



city of
covington
growing toward greatness

16720 SE 271st Street, Suite 100 • Covington, WA 98042 • (253) 480-2400 • Fax: (253) 480-2401

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

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

January 15, 2015

6:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Chair Sean Smith, Vice Chair Paul Max, Jennifer Gilbert-Smith, Ed Holmes, Bill Judd, Alex White, & Jim Langehough.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Election of New Planning Commission Chair

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Planning Commission Minutes for December 18, 2014 (Attachment A)

CITIZEN COMMENTS - *Note: The Citizen Comment period is to provide the opportunity for members of the audience to address the Commission on items either not on the agenda or not listed as a Public Hearing. The Chair will open this portion of the meeting and ask for a show of hands of those persons wishing to address the Commission. When recognized, please approach the podium, give your name and city of residence, and state the matter of your interest. If your interest is an Agenda Item, the Chair may suggest that your comments wait until that time. Citizen comments will be limited to four minutes for Citizen Comments and four minutes for Unfinished Business. If you require more than the allotted time, your item will be placed on the next agenda. If you anticipate, in advance, your comments taking longer than the allotted time, you are encouraged to contact the Planning Department ten days in advance of the meeting so that your item may be placed on the next available agenda.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Action Required

2. Review revised draft Comprehensive Plan chapters- Intro, Land Use, Housing and Economic Development
(Attachment B: Draft Comprehensive Plan Chapters)

ATTENDANCE VOTE

PUBLIC COMMENT: (Same rules apply as stated in the 1st CITIZEN COMMENTS)

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

ADJOURN

*Any person requiring a disability accommodation should contact the City at least 24 hours in advance.
For TDD relay service please use the state's toll-free relay service (800) 833-6384 and ask the operator to dial (253) 480-2400*

Web Page: www.covingtonwa.gov

**CITY OF COVINGTON
Planning Commission Minutes**

December 18, 2014

City Hall Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jennifer Gilbert-Smith, Ed Holmes, Bill Judd, Jim Langehough, Paul Max, Sean Smith and Alex White (arrived at 6:33 p.m.)

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Richard Hart, Community Development Director
Salina Lyons, Principal Planner
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- **1. Vice-Chair Max moved and Commissioner Gilbert-Smith seconded to approve the November 20, 2014 minutes and consent agenda. Motion carried 6-0.**

CITIZEN COMMENTS – None

PUBLIC HEARING - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2. Review and Recommend 2015 Planning Commission and Community Development Department Staff Work Program Tasks

Community Development Director Richard Hart reviewed the hours allotted for the proposed 2015 work plan and priorities based on City Council directives and state mandates. He noted that the city attorney's time is not included in the time estimates.

Mr. Hart also introduced a Supplemental List of Needed Zoning Code Changes for consideration as part of the Proposed 2015 Planning Commission Work Program. The Planning Commission asked staff about the request by the Master Builders to reduce setbacks from the current 7.5 foot interior setback to 5 foot interior and if this was a deterrent for single family development. Staff responded that these setbacks were adopted in 2006, and ~~are~~ not currently the biggest issue for

development. Any modifications to the setbacks would need to include input from the fire department in response to the life safety issues that can arise with smaller setbacks, fire truck ladders access, and location of second story windows. Each city has a different way of assessing setbacks; some communities provide flexible side yard setbacks, smaller setbacks with larger lot widths and/or larger minimum lot sizes.

The Planning Commission and staff discussed the other items on the supplemental list and determined that code provisions related to preserving neighborhood quality should be shown as a higher priority (moved to #7) and that items related to outside requests could be moved to a lower priority on the 2015 work plan.

➤ **Commissioner Holmes moved and Commissioner Judd seconded to recommend the 2015 Planning Commission and Community Development Department Staff Work Program Tasks in the following order:**

1. GMA Required 7-Year Comprehensive Plan Updates with Consultant Assistance
2. Hawk Property Development Agreement, Annexation, Clean-Up of Zoning Code References together with Comprehensive Plan Policy Citations
3. Comprehensive Plan & Development Code Regulation Amendment Annual Docket for 2015
4. Sign Code Changes for Civic, Government and Non-Profit Signs
5. Medical Marijuana, Collective Gardens & Dispensary Moratorium Extension/Code Changes and Recreational Marijuana Permanent Zoning Regulations
6. Park Impact Fee Code changes
7. Consider changes for keeping chickens, ducks, or other fowl in the animal control ordinance. Consider modifying requirements for RV's in residential zones to prohibit occupancy, and control the number and location stored on a residential lot. Consider reducing the side and rear yard setbacks for sheds or accessory dwellings from 7.5 feet to 5.0 or 3.5 feet.
8. Critical Area Ordinance Revisions
9. Shoreline Development Regulation Standards & Permit Process
10. Fire Impact Fee Changes Working with Kent Regional Fire Authority
11. Consider reducing the residential side yard setbacks from 7.5 feet to 5.0 feet.
12. Consider specific code requirements for wind turbines on residential properties beyond the normal accessory structure requirements.

Motion passed 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS - None

ATTENDANCE VOTE - None

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

Principal Planner Salina Lyons shared that the construction of the new Wendy's Restaurant is under way. Inland group has begun tree removal on their site behind Safeway. Soos Creek Water & Sewer District has begun work for lift station #46 which will likely result in road closures and interruptions increasing in January.

Mr. Hart informed the Planning Commission of two meetings in January. The joint Planning Commission meeting with the City Council will be on 1/13/15 and the regularly schedule Planning Commission meeting will be on 1/15/15.

ADJOURN

The December 18, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary



City of Covington
16720 SE 271st St. Suite 100
Covington, WA 98042

City Hall – 253.480.2400
www.covingtonwa.gov

Memo

To: Planning Commission Members

**From: Richard Hart, Community Development Director
Ann Mueller, Senior Planner**

CC: Salina Lyons, Principal Planner

Date: January 15, 2015

Re: Four Revised Comprehensive Plan Chapters

Attachment 1 includes revised, but by no means complete, drafts of four Comprehensive Plan chapters: Chapter 1, Introduction; Chapter 2, Land Use; Chapter 3, Housing; and Chapter 8, Economic Development.

Staff has made edits to these chapters, but there is still some missing or out of date data and maps that need to be included. The Planning Commission should review these documents prior to our meeting on the 15th and be prepared to discuss any gaps or additional information and analysis that should be included. Also please review the goals and policies to see if these reflect Covington today and the vision the community has for the future.

There is no action that needs to be taken at tonight's meeting on these four draft chapters. Staff is just sharing what we have received from the consultant at this point in time, and we are open to any additional input from the Planning Commission.

Chapter 1

Introduction

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 community that proudly invests in enhancing our community and natural environment and providing diverse recreational opportunities, while remaining financially responsible. This comprehensive plan facilitates Covington’s “growing toward greatness,” planning for greatness through the goals, policies and implementation actions included here.

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. This 2035 Comprehensive Plan is designed to assess existing conditions, look forward and plan for the next 20 years. In other words, it describes who we are, what we want and how we plan to achieve it.

Covington’s 2035 Comprehensive Plan translates the community’s values and vision into a policy direction, guiding 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.

Washington State’s Growth Management Act, Chapter 36.70A RCW (hereinafter referred to as “GMA”) mandates the concentration of population within urban areas and requires jurisdictions like Covington to develop comprehensive plans. Plans are required of almost every jurisdiction in Washington State, providing the basis upon which development regulations, capital investments, and strategic decisions are made.

This 2035 comprehensive plan is designed to satisfy the requirements for periodic updates of comprehensive plans for those cities planning under the GMA, including consistency with King County County-wide planning policies and the Puget Sound Regional Council’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 Setting

Located in southeastern King County, Covington is a growing city of almost 18,500. Located between the cities of Kent and Maple Valley, it is bisected by State Route 18 and is approximately 25 miles southeast of downtown Seattle.

Figure 1.01 – Regional location map (to be graphically enhanced)



Covington's residents appreciate the community's small town character, its proximity to metropolitan Seattle and its proximity to recreational opportunities found at the rural edge of the county.

(Include sidebar of Mayor's quote: 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

City of Covington Mayor)

Vision: Covington 2035

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 plans polices, staff will update the plan's goals and polices policies as appropriate.

{May need to update if changes are made in 2015} 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.

Goals:

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.

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.

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.



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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.

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.

Municipal Services: Plan, develop, implement, and maintain high quality capital infrastructure and services that reflect the needs of a growing community.

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.

Growing Toward Greatness

The Covington community is looking forward and addressing how to retain important aspects of why we live, work or own businesses here and where changes can be made to ensure we continue to have an unmatched quality of life. Highlighted below are major concerns that need to be addressed as Covington continues growing toward greatness:

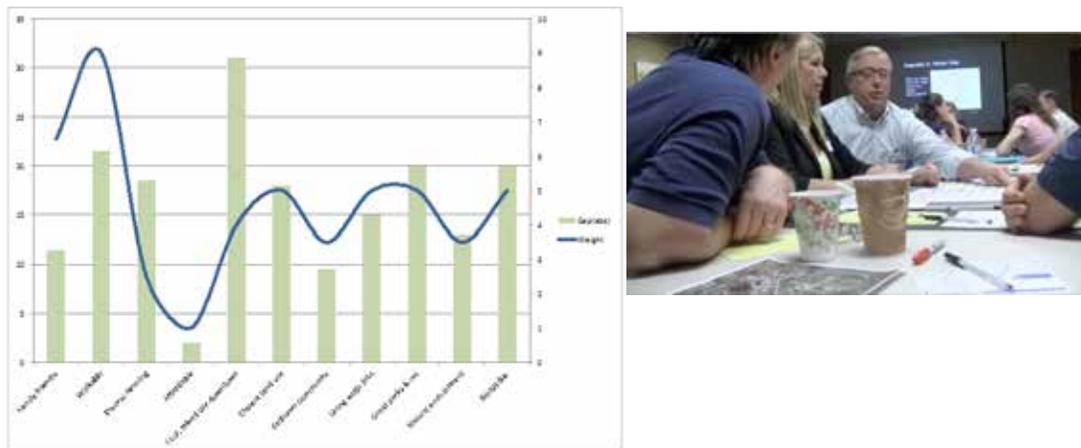
Small Town Character

Residents like Covington's small town feel and the scale of their neighborhoods, However, they recognize that improvement can and should be made to improve the connections and accessibility between neighborhoods, commercial areas, park and recreation facilities, schools and other services. The community is looking forward to the development of the Town Center to enhance the small town feel, by providing a thoughtfully designed center with new and diverse retail, commercial and active community space that will provide a sense of identify and draw Covington's residents together.

