are reflected through the Federal Functional Classifications. Covington streets are classified as Freeway, Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local Access. These functions are further described in the Existing Conditions Report 2015-2035.

The City has also identified four downtown street types—labeled Type I, II, III, or IV, and described in the Existing Conditions Report 2015-2035—that primarily reflect different non-motorized and transit mobility goals. The downtown street types are not correlated with functional classifications—they have been identified for a mix of arterial, collector, and local streets, and overlay the functional classifications. These functions are further described in the Existing Conditions Report 2015-2035. The report also shows that Covington streets are currently all operating within the City’s level of service standards for City streets, as defined in Policy T-2.

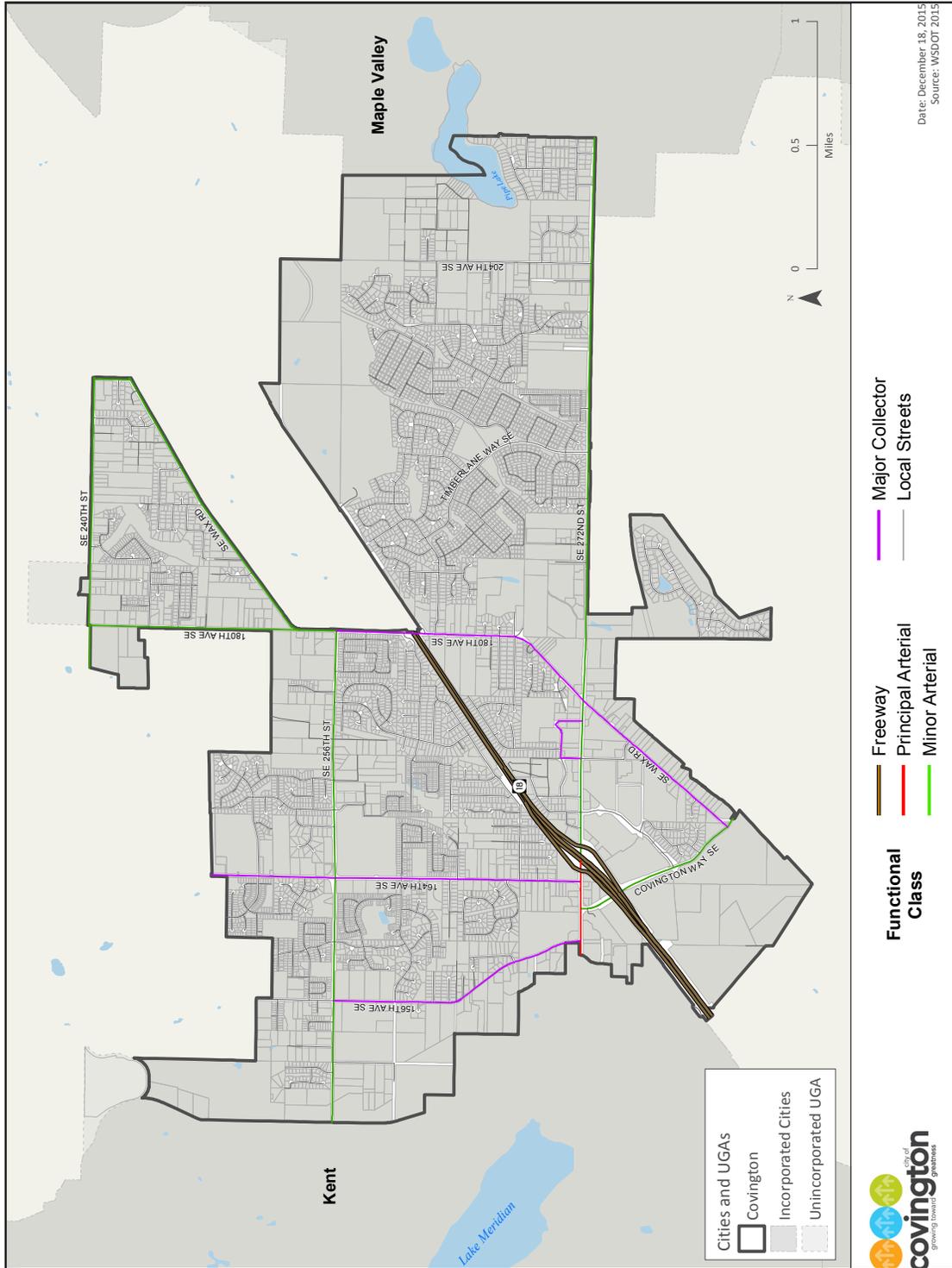
The existing Covington street system with functional classifications is shown on Exhibit T-2, and the designated downtown street types are shown on Exhibit T-3.



Example Road and Landscaping Treatment

Source: City of Covington

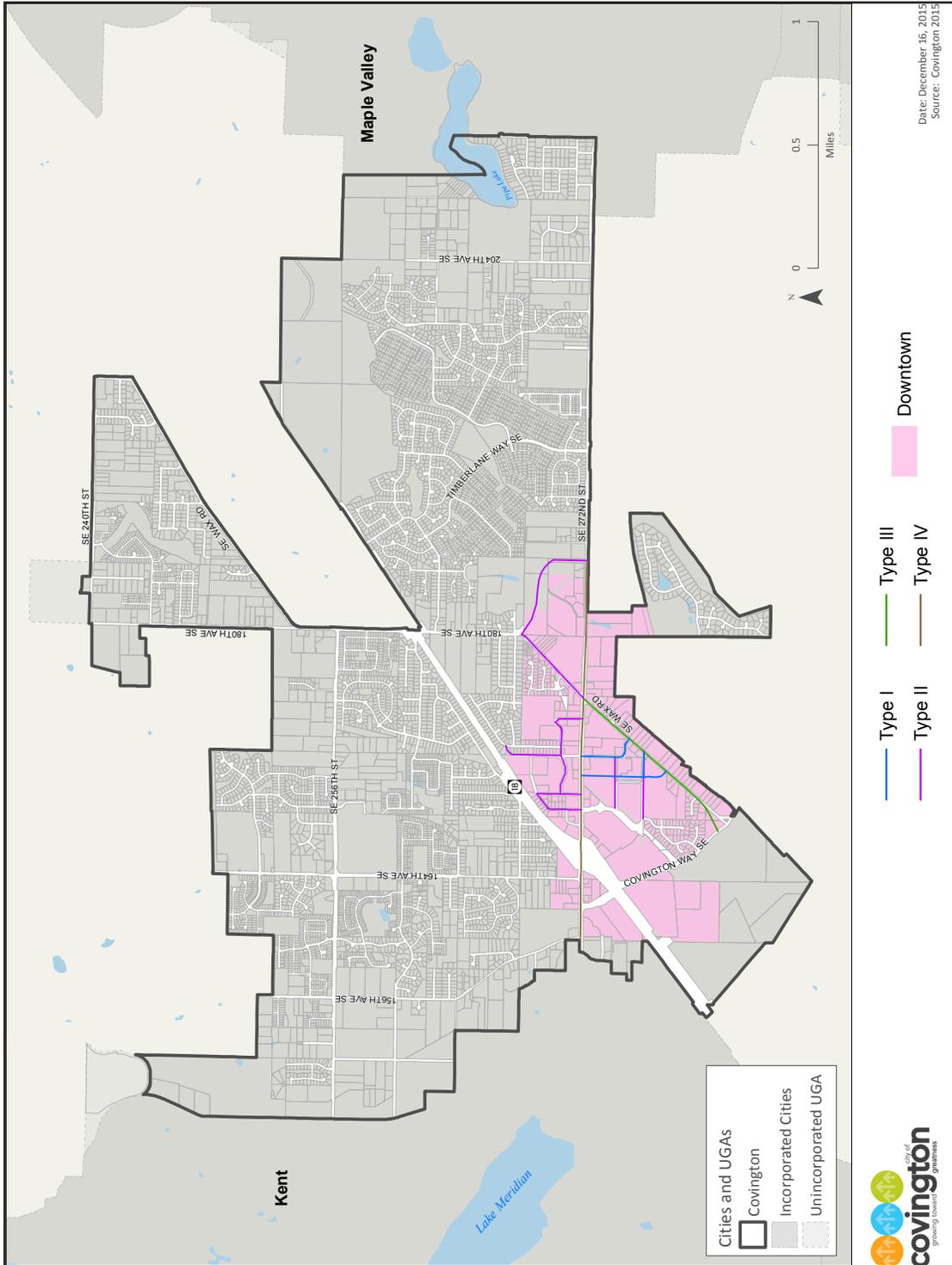
Exhibit T-2. Covington Street System and Functional Classifications



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015



### Exhibit T-3. Covington Downtown Street Types



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015



Complete Street Example  
Source: City of Covington

### *Walkway and Bikeway System*

Covington's major existing and planned facilities to support pedestrian and bicycle travel are shown on Exhibit T-4.

Sidewalks are an integral part of the City's active transportation system because walking provides an opportunity to be physically active, and also helps reduce road congestion by providing an alternative to driving a vehicle. Walkways within Covington include sidewalks, roadway shoulders, and off-road trails. Those facilities are typically more concentrated in areas with high pedestrian activity, such as the downtown area, commercial and business centers, schools, and other public facilities.

Bikeways are also an integral part of the City's active transportation system because biking also provides an opportunity to be physically active, and provides an alternative to driving a vehicle. Bicycle facilities within Covington include off-road trails, bicycle lanes, and shared use lanes.



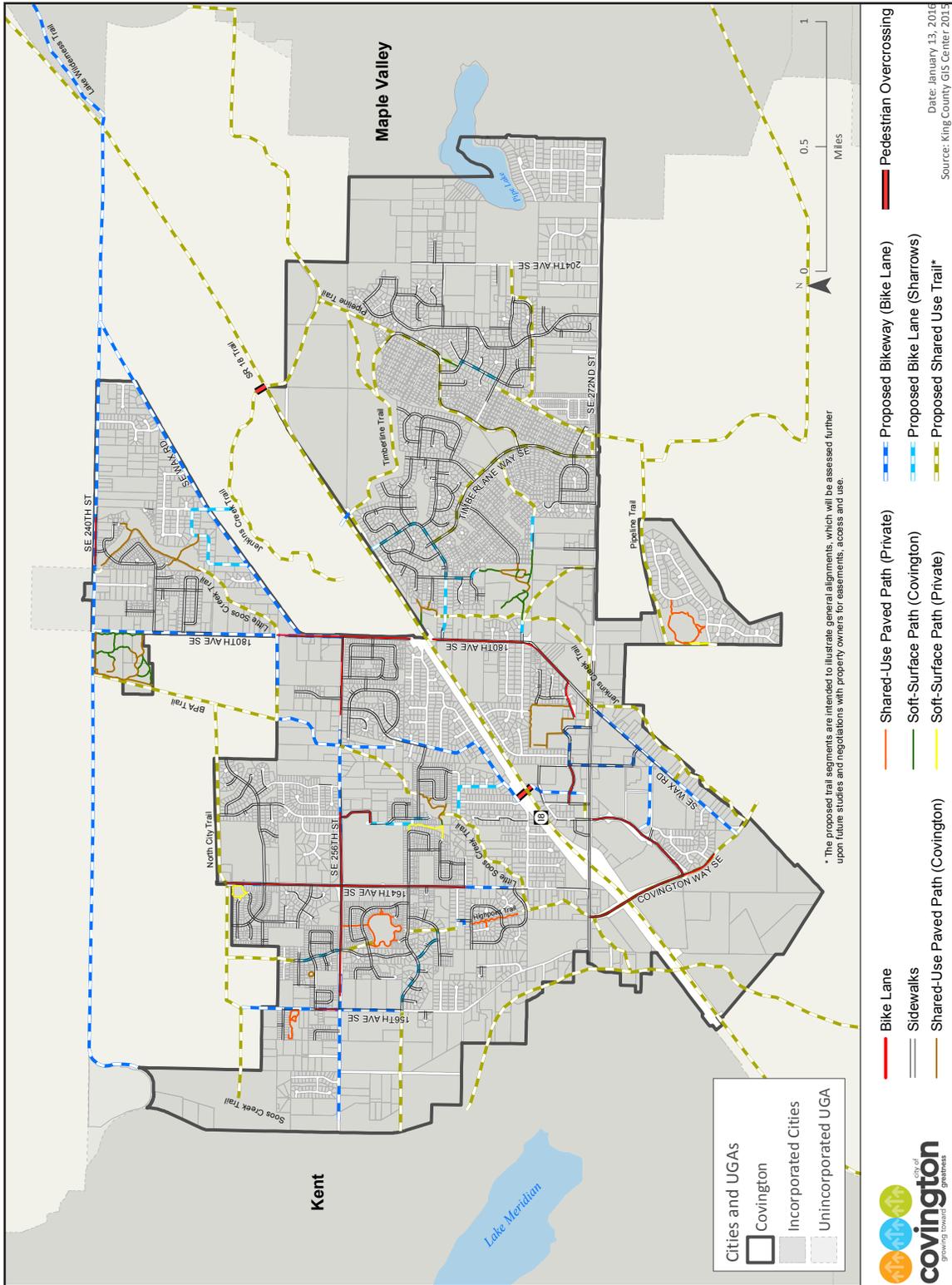
Bicyclist  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014

Bicycle lanes are dedicated lanes within the street that are reserved solely for bicyclists and distinguished through the use of pavement markings. Bicycle lanes may be located adjacent to the curbs or parking lanes.

Shared use lanes, or "sharrows," are commonly used on higher-volume streets to indicate where on the roadway a cyclist should ride, and also to remind motorists to share the lane with bicycles when present. Sharrows consist of a street striping treatment, chevron arrows, and a bicycle symbol placed on the outside portion of the travel lane. However, even if sharrows are not present, motorists and cyclists are required to share the street.

Trails are physically separated from vehicular traffic, and are shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized users.

## Exhibit T-4. Existing and Planned Non-Motorized Facilities



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015



King County Metro Route 168  
Source: City of Covington, 2014

### Transit

Bus service in Covington is provided by King County Metro (Metro) Routes 159 and 168.

- **Metro Route 159** provides weekday commuter service, with five buses that travel from Covington to Kent and downtown Seattle in the morning, and four buses that travel back to Covington from downtown Seattle and Kent in the evening.
- **Metro Route 168** provides daily local bus service between Maple Valley, Covington, and Kent. Buses operate at about 30-minute headways (time between buses) during weekdays and 60-minute headways after 7:00 pm and on weekends. This route stops at Kent Station, where riders can transfer to or from the Sound Transit Sounder commuter train or buses that serve other regional destinations.

Covington is not part of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) and therefore is not directly served by Sound Transit services (e.g. express bus, commuter rail or light rail).

In 1998, shortly after incorporation, the Covington City Council passed a resolution (Resolution 98-38) requesting that Sound Transit exclude the Covington city limits from the Regional Transit Authority boundaries. Sound Transit subsequently passed a resolution granting that request made by the City.

## Freight Mobility

SR 18 carries more than 10 million tons of freight per year, and is thus designated by WSDOT as a T-1 freight corridor. SE 272nd Street (SR 516) carries between 4 and 10 million tons of freight per year, and is designated as a T-2 freight corridor. All T-1 and T-2 corridors are included in the Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) network. The FGTS is used to support statewide freight planning, to establish funding eligibility for freight improvements, and to plan for pavement needs and upgrades.

No other streets in Covington are included in the FGTS network, but the following streets are categorized as T-3 freight corridors, meaning that they carry between 300 thousand and 4 million tons of freight per year.

- SE 256th Street
- Covington Way SE (between 165th Place and SE 272nd Street)
- 168th Place SE (between Covington Way SE and SE 272nd Street)
- 164th Avenue SE
- 180th Avenue SE
- SE Wax Road

These streets are all classified as arterials or major collectors, except for 168th Place SE which has been identified by the City to be upgraded to a major collector. In general, City design standards for arterials and collectors support freight movement by accommodating large vehicles and higher traffic volumes.



Roundabout at SE 256th Street  
Source: City of Covington, 2015



Example Commute Traffic  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### *Updating street classifications to reflect their existing and intended future functions.*

The functional classifications of City streets are an important component of long range transportation planning because they reflect the mix of property access and traveler mobility that each street is intended to serve, and help determine the appropriate mix of facilities (e.g. vehicle lanes, walkway, bikeways, and/or buffer areas) that should be included on each street, based on the available space. Additionally, designating a street with the appropriate functional classification is critical when seeking federal or state grant funding for improvements.

Over time, shifts in land use and traffic patterns may cause the function of a street to change. Thus, it is important to periodically review the functions City streets serve and evaluate whether any changes in classification are warranted. Guidelines set forth by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and WSDOT were applied to identify appropriate updates to the federal functional classifications of City streets; considerations include existing and projected traffic volumes, characteristics of surrounding land uses and the balance between mobility and access the street provides, overall spacing of arterials and collectors within the city, and the proportions of each classification within the street system. Recommended updates to street classifications are summarized in the Existing Conditions Report 2015-2035 and illustrated in the Transportation Plan section of this element.

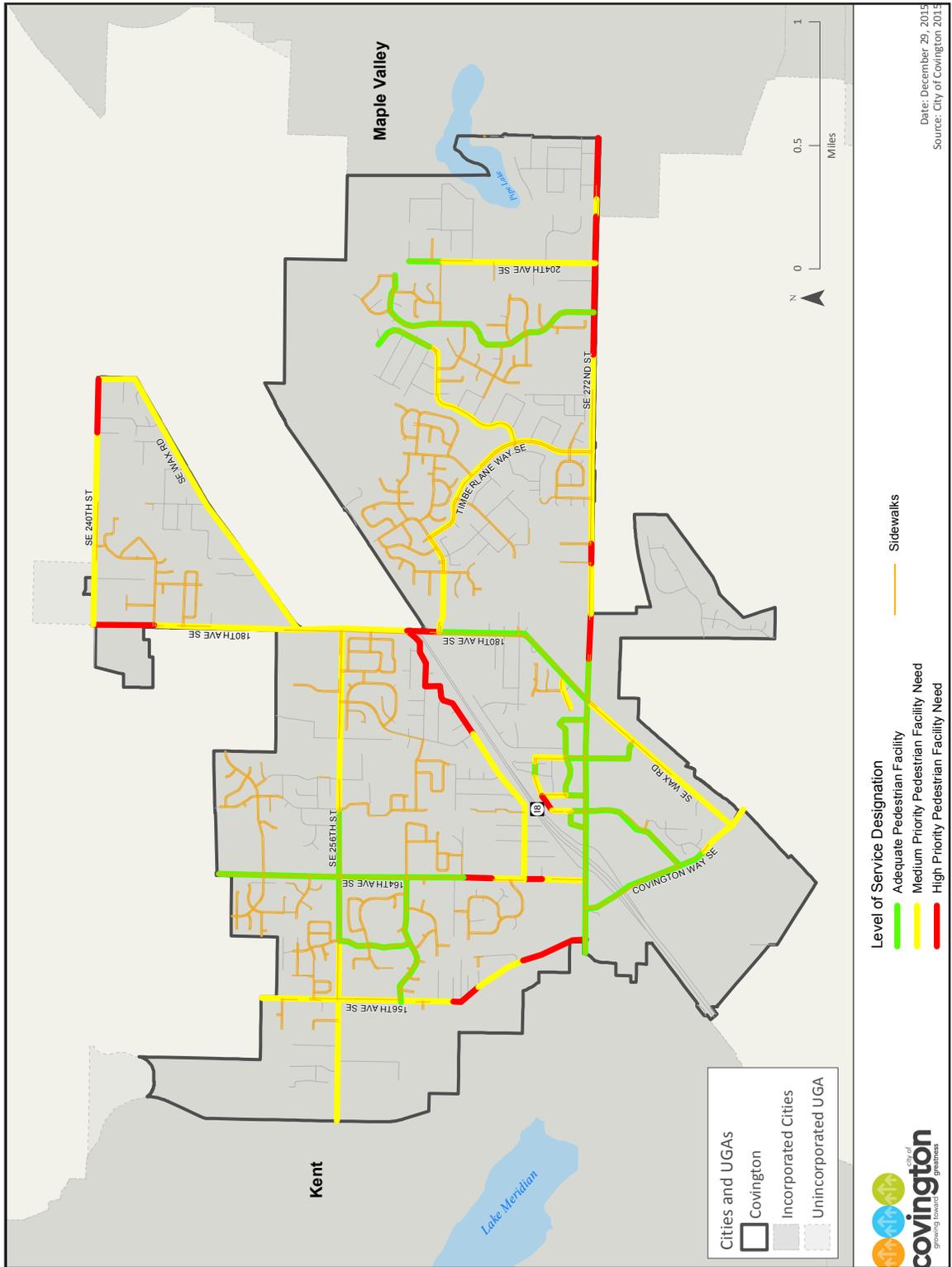


*Identifying locations where walkway and bikeway improvements are needed to support existing and future land use.*

It can be a challenge for a single street to meet the demands and expectations of all modes of transportation at any given time. It also may not be desirable from a user or a planning perspective to have all modes travel on every street. In response to this challenge, the City has adopted a layered network approach that focuses on how the City's transportation network can function as a system to meet the needs of all users. Unlike roadway standards that are capacity-based, the City has established level of service standards for pedestrian and bicycle facilities that recognize the primary objective of providing a complete non-motorized network that allows people to safely walk or bike between destinations in Covington, providing separation from vehicle traffic where needed. This can be achieved by providing separate vehicle and non-motorized facilities along a street where space allows, but it may also be achieved by identifying alternate routes for pedestrians or bicyclists that are parallel to corridors with high vehicle volumes. The City also recognizes that on many low-volume and low-speed local access streets, vehicular and non-motorized traffic may safely share the roadway.

Exhibit T-5 shows the medium- and high- priority walkway needs, and Exhibit T-6 shows the medium- and high- priority bike facility needs, based upon the City's walkway and bike facility level of service standards defined under Policy T-2.

Exhibit T-5. High and Medium Priority Walkway Needs



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015





Complete Street Example  
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

### *Identifying locations where street improvements are needed to support future land use growth.*

Under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), concurrency is the requirement that adequate infrastructure be planned and financed to support the City's adopted future land use plan. Level of service (LOS) standards are used to evaluate the roadway impacts of long-term development growth. To monitor concurrency, Covington has defined LOS standards for City streets under Policy T-2 that reflect the acceptable level of vehicular operating conditions. If a street's operation is worse than the City's adopted standard, a deficiency is identified.

The City has developed a travel demand forecasting model to analyze future travel demand and traffic patterns that would result from buildout of the Future Land Use Map in the Land Use Element. Projections were completed for the long-range planning year of 2035, taking into account additional traffic resulting from regional development growth. Analysis was completed for traffic conditions during the weekday PM peak hour, which is the hour in which the highest level of traffic typically occurs and is the time period in which concurrency assessment is based.

## FORECASTING

Future 2035 travel demand was projected using the City of Covington's travel demand forecasting model, which is a traffic analysis tool used for forecasting future traffic volumes based on existing traffic patterns and forecasted regional land use growth. The model forecasts the traffic generated by buildout of Covington's Future Land Use Map, and integrates the regional transportation model network developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) as well as PSRC's 2035 land forecasts for the region outside Covington. Travel demand forecasts are evaluated to support development review, concurrency, and comprehensive planning, and provide the basis for identifying projects for the City's Transportation Improvement Program.



Exhibit T-7 summarizes projected 2035 conditions with buildout of the Future Land Use Map at the City's concurrency intersections, as defined under Policy T-2. The analysis reflects completion of the City's planned improvements to SE 272nd Street (SR 516), which will complete the widening to its City-designated ultimate capacity of five lanes-plus-sidewalks along its entire length within Covington. It also reflects completion of other projects identified in the City's 2016 to 2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), including:

- Capacity and sidewalk improvements along SE 256th Street near 180th Avenue SE, including installation of a southbound right-turn lane at the intersection.
- Signalization of the intersection of SE 272nd Street/204th Avenue SE, which is required mitigation with redevelopment of the Lakepointe Urban Village.

The following four concurrency intersections are projected to exceed their standard of LOS D by 2035; all are projected to operate at LOS E.

- (2) SE 240th Street/196th Avenue SE (currently all-way-stop controlled).
- (5) SE Wax Road/180th Avenue SE (currently all-way-stop controlled).
- (11) SE 256th Street/180th Avenue SE (currently signal controlled). It is noted that this already reflects the improvement identified in the 2016 to 2021 TIP, but the projected average delay under 2035 buildout conditions exceeds the LOS D threshold by about 5 seconds.
- (40) Covington Way/SE Wax Road (currently signal controlled).

There are also several intersections located along SE 272nd Street (SR 516) that are projected to operate at LOS E or LOS F in 2035; however, with the street improved to ultimate capacity, City standards allow traffic operation at these levels.

## ULTIMATE CAPACITY

SE 272nd Street (SR 516) is designated at ultimate capacity in this Comprehensive Plan, indicating that once construction of the five-lane cross section and associated intersection improvements are completed, no further capacity improvements will be called for under the City's concurrency management program. The ultimate capacity designation recognizes the physical constraints to further widening of the corridor, and indicates that expenditure of public funds for additional large-scale capacity increase beyond approved design is not warranted. However, the City may still support or require localized improvements to the roadway to improve efficiency, preserve capacity, improve transit or non-motorized operations, or address safety issues.

**Exhibit T-7. 2012 and 2035 Level of Service at City Concurrency Intersections  
– PM Peak Hour**

ID	Intersection	Standard	Existing (2012)		Future (2035) Unmitigated	
			LOS <sup>1</sup>	Delay <sup>2</sup>	LOS	Delay
<b>Signalized</b>						
4	SE 251 <sup>st</sup> St/164 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	A	6.9	A	8.2
7	SE 256 <sup>th</sup> St/156 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	A	7.6	B	16.5
9	SE 256 <sup>th</sup> St/168 <sup>th</sup> Pl SE	D	A	8.7	A	8.7
11	SE 256 <sup>th</sup> St/180 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	C	37.0	E	<b>57.9</b>
14	SE 262 <sup>nd</sup> St/180 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	B	12.4	B	15.5
21	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/Covington Way	UC <sup>3</sup>	E	56.6	F	>100
22	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/164 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	UC <sup>3</sup>	D	37.5	F	82.4
23	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/Westbound SR 18 Ramps	UC <sup>3</sup>	C	28.1	E	60.5
24	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/Eastbound SR 18 Ramps	UC <sup>3</sup>	D	36.9	D	40.4
26	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/168 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	UC <sup>3</sup>	C	25.1	F	85.4
29	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/172 <sup>nd</sup> Ave SE	UC <sup>3</sup>	C	32.7	F	91.4
32	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/SE Wax Rd	UC <sup>3</sup>	D	43.2	F	83.2
34	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/192 <sup>nd</sup> Ave SE	UC <sup>3</sup>	B	14.8	B	13.3
36	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/204 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	UC <sup>3</sup>	-- <sup>4</sup>	-- <sup>4</sup>	D	55.0
40	Covington Way/SE Wax Rd	D	C	21.0	E	<b>71.8</b>
43	SE 270 <sup>th</sup> Pl/SE Wax Rd	D	B	16.6	A	8.8
57	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St (SR 516)/185 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	UC <sup>3</sup>	C	25.7	C	32.9
59	165 <sup>th</sup> Pl SE/Covington Way	D	B	18.4	D	50.5
233	Kentwood High School Dwy/164 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	A <sup>5</sup>	<10.0 <sup>5</sup>	A	6.5
<b>Roundabout</b>						
8	SE 256 <sup>th</sup> St/164 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	B	10.9	D	51.0
17	SE 267 <sup>th</sup> Place/SE Wax Rd/180 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	A	7.4	A	7.7
44	SE 270 <sup>th</sup> Place/172 <sup>nd</sup> Ave SE	D	A	5.8	A	6.0
83	Fred Meyer/Covington Square/168 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	A	7.2	A	7.2
128	Costco/SE 276 <sup>th</sup> St/168 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	A	6.2	A	8.1
<b>All-Way-Stop Control</b>						
2	SE 240 <sup>th</sup> St/196 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	B	12.7	E	<b>38.8</b>
5	SE Wax Rd/180 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE	D	B	13.2	E	<b>37.0</b>
15	SE Timberlane Boulevard/Timberlane Way SE	D	B	10.3	A	8.9
19	SE 267 <sup>th</sup> St/Timberlane Way SE	D	B	10.6	A	9.6

**Bold type indicates levels of service projected to exceed the LOS standard without mitigation.**

1. LOS = Level of Service

2. Delay = Average delay for all vehicles through the intersection in seconds per vehicle

3. UC = Ultimate Capacity provided on SE 272nd Street (SR 516); operation worse than LOS D acceptable with five-lane section.

4. Unsignalized under existing conditions.

5. Existing data is not available for this intersection, but existing level of service is estimated based upon future conditions analysis completed at this intersection, which projects LOS A operation through 2035



***Identifying locations where transit improvements are needed to support existing and future land use.***

As a relatively small community that is not designated by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) as an urban or regional center, Covington has not been a regional priority for improved transit service. While the City enjoys proximity to the Auburn and Kent Sounder Stations, direct transit connections are limited to two bus routes that serve Covington and Kent Station. Extending rail transit service into Covington is also unlikely in the near term, as the City is not a part of the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Improvement District (Sound Transit).

Recent plans including the Town Center element of the Downtown Plan, Hawk Property Subarea Plan, and the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines promote development patterns that would support additional transit service. The concentration of uses in the downtown and pedestrian connectivity of the Town Center create a place where transit options, such as standard Metro bus service and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to provide access to Sound Transit's regional system, could succeed in providing more frequent service and transportation choices to the community, for both local and regional travel. Planned new development in the Lakepointe Urban Village will consist of higher-density mixed residential and commercial uses, and the site is being designed to accommodate a park-and-ride lot.

Although transit service is not under the City's control, Exhibit T-8 shows the existing bus routes within Covington, and identifies where a need for future transit improvements are anticipated based on the transit level of service standards defined under Policy T-2.

The City has identified the following future potential improvements to transit:

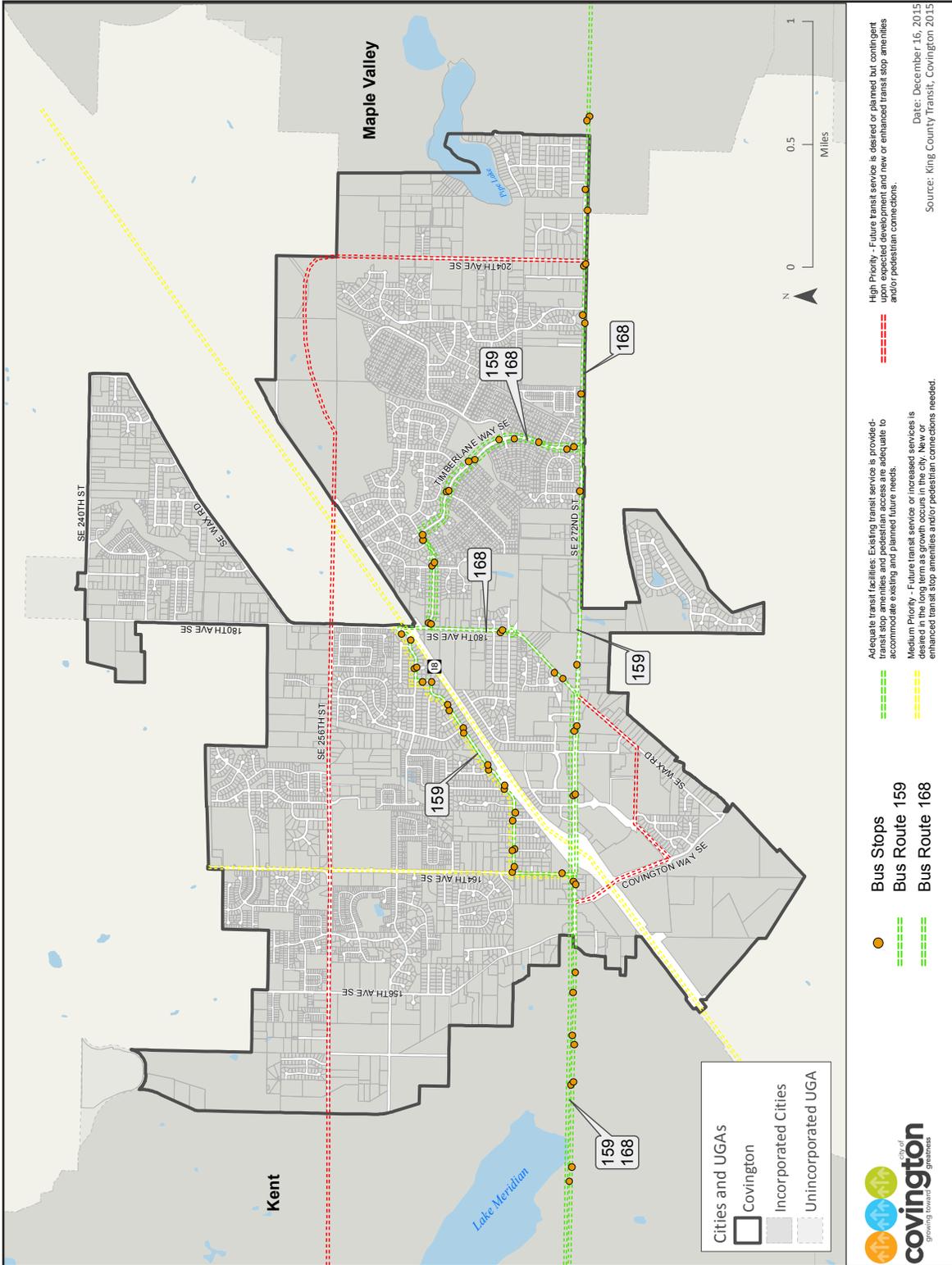
### **High Priority**

- A new transit route is desired to support planned development in the Town Center area, as documented in the Downtown Plan, which includes mixed residential and commercial uses and pedestrian-oriented streets. The proposed additional transit route would connect the downtown area to other destinations in Covington and beyond Covington Way SE and SE Wax Road.
- A new transit route is desired to support planned redevelopment at the Lakepointe Urban Village, located in the northeast area of Covington. The proposed additional transit route would connect the property to other destinations in Covington and beyond via 204th Avenue SE and SE 256th Street. To meet this objective, the City strongly supports a potential future local bus route along SE 256th Street that has been identified by Metro (King County Metro, 2015).

### **Medium Priority**

- Increased bus frequencies, transit stop amenities, and pedestrian connections along Route 159 to support existing and planned future land uses and multi-modal choices in the downtown vicinity and Lakepointe Urban Village.
- Other potential future bus routes identified by Metro (King County Metro, 2015), including an express bus route on SR 18, and an additional local routes on 164th Avenue SE.

## Exhibit T-8. High and Medium Priority Transit Needs



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015

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## OUR TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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### STREET SYSTEM

The City has planned capacity and operation improvements designed to meet City road standards and level of service standards concurrent with development or within six year of development. Exhibit T-9 identifies capacity improvements that have been identified to meet roadway concurrency through 2035, in addition to continued implementation of the SE 272nd Street widening and other projects included in the current six-year transportation/capital improvement program (TIP/CIP) and Hawk Property Planned Action (Ord. 04-14).

All of the 2035 Concurrency locations are operating within the LOS D standard under existing conditions, and will be monitored to determine the point at which land use growth triggers a need for improvement.

A map illustrating the six and 20-year projects is provided in Exhibit T-10.



Sidewalk Treatment

Source: Studio Cascade 2014

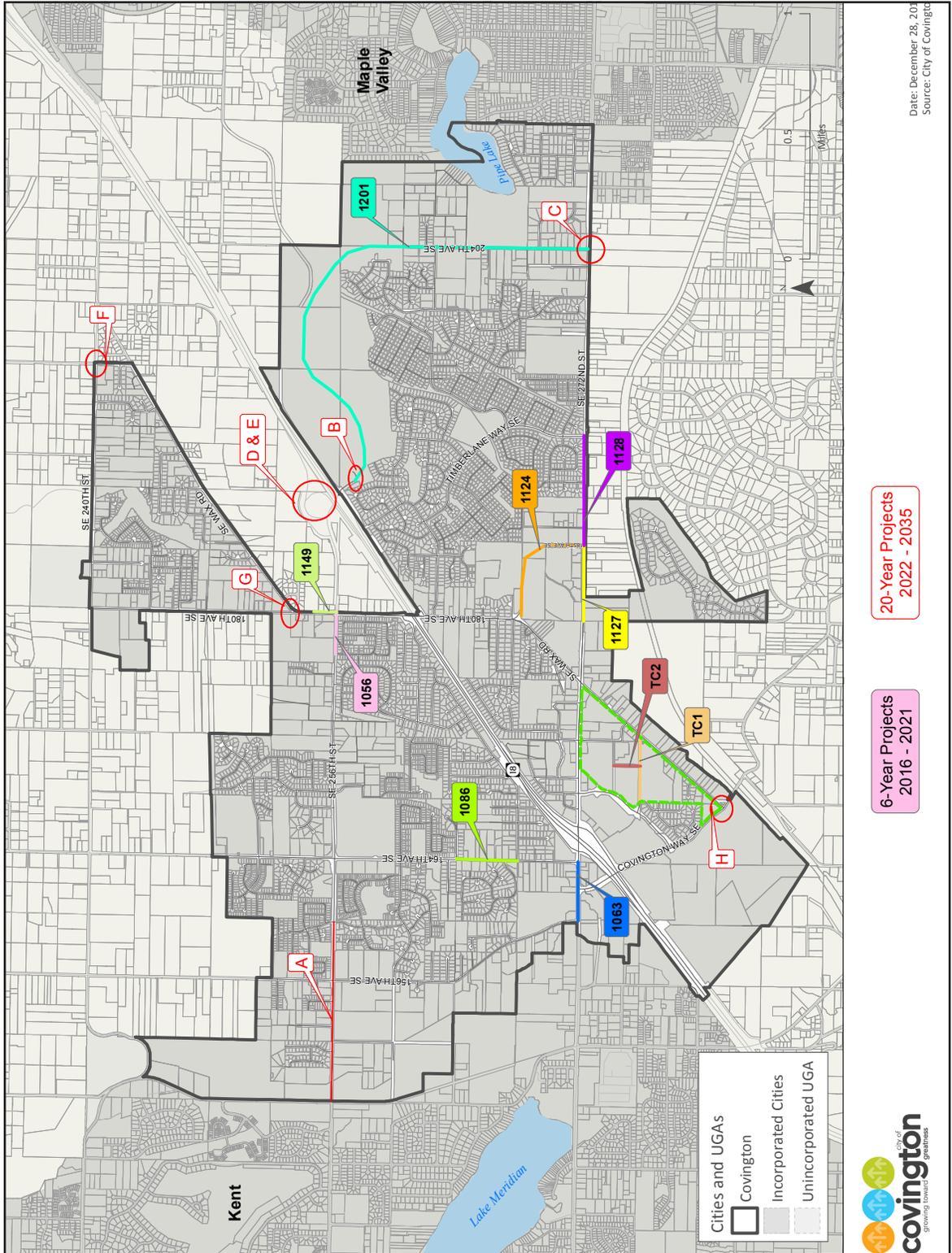


### Exhibit T-9. Street Improvement Projects to Meet Concurrency

Project	Description	Source	2016-21	2022-35
SE 272nd Street (SR 516) and Jenkins Creek to 185th Place SE)	Widen to 5 lanes & reconstruct, sidewalks, and new stream crossing.	CIP 1127	X	
204th Avenue SE and SE 272nd Street to SE 256th Street	Widen to full City Standard, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, planted medians.	CIP 1201	X	
164th Avenue SE and SE 264th Street to SE 256th Street	Pedestrian improvements, 5-foot asphalt walkway, drainage swale.	CIP 1086	X	
SE 272nd Street (SR 516) and 185th Place SE to 192nd Avenue SE	Widen to 5 lanes & reconstruct, sidewalks, new signal.	CIP 1128	X	
SE 272nd Street (SR 516) and 160th Avenue SE to 164th Avenue SE	Signal modifications, add turn lanes, and stream crossing.	CIP 1063	X	
SE 256th Street and 180th Avenue SE	Signal modifications, add right turn lane.	CIP 1056 and 1149 and 2035 Concurrency	X	
SE 276th Street and 168th Place SE to SE Wax Road	New route, new alignment, Type II Roadway.	CIP Town Center 1	X	
172nd Avenue SE and SE 275th Street to SE 276th Street	New route, new alignment, Type I Roadway.	CIP Town Center 2	X	
185th place SE Extension and Wax Road/180th Avenue SE Roundabout to SE 272nd Steet	New route, new alignment, access management.	CIP 1124	X	
SE 256th Street, from 148th Avenue SE 160th Avenue SE	Create cross section that allows intersection improvements to function. Add 2 Through Lanes, LTL Median, and Bike Lanes.	A. DEA Rate Study 2010		X
191st Avenue SE	Local roadway connection and traffic calming, to be built as part of the Lakepointe Urban Village.	B. Hawk Property Planned Action		X
SE 272nd Street/204th Avenue SE	Signalize and extend planned three-lane section to this intersection, providing a southbound left-turn lane.	C. Hawk Property Planned Action		X
SE 256th Street/State Route 18 Westbound Ramps	Signal or Roundabout	D. Hawk Property Planned Action		X
SE 256th Street/State Route 18 Eastbound Ramps	Signal or Roundabout	E. Hawk Property Planned Action		X
SE 240th Street/196th Avenue SE	Add eastbound left-turn lane.	F. 2035 Concurrency		X
SE Wax Road/180th Avenue SE	Add northbound right-turn lane or signalize.	G. 2035 Concurrency		X
Covington Way/SE Wax Road	Add southbound left-turn lane.	H. 2035 Concurrency		X

Source: City of Covington, 2013 and 2015; Heffron Transportation Inc. 2015

Exhibit T-10. Six and 20-Year Street Improvement Projects



Date: December 28, 2016  
Source: City of Covington

20-Year Projects  
2022 - 2035

6-Year Projects  
2016 - 2021





## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Exhibit T-11 shows the City street system, with recommended updates to the roadway functional classifications.