Town Center

The City Council continues its strong support and planning efforts to facilitate high-quality development which helps to fulfill the community's plan for the Town Center and the larger Downtown area. The community looks forward to the incorporation of public open spaces in close proximity to the town center core and coordinated with new mixed-use development. The city has identified strategies and planning is underway to help spur development of the Town Center that implements the community's plan, including use of development agreements, interlocal agreements, implementing design and development standards, as well as utilizing zoning incentives and multifamily tax incentives.

Figure 1.02 – Workshop activities



Workshop participants identified the gap between Covington's existing conditions and where they'd like to see the community be in the year 2035. Then they indicated how important closing that gap is by assigning imaginary budgets. Some items are best left to market forces, according to participants, looking at strategies appropriate to the community's efforts to be planning for greatness.

Funding for Needed Transportation Improvements

Kent-Kangley Road, also known as SR 516, is a regional arterial, crossing Covington, west to east, from Kent to Maple Valley, providing convenient access to SR 18 and indirectly to SR 167 and I-5. Kent Kangley Road is congested during weekday peak hour and on weekends. The community, residents, businesses and developers, view improving the existing road conditions as a top priority. They all understand the need to secure outside funding to implement these road improvements. Specifically, the city must find funding to implement its efforts to widen the roadway from Jenkins Creek eastward. There is also strong support for additional roadway improvements and elements to be added to accommodate pedestrians throughout the downtown area to create a lively, walkable and connected downtown with special focus on the Town Center.

Overall residents and workers would like more choice in how they get to and from places and services within Covington. They would like to see improvements throughout the city to make non-motorized transportation more accessible. In most areas of the city, the existing street network prioritizes cars, and the trail and sidewalk system rarely exists in a complete network. Thus biking or walking is not really a viable option to safely reach school, an adjacent neighborhood, nearby parks or a commercial center. Improvements and development of complete streets that incorporate multimodal amenities, such as sidewalks, bike lanes are a priority of the community balanced with implementing design features that protect neighborhoods from cut-through traffic and creating a comfortable environment for pedestrians. .

Local Employment

Most of Covington's residents who work, commute to jobs outside of the city, where the average one way commute time in 2012 was 33 minutes. This is likely due to Covington's relatively convenient location to regional roadways allowing access to higher paying jobs in other employment centers in the Puget Sound region. With relatively more affordable housing in Covington, residents make a choice to trade-off a longer commute time for the amenities and quality of life residing in Covington. However, there is also a recognition and desire that attracting employers with living wage jobs is smart planning and in the long term is the sustainable and fiscally responsible course of action to take. As a result efforts by the city have included targeting specific job sectors, include encouraging healthcare services and education providers to locate in Covington.

More Diverse Housing Options.

Covington has few multifamily housing options. In 2012, more than 98% of housing in Covington was composed of detached single-family homes. The community would like more choice in housing type and has supported plans to encourage mixed-use, multi-story development within the Downtown and the Hawk Property subarea. This will allow more variety of housing to attract new residents and accommodate existing residents whose housing needs or interests change.

Purpose of Comprehensive Planning

Planning allows communities to allocate resources to ensure they can maintain or improve local quality of life, stimulate economic development, and provide for continued public health, safety and general welfare. Further, comprehensive planning establishes clear goals and policies which the council, planning commission and city staff can use to take future implementation actions.

Long Range Planning and Internal Consistency

The plan's eight elements interrelate to touch on virtually every aspect of the City, helping the City identify where and how it should spend its money, direct staff resources and prioritize a wide variety of demands. Some of the plan's policies and implementation actions will shape regulations, like zoning or subdivision laws. Others will influence how the City designs, builds and manages its streets and storm water facilities. And others will dictate how the City answers the community's call for parks and recreation services or the preservation and enhancement of the natural systems that surround and traverse the community.

The long-range view incorporated in this plan guides the City's decision makers in determining how and where to invest resources, and what actions are necessary to ensure that the public's interest is served consistently and in a fiscally responsible manner.

Coordination and Cooperation

Southeastern King County is comprised of several cities, with which Covington has a close and cooperative relationship. Covington’s comprehensive plan ensures that the policies adopted by the City are generally compatible with those of surrounding communities and in conformance with King County’s Countywide Planning Policies. While cities adopt plans that are unique to their own situations, it is important that policies that impact public safety, regional commerce, essential public facilities, storm water management and other topics of regional concern are coordinated with adjacent governmental entities as well as with quasi-governmental entities that provide services to the residents in Covington. Most of Covington’s utility services, with the exception of storm water, are provided by other quasi-governmental entities.

Compliance with the requirements of GMA, PSRC and King County

This 2035 Comprehensive Plan is the result of the mandatory “periodic update” required to be completed by June 2015 by GMA for all jurisdictions within King County.

In addition to the GMA requirement, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has adopted multi-county planning policies as part of VISION 2040. Subsequently, King County amended its Countywide Planning Policies to reflect PSRC’s planning policies. Jurisdictions within King County, including Covington, must update their Comprehensive Plans to ensure they are consistent with PSRC and King County’s planning policies. Compliance with PSRC’s vision and policy guidance allows jurisdictions to compete for transportation funding, an important consideration given the region’s dependence on an effective, safe and interconnected transportation system.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Covington’s Comprehensive Plan is an evolving document and will be periodically reviewed and revised over the next twenty 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.

Using This Plan

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 are optional. These eight elements are a consolidation of the 12 elements included in Covington’s 2002 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.

Table 1.01 lists elements as they appeared in the 2002 plan, as amended, and how they appear in this new document. The table also includes adding detail on why and how the element listings differ from one plan edition to the next. The elements provide policy guidance, identifying the issues that shape the policy response and listing the goals and policies relevant to that particular topic.

Table 1.01 – Changes from the 2002 and 2015 Plan Elements (2002 column will be deleted upon final)

2002 Plan Elements	2015 Plan Elements	Notes
Land Use	Land Use	The Land Use element incorporates most of the earlier Downtown element and pieces of the Natural Hazard Mitigation element.
Housing	Housing	The scope of the housing element is unchanged, but the policy context is modified to address contemporary issues.
Downtown*		Most of the Downtown element's policy has migrated into the Land Use element, but other components inform the Housing, Transportation, Parks, and Economic Development elements.
Transportation	Transportation	The Transportation element is modified to reflect policy changes since the 2002 plan's adoption and to be consistent with the Capital Facilities & Utilities element.
Parks, Recreation & Open Space	Parks, Recreation & Open Space	Most of the policies in this element are unchanged, providing a solid link to the City's separate Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
Natural Environment*	Natural Environment*	Policies in this element underpin the City's critical areas regulations and have been augmented by the inclusion of policy from the Storm Water and Natural Hazard Mitigation elements.
Capital Facilities	Capital Facilities & Utilities	This element now combines capital facilities with utilities, ensuring heightened coordination between private utility providers and City counterparts.
Stormwater*		This element is absorbed into the Natural Environment and Capital Facilities & Utilities elements.
Utilities		This element is included in the Capital Facilities & Utilities element.
Natural Hazard Mitigation*		This element is incorporated into the Land Use and Natural Environment elements.
Economic Development	Economic Development	This element is significantly restructured to emphasize strategic direction in local economic development and community resiliency.
Shorelines*	Shorelines*	This element is essentially unchanged, providing a policy linkage to the City's Shoreline Master Program.

* - Denotes optional element

Goals and Policies

This is a comprehensive plan thus goals and policies contained in one element will interrelate with other elements. While particular interest in an individual topic may draw plan users to a specific element, the overall goals and policies of the entire comprehensive plan must be considered as a single plan.

Goals

Each of the eight elements contains goals that are directly linked to the issues this plan must address as the community works to achieve its vision. Goals are statements of a desired outcome; where Covington will be in 2035. They are aspirational, derived directly from the community's vision and targeted to address issues relevant to each element. Goals are concerned with the long term and often describe ideal situations that may result if all plan purposes were fully realized. Goals tend to be value-based, so their attainment is difficult to measure, but they're also specific enough to convey a sense of direction and priority.

Policies

Each element also includes policies that are intended to help attain the element's goals. Policies provide guidance to city staff and decision-makers on how to achieve the goals. Policy direction in the plan should be sufficiently clear so that decision-makers and city staff will interpret and apply the plan consistently over time. Policies should be flexible to account for changing circumstances but directive enough to give preferences and guide decision-making. Policies help the city determine whether a proposed activity, proposal, project, program or action would advance the city's values as expressed in the overarching goals.

Appendices

Appendix A. Implementation Strategies

The goals and policies in the eight elements are translated into implementation strategies that the city has identified to achieve the city's vision.

Implementation strategies are specific actions or work items. They are task oriented and budgetable, either in terms of staff time or public investment. Implementation actions can be capital projects, programs, services, revisions to development regulations, calls to dedicate time to developing agency partnerships, or the preparation of a functional planning document. An implementation action can be given a time frame (e.g. on-going, short term, long term), and prioritized to measure progress.