## NON-MOTORIZED SYSTEM

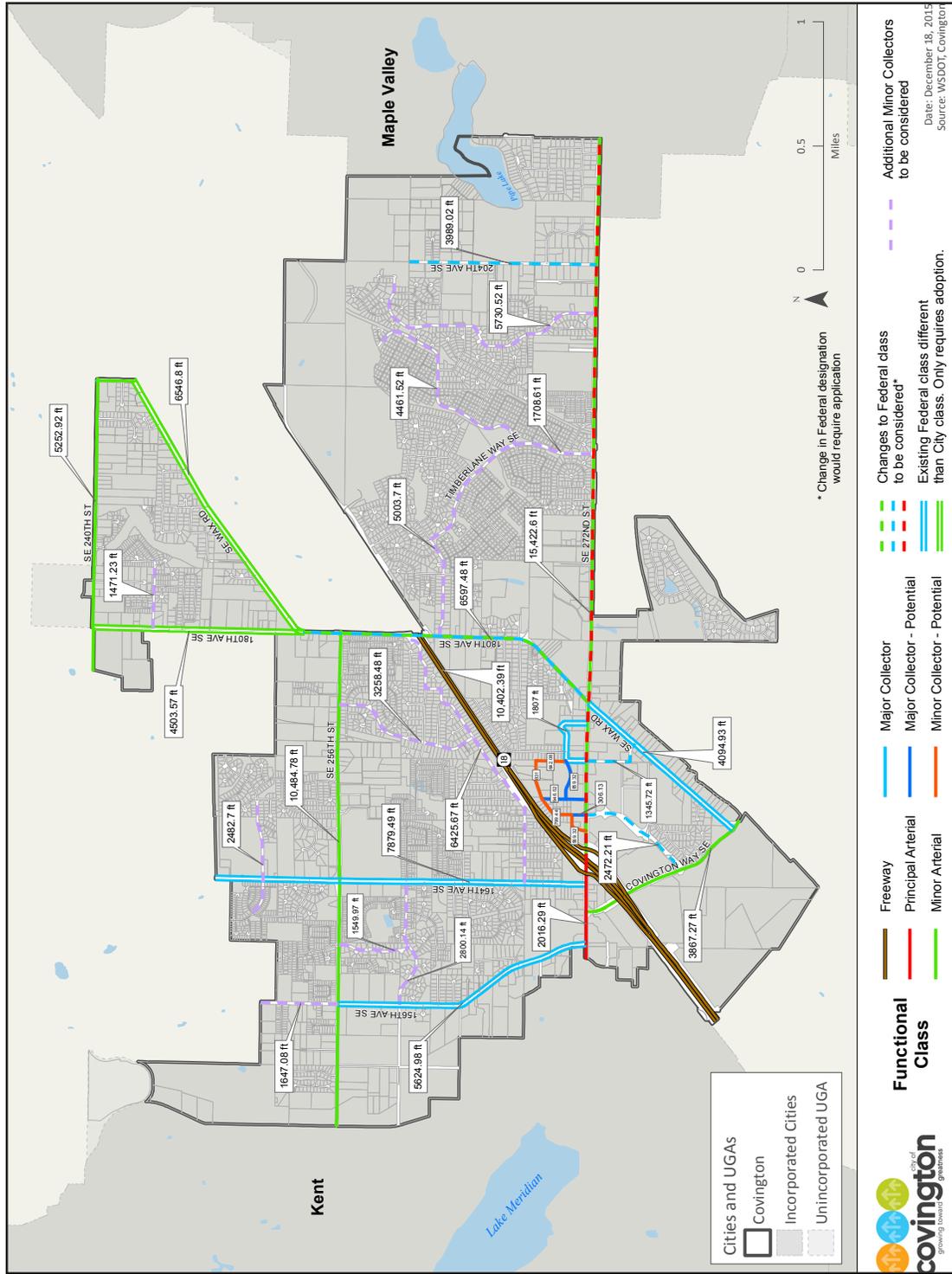
The City will implement walkway and bike facility improvements to address the medium- and high- priority needs shown on Exhibit T-5 and Exhibit T-6, and identified as follows:

- Medium- and high-priority pedestrian and bicycle facility needs are addressed as required frontage or connector improvements for new development or as part of larger multi-modal corridor improvements. Corridors with medium- or high- priority non-motorized needs receive first consideration for multi-modal improvement projects.
- Stand-alone pedestrian or bike facility improvements are considered in corridors where needs have been identified as funds become available, with first consideration going to locations of high-priority need, and second consideration going to locations of medium-priority need.

## TRANSIT SYSTEM

Although transit service is not under Covington's control, Exhibit T-8 identifies medium- and high-priority corridors where the City intends to focus on increased land use densities and amenities to support future transit and to help facilitate communication with Metro and Sound Transit regarding corridors where future transit improvements should be considered.

Exhibit T-11. Recommended Street Functional Classifications



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015



## INTERJURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

The City will coordinate with federal, state, and local agencies to implement projects and strategies presented in this Transportation Plan as follows:

- Apply to the FHWA to update the federal functional classification of some City streets, as summarized on Exhibit T-11.
- Continue to coordinate with WSDOT regarding operational objectives for SE 272nd Street (SR 516) and SR 18.
- Continue to coordinate with Metro to implement transit investments that are consistent with the City's priorities. This includes new transit routes, construction of additional bus shelters, benches and other amenities, a potential demonstration Community Van Program, and park-and-ride lots.

## FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Please see the Capital Facilities & Utilities Element.

## CONTINGENCY PLAN IN CASE OF REVENUE SHORTFALL

Some revenue sources are very secure and highly reliable. However, other revenue sources are volatile and difficult to predict with confidence. To cover the shortfall identified in the previous section, or in the event that revenue from one or more of these sources is not forthcoming in the amounts forecasted in this Transportation Plan, the City has several options:

- Change the LOS standard and therefore reduce the need for street capacity improvement projects.
- Increase the amount of revenue from existing sources.
- Find new sources of revenue, which could include additional federal and state grants, Transportation Benefit District (TBD) funding, business license fee for transportation, and/or Local Improvement Districts or Road Improvement Districts.
- Require developers to provide facilities at their own expense.
- Change the Land Use Element in the Comprehensive Plan to reduce the amount of development, and thus reduce the need for additional public facilities; or further concentrate growth along higher capacity streets that are served by transit.
- Identify opportunities to coordinate with Kent and Maple Valley on transportation improvements to SE 272nd Street.
- Continue to support lobbyist and efforts at the state legislature for funding.



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## GOALS AND POLICIES

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### TRANSPORTATION GOALS

- Goal T-I. Provide and maintain a complete transportation network that safely and efficiently accommodates all users.**
- Goal T-II. Promote the development of safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle networks that encourage multi-modal access to and from residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, civic buildings and the Town Center and Lakepointe Urban Village.**
- Goal T-III. Promote transit and transportation demand management strategies as viable alternatives to single-occupant vehicle use.**
- Goal T-IV. Develop a long-range financial component and multi-agency funding program to ensure adequate funding sources and strategies for transportation improvements and maintenance.**
- Goal T-V. Coordinate with neighboring and regional transportation entities as well as the general public to ensure maximum connectivity and interoperability of transportation systems in the region.**

### VISION CONNECTION

The Transportation Element supports Covington's vision for a balanced, sustainable transportation system that: supports walking, biking, and transit in addition to driving; promotes active and healthy living by design; and improves mobility for people and freight within a balanced financial strategy.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

### *Network Completion, Consistency & Monitoring*

- Policy T-1. The land use and transportation elements should be coordinated such that land use designations, transportation funding, and/or level of service standards shall be reexamined when street construction or upgrading is not feasible or where concurrency cannot be achieved.
- Policy T-2. Apply level of service standards to measure the overall transportation system's ability to move people and goods consistent with Policy T-2 tables A. Level of Service Standard for City Streets, B. Walkway Level of Service Standards, C. Bicycle Facility Level of Service Standard, and D. Transit Level of Service Standard.
- Policy T-3. Evaluate and prioritize proposed street improvement projects according to the following guidelines:
- A. Project's likelihood of improving public health and safety, to fulfill the City's legal commitment to provide transportation services to its users, or to preserve full use of the existing transportation system.
  - B. Project's opportunity to increase efficiency of existing facilities, prevents or reduces future improvement costs, provides service to developed areas lacking full service, or promotes development consistent with the future land use plan.
  - C. Project's ability to improve the general prosperity of the community or represent a logical extension of existing facilities.



### Policy T-2 Table A. Level of Service Standard for City Streets

Street Intersection	Standard <sup>1</sup>
Signalized, roundabout-controlled and all-way stop controlled intersections of all Arterial and Collector streets, except SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> Street (SR 516)	LOS D or better.
Signalized intersections along SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> Street (SR 516)	LOS D or better, until an ultimate capacity of five lanes (two travel lanes in each direction plus a center left-turn lane) plus sidewalks on both sides is reached for SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> Street. Once ultimate capacity is reached, vehicle operation worse than LOS D is acceptable.

1. Level of service for the weekday PM peak hour, based upon methods set forth in the current version of the Highway Capacity Manual, unless otherwise authorized by the Director of Public Works.

### Policy T-2 Table B. Walkway Level of Service Standards

Pedestrian Facility Standard <sup>1</sup>	Definition
	<b>Adequate pedestrian facility:</b> Existing pedestrian facility meets City standards and non-motorized goals – no improvements identified.
	<b>Medium-priority pedestrian need:</b> Pedestrian facility exists but does not meet City standards and/or non-motorized goals [e.g. narrow sidewalk, shoulder only (≥5 feet wide) or sidewalk on one side of the street when standards call for both sides] – upgraded facility desired.
	<b>High-priority pedestrian need:</b> No pedestrian facility exists (or existing shoulder <5 feet wide) – based on City standards and/or non-motorized goals, a gap in the walkway network is identified and a new facility is desired.

1. Applies to all Arterial and Collector streets, as well local access streets and trail corridors identified by the Director of Public Works as warranted by adjacent land use.

Policy T-2 Table C. Bicycle Facility Level of Service Standards

Bike Facility Standard <sup>1</sup>	Definition
	<p><b>Adequate bicycle facility:</b> Existing bicycle facility meets City standards and non-motorized goals, OR, street identified for shared use by vehicles and bicycles – no bicycle improvements identified.</p>
	<p><b>Medium-priority bicycle facility need:</b> Bicycle facility exists but does not meet City standards and non-motorized goals – upgraded facility desired.</p>
	<p><b>High-priority bicycle facility need:</b> Based on City standards and non-motorized goals, a gap in the bicycle network is identified and a new facility is desired.</p>

1. Applies to all Arterial and Collector streets, as well as local access streets and trail corridors identified by the Director of Public Works as warranted by adjacent land use.

Policy T-2 Table D. Transit Level of Service Standard

Transit Standard	Definition
	<p><b>No existing or planned future transit service.</b></p>
	<p><b>Adequate transit facilities:</b> Existing transit service is provided – transit stop amenities and pedestrian access are adequate to accommodate existing and planned future needs.</p>
	<p><b>Medium priority transit need:</b> Existing transit service is provided, and adequate pedestrian connections are in place, but additions or upgrades to transit stop amenities are desired.</p> <p>-OR-</p> <p>Future transit service is desired to support mid- to long-term higher density development, and a new or enhanced transit route, transit stop amenities, and/or pedestrian connections are needed to support that service.</p>
	<p><b>High priority transit need:</b> Existing transit service is provided, and improvements are needed to address inadequate pedestrian connections; additions or upgrades to transit stop amenities may also be desired.</p> <p>-OR-</p> <p>Future transit service is identified to support near-term higher density development, and a new or enhanced transit route, transit stop amenities, and/or pedestrian connections are needed to support that service.</p>

- Policy T-4. Annually develop and adopt a Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program that addresses concurrency needs, as well as other high priority non-motorized and vehicular mobility and safety needs.
- Policy T-5. Maintain development regulations, street design standards, and level of service standards that are consistent with the City's transportation goals.
- Policy T-6. Enhance truck access to/from SR 18 and other regional facilities to minimize the impact of trucks on residential areas of the city.
- Policy T-7. Accommodate pedestrian and bicycle movement on arterials, where appropriate, as well as automobile and transit traffic.
- Policy T-8. Classify streets based on knowledge of existing and future demand volumes, modal uses, and adjacent land uses.
- Policy T-9. Consolidate access to properties along principal and minor arterials wherever possible to maximize the capacity of the facilities and reduce potential safety conflicts.
- Policy T-10. Link local street networks through subdivisions to provide efficient local circulation, as appropriate, and provide additional collector arterial access for major residential areas.
- Policy T-11. Design, construct, and operate the transportation system to accommodate physically challenged persons in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and to accommodate and support public safety vehicles, emergency response and operation.



Roundabout at 180th Avenue SE  
Source: City of Covington, 2015



Town Center Pedestrian  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014

Policy T-12. Ensure that transportation facilities are developed and maintained in a manner that is sensitive to the natural environment, minimizes adverse environmental impacts to residential neighborhoods and local businesses, and complements the aesthetic character of the City of Covington.

Policy T-13. Build additional grid streets in the Town Center zoning district as private development occurs, with the location and timing of these other grid streets determined based on the location, design, and timing of new development.

Policy T-14. Provide efficient local access from regional transportation corridors to the downtown area.

Policy T-15. Enhance the attractiveness of the SR 18 right of way in accordance with its role as a gateway to the downtown area.

Policy T-16. Improve the street environment and appearance within the downtown area for use as public open space.

**Non-Motorized Transportation**

Policy T-17. Implement streetscape improvements that promote walkability and commercial activity.

Policy T-18. Promote active transportation through the development of safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle networks that encourage multi-modal access to and from residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, civic buildings, and the Town Center and Lakepointe Urban Village.



- Policy T-19. Develop a Non-Motorized Plan when funding becomes available that provides guidance on street design guidelines, trail standards, and bicycle and pedestrian priority routes.
- Policy T-20. Ensure new development is consistent with the Non-Motorized Plan.
- Policy T-21. Work with all governmental entities and the private sector to develop trail and bikeway plans and facilities that serve Covington residents, pedestrians, cyclists, and visitors from the greater region with improved connections to the Soos Creek Trail system and the planned Jenkins Creek trail system.
- Policy T-22. Address pedestrian safety and access across Kent-Kangley Road and SR 18.

### ***Transit & Transportation Demand Management (TDM)***

- Policy T-23. Encourage TDM strategies.
- Policy T-24. Support transit services that meet the needs of persons with disabilities, the elderly, and people with special needs.
- Policy T-25. Encourage the use of transit, high occupancy vehicles, and other travel modes, such as carpools and vanpools, through Transportation Demand Management programs and non-motorized connections.
- Policy T-26. Proactively work with King County Metro to evaluate and make necessary changes to enhance the transit service within the city.
- Policy T-27. Promote transit stops, access, and service improvements near land uses that attract

large numbers of employees and/or customers.

- Policy T-28. Encourage transit oriented development where feasible, to locate within the Town Center and Lakepointe Urban Village.

### *Funding and Maintaining the System*

- Policy T-29. Ensure that transportation facilities are maintained to optimize safety, traffic flow, and the life of the facility in the most cost-effective manner.

- Policy T-30. Ensure new development contributes its fair share to the financing of needed transportation improvements and expansions.

### *Regional Coordination*

- Policy T-31. Coordinate transportation systems operations, planning, and project implementation with neighboring jurisdictions and regional agencies, especially in anticipation of potential annexation areas.
- Policy T-32. Coordinate with neighboring and regional agencies to secure funds for transportation projects via means such as interlocal impact fee agreements and pursuing grants jointly.
- Policy T-33. Coordinate funding with other local and regional sources to address transportation improvements that serve multiple jurisdictions and/or are mutually beneficial.



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## ACTION PLAN

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Key actions to implement the Transportation Element are listed in Exhibit T-12.

### Exhibit T-12. Transportation Action Plan

Implementation Action	Responsibility
Update the City's transportation impact fee program and project-level transportation impact analysis guidelines to address concurrency needs through 2035.	Community Development and Public Works Department
Annually update and adopt the Six-Year TIP to implement projects that address concurrency needs, and walkway and bikeway projects as funding is available.	Public Works Department
Apply to the FHWA to implement recommended updates to the federal functional classification of City streets.	Public Works Department
Continue to coordinate with WSDOT regarding operational objectives for SE 272nd Street (SR 516) and SR 18.	Public Works Department
Continue to coordinate with Metro to implement transit investments that are consistent with the City's priorities; including construction of additional bus shelters, and benches, and new transit routes, a demonstration Community Van Program, and park & rides.	Public Works Department and Community Development



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ A summary of the major components of and trends in Covington's economy including an overview of the challenges and opportunities for the local economy.
- ▶ An economic plan for the future.
- ▶ Goals and policies to provide direction for economic development efforts.
- ▶ An economic development action plan.

## PURPOSE

The Economic Development Element comprises a larger economic development strategy for Covington. It is closely related to the plan's other elements, such as land use and capital facilities, but it serves the specific purpose of helping the community position itself to be a strategic actor in a dynamic economic context. This broad strategic direction is important to ensure the City's planning efforts and public investment remain on target and serve the community well in the long run. This element, much like the land use and transportation elements, will guide local decision-making on an almost daily basis.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND TRENDS

### CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The history of the local economy since the incorporation of Covington has been a positive one and the outlook for the future continues to be promising. The city's economic development conditions and trends are summarized in this element. More detailed information is available in the Existing Conditions Report prepared for the 2015-2035 periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan.

#### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Covington is a growing bedroom community with convenient access to services and large-format retail stores but limited local employment opportunities for living wage jobs for residents. Twenty-five percent of the residents are college educated, which is about half of the norm for King County, and another 40% have some college or higher education. Forty-three percent of households are families with children and the median household income is over 25% higher than for all King County households. The local economy is dominated by the retail and service sectors and over 75% of the local jobs in Covington pay less than \$40,000 a year. The disparity between high household income and low local employment earnings explains why virtually all residents commute to work outside the city, and local employees commute to their jobs in Covington.

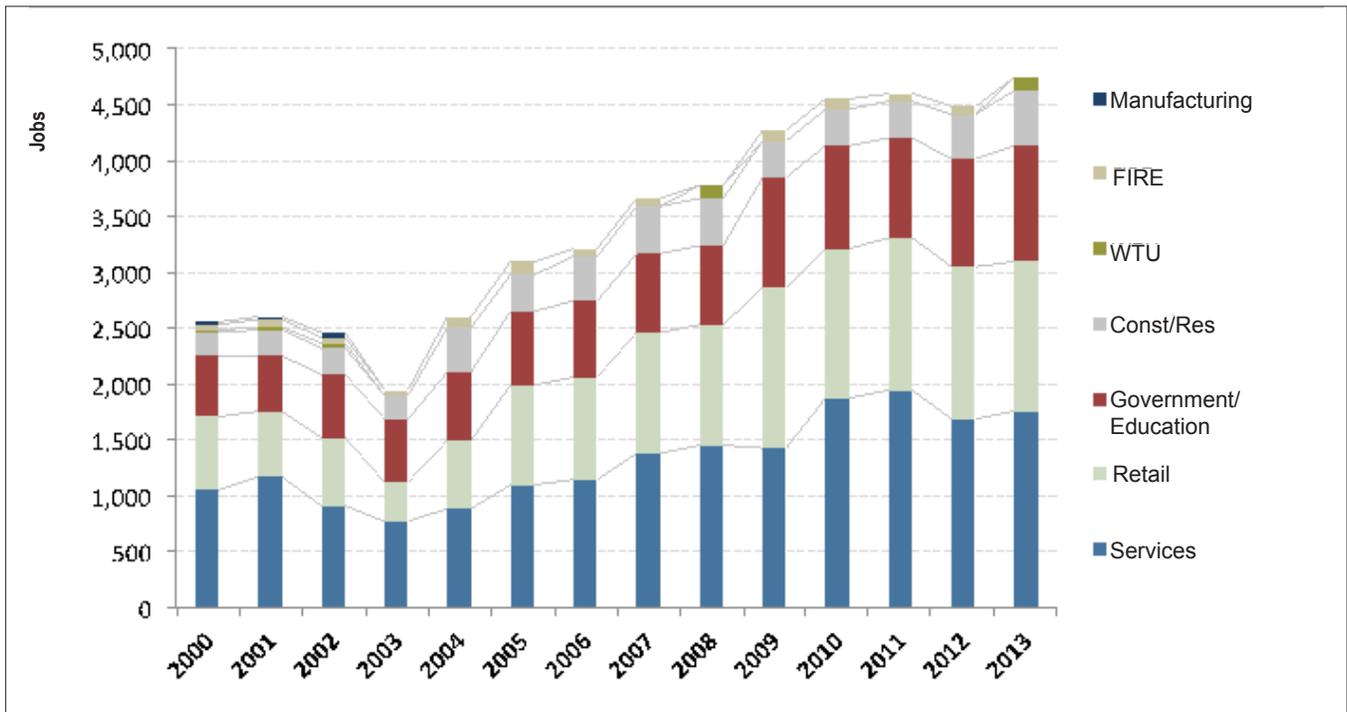
Retail sales have grown steadily since 2000, in response to the population and housing growth in Covington and surrounding communities; the taxes generated by retail sales are a critical source of revenue to the City for providing public services. Continued City support of the existing retail base and new retailers is crucial to the City's financial health.

Implementation of the vision for the downtown and the Lakepointe Urban Village ensures that the retail and service sectors will continue to dominate the local economy for years to come. This offers the opportunity to capture some of the lost retail sales dollars. In 2014, over \$28 million of local spending power was lost to businesses outside the city limits. Development of mixed-use, multifamily housing in the downtown and the Lakepointe Urban Village provides an opportunity to improve the jobs-housing balance for the expanding retail and service sectors. Continuing support and vision of City leaders for the growing presence of healthcare facilities and medical providers in the downtown will help diversify the local economy. These efforts will generate development that will create higher paying jobs for Covington residents and reduce the commuting time for local employees.

As indicated in Exhibit ED-1, Covington has a retail and service-centered economy:

- The City has increasingly become a retail and service center for the local population and broader area, due to the accessibility provided by SR 18 and SR 516.
- Local employment has increased primarily in local-oriented service sectors such as retail, personal services, and government/education to support the increasing population.
- Although not tracked in the employment data, home occupations represent a significant number of jobs in the city. In 2015 the City issued or renewed 301 business licenses for home occupations.

**Exhibit ED-1. Total Covered Employment, 2000-2013**



Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2000-2013

Note: FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate), WTU (Warehousing, Transportation, and Utilities)



Retail Store in Covington  
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

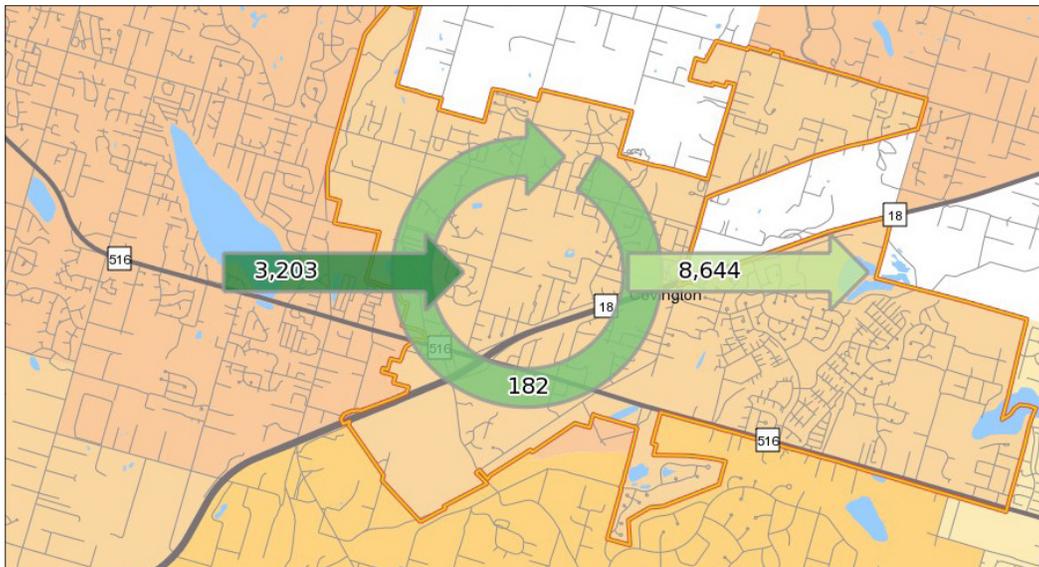
**Household Incomes are relatively high, but most residents' jobs are not local.**

- Household incomes of residents are relatively high despite educational levels below that of the county overall.
- The overwhelming majority of Covington residents commute an average of over 30 minutes to jobs located outside the city, which are often better paying than are local jobs.
- As indicated in Exhibit ED-2, in 2011 3,203 people came to work in Covington, but 8,644 Covington residents left for jobs located outside the city. Only 182 people both lived and worked in the city.

**Local jobs are lower-paying and workers live elsewhere.**

- Wages and earnings for those working in local retail and service sectors in Covington are lower than earnings for residents of Covington and the county overall.

**Exhibit ED-2. Commute Pattern: 2011**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2011). <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>; ECONorthwest 2014

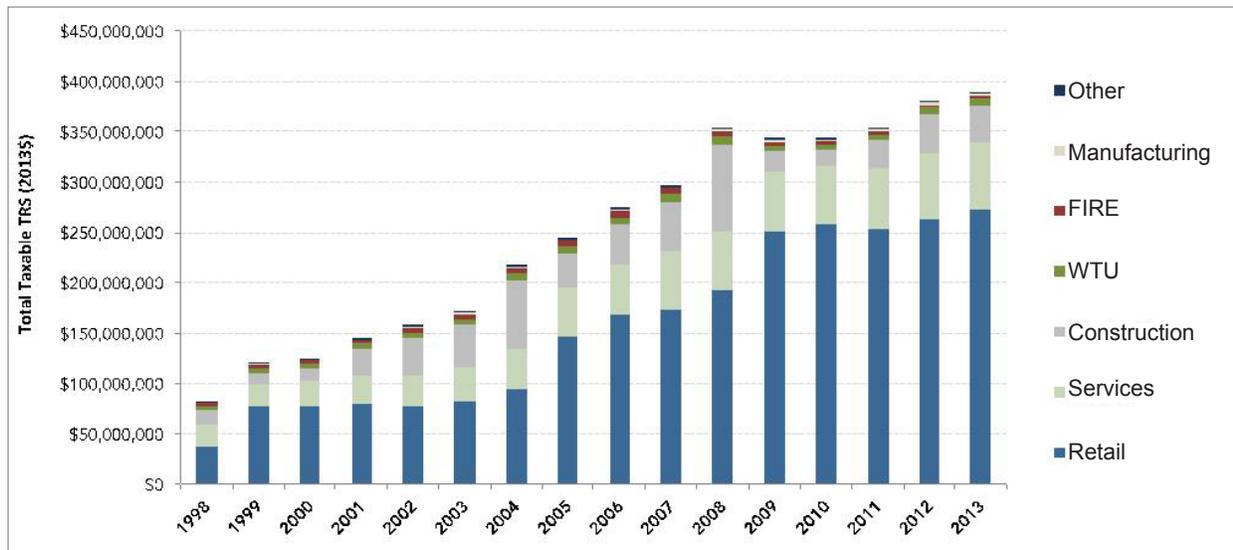


- Overwhelmingly, employees of local businesses commute from elsewhere in the region.
- The addition of more choice in housing types in the downtown and the Lakepointe Urban Village, combined with the addition of local retail and service jobs, is intended to improve the jobs/housing balance.

**Retail sales generate significant revenue to the City.**

- Retail sales taxes will continue to be a significant contributor to the city’s financial health.
- The addition of 850,000 square feet of commercial space – largely retail–in the Lakepointe Urban Village will reinforce the city’s retail and service center reputation, create a substantial number of new jobs, and reduce the leakage of retail sales dollars to businesses located outside the city.

**Exhibit ED-3. Taxable Retail Sales (TRS) in 2013 Inflation Adjusted Dollars, 1998-2013**



Source: Washington Department of Revenue; ECONorthwest, 2014

Note: FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate), WTU (Warehousing, Transportation, and Utilities)

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The recent economic recession of 2008–2011 had less of an impact on Covington than it had on other suburban communities, largely because Covington’s retail sector serves a large portion of southeastern King County. Revenues from sales taxes remained relatively consistent, and the City was able to make targeted budget cuts without sacrificing the community’s quality of life. Covington remains a retail center for a much larger area, and the City’s plans are to expand that niche even more by identifying opportunities for increased retail growth in downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village. Covington also will continue to foster and leverage its growth as a healthcare facility and medical services hub for south King County. While the outlook for the local economy is bright, it is not without challenges:

- Employment growth is increasingly occurring in regional employment centers such as downtown Seattle and Bellevue.
- The rise of online shopping reduces the share of consumer spending at traditional “brick and mortar” stores, particularly large format discount and department stores.
- Surrounding communities are realizing new retail development that competes for retail spending with stores in Covington.
- The City will not always have the opportunity to capture lost local spending power in many sectors. Sectors with large market areas, such as motor vehicle sales, serve a population much larger than Covington’s. As a result, a city the size of Covington cannot always support enough retail options to fully accommodate local demand.



Medical Services in Covington  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014



- With the exception of downtown and the Lakepointe Urban Village, many of the large, easily developable sites in the city have already been developed or are in the process of being planned and developed. As a result, the remaining commercial development opportunities will occur as infill development on smaller parcels and/or redevelopment of existing sites.
- The City is experiencing increasing service and infrastructure costs from population growth paired with limited ability for tax revenues to keep pace. This is due to a 1% limit on property tax revenue increases and increased competition for retail spending.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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The policy direction in this plan update is to reinforce the community's resilience to changing conditions by continuing to support local businesses; enlarging the retail sector; improving the jobs/housing balance by diversifying the local economy and the choice of housing solutions; continuing to invest in infrastructure; and providing efficient City services, all in support of the neighborhoods, human services, and public spaces that make Covington a unique community in which to live.

### CONTINUE TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT EXISTING RETAIL AND SERVICE BUSINESSES.

Covington is not looking to provide large amounts of manufacturing or industrial land, but instead is looking to strengthen its position in the regional economy where it already has a solid footing. Existing retail and service providers account for over 90% of total retail sales and



Retail Store in Covington

Source: Studio Cascade 2014

65% of total employment, and much of Covington’s retail sector is dedicated to serving a larger, regional market. Even so, Covington’s residents are the retail sector’s staple. Increased disposable income – that share of a household’s income not dedicated to housing, food, medical expenses, education, or transportation – may increase local spending, thereby increasing local commerce, generating more local sales tax, and helping the community become less dependent on attracting shoppers from elsewhere.

**EXPAND THE LOCAL ECONOMY BY BUILDING ON EXISTING STRENGTHS IN THE RETAIL AND SERVICE SECTORS.**

The City’s economic development policies call for both increased economic diversity and an increased retail presence. Calculations on retail leakage confirm that there are retail markets where Covington can conceivably still expand its retail trade, and the downtown and the Lakepointe Urban Village areas are intended to capture some of it.



Lakepointe Urban Village Concept

Source: Hawk Property Subarea Plan (Ord. 01-14)

**DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY BY TARGETING EXPANSION OF THE OFFICE MARKET, ESPECIALLY THE BURGEONING MEDICAL SECTOR.**

While Covington is a prosperous community, its economy is not necessarily diverse. Covington relies on the sales taxes generated by a large retail service area that extends beyond the community’s boundaries. The City seeks to leverage and expand the development of medical facilities in the community to provide needed services and job growth. The policies provide for increased professional office employment, building on the regional medical presence and expanding the scale of other, related personal services that are needed to address local demand.



## MAKE IT EASIER TO LIVE AND WORK IN COVINGTON.

Overwhelmingly, residents of Covington commute to work by vehicle to employment located outside the city, while employees of Covington businesses commute to work from areas outside the city. Housing in Covington is more expensive than what many of those employed in Covington can afford to buy or rent, so expanding housing choices is important for reducing the commuting time for those employees. Preserving the character of Covington's existing neighborhoods is essential to the character of the town, so diversifying the local economy to create higher-paying jobs is important for reducing the commuting time for residents of the City.

## PROMOTE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS.

The City will continue to seek and support programs that provide easy access to quality adult and post-secondary education. This will allow residents to gain the academic skills and credentials they need to transition to post-secondary institutions, higher skilled jobs, and function productively in the work force while supporting their families. The City is searching for opportunities to partner with post-secondary institutions to provide classes locally that will provide information and skills for residents to obtain in-demand, stable jobs with living wages in the current and future marketplace. This should be carried out based on an understanding of the needs of local employers and workers and the demands of the economy.



Professional Services in Covington  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014

## RETAIN AN EFFICIENT, FISCALLY-SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

The City has a history of facilitating economic development and efficiently reviewing and processing development applications. The policies recognize the high-level functioning of City operations and encourage the business and development community to become engaged, ensuring it is sustainable. Community engagement will encourage continued City responsiveness, generate new leaders, and build closer relationships between residents, the business community, and local government.

Strategic investment – directed by the community’s leaders – will ensure Covington can continue to prosper. While the City has the capacity to incur additional public debt, its tendency has been to support municipal investment only in those cases where direct benefit will result and where the community’s money will be matched by funds from other governments or private entities. Its preference is to leverage public investment, where City funds are augmented by investment from others, thereby making for more attractive partnership-style solutions. Much of this work will need to involve partners, either in coordinating the utility services provided by others or in sharing financial obligations among other jurisdictions. Covington has already demonstrated its ability to do this, through Interlocal Agreements.

The City also has other, more targeted, economic development tools at its disposal including development agreements, Multifamily Tax Exemption Program, and Traffic Impact Fee Funding Source Adjustments.



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## GOALS AND POLICIES

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Goal ED-I.** Support local commercial activity and spending power in the community through increasing household disposable incomes and by continued population growth within the city.
- Goal ED-II.** Grow local employment targeted to the medical and professional office sectors suited to Covington’s resident population, offering higher wages, building on local institutions, expanding the availability of local services, and contributing to the community’s economic resiliency.
- Goal ED-III.** Build and demonstrate local capacity to support development activity, including a responsive service culture, proactive problem solving, and strategic investment in education, transportation, utilities, and telecommunications infrastructure.
- Goal ED-IV.** Build on the City’s existing assets and stable growth, and focus on being a desirable place to live, work, play, shop, and learn by continuing to provide high quality services (including schools, safety, and recreation) and making strategic investments in infrastructure.
- Goal ED-V.** Grow the City’s tax base, prioritize investments, and efficiently provide City services.

### VISION CONNECTION

Fostering growth and diversification of the local economy will help meet the citywide goals for the downtown and the Lakepointe Urban Village as areas with a mix of retail and office uses and varied housing densities. Growth and diversification also ensure the continuing health of the existing retail and service businesses along major corridors, expand the diversity of products and services, create family wage jobs, and ensure a healthy tax base to support public services.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

### *Actively support business and service retention, expansion, and diversification*



Retail and Food Establishments in Covington

Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

Policy ED-1. Strengthen Covington’s position as the center of a regional retail and service area serving Covington and nearby communities readily accessed from the SR 18 and SR 516 highway corridors.

Policy ED-2. Support efforts for retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Policy ED-3. Provide outreach efforts to local businesses for City government contracts.

Policy ED-4. Promote new business formation by economically disadvantaged populations such as minorities and women by committing resources to human services and economic development strategies in this element.

Policy ED-5. Provide for business attraction and diversification including entrepreneurship and small business development.

Policy ED-6. Facilitate continuing education and skill development for residents.



Services in Covington

Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

### *Expand the local economy by building on existing strengths*

Policy ED-7. Partner with regional and state organizations for economic development initiatives of mutual interest. Coordinate local and countywide economic policies and strategies with the Puget Sound Regional Council’s Regional Economic Strategy, King County initiatives, and other agencies.

Policy ED-8. Actively market the community by identifying areas for development and target new or expanding businesses for which there is clear opportunity to locate and invest in Covington.

Policy ED-9. Encourage regional commercial and employment uses along major transportation corridors to strengthen Covington's economic position within the region.

Policy ED-10. Facilitate development of lodging, meeting, event, entertainment venues, and post-secondary educational opportunities to meet both resident and visitor needs.

***Diversify the local economy by targeting expansion of professional services, especially the burgeoning medical sector***

Policy ED-11. Foster a business climate and site options supporting large employers offering high-wage jobs together with small business and entrepreneurial start-ups.

Policy ED-12. Promote the emerging professional services sector, especially healthcare facilities and medical services.

Policy ED-13. Encourage location of new higher-wage jobs in the downtown area and the Lakepointe Urban Village.

***Make it easier to live and work in Covington***

Policy ED-14. Facilitate commute trip reduction by providing more jobs locally for Covington residents.



Multiple Transportation Modes  
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014



Medical Services and Artwork in Covington  
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

*Retain an efficient, fiscally-sustainable strategy of economic development*

- Policy ED-15. Maintain development regulations that are predictable and that balance public costs with public benefits as well as assure competitiveness with other Puget Sound jurisdictions.
- Policy ED-16. Support an economic development effort over time with adequate budgets and staffing to ensure it has appropriate capacity to address economic development threats and opportunities.
- Policy ED-17. Develop downtown, neighborhood, community, and regional commercial uses with coordinated provision of:
- A. Adequate transportation, pedestrian, and utility infrastructure.
  - B. Development and design standards to encourage mixed-use, commercial, and residential developments.
  - C. Incorporation of trails, open space, and parks consistent with city plans and regulations.
- Policy ED-18. Assure that new development is a fiscal benefit except in instances where clear public policy supports additional public investment.
- Policy ED-19. Draw on outside regional, state, federal, and private/non-profit resources to assist in meeting community infrastructure and public service needs associated with economic development.
- Policy ED-20. Encourage public-private partnerships with proactive tools and incentives to leverage the desired mix of private and public uses with a net long-term economic and financial benefit to the City at the lowest public outlay possible.



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## ACTION PLAN

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The Economic Development Element is implemented by related elements, plans, regulations, and programs, including:

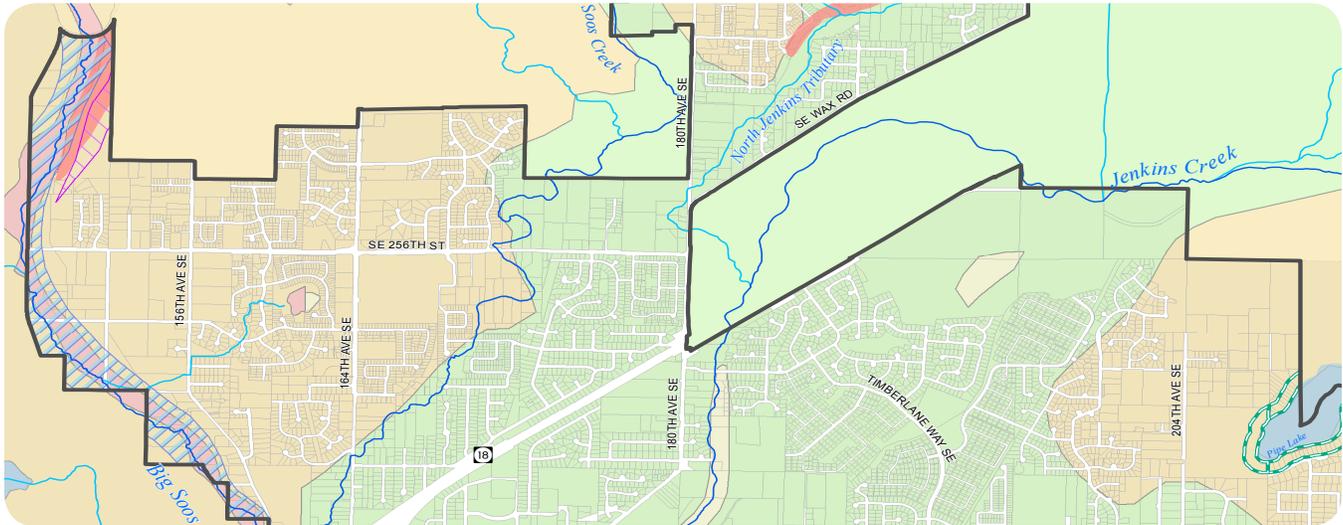
- Covington’s Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element, and Zoning Code that provide capacity for and variety in both commercial and high density residential uses.
- Housing and Land Use Elements that provide policy direction for capacity, variety, and design of commercial and residential uses with an emphasis on high density housing and mixed-use commercial/residential solutions.
- The Housing Element that provides policy direction for a greater range of housing choices.
- The Transportation Element that provides policy direction for motorized and non-motorized solutions between the commercial and residential areas within Covington including pedestrian-scale streets, adequate parking for commercial uses, and an interconnected system of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle routes between neighborhoods.