Appendix B. Consolidated Goal/Policy Framework

This appendix presents all of the plan's goals and policies in a single location, indicating how the various goals and policies relate to the plan's eight elements. Often a goal or a policy included in one element has significant implications on others, particularly those relating to land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities, and economic development.

Appendix C. Existing Conditions -This appendix provides detail on Covington's existing conditions, inventorying and describing the land use, housing, economic, environment, transportation, capital facilities and utilities context at the time of this plan's preparation.

Appendix D. Community Engagement

This appendix provides a summary of the community engagement process and activities conducted from May 2014 through the plan's adoption.

Appendix E. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

This appendix includes documentation as necessary to support the addendum to the 2002 comprehensive plan EIS.

Chapter 2.

Land Use Element

What you will find in this chapter:

- An overview of Covington, its current land uses, future capacity and the factors that are influencing development within the city limits;
- A discussion of development trends and areas where new development is expected and being directed; and
- Goals and polices that guide the type and location of development within Covington.

Purpose

This land use element guides future land use of both public and private property within Covington's Urban Growth Area (UGA). It forms the basis for all of the growth-related planning functions of this comprehensive plan, including transportation, housing, and capital facilities. The land use element describes the big picture of how Covington will balance the goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and King County's countywide planning policies to guide the distribution of land use within the city, and accommodate the city's growing needs for residential, employment, recreation, public facilities and other land uses to achieve the city's vision of an unmatched quality of life.

Issues & Trends

Planning for growth that is expected to surpass PSRC and King County targets.

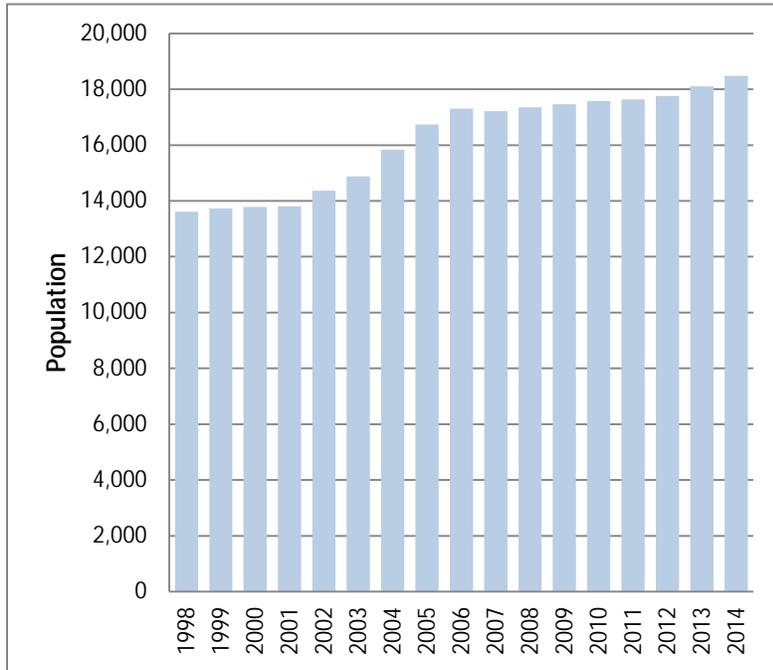
The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) estimates Covington's Population as of April 1, 2015 is _____. PSRC forecasts that by 2035 Covington's population will be 20,341, which is a population increase of approximately ___ persons between 2015-2035. Between 2002-2006 as shown in Figure 2.01, Covington's population increased by X%. Since then the population growth rate has slowed, likely reflecting a combination of factors including the economic downturn, and lack of infrastructure (such as road, sewer and water) in some areas of Covington, which prohibit development from happening due to concurrency issues until improvements are made.

King County's countywide planning policies establish the size of the UGA and growth projections; providing housing and job targets for each jurisdiction. The County's most recent housing growth targets for 2006-2031 stem from population projections released by OFM in 2012 and employment forecasts from the PSRC. The County used those numbers to allocate projected housing and employment growth targets to individual jurisdictions.

(Insert text box as follows: In accordance with GMA (RCW 36.70A.110) King County and the cities within the county must adopt comprehensive plans that can accommodate 20 years of anticipated population and employment growth. The state Office of Financial Management issues population projections for each county in the state as a basis for GMA planning, while PSRC produces the employment forecasts. The first step in setting growth targets is for King County to translate the population numbers into number of households. Based on these projections, counties and cities collaborate in determining the allocations of that growth. These allocations take the form of growth targets, which are statements of planning policy indicating the minimum number of households and jobs that each jurisdiction will plan to accommodate during each 20-year period.)

Figure 1 illustrates Covington's population growth during the years since the City's incorporation in 1997.

Figure 2.01: OFM April 1st Population Estimates



Source: Office of Financial Management, April 1 Populations, <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/april1/default.asp>

While the City of Covington Incorporated in 1997, OFM population estimates did not begin until 1998. Population growth between 2002 and 2006 was relatively rapid in Covington, and the community may be positioned to grow again as land in the Town Center and Hawk Property Subarea gets ready for development.

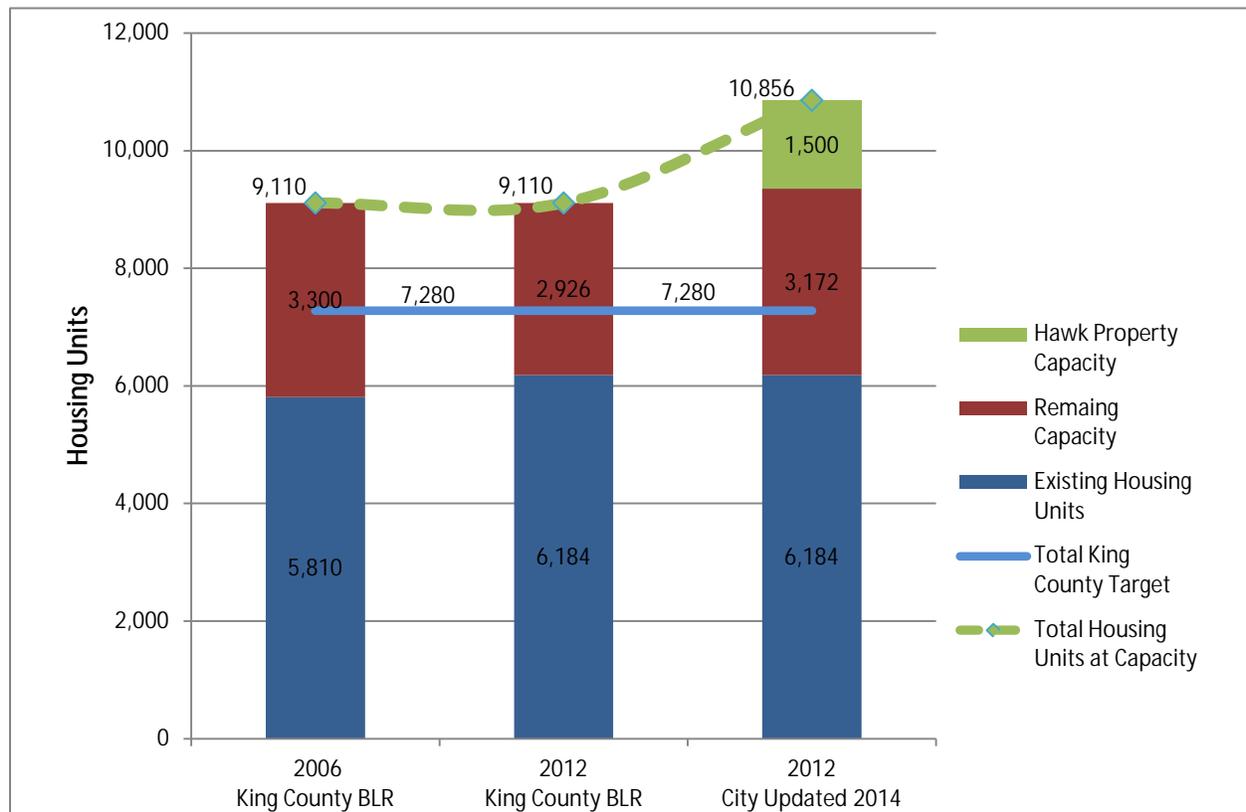
The 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report identified specific housing and job targets for Covington to achieve by 2031. In the 25 years between 2006-2031, Covington is expected to accommodate 1,470 new housing units and 1,320 new jobs. These targets are policy statements of how King County expects growth to occur in relation to other jurisdictions in the county. Jurisdictions, such as Covington, must plan and provide for both household and job growth to meet these targets through designation of sufficient land suitable for development in their comprehensive plans and regulations.

Based on an analysis of Covington’s developable land, zoning and planned infrastructure improvements in the next 20 years, Covington’s expects its population growth to surpass King County’s target and PSRC’s forecast. Covington’s land capacity is more than adequate to accommodate King County growth targets.

Housing has been developed at a faster rate than anticipated in King County’s 2006 assignment of housing targets. Covington added nearly 400 housing units between 2006 and 2012, leaving a balance of 1096 remaining to meet the 2031 King County housing target. The 2014 King County Buildable Lands Report estimated Covington had an additional residential housing capacity of 2,926 units in 2012. With 1,096 housing units remaining in its housing target and a residential capacity of 2,926 units, King County estimates Covington has a surplus capacity of 1,830 units.

In 2014, the City hired a consultant (BERK) to review the County’s estimates and do additional review of Covington’s land capacity based on permits issued or expected to be issued and an analysis of existing zoning, expected redevelopment and infill development. That study estimated that land capacity within Covington will accommodate a total of 9,336 housing units. Future development of the approved Hawk Property Subarea will include annexation of an additional 75 acres of land, allowing for an additional 1,500 housing units and a total capacity within Covington of 10,856 units. Figure 2.02 shows side by side how King County 2012 and updated 2014 Buildable Lands Reports compares with Covington’s own estimate of housing growth and capacity expectations.