**Exhibit 3. Economic Development Action Plan**

Implementing Action	Responsibility
Annual Strategic Assessment of economic strengths and weaknesses	Community Development Department and Executive Department
Annual Economic Development Work Plan	Community Development Department and Executive Department
Annual business survey	Community Development Department and Executive Department
Ongoing liaison with Chamber of Commerce	City Manager and Community Development Department



# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ A discussion of conditions and trends for Covington's natural environment.
- ▶ Planning efforts under way or needed to benefit or protect the City's natural environment, to ensure a healthy and sustainable community.
- ▶ Goals and policies to guide the protection and management of Covington's natural environment.

## PURPOSE

Covington is committed to the thoughtful, well-planned stewardship of the natural environment, in order to preserve and improve the quality of life for its residents. The natural environment is a complex system of inter-related components including air, water, soils, plants, and animals. All of these systems are affected by human activity. Through thoughtful planning and implementation of local, state, and federal regulations, Covington seeks to accommodate development needed for growth while preserving the natural environment and protecting residents as well as public and private property, from natural hazards.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ISSUES AND TRENDS

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The quality of the natural environment is an important component of our quality of life. The natural environment provides a variety of valuable and beneficial functions, such as contributing to the clean air we breathe and the beauty of our surroundings.

However, the natural environment can also at times pose threats to human safety or property. Examples of such threats include floods and landslides.

As it plans for growth, the City must plan to protect the valuable and beneficial functions of the natural environment, and to eliminate or reduce threats posed by the natural environment.



Western Hemlock

### CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Within the city's six square miles, Covington has an array of natural environment features; conditions and trends are summarized below. For more detail, please see the Review of Best Available Science prepared for the 2015 update to the Comprehensive Plan and the City of Covington Hazard Mitigation Plan, hereby adopted by reference as amended.

#### *Water and wetlands are all around*

- Covington features several creeks, including Big Soos Creek, Little Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, Cranmar Creek, and North Jenkins Creek tributary.
- Pipe Lake is the only lake within Covington; however, smaller open water areas occur elsewhere in the city, such as Spring Pond in Jenkins Creek Park.
- Wetlands are generally associated with creeks and Pipe Lake as well as groundwater seeps.
- Critical aquifer recharge areas have been defined in Covington to protect the City of Kent's (e.g. Armstrong Springs) and other special districts' wellhead protection areas that may be susceptible to contamination.

#### *Vegetation is abundant in the City*

- Natural vegetation in Covington consists primarily of second- and third-growth Douglas fir, western hemlock, western red cedar, and vine maple as well as many plant species associated with lowland coniferous forests. Meadows and wetland plant species are also fairly common.



- In a 2012 analysis done as part of the Urban Forestry Strategic Plan, tree cover was approximately 37%. Benefits of maintaining and enhancing a healthy urban forest include: reduced stormwater runoff and erosion; provision of shading and cooling; improved air quality and mitigation of wind effects; provision of wildlife habitat; and increased property values.
- The City has achieved a designation of Tree City USA since 2002. The designation is based on the City “meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management: maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry and celebrating Arbor Day.”

*In addition to people, Covington is home to a variety of wildlife*

- Many animals can be found in Covington, including deer, elk, beaver, bald eagle, and great blue heron.
- The city includes habitat types that are known to be used or could be used by species listed as endangered, threatened, or sensitive by the state or federal government, including Chinook salmon and steelhead.
- Continuous wildlife corridors are found along riparian areas.

## **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT REGULATORY AGENCIES**

### **FEDERAL**

- ▶ National Marine Fisheries Service
- ▶ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- ▶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- ▶ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- ▶ Federal Emergency Management Agency

### **STATE**

- ▶ Washington Department of Ecology
- ▶ Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ▶ Washington Department of Natural Resources

### **REGIONAL/LOCAL**

- ▶ Puget Sound Clean Air Agency
- ▶ Puget Sound Partnership
- ▶ Puget Sound Regional Council
- ▶ King County

*While providing many benefits, the natural environment also poses threats*

- According to the City of Covington Hazard Mitigation Plan, several natural hazards have some probability of occurring in the city. Natural hazards with high probability include drought, flood, landslides, and severe weather. Natural hazards with medium probability include earthquakes and fires. Natural hazards with low probability include dam failure and volcanic activity.
- Climate change is generally expected to impact the occurrence and severity of natural hazards. Current modeling efforts are unable to assess the likelihood of specific impacts for Covington; however, in the Pacific Northwest, projected changes include a rise in annual average temperature in all seasons and a likely increase in the frequency in extreme heat events, as well as small changes in annual precipitation, with more frequent heavy rainfall events.



Wooded Lands

Source: The Watershed Company

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## OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PLAN

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The City strives to preserve and improve the natural environment by protecting significant trees, limiting impervious surfaces, and promoting low-impact development, energy conservation, mixed-use development, multi-modal transportation options, and other measures. The City's approach to preserving and improving the natural environment includes adopting regulations that require new development to protect the natural environment and that provide incentives for environmental restoration. The City also funds programs and projects that benefit the natural environment.

## CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT LAWS THAT PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Many laws at the local, state and federal levels influence Covington's management of the natural environment.

Three key local regulatory programs that protect Covington's natural environment are discussed below.

- Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) sets forth a requirement for local jurisdictions to designate and protect critical areas, which include wetlands, areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, fish, and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas. The City's critical areas regulations, found in Chapter 18.65 of the Covington Municipal Code, aim to protect beneficial functions and protect against hazards.
- Pursuant to the Shoreline Management Act, the City adopted a comprehensive Shoreline Master Program in 2011 to regulate more significant waterbodies. The program regulates Pipe Lake and the lower reaches of Jenkins Creek and Big Soos Creek.
- The City implements a Stormwater Program to help meet federal and state water quality requirements (the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System or NPDES). This includes measures to promote low-impact development to mimic natural systems.



Covington Park

Source: Black Diamond Now Blog, 2015

## RETAIN AND ENHANCE COVINGTON'S TREE AND VEGETATION COVER.

The City's Urban Forestry Strategic Plan lays out a strategy to retain and enhance tree and vegetation cover on publicly managed properties. The plan proposes the following vision statement: "Covington is dedicated to protect and manage the urban forest in order to preserve and enhance its benefit to the environment and the livability of the community."

## IMPLEMENT AND INCORPORATE THE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN ACTION ITEMS INTO EXISTING LOCAL PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS.

The effectiveness of the Hazard Mitigation Plan depends on its implementation and incorporation of its action items into existing local plans, policies, and programs. Completion of the annual progress report will help the City to evaluate the progress of the plan.

## PROMOTE LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN BUILDING PRACTICES.

Low-Impact Development (LID) focuses on how stormwater enters, is stored, and leaves a site. By mimicking natural systems, LID can help maintain or restore the natural hydrology of watersheds. Site design using LID principles incorporates vegetation and small-scale hydrologic control to capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater runoff on-site. When implemented throughout the watershed, LID can improve habitat by complementing the regulatory protections afforded to environmentally critical areas. LID techniques applicable to new development or redevelopment include: preserving native vegetation, natural drainages and porous soils; reducing impervious surfaces; diverting runoff from the storm drainage system to on-site infiltration systems; and clustering development.

Green building practices such as Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certification can be used by individuals on a small scale (e.g. home remodel) or on a broader scale (e.g. plat) and are applicable to residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional users. In addition to the environmental benefits, green building and LID practices can also reduce long-term building operating costs, improve indoor health for residents and tenants,



and add value due to consumer demand for energy and resource-efficient buildings.

## AIR QUALITY, NOISE, ENERGY, AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

Many federal, state, regional, and local agencies enact and enforce legislation intended to protect air quality. Air quality in Covington and in much of the Puget Sound area is tied to controlling emissions from all sources, including: internal combustion engines, industrial operations, and indoor and outdoor burning. In the Puget Sound region, vehicle emissions are the primary source of air pollution. Consistent with State goals and funding requirements as well as Countywide Planning Policies, Covington will work collaboratively with other agencies to achieve good air quality and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Local and regional components must be integrated in a comprehensive strategy designed to improve air quality through transportation system improvements, vehicle emissions reductions, and demand management strategies.

Excessive noise is a form of pollution that has direct and harmful effects upon the public's health and welfare and adversely affects the livability, peace, and comfort of neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Noise, like many forms of pollution, is both a local and a regional problem. Noise that originates on residential, commercial, or industrial land within the city is regulated through enforcement of Covington's noise regulations. Because commercial and industrial uses both generate the most noise and are the least sensitive noise receptors, the City's noise regulations are focused on protecting residential neighborhoods from excessive noise that could impact quality of life.

There is a growing awareness of the contributing factors to climate change and an increasing willingness to lower



Big Soos Creek

Source: City of Covington, 2008

### VISION CONNECTION

Unmatched quality of life requires thoughtful, well-planned stewardship of the natural environment. Stewardship of the natural environment is foundational for achieving citywide goals.

GHG emissions and better protect the natural systems that provide valuable ecological services. Significantly reducing GHG emissions over several decades requires a wide range of strategies at the regional and local scale. Efforts discussed above that maintain healthy natural ecosystems, encourage green building practices, and ensure LID are critical to success, but there is more that can be done. Increasing the adoption of cleaner and more renewable sources of energy in our homes and transportation modes has often proven to be more cost effective in the long-term while sparking innovative job markets and contributing significantly to GHG emissions reductions in the short-term. Examples of activities that communities like Covington can undertake that can reduce GHG emissions include, but are not limited to:

- Urban forestry: Increases in temperatures could create heat island effects in the developed areas of the city where there is a significant amount of impervious surface (buildings, streets, and parking lots). This underscores the importance of increasing tree canopy in these areas to help reduce temperatures during the summer months. It has been noted in studies that 100 trees remove 13 tons carbon/year and divert 54,000 gallons of rain. The City's Tree City USA status and the City's Urban Forestry Strategy will help to implement goals to increase and protect the city's tree canopy.
- Promoting carpooling and transit: see the Transportation Element. The City has established multi-modal levels of service to promote alternatives to driving alone.
- Promoting green energy and solarizing: The City implements the State energy code and supports coordinating planning with power utilities. Grants are also available to help promote energy conservation. See conservation policies in the Capital Facilities and Utilities Element.



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

### *Environmental Quality and Awareness*

- Policy NE-1. Protect the ecological integrity of the natural environment while allowing for compatible growth and development.
- Policy NE-2. Promote conservation of natural resources and the environment in cooperation with schools, business owners, residents, affected jurisdictions, and tribes.
- Policy NE-3. Encourage and support residents, workers, developers, and business owners to take active measures to protect and enhance the city's natural environment. Such measures could include use of environmentally safe vegetation control, non-toxic lawn care, composting and recycling, wetland and stream bank restoration, and use of low-impact development (LID) techniques.
- Policy NE-4. Implement the mitigation actions and maintenance details contained in the most recent version of the adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Policy NE-5. Maximize retention of a healthy tree cover and native vegetation and encourage restoration, replacement, and enhancement of unhealthy or disturbed trees and vegetation.

### **Urban Forest and Vegetation**

- Policy NE-6. Require protection of significant trees and limit unnecessary disturbance of vegetation, when possible, during all phases of development, and require mitigation as needed, including the appropriate ratio of replacement for trees removed during development.
- Policy NE-7. Require the use of native plants in landscaping, development proposals, and erosion-control projects, and in the restoration of stream banks, lakes, shorelines, and wetlands.
- Policy NE-8. Promote and support a systematic approach to enhancing the city through carefully-planned plantings and ongoing maintenance of street trees, public landscaping, and public open spaces.
- Policy NE-9. Preserve existing natural trees and vegetation on steep hillsides, along stream banks and other habitat areas, and where visual buffers between uses or activities are desirable.

### **Air Quality, Energy, and Climate Change**

- Policy NE-10. Promote regional air quality standards in coordination with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and the Puget Sound Regional Council.
- Policy NE-11. Encourage the reduction of greenhouse gases through energy conservation and reduction in vehicle emissions.



Urban Forest in Streetscape

Source: Studio Cascade 2014



Example Solar Panels

Source: PSE 2015

Policy NE-12. Strive to reduce energy consumption in the construction and operation of public facilities, fleet vehicles, and the delivery of services. When possible and fiscally feasible, incorporate innovation related to use of renewable energy resources.

Policy NE-13. Reduce energy consumption and maximize energy efficiency by promoting programs and educational initiatives aimed to “reduce, re-use, and recycle” at individual and community-wide levels.

Policy NE-14. Support the use of renewable resources and improvements in energy efficiency for new and existing development.

### *Water Resources*

Policy NE-15. Work cooperatively with federal and state agencies, other affected jurisdictions, and tribes to implement water quality management strategies and regulations.

Policy NE-16. Comply with and implement the most recently adopted Comprehensive Stormwater Plan. Update and adjust this plan as state and federal regulations change and new information is obtained.

Policy NE-17. Manage land use and stormwater to protect groundwater and surface water quality and quantity.

Policy NE-18. Promote LID techniques as an alternative to standard development practices, and take advantage of natural systems to maintain and enhance environmental quality by



having them perform such functions as cleaning water and controlling stormwater runoff.

Policy NE-19. Regulate development in a manner that maintains the ecological and hydrologic function of water resources based on pre-development quality and quantity measurements.

Policy NE-20. Protect groundwater and aquifer quantity by requiring stormwater disposal methods that infiltrate runoff where favorable subsurface soil conditions permit and by requiring stormwater runoff treatment best management practices for any new development.

Policy NE-21. Incorporate erosion control best management practices and other development controls as necessary to reduce sediment discharge from grading and construction activities to minimal levels.

Policy NE-22. In the Lakepointe Urban Village, transform the existing detention facilities into a unique, publicly accessible community amenity which may continue to serve as a stormwater management facility.

### **General Critical Areas**

Policy NE-23. Include best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas and give special consideration to conservation or protection measures



Lakepointe Property Riparian Habitat  
Source: The Watershed Company, 2013



Jenkins Creek Park

Source: City of Covington 2015

necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries, consistent with the GMA.

Policy NE-24. Use incentive programs, acquisition, appropriate regulations, and other techniques to preserve critical areas as permanent open space where development may pose hazards to health, property, or important ecological functions.

Policy NE-25. Require that prior to any development, critical areas are identified and protected.

Policy NE-26. Minimize tree removal in critical areas and their buffers for the purposes of trails, utility corridors, and similar infrastructure. Apply mitigation sequencing and critical area regulation standards.

Policy NE-27. Ensure the effectiveness of critical area mitigation by requiring adequate critical area studies and mitigation plans, the application of mitigation sequencing, financial assurances from developers to ensure mitigation success, and by improving City oversight of maintenance and monitoring of mitigation sites.

Policy NE-28. Require and enforce mitigation to ensure no net loss of critical area functions, including mitigation designed to replace critical area acreage lost due to development.

Policy NE-29. Support restoration of stream channels and associated wetland and riparian areas to enhance water quality and fish and wildlife



habitat and to mitigate flooding and erosion.

Policy NE-30. Allow public access to wetlands, streams, and lakes for scientific, educational, and recreational use, provided the public access trails are carefully sited, sensitive habitats and species are protected, and hydrologic continuity is maintained.

### **Wetlands**

Policy NE-31. Protect wetlands not as isolated units, but as ecosystems, and essential elements of watersheds.

Policy NE-32. Protect areas of native vegetation that connect wetland systems, preferably through incentives and appropriate non-regulatory mechanisms.



Local wild rabbit  
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

### **Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas**

Policy NE-33. Protect the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies.

### **Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas**

Policy NE-34. Protect and preserve habitats for species which have been identified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive by the State or federal government.

Policy NE-35. Maintain habitats that support the greatest diversity of fish and wildlife through conservation and enhancement of critical areas.

Policy NE-36. Implement salmon habitat protection and restoration priorities in approved Water

Resource Inventory Area 9 plans.

Policy NE-37. Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and tribes to identify, protect, and develop enhancement plans and actions for habitat networks and wetlands that cross jurisdictional lines.

Policy NE-38. Promote the enhancement or restoration of aquatic areas (e.g. streams, lakes, wetlands) as adjacent development activities occur.

Policy NE-39. Protect wildlife corridors to minimize habitat fragmentation, especially along existing linkages and in patches of native habitat. Improve wildlife habitat, especially in linkages, by enhancing vegetation composition and structure, and incorporating indigenous plant species compatible with the site.



Soos Creek Trail and Open Space  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014

### *Frequently Flooded Areas*

Policy NE-40. Minimize the alteration of natural surface water features that retain or carry floodwaters (e.g. wetlands, floodplains, streams, and lakes), and prevent land alterations that would increase potential flooding.

Policy NE-41. Require mitigation for adverse environmental impacts from engineered flood control measures.



Policy NE-42. Work cooperatively to meet regulatory standards for floodplain development as these standards are updated for consistency with relevant federal requirements including those related to the Endangered Species Act.

### ***Geologically Hazardous Areas***

Policy NE-43. Decrease development intensity, site coverage, and vegetation removal as slope increases in order to minimize drainage problems, soil erosion, siltation, and landslides.

Policy NE-44. Minimize soil disturbance and maximize retention and replacement of native vegetative cover for any land uses permitted in Erosion and Landslide Hazard Areas.

Policy NE-45. Encourage special building design and construction measures in areas with severe seismic hazards to minimize the risk of structural damage, fire, and injury to occupants during a seismic event and to prevent post-seismic collapse.

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## ACTION PLAN

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The Natural Environment Element is implemented by related elements, plans, regulations and programs, including, but not limited to:

- The Land Use Element, which sets forth the general location and extent of the uses of land.
- The Covington Municipal Code, particularly the Environment and Zoning titles.
- The City's Shoreline Master Program.
- The Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was developed in compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act to reduce future loss of life and property resulting from disasters.
- The Urban Forestry Strategic Plan, which provides recommendations to guide the community regarding planning, management, and maintenance of trees on publicly managed properties.
- The City's Stormwater Management Plan and federal NPDES Stormwater Permit Program.

See Exhibit NE-1 for actions and responsibilities.



### Exhibit NE-1. Natural Environment Action Plan

Implementation Action	Responsibility
Consider updates to development codes as needed to implement environmental sustainability measures	Community Development Department
Implement and enforce development regulations	Community Development Department
Hazard Mitigation Plan annual progress report	City Council and Public Works Department
Urban Forestry Strategic Plan annual work plans	Tree Team
Stormwater Program implementation including ongoing compliance with federal and state laws such as NPDES	Public Works Department



# CAPITAL FACILITIES AND UTILITIES



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ An inventory of capital facilities and utilities, service providers, and existing and future level of service (LOS) for each type of capital facility.
- ▶ A capital facilities plan (CFP) to provide urban services to existing and future development in the city limits and Urban Growth Area (UGA).

*(Continued on next page)*

## PURPOSE

The Capital Facilities and Utilities Element ensures that adequate public and franchise facilities and services are available to serve existing residents and businesses and future growth as outlined in the Land Use Element.

The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) should be adequate to maintain established levels of service (LOS) for each type of capital facility as the City grows. Capital facilities include City- and special district-operated water systems, sewer systems, stormwater systems, schools, parks and recreation facilities, police facilities, and fire facilities. The City of Covington is expecting significant new housing and job growth during the planning period, and the City and

*WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS  
CHAPTER (continued)*

- ▶ A financing plan to fund the CFP required to serve new growth over the next six years. A 20-year CFP with identification of broad funding sources.
- ▶ A summary of power, natural gas, and telecommunications utilities and efforts to coordinate growth projections and future utility extension plans.
- ▶ Goals and policies to provide direction to guide capital facilities and utilities planning.
- ▶ A capital facility action plan.

other service providers have a responsibility to provide urban services and meet adopted LOS standards. Capital facility planning is directly tied to the quality of life and economic development activities in the community, which depend on high quality schools, a robust park and trail system, a well-maintained street system, responsive fire and emergency services, and capacity to provide sewer and water service.

Residents and businesses rely on power, gas, and telecommunication services. This element also addresses coordination and expansion of these utility services to meet the growth anticipated over the 2015-2035 planning period.

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## ISSUES AND TRENDS

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### CAPITAL FACILITIES

The City provides capital facilities for municipal buildings, streets, parks and recreation, and stormwater. Other capital facilities are provided by non-City service providers as shown in Exhibit CF-1. The capital facilities plans in Exhibit CF-1 are hereby incorporated by reference. The Capital Facilities Plan Appendix provides a summary of each provider's facilities, LOS demand, and planned facilities. Highlights of the analysis show:

- **Municipal Buildings:** To maintain Covington's adopted levels of service for administrative space, additional space will be needed. In the 20-year life of the Comprehensive Plan, it is anticipated that the City will build a City Hall. In the interim, it is likely that the City will need to lower its LOS until such a plan can be accomplished. The recommended space needs for City maintenance facilities indicates the City



### Exhibit CF-1. Capital Facility Service Providers

Public Service	Provider	Relevant Plans and Documents
<b>Municipal Buildings</b>	City of Covington	Public Works Maintenance Facility Study 2013 New City Hall Feasibility Study 2012
<b>Police</b>	King County Sheriff (contracted service)	City Council Police LOS 2007 Resolution (RES 07-42)
<b>Fire and Emergency Services</b>	Kent Regional Fire Authority, Maple Valley Fire District (Mutual Aid)	Kent Regional Fire Authority Capital Facilities and Equipment Plan, 2014-33
<b>Schools</b>	Kent School District	Kent School District: Kent School District, Capital Facilities Plan, 2015-16
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>	City of Covington	Covington Parks and Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, 2010
<b>Stormwater</b>	City of Covington	Stormwater: City of Covington 2010 Comprehensive Stormwater Plan and 2015 Stormwater Management Plan
<b>Streets</b>	City of Covington	
<b>Water</b>	Covington Water District, King Co. Water District 111, Ham Water Co.	Covington Water District District: Covington Water System Plan Update, 2007
<b>Sewer</b>	Soos Creek Water and Sewer District	Soos Creek: 2014 Soos Creek Water and Sewer District Sewer Comprehensive Plan; King County Wastewater: King County Regional Wastewater Services Plan, 2013 Comprehensive Review

## CAPITAL FACILITIES ELEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Capital facilities generally have a long useful life and include City and non-City operated infrastructure, buildings, and equipment.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that the Capital Facilities Plan Element include an inventory of facilities, a forecast of the future needs for facilities, proposed expanded or new capital facilities, at least a six-year plan to finance capital facilities, and a requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of existing needs. (RCW 36.70a.070(3))

## UTILITIES ELEMENT REQUIREMENTS

GMA requires that a Utilities Element address the “general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including, but not limited to, electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines.” (RCW 36.70a.070(4))

may be able to lower its LOS standard, which it will not be able to meet, even with the new maintenance facility. The LOS deficit would continue to grow as the population increases.

- **Police Services:** The City is meeting its adopted service levels for officers as of 2015. To maintain current staffing standards, the Police Department will need to hire an additional two officers by 2021, and an additional seven officers by 2035. The City could lower the LOS standard or add officers over time. The space needs for officers would likely be addressed in concert with the evaluation of City Hall space needs above.
- **Fire Protection:** Even though the response time standards have improved in Covington, the Kent Regional Fire Authority (KRFA) is still not meeting the suburban LOS Standard 90% of the time. Therefore, the KRFA is pursuing fire impact fees in Covington to ensure appropriate facilities are available as growth occurs. The KRFA’s Capital Facilities Plan includes building an additional fire station in Covington, which would be better able to serve the southern part of the city. Additionally, Station 75 will be moved further west, and there will be an extension of SE 256th from SR 18 out to 204th Avenue, which should improve response times in eastern Covington.
- **Schools:** Using present student generation rates, approximately 780 additional school-age students could be added by 2021, and approximately 2,600 school-age students could be added by 2035. The Kent School District has identified capital projects serving Covington area residents and students; some of the improvements would be funded by school impact fees.



- **Parks:** The City has a deficit for all facility types based on its present LOS. As the population is expected to grow 50% by 2035, the estimated deficits are anticipated to grow if these same LOS standards remain in place. The City is updating its Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan to consider appropriate LOS and capital needs for 20 years. A six-year plan is proposed in the CFP to address near-term needs. The City's parks department is pursuing park impact fees to help offset the growing capital needs.
- **Stormwater:** LOS for stormwater activities are regulated by the City's code and engineering design standards. New development is conditioned to meet water quality, runoff control, and erosion control requirements. The City prepared a stormwater comprehensive plan in 2010, established a stormwater enterprise fund in 2012, and uses a portion of the customer rate charges to fund capital facilities. A Stormwater Management Plan was completed on March 31, 2015 and is updated annually as part of the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II permit. These plans have identified facilities, programs, and regulations to help manage stormwater quantity and water quality.
- **Water:** The Covington Water District has the capacity to serve its designated service area in the city and UGA. The District has acquired additional water rights in recent years and expects that water consumption rates per residential unit will continue to decline based on a greater share of multi-family units being built in the future. The District is in the process of updating its master plan, which was last completed in 2007. King County Water District #111 also serves a limited number of properties with minimal capacity for new growth compared to the rest of the city.



Covington Police Officer

Source: City of Covington, 2015

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The City of Covington is responsible for capital facility planning for municipal buildings and facilities, parks and recreation, streets, and stormwater. Other capital facilities such as schools, water, sewer, fire and emergency services, and police services are provided by other municipal service providers. Utilities are provided through independent service providers. Therefore, it is important that the City work collaboratively with the service providers to ensure that adequate facilities are provided to meet LOS standards based on the City's land use plan that outlines the amount and location of future growth in housing and employment.

- **Wastewater:** The Soos Creek Water and Sewer District develops and analyzes its own growth projections to ensure the District can accommodate future urban growth within its service area. The District indicates that new growth is partially offset by increases as residences become more efficient. The District's 2014 District Sewer Comprehensive Plan identifies numerous capital projects, some of which are located within the city limits. All recommended projects belong to one of two categories: pipe replacements/upgrades or lift station replacement/upgrades.
- **Transportation:** This capital facility is addressed in the Transportation Element. Six-year and 20-year capital improvement programs are included in the Capital Facilities Appendix. Along with revenue projections, the improvements are designed to meet the City's adopted LOS.

Cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) are required to develop a financing plan to demonstrate the ability to fund the six-year capital facilities plan and support future growth consistent with the land use plan. The total estimated cost for the six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is approximately \$135 million dollars. Currently, the City of Covington has some capital projects identified for the 7-20 year planning period. The City is identifying potential funding sources for this 20-year period; these are less detailed than for the six-year period. The City has plans to construct a new City Hall facility as a 20-year capital planning project. Several transportation projects are planned over the 7-20 year period to maintain concurrency. The City is also working on a PROS plan that includes an updated six-year CIP and a longer-term parks plan.



The current revenue projections for future capital facilities shows a total funding gap of approximately \$76.4 million for all parks, stormwater and transportation. The forecasted revenues are significantly less than necessary to support the City's identified CIPs. In the past, Covington has relied heavily on one-time revenues to fund capital facilities, which are not included in the revenue forecast. As such, it is imperative that the City consider new funding and financing sources that can be dedicated to capital facilities to ensure it can meet its six-year CIP priorities as required under GMA. Several policy changes could be made to generate additional revenues or establish debt to fund these projects. These are described in the CFP Appendix. Beyond financing and funding options, the City always has the option to reprioritize its CIPs based on revised LOS standards to lower the funding need for projects. Otherwise, if the City cannot provide adequate funding for the CIP to support new growth, the City's land use plan must be revisited.

## UTILITIES

### *Puget Sound Energy*

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) owns and maintains the power distribution system within the city limits. Overhead power lines are required to be undergrounded as development progresses. Underground conduits generally supply secondary power to structures in the study area.

In 2009, to improve system reliability, a new 230 kv transmission line was installed to replace the 115 kv line between the PSE Berrydale Substation and the BPA Covington Substation within the city.

Covington is currently served by the Soos Creek and Pipe Lake Substation. To increase capacity and reliability in



BPA Substation

Source: Komonews.com 2014



Light Standard and Streetscape  
Source: Studio Cascade 2014

Covington, PSE is planning to develop a new substation within city limits called the Jenkins Substation. (PSE, 2015).

### ***Bonneville Power Administration***

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) owns and operates most of the higher voltage transmission lines and substations in the Pacific Northwest. According to the 2014 BPA 10-Year Plan, no projects are currently planned at the Covington substation or involving the transmission lines in Covington. However, BPA is planning stormwater facility upgrades and planning for new buildings and parking along Covington Way within five years.

### ***Natural Gas***

PSE provides natural gas service to Covington and the surrounding areas. The location, capacity and timing of system improvements depend greatly on opportunities for expansion and on how quickly the study area and surrounding areas grow. Natural gas is supplied to Covington from Canada via the Williams Northwest Pipeline through the Covington Gate Station. PSE natural gas supply mains transport gas from the gate stations to District regulators. Williams Pipeline is proposing an upgrade on the pipeline over a 3-4 year period following 2015 and requesting a staging area it will need for the project in Evergreen Park. The City anticipates that by granting them an area for staging, they will level it for future installation of a play area.

### ***Solid Waste***

The City Council adopted an ordinance on July 1, 2015 requiring mandatory garbage pickup for both residential and commercial customers. Solid waste for residential and commercial customers is provided by Republic Services,

which operates under a contract with the City. Republic Services provides service for both solid waste disposal and recycling. Commercial establishments are responsible for contracting directly with Republic Services for their own services. Solid waste transfer stations are provided by King County. The nearest station serving Covington is the Algona Transfer Station, which is scheduled to be replaced soon. King County is undergoing the site selection process for the new facility. The Cedar Hills Regional Landfill is the only regional landfill in King County and is located in Maple Valley and operated by King County.

### **Telecommunications**

The City of Covington is served by Comcast, Century Link, and WAVE. Comcast provides high speed internet, phone, and television services while Century Link provides telephone and high speed internet services. WAVE provides high speed internet services. Service is available throughout the city. In addition, some customers may choose to go wireless and utilize service through a mobile phone provider.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### **Limited resources for Capital Investments.**

Like most cities, Covington has limited resources to allocate toward both capital facility maintenance and new facilities. Revenues for capital facilities are also impacted by regional and national economic trends, which bring uncertainty to the capital planning process. The City must plan for existing and new capital facilities to support new growth while accounting for changes in revenues over time.



Clements Capacity Project/263rd Drainage Improvements

Source: City of Covington 2015

## VISION CONNECTION

Capital facilities are necessary to provide basic services and maintain a certain quality of life for Covington’s residents and businesses. However, capital facilities are also the key to advancing the City’s brand and strategy of “Growing Toward Greatness.” This element helps meet a framework goal to plan, develop, implement and maintain high quality capital infrastructure and services that reflect the needs of a growing community. The realization of plans for both the Downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village will require substantial investments in capital facilities. Pedestrian-friendly and connected streetscapes, a robust trail and park system, vibrant public spaces, and capacity to support economic development all require planning and investments in capital facilities.

### *New Growth to Support Capital Facility Investments.*

Covington expects an additional 3,920 housing units and 3,706 jobs during the 2015-2035 planning period. This robust expected growth will provide additional revenues for investments in capital facilities. The City must ensure that new growth is coordinated with capital facility needs and that investments are coordinated, prioritized, and meet other objectives for the City, such as implementing the Downtown and Hawk Property subarea plans.

### *Reduced LOS Standards.*

As Covington continues to grow, the City may have to reduce its LOS standards for certain facilities or risk falling below the standards.

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## OUR CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN

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The Capital Facilities Appendix presents the City’s physical and funding plan to ensure that capital facilities are provided as growth occurs within the capabilities of the City. The Appendix also presents the City’s review of non-City provider plans and efforts to plan for growth in Covington in a coordinated manner.

Further, this element’s goals and policies address how the City intends to ensure that facilities and utilities are in place to serve current and future residents and employees. This element requires that capital facilities are in place and available when new development occurs, otherwise known as concurrency. A requirement to reassess the land use element is included in the policies if probable funding falls short of existing needs.

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## GOALS AND POLICIES

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### CAPITAL FACILITIES GOALS

- Goal CF-I.** Provide public and private utility services and facilities that enhance the Covington community's quality of life, address past deficiencies, and meet current and future demands in a safe, reliable, efficient, and fiscally and environmentally responsible manner.
- Goal CF-II.** Provide capital facilities and utilities that meet acceptable levels of service and guidelines, and support and anticipate demand from new and existing development without compromising public health and safety.
- Goal CF-III.** Provide coordinated projects and services among the City, private utilities, and contracted service providers to take advantage of opportunities to accomplish multiple purposes and functions when maintaining, installing, and building new infrastructure and facilities.
- Goal CF-IV.** Prioritize, coordinate, plan, expand and site essential public facilities through an inter-jurisdictional process.



CIP 1028 SE 240th Street, 196th Avenue SE and SE Wax Road Overlay

Source: City of Covington 2015

## CAPITAL FACILITIES POLICIES

### *Levels of Service and Development Requirements*

Policy CF-1. Adopt the levels of service shown in Policy CF-1 Table to promote the community's quality of life.



Covington City Hall

Source: Studio Cascade 2014

### Policy CF-1 Table. Level of Service Standards

Service Type	Level of Service Standard
<b>Municipal Buildings</b>	Base: 617 SF/1,000 Population Target City Offices: 1,100 SF/1,000 Population Target City Maintenance Shops: 800 SF/1,000 Population
<b>Police</b>	0.75 Officers /1,000 Population
<b>Fire Service</b>	Response time objectives consistent with Kent Regional Fire Authority Capital Facilities and Equipment Plan, 2014-33
<b>Schools</b>	Student to teacher ratios and student generation rates of Kent School District, Capital Facilities Plan, 2015-16
<b>Parks</b>	See adopted Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.
<b>Stormwater</b>	Stormwater Maintain existing capacity. New facilities are constructed in accordance with the 2013-2018 Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit.
<b>Transportation</b>	See Transportation Element.
<b>Water</b>	Gallons per capita consistent with Covington Water System Plan Update, 2007, as amended
<b>Wastewater</b>	Gallons per capita consistent with 2014 Soos Creek Water and Sewer District Sewer Comprehensive Plan and King County Regional Wastewater Services Plan, 2013 Comprehensive Review



- Policy CF-2. Require sufficient system capacity for surface water, potable water, sewer, and transportation prior to approval of any new development. New development must pass concurrency tests before development may be permitted.
- Policy CF-3. Require new development to obtain a letter of water and sewer availability and adequate fire flow prior to submitting a development application.
- Policy CF-4. Encourage the hookup to a public water system for those properties on existing private well systems.
- Policy CF-5. Encourage conversion from on-site wastewater disposal systems as sewer lines become available.
- Policy CF-6. Provide for municipal, maintenance, and public safety building space reflecting changing needs for staffing, information technology, and community service needs.
- Policy CF-7. Encourage community policing and other business and neighborhood community watch programs to improve public safety for both businesses and residences.
- Policy CF-8. Support the capital and operation plans of the Kent Regional Fire Authority to assure response time objectives are met in the community.
- Policy CF-9. Provide for a connected transportation system that enhances emergency response times and environmental objectives to

minimize impervious area and sufficiently treat stormwater.

Policy CF-10. Apply the adopted surface water design manual as the minimum requirement for all development projects and other actions that could cause or worsen flooding, erosion, water quality, and habitat problems for both upstream and downstream development.

Policy CF-11. Manage the City's stormwater utility to meet federal and state permit requirements and advance environmental goals.



Fire Station 78

Source: Kent Regional Fire Authority 2015

### *Coordination and Efficiency*

Policy CF-12. Coordinate with service providers and utilities to provide reliable and cost-effective services to the public based on the City's anticipated and planned growth.

Policy CF-13. Encourage utilities and service providers to consolidate facilities, use existing facilities, construct within existing transportation and utilities corridors and to minimize visual impacts of new and expanded facilities where technically feasible.

Policy CF-14. Encourage public and private community service providers to share or reuse facilities when appropriate, to reduce costs, conserve land, and provide convenience and amenities for the public. Encourage joint siting and shared use of facilities for schools, community centers, health facilities, cultural and entertainment facilities, public safety/public works, libraries, swimming pools, and other social and recreational facilities.



- Policy CF-15. Require private utilities and service providers working within the city limits to obtain franchise or other agreements with the City that includes service levels and requirements meeting anticipated growth and demand as well as other local, state, and federal regulations.
- Policy CF-16. Coordinate capital improvements with related improvements by adjacent jurisdictions.
- Policy CF-17. Attend regular meetings with local utility and service providers to maintain ongoing coordination between agencies.
- Policy CF-18. Work in partnership with the Kent School District to offer quality education to the Covington community. Consider partnerships with human service and parks and recreation programs and facilities.
- Policy CF-19. Coordinate street repaving efforts with utility providers to prevent excavation of newly paved street and trail surfaces by prohibiting excavation of new pavement for utility projects for a period of the first five years after new paving.
- Policy CF-20. When infrastructure projects are proposed within City right-of-way, assist in the coordination between communication providers to ensure that all interested parties are given the opportunity to install facilities in common trenches.



Covington Elementary School,  
Source: Kent School District, 2015

Policy CF-21. Coordinate with natural gas providers, with transmission pipelines within the city to address pipeline safety and natural disaster emergency response issues.

Policy CF-22. Seek cost-effective, innovative, and state of the art solutions for utility and telecommunications infrastructure.

### *Funding, Financial Planning & Maintenance*

Policy CF-23. Aggressively pursue funding from all levels of government and private agencies to accomplish the City's capital investment program while optimizing resources.

Policy CF-24. Ensure budget decisions are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy CF-25. Fund non-transportation capital projects and improvements (e.g. parks, trails, City offices) through general revenues, impact fees, grants, or bonds as determined in the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Policy CF-26. When planning, developing, and administering the City's capital investment program, give primary consideration to how the public's health, safety, and welfare will benefit. The City should schedule and phase infrastructure that supports the planned for and expected growth and development.

Policy CF-27. Prepare and adopt a six-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) regularly and include reviews of forecasts and actual growth, revenue and costs totals based on adopted level of service standards, and the means



and timing by which identified deficiencies will be corrected. Annually adopt a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) with the budget that more specifically identifies financing and implementation of facilities contained in the six-year CIP. Ensure the 20-year projected growth, level of service, and funding projections are also considered in the CIP.

Policy CF-28. Maintain and regularly update an inventory of existing capital facilities owned by the City.

Policy CF-29. Impose impact fees on new development so that “growth may pay for growth” only when associated growth-caused improvements are reasonably related to the new development; fees should not exceed a roughly proportionate share of the costs of system improvements.

Policy CF-30. Once established, impact fees shall be adjusted periodically based upon an appropriate study or other relevant data, to ensure that the fees reflect the cost of planned system improvements related to growth.

Policy CF-31. Reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of existing needs. The reassessment may result in changes to growth projections, alternative level of service standards, or expanded funding or financing options.



Covington Park

Source: City of Covington 2015

## PRIORITIZATION

Policy CF-32 suggests the City develop a project prioritization rating system for all capital facility projects. Example criteria for roadway projects are listed below to illustrate how such a prioritization system could work. The City will determine its particular criteria and rankings as part of its CIP process that may differ from these.

Example Criteria	Description
Concurrency	Is the project required to meet concurrency?
Safety	Does the project address identified multi-modal safety issues?
Grant Eligibility	Does the project include elements which would make it more attractive for state or federal grant funding?
Partnerships	Does the project include funding partnerships, or include elements that would be more attractive for such partnerships?
Traveler Benefits	How many travelers would benefit from the project? [Note, this may need to be relative between projects, rather than referring to absolute thresholds.]
Magnitude of Improvement	What size of facility would the project improve?
Multi-modal Elements	Does the project include elements that improve safety or mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and/or transit?
Environmental Constraints	Can environmental impacts be avoided or minimized?
Environmental Sustainability	Does the project reduce impacts compared to standard improvements through sustainability measures or critical area enhancements? Examples: permeable pavement or sidewalks, biofiltration beyond minimum stormwater manual requirements, buffer enhancements, critical area enhancements, etc.