Figure 2.02: Housing Unit Capacity: King County Buildable Lands Report versus City Updated Capacity



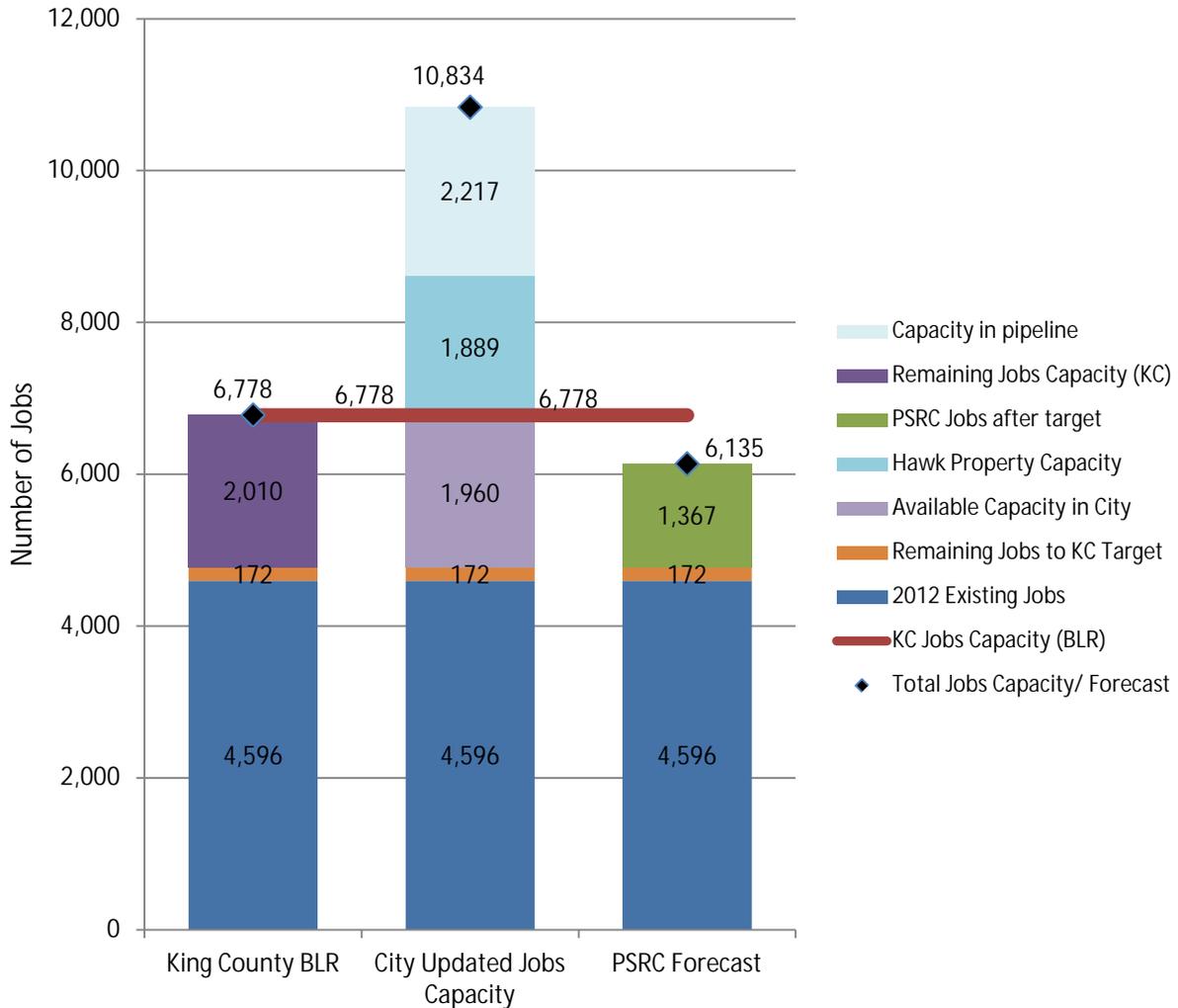
Sources: King County Buildable Lands Report 2014; Corrected Land Capacity Results – City of Covington, May 5, 2015 (BERK)

Covington’s capacity for new housing tops out at 10,856 units, including those proposed in the Town Center and Hawk Subarea, far in excess of growth targets established by King County and growth forecasts established by PSRC.

According to PSRC, Covington will see a 10% population growth between 2014 and 2035, slowing the community’s rate of growth from the previous decade. The PSRC forecast indicates that Covington’s population will increase by 1,861, resulting in a 2035 population of 20,341 residents. This is the population forecast used for this plan. However, looking at the amount of land available for development, redevelopment, infill, existing zoning, and average household size (3.02 as of 2010 Census) Covington can theoretically accommodate 14,109 in population growth for a total population of 32,785 when all of the community’s residential land is developed and occupied. This is considered the full “build out” population of the city based on current zoning and taking into consideration land use constraints such as critical areas and existing development patterns.

King County’s job growth target for Covington between 2006-2031 is 1,320 new jobs. The City has the land capacity and zoning to accommodate this employment growth. According to the City of Covington’s 2014 Corrected Land Capacity Results, Covington’s UGA has room to accommodate an additional 6,066 jobs. Much of this capacity is due to the adoption of the Hawk Property Subarea Plan and the zoning in the Town Center allowing high-intensity mixed use. Excluding those jobs that were considered “in the pipeline” and including the Hawk Property Subarea, there is capacity to accommodate at least 3,849 additional jobs in Covington’s UGA.

Figure 2.03: Jobs Capacity and Target: King County Buildable Lands Report versus City Updated Capacity



Sources: King County Buildable Lands Report 2014; Table DP-1 of the 2012 Countywide Planning Policies, King County; Puget Sound Regional Council, Land Use Targets, 4-14-14; Corrected Land Capacity Results – City of Covington, May 5, 2015 (BERK)¹

Covington has adequate land available to accommodate 10,834 jobs, higher than the 2031 employment target set by King County and the employment forecast by PSRC.

Between 2006-2012, an additional 1,148 jobs were added in Covington for a total of 4,596 jobs. As of 2012, Covington needed to accommodate an additional 172 jobs to reach King County’s 2031 job target. Based on BERK’s analysis of existing zoning and expected redevelopment and infill development, Covington has land capacity within its current city limits for an additional 2,281 jobs.

¹ King County Buildable Lands Report 2014: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/2014%20KC%20Buildable%20Lands%20Report.aspx>
 Countywide Planning Policies, King County: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/property/permits/codes/growth/GMPC/CPPs.aspx>
 Puget Sound Regional Council, Land Use Targets: <http://www.psrc.org/data/forecasts/2013-forecast-products/>

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

According to King County GIS mapping there are 3,788 acres within Covington’s city limits, with 117 acres located outside the city limits but within the Urban Growth Area (UGA). Covington’s UGA is specific to the City and does not overlap with annexation areas of adjacent cities. By the end of 2015, Covington expects to annex approximately 75 acres within the UGA located on the north side of the city. This annexation area is part of an old gravel mine that is undergoing reclamation and is included in the Hawk Property Subarea.

The predominant land use within Covington’s city limits is single-family residential. According to the King County Assessor’s data, more than one-half of the land area within city limits is occupied by single-family residential uses.²

While single-family residential use will likely remain Covington’s predominant land use, many areas are expected to experience new development and redevelopment over the next 20-years. This includes replacement of aging residential and commercial structures and redevelopment of partially used and underutilized land.

The City is actively planning for well-designed, high quality mixed-use development focused in the Town Center focus area and within portions of the Hawk Property Subarea.

Figure 2.04 – Town Center bird’s eye view



Covington imagines full-scale transformation of its town center into an identity-rich, mixed-use civic district.

The richness and identity of Covington’s neighborhoods must be maintained as land within the city develops more intensively. New development, whether it locates in Town Center, the Hawk Property Subarea 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.

Maintaining Covington’s small town feel and the natural environment.

The Covington community 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 and City actions taken today have an impact on the environment. The quality of the natural and physical environment impacts the health and welfare of everyone in the community. It is important to acknowledge

² Source: King County GIS, Property Thematic Shapefile, downloaded 10/21/14

and understand how potential development constraints intended to protect environmental functions and values may impact future growth and development patterns.

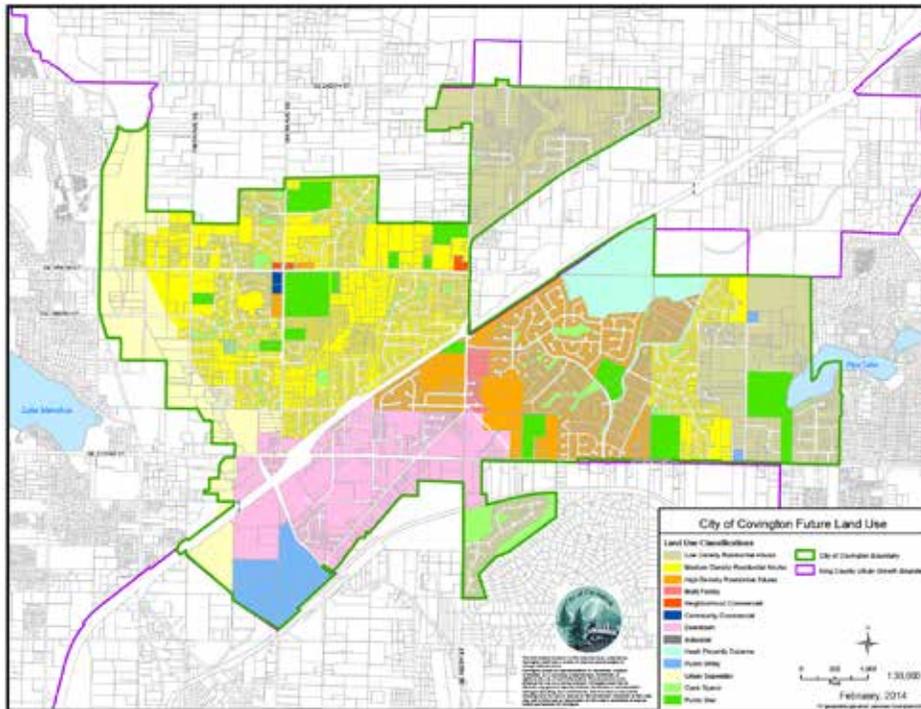
“Potentially constrained lands” typically include areas constrained by floodplains, wetlands, streams and associated buffers, as well as landslide hazard areas, seismic hazard areas, erosion hazard areas, power line easements, and gas line easements. Approximately, XXX acres of Covington’s total land area is potentially constrained (defined as XXXXXX), much of which is subject to provisions of the City’s critical areas ordinance and shoreline master program. More detailed discussion and policies specifically related to the city’s natural environment can be found in the Natural Environment and Shoreline Master Plan Element.

Thoughtful planning of future land use is crucial to attaining and sustaining Covington’s unmatched quality of life.

The UGA has been divided into future land use designations, as shown on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM – Figure 2.05). These land use designations indicate where certain types of land uses are currently or should be located. The FLUM identifies areas for a range of housing densities and a variety of nonresidential uses that are reflective of the intensity, type and location of growth necessary to fulfill our community vision. Mixed-use development is an important part of the City’s overall land use strategy, and it may occur within the Neighborhood Commercial, Community Commercial, Downtown and Hawk Property FLUM categories. Per GMA requirements, minimum density standards for residential developments are specified to ensure that land is used efficiently and that low-density sprawling development does not occur.

The FLUM may be amended through the annual comprehensive plan amendment process.

Figure 2.05 – Future Land Use map (to be updated upon receipt of current data from King Co.)



The Future Land Use Map identifies where certain land uses are expected to develop over the coming 20 years. It informs much of the comprehensive plan’s policies and has a direct relationship with the City’s zoning and development regulations.

Table 2.01 *Future Land Uses for Covington and Its UGA (to be updated upon receipt of current data from King Co.)*

Future Land-Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Urban Separator 1du/ac		
Low Density Residential 4du/ac		
Medium Density Residential 6du/ac		
High Density Residential 8du/ac		
Neighborhood Commercial		
Community Commercial		
Downtown		
Downtown Multifamily		
Hawk Property Subarea		
Industrial		
Public Utility		
Open Space		
Public Use		
	<i>Right of way</i>	
	<i>Pipe Lake</i>	
	Total	

Source: King County GIS, Planning Thematic Shapefile, downloaded 10/21/14

Following is a description of Covington’s Future Land Use categories, describing each in terms of intended use and overall character. They work together to reach the residential and employment targets in a sustainable development pattern, maintaining Covington’s quality of life and creating new pockets of mixed-use development to enhance Covington’s identity.

Urban Separator

This 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.

Single-Family Residential (Low, Medium, High)

Covington’s existing neighborhoods are primarily characterized by single-family residential development, with existing subdivisions typically platted at four to eight units per acre. Accordingly, the Future Land Use map divides the Single Family 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.

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 Land Use category includes four interrelated land use subcategories 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 an important public 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.

Downtown Multifamily

This 35-acre area located on the north side of the Downtown land use designation allows higher density residential development typified by structures designed to accommodate several unrelated households, including duplexes, apartments, townhomes, and condominiums. Other commercial areas not designated as Multifamily will also see multifamily as part of a mixed-use development approach.

Hawk Property Subarea

This category is intended to provide commercial and residential opportunities in an “urban village” setting, with associated recreational and open space amenities. The adopted Hawk Property Subarea Plan (list ordinance #), clearly envisions this area will incorporate mixed-use development. Future development of the Hawk Property 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 zone is also to protect the industrial land base for industrial, economic development and employment opportunities.

Public Utility

This category is only placed on properties currently developed with a public utility use, such the Bonneville Power Administration Substation, large water tanks and City-owned storm water facilities. Future locations of Public Utility uses 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 with this designation may occur in any zone, as this land-use designation does not affect underlying zoning.

Open Space

This category includes dedicated public and private open space, set aside to provide a range of community benefit, including aesthetic beauty, landmark features, rural character, wildlife habitat, critical area protection and passive recreation. Much of Covington's Open Space lands are currently part of residential plats, dedicated tracts, or parcels located between plats that are undeveloped either because of environmental constraints, or in order to provide buffers between areas or promote passive recreation opportunities.

Public Use

This category applies to the library, parks and all government-owned property within the Covington UGA. Currently, this designation includes a post office, eight public schools, two private schools, and nine religious institutions. Future Public Uses 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.

Table 2.02 lists the Future Land Use Designations and the corresponding zoning districts that implement those designations. City development regulations – including the zoning designations – are designed to consistently implement the comprehensive plan's land use designations and policies.

Table 2.2 - Future Land-Use Designations & Corresponding Zoning Districts

Land Use Designation	Zoning District
Urban Separator	US(R-1) Urban Separator
Single-Family Residential (Low, Medium, High)	
Low Density Residential	R-4 Residential 4 Units Per Acre
Medium Density Residential	R-6 Residential 6 Units Per Acre
High Density Residential	R-8 Residential 8 Units Per Acre
Neighborhood Commercial	NC Neighborhood Commercial
Community Commercial	CC Community Commercial
Downtown	
Town Center	TC Town Center
Mixed Commercial	MC Mixed Commercial
Mixed Housing/ Office	MHO Mixed Housing/ Office
General Commercial	GC General Commercial
Downtown Multifamily	R-18 Residential 18 Units Per Acre
Hawk Property Subarea	<p><i>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 1-14 includes the following:</i></p> <p>R-6 Residential 6 Units Per Acre R-12 Residential 12 units per acre MR Mixed Residential RCMU Regional Commercial Mixed Use</p>
Industrial	I Industrial
Public Utility	<i>All underlying zones</i>
Open Space	<i>All underlying zones</i>
Public Use	<i>All underlying zones</i>

Land Use Goals

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.
LU-II	Covington's zoning, design guidelines and other strategies promote development that provides a variety of land use types, density 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.
LU-III	Covington's vibrant mixed-use and commercial areas are places current and future residents and businesses want to live, shop work 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.
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.
LU-V	The Hawk Property urban village is thriving and accessible by multiple modes 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.
LU-VI	Covington is a healthy walkable community with access to healthy, local food and facilitates active living, with well-designed and accessible multi-modal connections between and within neighborhoods and commercial areas.
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.

Land Use Policies

Citywide Sustainable Growth Management Strategy

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.
LU- 2	Maintain sufficient land designated to accommodate appropriate commercial, office and healthcare and educational uses proximate to adequate transportation and utility infrastructure. (LNP 18.1, EDP 5.5)
LU- 3	Maintain land use designations that ensure an adequate supply of housing units to meet required growth targets.
LU- 4	Encourage maximum permitted density of land development while requiring high-quality design and protecting critical areas and environmental quality to avoid unnecessary public and private costs.
LU- 5	Encourage new development to be sited and designed to have limited impact on the natural environment, be compact and contiguous to existing development, protect critical areas and encourage walking, bicycling and transit use.
LU- 6	Direct growth, including redevelopment and infill to locations that take advantage of existing service capacity and infrastructure. 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.
LU- 7	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.

LU- 8	Support development patterns that promote the community’s health, providing opportunities for safe and convenient physical activity and social connectivity.
LU- 9	Promote residential and other forms of mixed-use development in commercial areas to allow people to live, shop and work while reducing vehicular traffic and providing for shared parking in a pedestrian friendly setting.
LU- 10	Require the incorporation of features in new development projects that support transportation choices.
LU- 11	Promote the use of landscaping that can thrive in urban settings, conserve water, retain desirable trees, and is comprised of native plant materials.
LU- 12	Promote farmers markets and urban agriculture as a way to access healthy, affordable, local foods.
LU- 13	Encourage the development and strategic placement of public art features throughout the city (DTP 9.4)
LU- 14	Encourage public open spaces or community plazas, where appropriate in commercial areas, for the congregation of people.
LU- 15	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.
LU- 16	Public utility land uses and structures should be managed and designed in a manner that is compatible with nearby uses, using techniques such as buffers, increased setbacks, easements, landscaping and other innovative forms of screening. (LNG 12.0)
LU- 17	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. (LNP 17.4)

Urban Growth & Annexations

LU- 18	Continue to support the expansion of the city’s urban growth area in the northern gateway to the city to include land east of 180 th Ave SE between SE Wax Road and SR 18. (LNP 1.8)
LU- 19	Include all unincorporated urban areas within the city’s urban growth area into Covington’s city limits only after carefully study of the fiscal impacts and planning for the future development of the area. (LNG 2.0, LNP 2.4)

Public Service and Responsiveness

LU- 20	Ensure timely, thorough, consistent, fair, and predictable project review by allocating adequate resources to the permit review process, minimizing review time.
LU- 21	Promote public involvement in the planning process.
LU- 22	Establish and maintain positive and proactive inter-jurisdictional relationships with outside service providers, such as water, sewer, gas, electric, fire, phone and cable entities throughout the permitting process.