Higher Favorability



Medium Favorability



Lower Favorability

Policy CF-32. Develop a project prioritization rating system for all capital facility projects.

### ***Capital Improvements Planning & Construction***

Policy CF-33. Recognize and provide for multiple purposes and functions in all City facilities, and where possible, incorporate the needs of the City's stakeholders within the design.

Policy CF-34. Focus capital investments on creating a connected, dynamic urban environment.

Policy CF-35. Minimize the cost of maintaining, operating, and other life cycle costs in the design and funding for any capital facility.

### ***Conservation & Environmental Sustainability***

Policy CF-36. Make conservation an integral part of the City's operations and management.

Policy CF-37. Encourage and support conservation strategies aimed at reducing average annual and peak day water use.

Policy CF-38. Reduce the solid waste stream and support reuse and recycling. Implement mandatory curbside collection of solid waste and recyclables and move towards mandatory collection of yardwaste.

Policy CF-39. Coordinate water quality improvement efforts with adjoining jurisdictions whose surface waters flow into or through the city.

Policy CF-40. Encourage the retention and planting of vegetation for their beneficial effects on surface water runoff, including flow attenuation, water quality enhancement, and temperature reduction.



Covington Water District, Waterwise Garden

Source: <http://www.watoxics.org/>

- Policy CF-41. Ensure construction, maintenance, and retrofits of capital facilities, and other capital investments support conservation of resources, such as water reuse and installation of energy-efficient electric fixtures.
- Policy CF-42. Ensure the design and location of infrastructure improvements considers the impact of climate change, natural hazards, seismic occurrence, and the ability to serve the community in the event of a natural disaster.
- Policy CF-43. Promote energy efficiency and conservation methods, and utilize sustainable energy sources in City operations to support climate change reduction goals for the region.
- Policy CF-44. Minimize future energy usage and carbon emissions from street lighting through the implementation of an economically viable street lighting program that will achieve energy and cost savings.

#### *Private Franchise Utilities*

- Policy CF-45. Construct all new electrical and communication facilities underground, unless specifically exempted, as provided for in the Covington Municipal Code.
- Policy CF-46. Ensure that development regulations are consistent with and do not otherwise impair private utilities from fulfilling public service and other obligations imposed by state and federal laws.



- Policy CF-47. Support the availability of telecommunications infrastructure to service growth and development in a manner consistent with the anticipated land use pattern while minimizing the visual and environmental impacts on the community.
- Policy CF-48. Ensure that utility providers limit disturbance of vegetation within major electrical utility transmission corridors that is necessary for safety and maintenance of transmission lines, and adhere to all applicable City regulations including planting of vegetation compatible with utility lines.
- Policy CF-49. Support and participate in the long-term planning of water, sewer, electrical, and communication facilities that provide for uninterrupted service during natural disasters.
- Policy CF-50. When utilities are being installed on public property, evaluate whether spare conduit for future City telecommunications use should be installed at the same time.
- Policy CF-51. Require utility providers to design, locate, and construct facilities within public-owned properties and rights-of-way when possible, to reasonably minimize significant, individual, and cumulative adverse impacts to the environment and to protect critical areas.

*Essential Public Facilities*

- Policy CF-52. Locate proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities consistent with the Covington Comprehensive Plan and King County Countywide Planning Policies.
- Policy CF-53. Share essential public facilities with King County and neighboring counties and cities, if advantageous to both to increase operation efficiency.
- Policy CF-54. Ensure that no racial, cultural, or class group is unduly impacted by essential public facility siting or expansion decisions.
- Policy CF-55. Site essential public facilities in coordination with King County equitably. No single community should absorb an undue share of the impacts of essential public facilities. Siting should consider environmental equity and environmental, technical, and service area factors.
- Policy CF-56. Define essential public facilities based on the Growth Management Act definition, the function of the facility to serve a broad portion of the county or region, and the nature of the facility as being difficult to site or expand. Consider whether agencies have developed lists and locations of likely essential public facilities.
- Policy CF-57. Site proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities based on the following:



- A. A forecast of the future needs for the essential public facility.
- B. An analysis of the potential social and economic impacts and benefits to jurisdictions receiving or surrounding the facilities.
- C. An analysis of the proposal's consistency with County and City Policies.
- D. An analysis of alternatives to the facility, including decentralization, conservation, demand management and other strategies.
- E. An analysis of alternative sites.
- F. An analysis of environmental impacts and mitigation.
- G. Extensive public involvement.

Policy CF-58. Actively regulate and monitor designated essential public facility operations to ensure that such facilities do not cause or create a public nuisance.

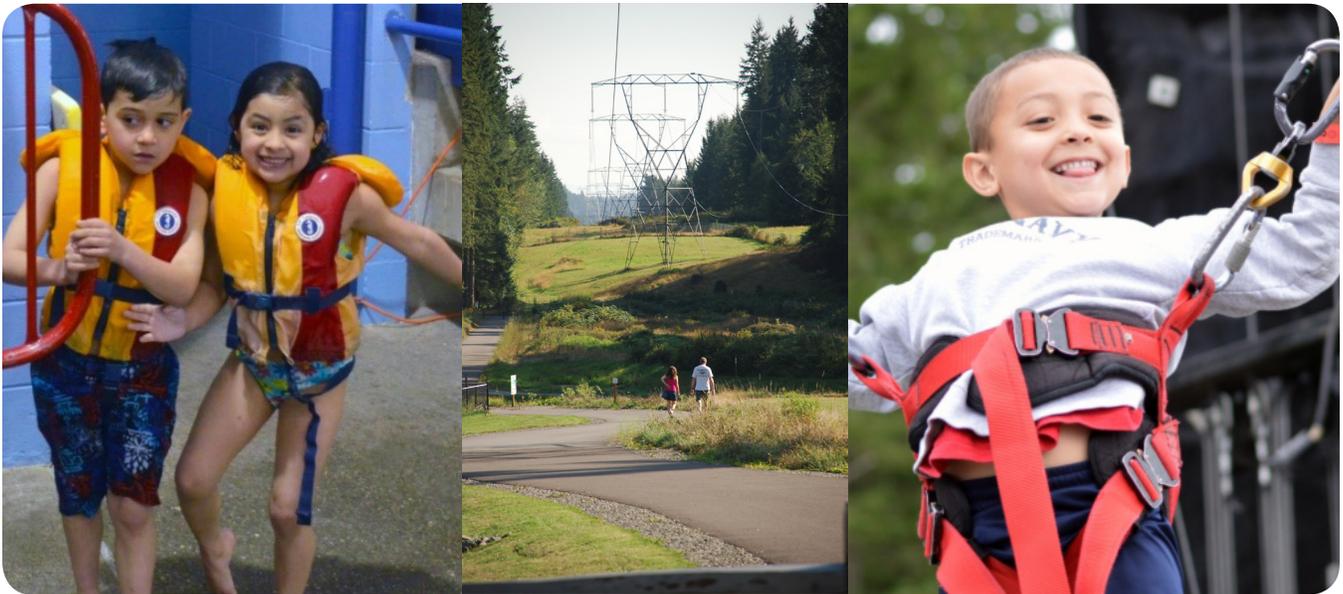
## ACTION PLAN

The City regularly reviews its capital plans as part of its budget and functional plan updates. See Exhibit CF-2.

### Exhibit CF-2. Capital Facilities Action Plan

Implementation Action	Responsibility
<p>Maintain and update annually a comprehensive CIP including municipal facilities, transportation, parks and recreation, and stormwater. The annual update should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of research on grant funding opportunities.</li> <li>• Consideration for integrating capital facilities projects to reduce costs and achieve economies of scales.</li> <li>• Development of a project prioritization system to ensure projects are advanced that meet multiple City goals and policies.</li> </ul>	<p>Community Development Department, Parks &amp; Recreation, Public Works Department, and Finance Department</p>

# PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

- ▶ A description of Covington's parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.
- ▶ An assessment of how well the City is meeting the park and recreation needs of its residents.
- ▶ Goals that meet the City's vision for Parks and Recreation.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Element is to provide goals that guide the acquisition, development, and management of parks, natural areas, trails, and recreation facilities and programs for the City of Covington. This Element works in conjunction with the City of Covington's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) plan, being updated in 2015-2016. The PROS Plan establishes a road map for providing high quality, community-driven parks, trails, natural areas, and recreation services throughout Covington.



Crystal View Park

Source: City of Covington, 2015

Quality of life is vital to the residents of Covington. From Covington’s beginning, parks and recreational pursuits have been important to the community’s quality of life, and this tradition has endured.

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## PARKS ISSUES AND TRENDS

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### CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

#### *Covington’s Parks and Recreation Facilities Today*

Covington has over 700 acres of public and privately owned parks and recreation facilities, classified into seven categories: community parks, neighborhood and pocket parks, natural areas and greenspaces, trails and bikeways, special facilities, school playfields and playgrounds, and King County Parks and Trails. See Exhibits P-1 and P-2.

The Covington Parks and Recreation Department offers athletics, fitness and wellness, cultural arts, special events, recreation, and aquatic programs – these are the foundation of residents’ opportunities to be active and connect with their community. Covington’s recreation programming is centered in four areas:

- **General Recreation:** The majority of the City’s recreation programming focuses on youth.
  - › Fitness: Youth Nutrition, Adult Zumba, Yoga, and Bootcamp.
  - › Cultural Arts: Youth Ballet, Tap & Jazz, Hip Hop, Art, and Acting.
  - › Education: Youth Math Camp, Bricks for Kidz, and Engineering Challenge.
  - › General interest: Youth Cooking, Super Sitters, Safe at Home, Adult Parenting, and Dog Obedience.
  - › Outdoor Recreation: Birding and Boating Safety.



- **Aquatics:** Covington’s Aquatic Center (formerly the King County Tahoma Pool) is a year-round indoor public pool that attracts visitors from the greater Covington area. The City offers youth swim lessons, swim teams, water polo, Dash & Splash Camp, water exercise, lap swimming, Masters Swim, Aqua Zumba, Triathlon adult swim training, and recreation swimming. The Aquatic Center averages approximately 110,000 pool users per year through general attendance, activity participants, and rental groups.
- **Athletics:** The City has been the primary provider of youth sports since 2014 and currently serves more than 2,000 youth per year through team sports, including basketball, baseball, flag football, soccer, and volleyball in addition to gymnastics, camps, track & field, and martial arts.
- **Special Events:** The City puts on more than 20 special events throughout the year, including those hosted at the Aquatic Center and in City parks. In 2014, over 5,400 people (combined) attended the five most popular events.

### *Planning For the Future*

New projects are being planned in Covington to expand parks and recreation opportunities for local residents. This includes acquiring and developing new parks, renovating or repairing existing facilities, and expanding trail corridors. Priority projects include renovation of the Covington Aquatic Center and Gerry Crick Skate Park, expansion of the Covington Community Park (Phase 2), land acquisition for new South Covington (SoCo) Park, and preliminary planning for Town Center Park Plaza, Jenkins Creek Park improvements. See Exhibit P-3.

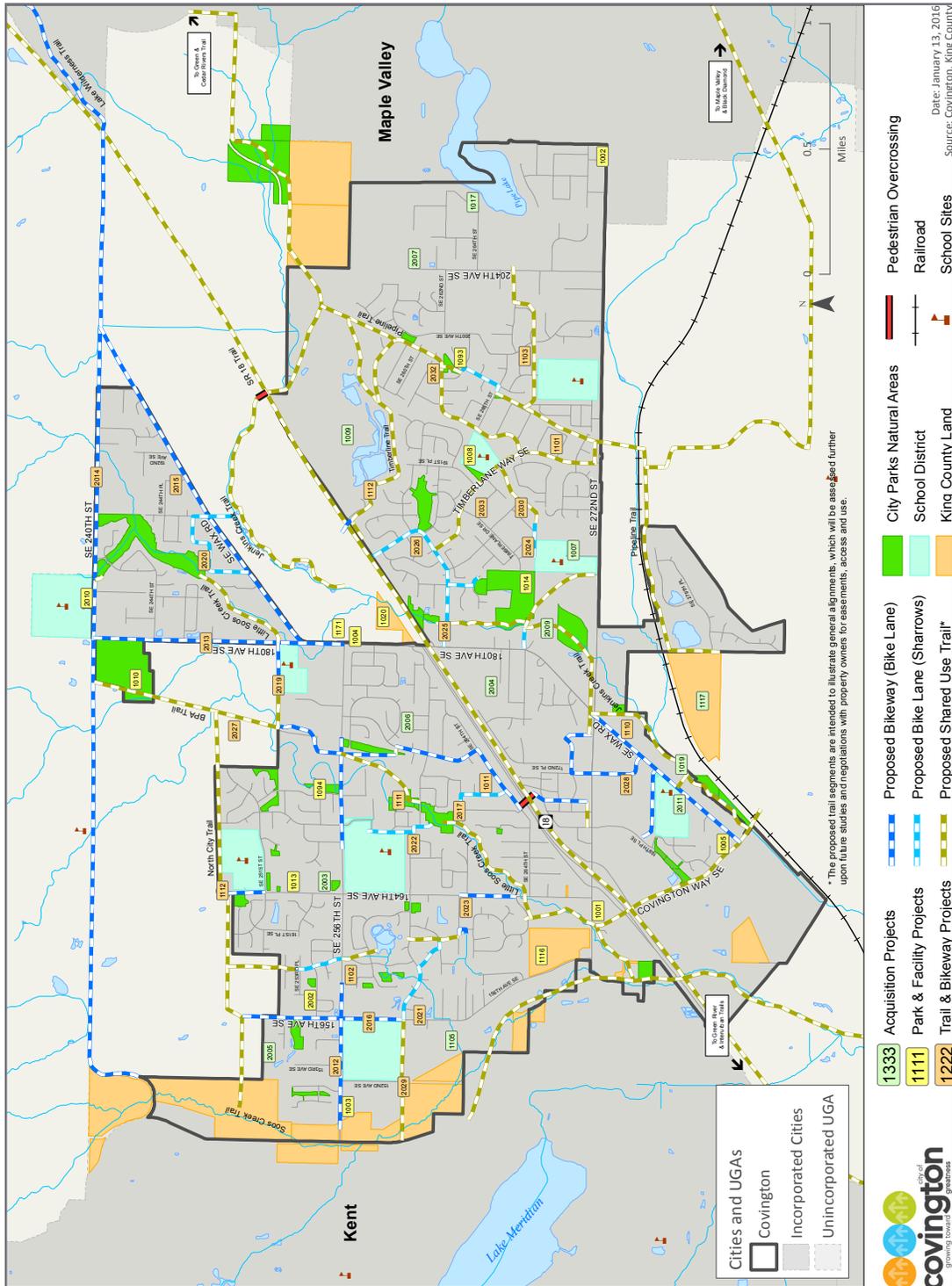
### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN**

- ▶ Covington’s population has grown rapidly, while parks and recreation facilities have not increased at a commensurate level, leading to a deficit of facilities.
- ▶ Projected future population growth will require a larger investment to provide adequate parks and recreation for residents.
- ▶ New projects are planned to expand parks and recreation, including acquisition and development of new parks, renovation or repair of existing facilities, and expanding trail corridors.





### Exhibit P-3. Proposed Capital Facilities - Capital Improvement Plan



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015

## Service Standards

The City has established service standards for parks and recreation facilities, which helps the City plan facilities to serve expected population growth. The standards based on the City's PROS Plan (draft 2015) are:

- Community Park (City-owned): 5 acres per 1,000 people
- Neighborhood Parks (City-owned and private): 3 acres per 1,000 people
- Natural Areas and Greenspace (City-owned and private): 6 acres per 1,000 people
- Trails (City-owned and private): 0.75 miles per 1,000 people
- Bikeways (City-owned): 0.75 miles per 1,000 people

Today Covington has a deficit of parks and recreation facilities to meet community demand. Meeting service standards today would require approximately 42 additional acres of parks and 16 additional miles of trails and bikeways. The deficit of parks and recreation facilities will increase to approximately 109 acres of park land and 30 miles of trails and bikeways in 2035, unless additional facilities are added. Exhibit P-4 shows the current and future level of service for each type of park facility.



Flag Football Team

Source: City of Covington, 2015

**Exhibit P-4. Level of Service (LOS) Analysis**

Time Period	Population	Acres Needed to Meet LOS Standard	Current 2015 Acres/Mile Available	Net Reserve or Deficit
<b>Community Park (City-owned) LOS Standard: 5 acres/ 1, 000 people</b>				
2015	18,520	92.60	50.20	(42.40)
2021	21,257	106.29	50.20	(56.09)
2035	27,645	138.22	50.20	(88.02)
<b>Neighborhood Parks (City-owned and private) LOS Standard: 3 acres/ 1,000 people</b>				
2015	18,520	55.56	61.12	5.56
2021	21,257	63.77	61.12	(2.65)
2035	27,645	82.93	61.12	(21.81)
<b>Natural Areas &amp; Greenspace (City-owned and private) LOS Standard: 6 acres/ 1,000 people</b>				
2015	18,520	111.12	206.97	95.85
2021	21,257	127.54	206.97	79.43
2035	27,645	165.87	206.97	41.10
<b>Trails (City-owned and private) LOS Standard: 0.75 miles/ 1,000 people</b>				
2015	18,520	13.89	7.34	(6.55)
2021	21,257	15.94	7.34	(8.60)
2035	27,645	20.73	7.34	(13.39)
<b>Bikeways (City-owned) LOS Standard: 0.75 miles/ 1,000 people</b>				
2015	18,520	13.89	5.03	(8.86)
2021	21,257	15.94	5.03	(10.91)
2035	27,645	20.73	5.03	(15.70)

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

*Growing Population and Limited Funding*

The population of Covington is expected to grow 50 percent between 2015 and 2035, creating a challenge for the City to acquire new parks to serve the growing population. To meet service standards in 2035 would require an additional 30 miles of trails and bikeways and more than 109 acres of new parks.



The 2015 LOS is:

- Community Parks: 2.71 acres per 1,000 population
- Neighborhood Parks: 3.30 acres per 1,000 population
- Trails: 0.40 miles per 1,000 population
- Bikeways: 0.27 miles per 1,000 population

In an environment of limited resources and competing needs for City funds, a strong community commitment will be needed to implement many of the identified projects and meet service standards. New funding sources, such as a bond, levy, or special assessment, backed by voters, may be needed to make these projects a reality.

### ***Limited Land Available***

As a City with a defined planning area and growing population, Covington's ability to significantly add land to its holdings is limited. More attention will be paid to investing in existing parks, creating linkages between existing and planned parks and trails, leveraging regional parks and trails systems, and to ensuring new growth provides for appropriate gathering and recreation space onsite.

### ***Partnerships***

Regional trails plans have been developed by King County in coordination with Covington and neighboring communities. Inter-agency partnerships and master planned developments such as the Lakepointe Urban Village will help ensure connected facilities that serve the broader Covington community. Partnerships with the School District is also an opportunity as the District has undeveloped and underdeveloped facilities that could be improved by the City.

## **VISION CONNECTION**

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element supports Covington's vision for an unmatched quality of life and framework goals for integrating nature in neighborhoods, promoting mobility, supporting active and healthy living, supporting economic development, the development of the Town Center, supporting youth and families, and promoting community arts, recreation, and education.

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## COVINGTON'S PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

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Covington's parks and recreation plan is based on the following principles:

Covington is responsive to community needs. The City will establish specialized recreation programs and acquire additional parkland to meet the needs of its growing and diverse community. Partnering with other agencies, Covington will pursue opportunities and innovative solutions for new facilities and inclusive access to services.

Covington promotes active lifestyles, personal fitness, and a greater sense of place and community. Through joint marketing efforts and partnership development with regional health and fitness providers, Covington strives to be one of the healthiest cities in Washington.

Covington is a walkable community with an expanded trails network connecting parks and natural areas with neighborhoods and downtown. This includes a comprehensive system of on-road bicycle routes as well as off-road multi-purpose trails, so people have alternative transportation options and access to passive recreation opportunities for wellness and exploration.

Safe, attractive, well-kept parks and natural areas will be a key contributor to the city's health and economic prosperity. The City's parks maintenance and operations activities as well as capital investments are important to meeting this principle. Community outreach and education will build awareness of the benefits of parks, trails, and recreation, along with encouraging residents to participate in improving their park system.



Concert in the Park

Source: City of Covington, 2015



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## GOALS

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The following goals for Covington's parks, recreation, and open spaces have been developed through a community planning process.

- Goal-I. Encourage meaningful public involvement in park and recreation planning and inform residents through department communications.**
- Goal-II. Establish a varied and inclusive suite of recreation programs that accommodate a spectrum of ages, interests, and abilities.**
- Goal-III. Acquire and develop a high-quality, diversified system of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces and trails that is attractive, functional, accessible, and safe – providing equitable access to all residents.**
- Goal-IV. Protect and manage the City's environmentally-sensitive lands, open spaces, and natural and cultural resources to highlight their uniqueness, local history, and environmental value.**
- Goal-V. Develop a high-quality system of multi-use parks, trails, and bicycle and pedestrian corridors that connect to regional trails and provides access to significant local landscapes, public facilities, neighborhoods, and businesses.**
- Goal-VII. Provide a parks, trails, recreational facilities, and open space system that is efficient to administer and operate, while protecting capital investment.**

The goals and objectives from the Covington Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan are incorporated by reference as amended.

### LEVELS OF SERVICE

The City adopts levels of service standards in the PROS Plan as LOS standards (see below), hereby incorporated by reference as amended.

#### Exhibit P-5. Parks LOS

Facility Type	Unit of Measure	Existing LOS	Target LOS
Community Park (City-owned)	Acres per 1,000 population	2.71	5.00
Neighborhood Park (City-owned and private)	Acres per 1,000 population	3.30	3.00
Natural Areas & Green Space (City-owned and private)	Acres per 1,000 population	11.18	6.00
Trails (City-owned and private)	Miles per 1,000 population	0.40	0.75
Bikeways (City-owned)	Miles per 1,000 population	0.27	0.75

### ACTION PLAN

Implementation of this Element will be spelled out in the updated Covington PROS Plan, which includes a list of proposed parks and recreation projects, estimated costs, and a discussion of funding sources and options. Because current funding sources are inadequate to meet the need for new parks and recreation facilities, projects in the PROS Plan have been prioritized into high, medium, and low categories, through consideration of community need, population distribution, project opportunities, and potential funding.

# SHORELINE



## WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

This element addresses  
Covington's shorelines of the state  
– segments of Big Soos Creek,  
Jenkins Creek, and Pipe Lake.

## SHORELINE ELEMENT

Since the early 1970s, the Washington State Shoreline Management Act (SMA) has required that jurisdictions develop shoreline management programs for areas with significant shorelines.

Washington State, in partnership with Department of Ecology (Ecology), requires that cities with areas designated as "Shorelines of the State" update their Shoreline Master Program in accordance with the SMA and the State Shoreline Master Programs Guidelines.

One of the goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA) incorporates the goals and policies of the SMA as set forth in RCW 90.58.020. A community's shoreline master program goals and policies is considered part of the

**KEY TERMS**

“Shorelines” means all of the water areas of the state, including reservoirs, and their associated shorelands, together with the lands underlying them; except (i) shorelines of statewide significance; (ii) shorelines on segments of streams upstream of a point where the mean annual flow is twenty cubic feet per second or less and the wetlands associated with such upstream segments; and (iii) shorelines on lakes less than twenty acres in size and wetlands associated with such small lakes. (RCW 90.58.030(2)(e))

Segments of Big Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, and Pipe Lake are shorelines of the state in Covington.

Comprehensive Plan. The shoreline master program development regulations are considered part of a community’s GMA development regulations.

In July 2007, the City of Covington obtained a grant from Ecology to conduct a comprehensive Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update. As a result, the City inventoried its shorelines and developed goals, policies, and regulations for any new development along the city’s shorelines. The goals and policies were developed with the help of an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee that included property owners along Jenkins Creek, Soos Creek, and Pipe Lake; members of the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission; a representative from Soos Creek Water & Sewer District; an area homeowner association member; and a member of the business community.

In March 2011, the City Council forwarded the final draft of the SMP to Ecology for its approval (Ordinance No. 05-11). In April 2011, Ecology adopted the City of Covington’s Final SMP.

This element summarizes and provides the SMP goals, as well as incorporates the City’s SMP by reference.



## SHORELINE MANAGEMENT ACT

Washington's Shoreline Management Act (SMA) was adopted by the public in a 1972 referendum "to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines." The Act has three broad policies:

- ▶ Encourage water-dependent uses: "uses shall be preferred which are consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the natural environment, or are unique to or dependent upon use of the states' shorelines..."
- ▶ Protect shoreline natural resources, including "...the land and its vegetation and wildlife, and the water of the state and their aquatic life..."
- ▶ Promote public access: "the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of natural shorelines of the state shall be preserved to the greatest extent feasible consistent with the overall best interest of the state and the people generally."

The SMA recognizes that "shorelines are among the most valuable and fragile" of the state's resources. The SMA, and the City of Covington, recognize and protect private property rights along the shoreline, while aiming to preserve the quality of this unique resource for all state residents.



Pipe Lake, King County 2015

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Three shorelines of the state are found in Covington: Big Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, and Pipe Lake. Shoreline jurisdiction generally includes the water bodies at greater than 20 cubic feet per second flow or lakes of 20 acres or more plus 200 feet landward of the waterbody and associated wetlands. The three shorelines in Covington encompass about 104 acres of shoreline jurisdiction and 2.45 miles of shorelines and lakeshore. Shoreline jurisdiction is a management area where shoreline uses, ecological function, and public access are balanced consistent with SMA goals.

The City's SMP has been prepared consistent with the SMA and provides goals, policies, and regulations of each shoreline. The SMP is adopted by the City of Covington and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). The City administers the SMP, though Ecology has authority over shoreline conditional use permits and shoreline variances.

Predominant uses along Covington shorelines include low-density residential, utility, and mixed housing/office uses. The stream corridors contain floodplains and wetlands; minimal critical areas are located along Pipe Lake. Planned land uses match present uses – residential, industrial (utility), and public. There are some adjacent public access locations just outside the Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek shoreline jurisdiction boundaries.

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# SHORELINE ISSUES AND TRENDS

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## CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

The City's shorelines include Big Soos Creek, Jenkins Creek, Pipe Lake, and their associated shorelands. The total area subject to the City's updated SMP is approximately 104 acres, and encompasses 12,934 lineal feet (2.45 miles) of stream and lakeshore.

Big Soos Creek is surrounded largely by very low-density residential uses and undeveloped lands. Other land uses include a small strip of industrial lands along the eastern edge of the shoreline management area and SR 18 bisecting the area roughly in half from northeast to southwest. The two SR 18 bridge spans and associated embankment fill, armoring, footings, and pilings are the only known shoreline modifications in the Big Soos Creek shoreline area within city limits. Public access opportunities exist on public lands inside and outside of shoreline jurisdiction, such as the adjacent Soos Creek Park. Floodplains and wetlands make up much of the shoreline jurisdiction along Big Soos Creek. The stream is used by chinook and coho salmon as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout. (The Watershed Company, November 2010)

Along Jenkins Creek, over half of the shoreland area is in low-density residential uses. Much of the rest of the land is in public utility use by the Bonneville Power Administration's Covington substation or is undeveloped. Covington Way SE crosses the shoreline jurisdiction of Jenkins Creek just southeast of SE Wax Road outside the city limits (King County jurisdiction), while SE Wax Road runs parallel to Jenkins Creek just outside the shoreline



Pipe Lake, King County



Big Soos Creek  
The Watershed Company, 2010



Jenkins Creek  
The Watershed Company, 2010

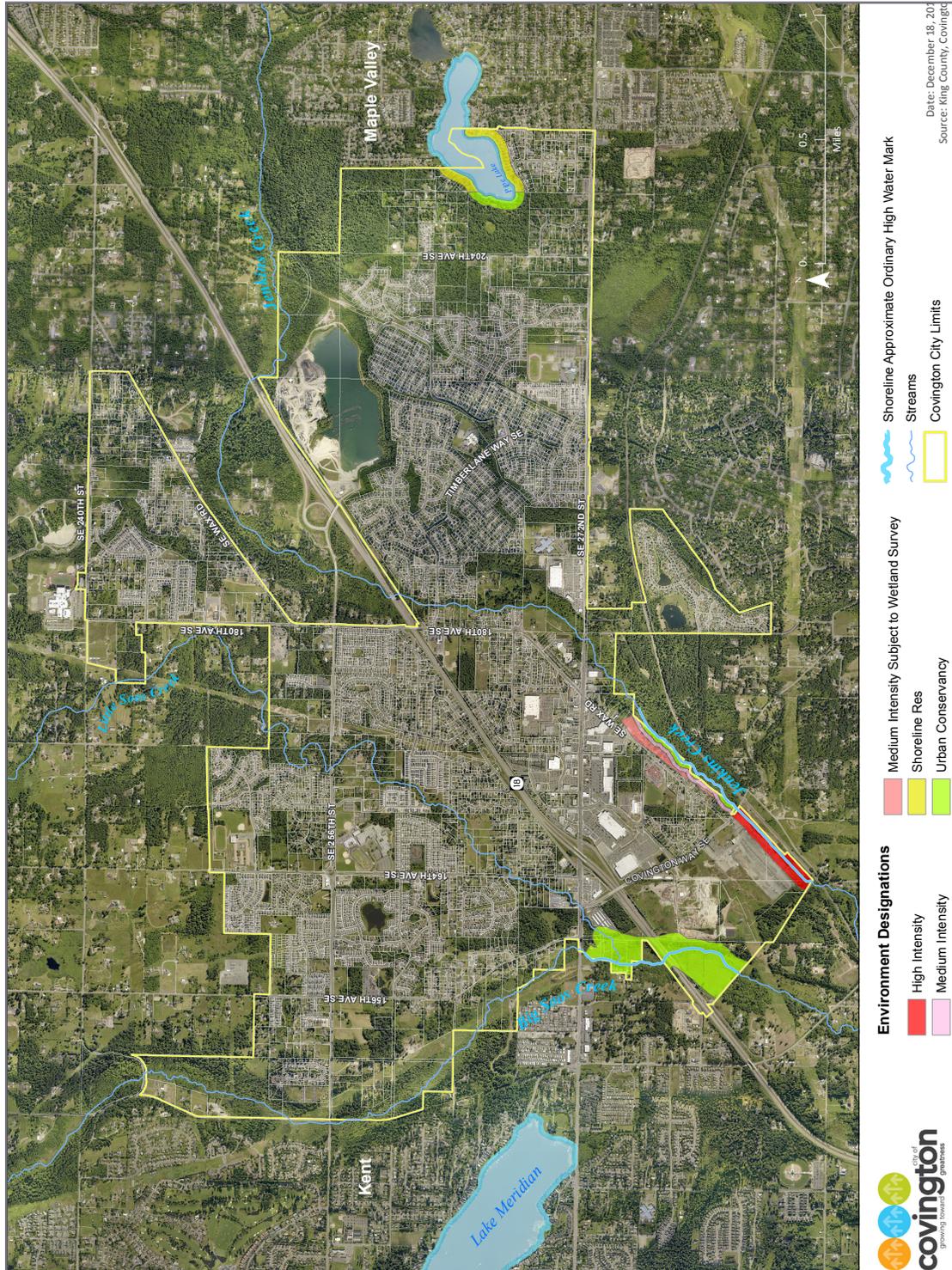
jurisdiction to the north. The Jenkins Creek channel bordering the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) substation has been straightened. Just upstream of the BPA site, the stream passes through a three-bay concrete box culvert under Covington Way SE. Public shoreline access to Jenkins Creek exists currently within Jenkins Creek Park and Jenkins Creek Trail, both of which are located further upstream outside of the shoreline jurisdictional area. Floodplains and wetlands are found along the Jenkins Creek shoreline. Fish species include chinook and coho salmon, steelhead, and resident cutthroat trout. (The Watershed Company, November 2010)

Pipe Lake is approximately 52 acres and has a maximum depth of approximately 65 feet and a mean depth of 27 feet. Pipe Lake feeds into Lake Lucerne, which eventually feeds into a tributary of Jenkins Creek approximately one-half mile to the north of Lake Lucerne. There are no visible inflows into either lake. Currently, over half of the shorelands surrounding Pipe Lake are in low-density residential uses. Camp McCullough, owned by the Presbyterian church, comprises another third of the shoreline frontage, while the remaining is undeveloped. There are a number of docks that are owned and maintained by private homeowners associations located along the lake. There is also a boat launch and dock along the western shore of the lake that is associated with Camp McCullough. This parcel has some natural shoreline. Motorized boats on Pipe Lake are prohibited. While there are some wooded areas, there are minimal mapped critical areas. It appears the lake may support cutthroat trout and possibly rainbow trout when stocked by lake residents. (The Watershed Company, November 2010)

A map showing shoreline jurisdiction and locations of floodplains and wetlands is provided in Exhibit S-1.



### Exhibit S-1. Covington Shorelines and Environment Designations



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015

### VISION CONNECTION

The Shoreline Element implements the vision and framework goals by establishing policies and regulations that retain unique shoreline neighborhoods and conserve ecological features.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This Shoreline Element balances:

- Preferred shoreline uses such as single family residential and water oriented uses such as recreation
- Ensuring no-net-loss of shoreline ecological function
- Promoting public access opportunities, with larger developments or on public lands

These three goals are balanced consistent with SMA requirements and through application of shoreline environment designations that function as an overlay to the underlying zoning (see “Our Shoreline Plan”) permitted uses and regulations.

The SMP includes Environment Designations that function as an overlay zone on top of the City’s underlying zoning. The Environment Designations control land use, building placement, height, and other aspects of shoreline development. Each designation has a different purpose.

## OUR SHORELINE PLAN

- **High Intensity:** The purpose of the High-Intensity Environment Designation is to provide for high-intensity water-oriented and non-water oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded.
- **Medium Intensity:** The purpose of the Medium-Intensity environment designation is to provide for water-oriented and non-water oriented commercial, mixed-use, and residential-uses while protecting existing ecological functions and restoring ecological functions in areas that have been previously degraded. Adaptive reuse of existing structures for office uses

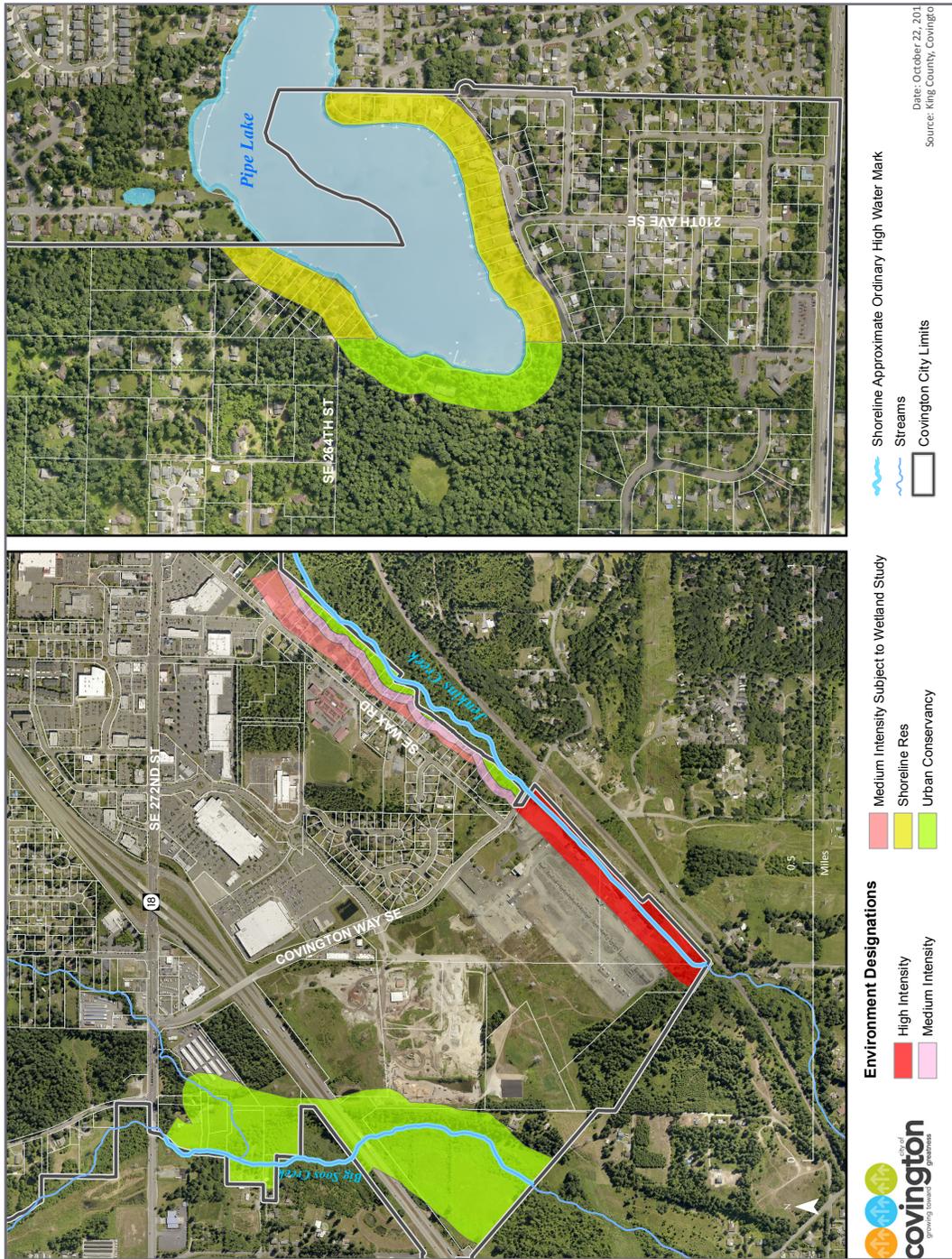


is emphasized, along with public access and water-enjoyment uses. A subset of this designation is subject to a wetland study and is marked on the map as: Medium Intensity Subject to Wetland Study.

- **Shoreline Residential:** The Shoreline Residential Environment Designation is designed to provide for residential needs where the necessary facilities for development can be provided. An additional purpose is to provide appropriate public access and recreational uses.
- **Urban Conservancy:** The purpose of the Urban Conservancy Environment Designation is to protect and restore ecological functions of open space, floodplain, and other sensitive lands where they exist in urban and developed settings while allowing a variety of compatible uses.
- **Aquatic:** The purpose of the Aquatic environment designation is to protect, restore, and manage the unique characteristics and resources of the areas waterward of the ordinary high-water mark.

A map identifying the Environment Designations is found in Exhibit S-2.

Exhibit S-2. Covington Environment Designations Detail



Source: King County GIS Center, 2015; City of Covington, 2015



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## GOALS

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Covington's SMP goals are listed below. The entire SMP is additionally incorporated by reference, consistent with Covington Ordinance No. 05-11.

- Goal S-I. Ensure that any economic activity taking place along the shoreline does not harm the quality of the site's environment or adjacent shorelands, and that new non-residential development provides public access to the shoreline for water-enjoyment activities.**
- Goal S-II. Increase the amount and diversity of public access to the shoreline and preserve and enhance views of the shoreline consistent with the natural shoreline character, private rights, and public safety.**
- Goal S-III. Encourage diverse, water-oriented recreational opportunities in those shoreline areas that can reasonably tolerate such uses without destroying the integrity and character of the shoreline.**
- Goal S-IV. Maintain safe, reasonable and adequate vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation systems to shorelines and ensure that these routes will have the least possible adverse effect on unique or fragile shoreline features and existing ecological systems, while contributing to the functional and visual enhancement of the shoreline.**
- Goal S-V. Preserve, protect, and restore to the greatest extent feasible the natural**

resources of the shoreline, including but not limited to scenic vistas, aesthetics, and vital riparian areas for wildlife protection.

- Goal S-VI.** Ensure that the land use patterns within shoreline areas are compatible with shoreline environment designations and will be sensitive to and not degrade habitat and ecological systems and other shoreline resources.
- Goal S-VII.** Identify, protect, preserve, and restore important archaeological, historical and cultural sites located in shoreline jurisdiction of Covington for their educational and scientific value as well as for the recreational enjoyment of the general public.
- Goal S-VIII.** Protect the City of Covington from losses and damage created by flooding.

## ACTION PLAN

The Shoreline Element is implemented through administration of the City’s SMP. Similar to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the City would reevaluate the SMP and consider appropriate revisions every eight years.

### Exhibit S-3. Shoreline Element Action Plan

Implementation Action	Responsibility
Implement SMP and evaluate consistent with GMA review cycles.	Community Development Department