Downtown

LU- 23	Encourage a variety of development in the Downtown with an emphasis on multistory mixed-use, while allowing existing, major retail components to exist until market conditions support redevelopment; allow limited, regulated and high quality designed large format retail; while minimizing impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods. (LNP 10.2, DTP 1.2)
LU- 24	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.
LU- 25	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.
LU- 26	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.
LU- 27	In the Mixed Commercial area of the Downtown, encourage diverse employment opportunities, 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; and 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.
LU- 28	In the General Commercial designation, encourage a complete variety and mix of commercial and office uses, some appropriate low-impact manufacturing and storage, transportation-related and utility facilities and limited residential use that can be buffered to ensure compatibility.
LU- 29	Encourage a development pattern that places buildings near the street and makes surface parking a non-dominant use.
LU- 30	Provide for a sense of approach and entry to the downtown area through the development of key distinctive focal points, such as special architectural, water and/or landscaping features.
LU- 31	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.

Hawk Property Subarea

LU- 32	Encourage a variety of commercial, residential, and recreational development types on the Hawk Property.
LU- 33	Encourage a variety of housing types at various densities on the Hawk Property to provide housing choices not currently available in one location within Covington.
LU- 34	Ensure that the public realm in the Hawk Property provides places for a variety of ages, interests, and experiences and is easily accessible.
LU- 35	Ensure that the pond on the Hawk Property 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.
LU- 36	Encourage the preservation of a green space buffer, which may include public trails, along the southern border of the Hawk Property Subarea, adjacent to existing residential development.

LU- 37	Encourage development of larger public park and greenspace amenities in the Hawk Property Subarea that are accessible to all residents and visitors, as opposed to small, fragmented, private park facilities.
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Related Goals and Policies

Appendix A lists all plan goals and policies, identifying the interrelationships between them and all of the other plan elements. Goals and policies listed in this chapter may have implications on other planning topics. Likewise, goals and policies from other chapter may have implications on Covington's housing policy. The complete listing will help ensure overall consistency between elements and aid staff, local officials and the larger community as they consult this plan for comprehensive policy guidance.

Implementation Actions

These actions include various programs and activities that implement the City's land use policy. They are included in an appendix to this plan, listed with implementation actions from the plan's other elements. In many cases, implementation actions intended to address land use policy also implement housing, transportation, environmental, and economic development policy.

Chapter 3.

Housing Element

What you will find in this chapter:

- An assessment of Covington’s existing housing type, affordability and needs;
- Efforts underway and needed to provide safe and affordable housing in the community;
- A summary of the issues and needs associated with housing demand and the need to accommodate future growth; and
- Policy directions to encourage more diversity in housing types and ensure housing demands are met.

Purpose

Covington residents place a high value on having a safe place to live, a home that is affordable, and located within a neighborhood that is attractive, accessible and connected. These values must be taken into consideration when planning comprehensively to ensure that Covington’s quality of life is maintained. This housing element builds on the information in the land use element and the expected growth within the city by 2035. A summary of the existing housing conditions and needs is summarized in this element with more detailed information Appendix X.

Trends & Issues

Covington is primarily a single family residential community with a limited mix of housing types.

Covington’s attractive and affordable housing inventory is an important component of the city’s healthy and thriving environment. In the preceding years, Covington has recognized that it needs – and there is an unmet demand for – more diversity in housing type. Covington seeks to create a more livable, healthy and vibrant community addressing the needs of current and future residents. A variety of housing types will accommodate the community’s changing needs and interests from different age and income groups. The City has implemented plans, zoning regulations and design guidelines to encourage high-quality mixed-use development in the Downtown. In 2014, the City also adopted a subarea plan to create a mixed-use urban village on the Hawk Property in the community’s northern gateway area. The purpose of this subarea plan is to facilitate development that provides additional housing choices, including mixed use development, reduces vehicles trips while boosting the community’s economic vitality with regional commercial uses.

According to Washington State Office of Financial Management’s (OFM) Postcensal estimate of total housing units in 2014, Covington has **6,368**¹ housing units. To meet King County’s housing target, Covington must accommodate a total of 7,280 housing units by the year 2031.² Covington has evaluated its land capacity and can conservatively demonstrate that land within the current city limits can accommodate a total of 9,356 housing units³. With the anticipated annexation of 75 acres, and the

¹ Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, Postcensal Estimates of Housing Units, April 1, 2010 to April 1, 2014 accessed on 11/24/2014 URL: http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/april1/ofm_april1_housing.xlsx

² Currently, Covington has an assigned growth target from King County of 1,470 housing units between 2006-2031. See King County Buildable Lands Report 2014.

³ BERK Memorandum to King County dated May 5, 2014, “Corrected Land Capacity Results- City of Covington”.

associated rezone and development planned for in the Hawk Property Subarea Plan, the City estimates Covington’s housing capacity could increase by an additional 1,500 units.

More diversity in housing type needed.

According to the 2010 Census, Covington averages 3.02 people per household; larger than King County’s average household size of 2.4 people per household. Household size has decline slightly within Covington from an average of 3.13 people per household in 2000. Smaller households with or without children may prefer different housing styles and sizes in comparison to larger households. To encourage diversity in housing, Covington permits accessory dwelling units, cottages, and a variety of multifamily development styles in the High Density Residential and Multifamily Residential land use areas. Within the Downtown and Hawk Property, mixed use and other high-density residential development types are encouraged.

Table 3.01 – Average Household and Family Size and Percent Family Households

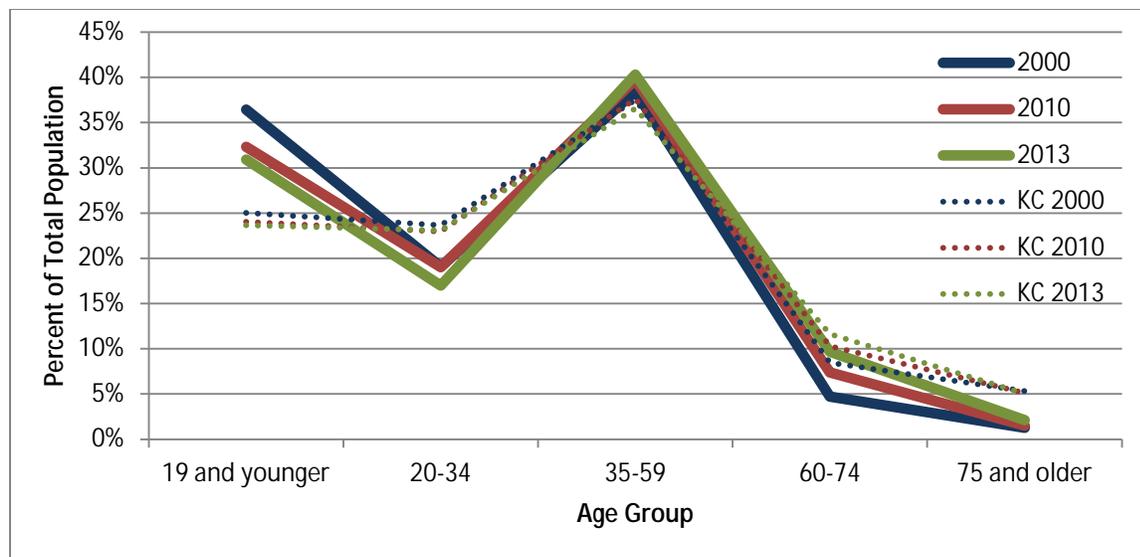
	City of Covington		King County	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
Average Household Size	3.13	3.02	2.39	2.4
Average Family Size	3.37	3.31	3.03	3.05
Family Households ⁴ (percent of total households)	83.9%	79.9%	59.1%	58.5%

Sources: US Census Summary File 1, Table DP-1 Profile of General Demographics: 2000 and General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010

Many households in Covington are families with children. Figure 3.01 shows the City’s resident age profile, with the percent of the population aged 19 and younger decreasing over time. However, compared to King County, the relative share of the 19 and younger population represents a higher percentage of the population.

Figure 3.01 - Covington Population over Time by Age Group

⁴ "Family households" consist of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. They do not include same-sex married couples even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples. Same-sex couple households are included in the family households category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption. Same-sex couple households with no relatives of the householder present are tabulated in nonfamily households. "Nonfamily households" consist of people living alone and households which do not have any members related to the householder.



Source: US Census, 2006-2010 American Community Survey, Demographic and Housing, Form DP05 accessed 12/17/14:

US Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, Demographic and Housing, Form DP05 accessed 12/17/14.

US Census, 2000 Summary File 1, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics, Form DP-1 accessed 12/17/14.

Covington's residents are relatively young, when compared to the rest of King County.

As of 2014, Covington has only two multifamily apartment developments. The Allegro Apartments project has 200 units, and the age-restricted Covington Place Senior Apartments project has 121 units. Both of these multifamily developments are located in the Downtown area. The Allegro Apartments, built in 2002, are a low-rise three-story development with a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units they report a low vacancy rate. The Covington Place Senior Apartments is a five-story structure with one and two-bedroom units. Built in 2008, Covington Place typically has a waiting list for new residents.

Covington also has one townhouse-style condominium development, Shiloh Village, with 18 attached units located in two story buildings in the High Density Land Use designation. Shiloh Village is located near the intersection of SE 256th St and 164th Ave SE. Between 2006-2012, the city approved two Accessory Dwelling Units in the R-4 zoning district.

In 2012, Covington adopted provisions, consistent with state law, to allow for property tax exemptions for affordable multifamily development, meeting specific requirements in the downtown, to encourage high-quality, mixed-use, affordable housing in the heart of the city close to a variety of commercial and personal services. As of 2015, Covington has three additional multifamily structures **under construction** in the Town Center, expected to be ready for occupancy in 2016, which are utilizing this property tax exemption provisions. Two of these buildings are six-story multifamily structures with a total of 200 units of affordable family apartments above ground-level commercial space and parking. The third building contains 156 units of age-restricted housing for seniors.

These 200 units of new affordable family apartments will include a mix of one to three-bedroom apartments. All of these units will be restricted for 12 years from date they are ready for occupancy to households earning 60% of the King County Adjusted Median Income (AMI), as adjusted for household size. This means the County will delay collecting property taxes on the residential improvement portion of the development until the 12-year tax exemption period ends. The senior housing contains a mix of studio, one and two-bedroom units, and the majority of the senior housing will be market rate. However, 32 units will be restricted for 12 years from the date they are ready for occupancy to seniors with low or moderate incomes less than 80% of King County's AMI.

Higher density housing and mixed use development must demonstrate excellence in design and compatible with existing neighborhoods.

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 existing neighborhoods and households have invested time and money into their homes, and they want to see their property values maintained. While 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 developed at higher densities does not maintains or enhances the value and neighborhood feel of the residential areas nearby.



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

Housing in Covington is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

The US government has determined that for housing to be considered affordable, total housing costs must not exceed 30% of monthly household income. "Household costs" include monthly rent or, for those owner-occupied homes with a mortgage, the monthly total of mortgage principal, interest, property tax and insurance. According to the American Community Survey, conducted between 2009-2013, approximately 94% of Covington's housing units are single-family homes, and 35% of Covington's residents of owner-occupied housing paying a mortgage pay more than 30% of their income toward housing costs. For renters, slightly more than 57% pay more than 30% of their income toward housing. Though the city's average household incomes are high, housing is not necessarily universally affordable, especially for renters. And there are few units available to serve the needs of those who may be seeking something other than a single-family home. Table 3.0X details the housing inventory for Covington and King County and the number of households that are paying more than 30% of household income toward monthly housing costs.

Need to discuss special needs populations and housing affordability issues that maybe encountering in Covington. Include a side bar . Special needs housing in this plan includes homes suitable for and occupied by people with one or more self-help limitations, such as physical or mental disability, long-term illness, or alcohol or drug issues. The housing may or may not

incorporate supportive services, and may be permanent or transitional. Examples include adult family homes, assisted living facilities, and group homes for people with developmental disabilities.

Table 3.02 – Covington Housing Information

	Covington (2009-2013)		King County (2009-2013)	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
Total Housing Units	6,460	-	856,720	-
Total Occupied Housing Units	5,957	92.7%	802,606	93.7%
Total Vacant Housing Units	503	7.8%	54,114	6.3%
Total Single-family units (detached & attached)	6,059	93.8%	510,893	59.6%
Owner-occupied units	5,056	84.9%	466,964	58.2%
Owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage paying more than 30% income for housing per month ⁵	1,627	35.1%	136,582	38.7%
Renter-occupied units	901	15.1%	335,642	41.8%
Renter-occupied housing units paying rent more than 30% income for housing per month ⁵	472	57.2%	153,537	47.9%

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey, Selected Housing Characteristics, Table DP-04 accessed 12/17/14.

According to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) data (2009-2013), Covington has a 78% homeownership rate compared to 58% in King County. In 2013, Covington’s median value of owner occupied housing units was \$267,500, 29% below King County’s median value of \$ 377,300. The city’s 2013 median household income of \$90,280 is quite a bit higher than King County’s median household income of \$ 71,811. Taken together, the median home value and median household income indicate that housing for Covington’s households is generally more affordable than in the rest of King County. However, those households earning between \$79,400 to \$63,520 (100% and 80% of King County’s median income) are likely having difficulty accessing housing in Covington or pay a higher percentage of their income toward housing, leaving them less funds to spend on other necessities. For lower-income seniors, those households earning comparatively lower incomes, or others with special housing needs, the situation is particularly challenging.

(Include sidebar: The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities a fresh look at how they are changing. The ACS replaced the decennial census long form in 2010 and thereafter by collecting long-form type information throughout the decade rather than only once every 10 years.

Questionnaires are mailed to a sample of addresses to obtain information about households and the people living in them.

⁵ The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) defines housing as affordable if its occupants pay no more than 30 percent of their income for rent and utilities or for mortgage, taxes, and insurance.

The American Community Survey produces demographic, social, housing and economic estimates in the form of 1-year, 3-year and 5-year estimates based on population thresholds. The strength of the ACS is in estimating population and housing characteristics. It produces estimates for small areas, including census tracts and population subgroups.

Although the ACS produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates, the Census Bureau's population estimates program produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities and towns, and estimates of housing units for states and counties.

For 2010 and other decennial census years, the Decennial Census provides the official counts of population and housing units.)

City planning in the Town Center and Hawk Property Subarea provide more housing options for different segments of the community by encouraging and allowing more varied housing types. The implementation of these planning efforts will allow the community to obtain a wider variety of housing in settings that encourage a diversity of land use and housing located close to a wide range of services.

Covington's Human Services department is active in implementing a series of 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. This service 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 effort to partner with and support local and regional housing organizations is necessary to provide safe and affordable housing for all of the City's economic segments, and this plan underscores and supports the City's work to build and maintain these effective housing partnerships.

Housing Goals

HO-I	Covington fosters livable neighborhoods with a desirable quality of life, environmental sustainability and healthy active living.
HO-II	Covington's encourages the preservation, maintenance, and improvement of the city's existing neighborhoods.
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.
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 (HGG 7.0, HGG 8.0)

Housing Policies

Healthy Community

LU-1	Maintain future land use designations that accommodate Covington’s regionally determined housing growth target and support regional objectives for walkability, housing diversity, affordability, job-housing balance and flexibility.
LU-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, apartment and condominiums.
LU-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 services, are easily accessible to Covington’s residents. (HGP 1.1)
LU-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. (HGP 1.5)
LU-5	Ensure development regulations allow for and have suitable provisions to accommodate housing opportunities for special needs populations in Covington.
LU-6	Promote energy-efficient housing and the use of renewable energy.
LU-7	Encourage innovative and environmentally sustainable development and design techniques.
LU-8	Promote infill and redevelopment designed to be compatible with existing neighborhoods while creating new housing opportunities.
LU-9	Maintain a strong code enforcement program.

Housing Affordability, Choice & Preservation

LU-10	Support both rental and ownership forms of affordable housing, in a variety of locations, types, and sizes.
LU-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.
LU-12	Promote educational and outreach efforts regarding preservation, improvements, maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential structures. (HGP 3.2)
LU-13	Support non-profit organizations involved in housing repair and rehabilitation. (HGP 3.3)
LU-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.

LU-15	Provide incentives and work in partnership with non-profit and private developers to build affordable housing.
LU-16	Coordinate with public and private lending institutions to find solutions that reduce housing financing costs for both builders and consumers.

Regional Partnerships & Education

LU-17	Promote education and guidance of low and moderate-income households on financing assistance, home purchasing techniques, and assistance in locating affordable rentals. (HGP 7.1)
LU-18	Participate in local and regional resource, education, and lobbying programs regarding housing data, housing programs, design alternatives, and funding sources. (HGP 7.2)
LU-19	Participate in educational campaigns in the community that support low-income and special needs housing. (HGP 7.3)
LU-20	Actively participate in regional responses to affordable housing development needs and issues. (HGG 8.0)
LU-21	Participate in the development of countywide resources, funding, and programs to assist low and moderate-income households in obtaining affordable and appropriate housing. (HGP 8.2)
LU-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. (HGP 8.4)
LU-23	Use housing and community development block grant funds in order to provide housing opportunities for low and moderate-income households. (HGP 8.5)

Related Goals and Policies

Appendix A lists all plan goals and policies, identifying the interrelationships between them and all of the other plan elements. Goals and policies listed in this chapter may have implications on other planning topics. Likewise, goals and policies from other chapter may have implications on Covington’s housing policy. The complete listing will help ensure overall consistency between elements and aid staff, local officials and the larger community as they consult this plan for comprehensive policy guidance.

Implementation Actions

These actions include various programs and activities that implement the City’s housing policy. They’re included in an appendix to this plan, listed with implementation actions from the plan’s other elements. In many cases, implementation actions intended to address housing policy also implement land use and economic development policy.

Chapter 8.

Economic Development

What you will find in this chapter

This economic development element provides the policy direction for Covington's economic development efforts. This chapter includes:

- A description of Covington's economic issues, identifying local challenges and how the community should respond to maximize its economic resiliency.
- Goals and policies to provide direction for Covington's economic development efforts.

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.

Issues

Covington's economy should become more diversified to adapt to future conditions, remain prosperous in the face of unexpected change and maintain economic opportunities over the long-term. (Goal ED-A, ED-B)

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 to scale services 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, identifying opportunities for increased retail growth in the Hawk Subarea Urban Village and Town Center plans.

Figure 8.01 – Regional commercial center



Town Center serves a mix of local and regional retail needs today, and that role is forecast to continue into the future.

Covington residents earn relatively high incomes. According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, the median annual household income is \$92,000, much higher than Washington State’s (\$59,300). But relatively few of Covington’s residents possess a complete college education and higher levels of graduate degrees. In Covington, slightly more than 23% of those age 25 and older have completed a four-year degree. That compares with slightly more than 31% for Washington State. And less than 10% have completed graduate degrees. Manufacturing is the single largest industrial sector for Covington’s workforce, where specialized skills and high salaries do not necessarily require advanced degrees. Almost all of Covington’s working residents leave Covington for their jobs, traveling alone in their cars for more than 30 minutes each way. Many travel to manufacturing and industrial employment centers elsewhere in metropolitan King and Pierce counties.

Table 8.01 – Demographic snapshot

	WA	King Co.	Covington
2000 population	5,900,000	1,737,034	13,783
2010 population	6,598,000	1,931,249	17,575
2014 population	6,882,400	2,044,449	18,480
Housing units	2,620,000	789,232	5,817
Owner-occupied housing	64%	59%	82%
Mean household size	2.52	2.40	3.13
Median household income	\$57,000	\$71,175	\$92,000

Mean time traveled to work	25 mins	26.8 mins	33 mins
Commuting alone in vehicle	72%	65.4%	80%
Educational attainment: high school graduate	23.6%	17%	29%
Educational attainment: some college/AA degree	34.8%	28.9%	37.6%
Educational attainment: bachelor's degree	20.2%	28.8%	15.4%
Educational attainment: graduate/professional degree	11.4%	17.2%	8.9%

Source: 2010 Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey, WA Office of Financial Management

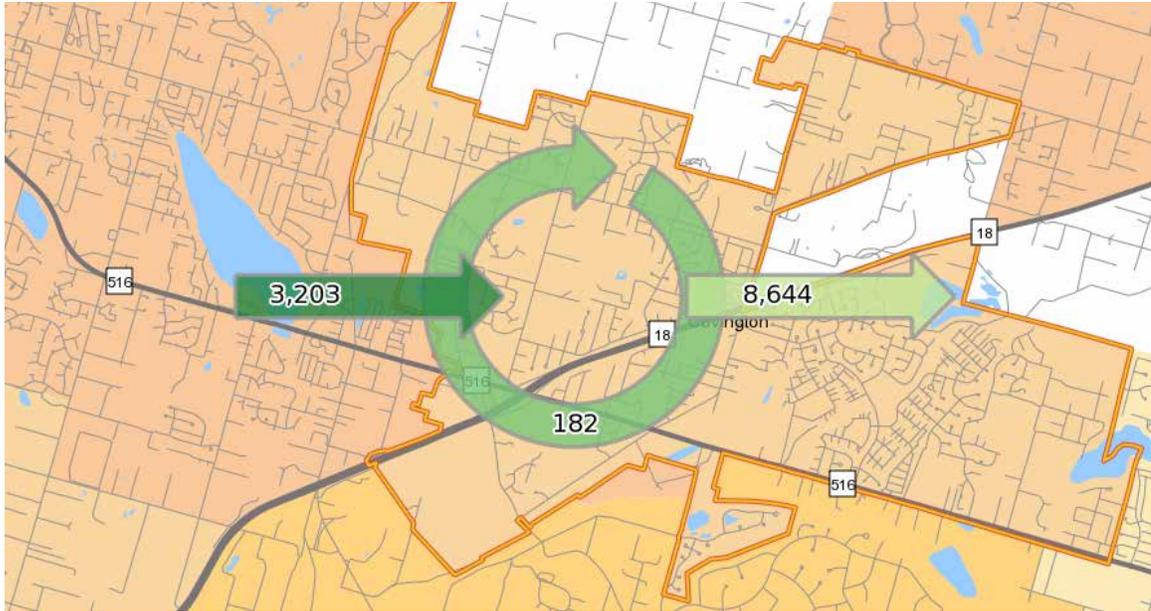
Still, there is employment within Covington’s city limits. But those employed in Covington generally come to work from someplace else. Housing in Covington is more expensive than what many of those employed in Covington can afford to either buy or rent. The jobs offered in Covington tend to be in the retail and service sectors, where incomes may not be high enough to enable workers to compete for Covington housing. However, the trends appear to be changing, with increases in professional office employment, particularly in the medical fields, introducing higher earnings within Covington. Presently there is still a gulf between what housing costs in Covington and what jobs in Covington pay. But plans in the works for professional/medical office development near downtown may make a difference.

Table 8.02 – Where Covington’s Residents Work (2011)

City or Designated Place	Count	Share
Seattle city, WA	1,637	18.5%
Kent city, WA	1,259	14.3%
Renton city, WA	757	8.6%
Bellevue city, WA	627	7.1%
Auburn city, WA	494	5.6%
Tukwila city, WA	407	4.6%
Tacoma city, WA	338	3.8%
Redmond city, WA	286	3.2%
Everett city, WA	246	2.8%
Issaquah city, WA	239	2.7%
All Other Locations	2,536	28.7%

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/>

Figure 8.02 – Map graphic of employment inflow/outflow



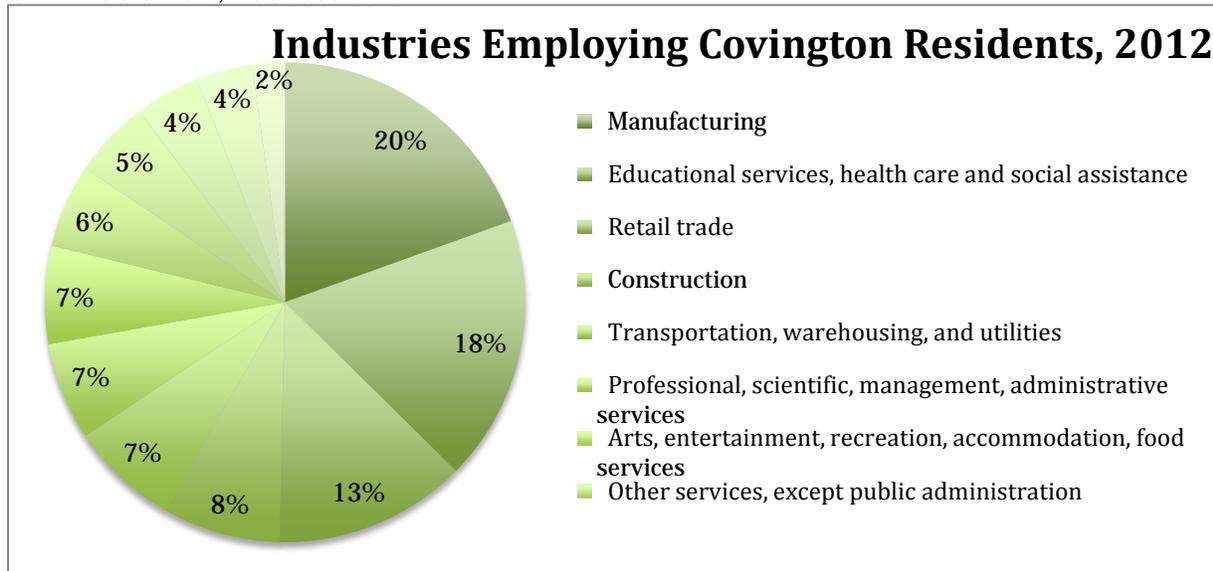
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2011). <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

More than 3,200 people come to work in Covington, but more than 8,600 leave Covington for jobs elsewhere. Only 182 people both live and work in town.

While Covington is a prosperous community, its economy is not necessarily diverse. Covington relies on a robust Puget Sound manufacturing/industrial sector as the source of well-paid employment, and it relies on the sales taxes generated by a large retail service area transcending the community’s boundaries. If either of those conditions change, Covington could be vulnerable.

Figure 8.03 – Occupation by sector graphic

Source: US Census, ACS 2008-2012



Covington’s residents generally work in the manufacturing, educational/health care, and retail trade industries.

Covington’s economic 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 Town Center and Hawk Property Subarea plans intend to

capture some of it. These plans also 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. Covington is not looking to provide large amounts of manufacturing or industrial land to capture those manufacturing and industrial workers who leave town to go to work, but it is looking to strengthen its position where it already has solid footing.

The City adopted an economic development element in 2008, incorporating it into the comprehensive plan. This plan update incorporates many of the economic development goals and policies adopted as part of that earlier economic development plan, but it proposes some restructuring and adjusting to diversify the local economy and add a strategic dimension. Some of those adjustments – already incorporated in the Town Center and Hawk Property Subarea plans – focus on an increase in the professional office sector, enlarging the retail sector, and providing opportunities for other types of local employment. The policy direction in this plan update is to reinforce the community’s resilience to changing conditions, encouraging increased access to education, creative entrepreneurship and continued investment in those elements that make Covington a unique community in which to live.

Increased local spending will be important to sustain and grow local commercial activity. (Goal ED-B)

The retail sector is a large source of tax revenues and employment for Covington. 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, increasing local commerce, generating more local sales tax, and helping the community become less dependent on attracting shoppers from elsewhere. While Covington’s position as a regional retail center will likely remain, it is also likely that the size of the regional market will attract competition. Maple Valley’s Four Corners commercial center is now under development, and it may be in a position to intercept shoppers from the southeast King County area Covington now serves.

Increases in disposable, or “discretionary,” income can be achieved by increasing household incomes and/or reducing household spending. The extent to which Covington can directly influence local disposable income is limited. But it can indirectly help to reduce household spending by supporting more affordable housing choices and by creating land use patterns that help to reduce household transportation costs. The City can also increase the number of households in the community by increasing the intensity of residential development, elevating the community’s aggregate disposable income. Both of these strategies are incorporated in the Town Center and Hawk Property Subarea plans, and this plan update incorporates them into this element’s policy direction.

Figure 8.03 – Town Center plan



The Town Center Concept Plan calls for a new look and identity for central Covington, providing mixed uses, civic plazas, ground-level retail and a distinctly pedestrian environment.

The City of Covington, its public agency partners, community residents, and local business owners must build up their capacity to match the community's economic growth and complexity. (Goal ED-C)

The City's economic development plan calls for increases in City efficiency, particularly with respect to facilitating economic development and reviewing and processing development applications. The City has responded by beating every permit timeline requirement and by ensuring interdepartmental communication is efficient. This plan update recognizes the high-level functioning of City operations and encourages 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.

Figure 8.04 – Public workshop



Encouraging participation and other types of local involvement in community affairs is a keystone in building local capacity and stimulating economic development. Local leaders will be nurtured through processes like this, expanding their understanding of civic affairs and contributing to the richness and appropriateness of local policy.

Even when the community reaches its build-out potential of more than 28,000 residents, Covington will still retain characteristics that make it feel like a small town. Its corps of volunteers, grass-roots community leaders and City officials will guide community discussion and shape public policy. City Councilmembers will continue to be directly accountable for the actions they take. These individuals will be relied upon by the larger community to keep things running smoothly, facilitate economic development, and ensure the City's fiscal sustainability. Actively building local capacity, recruiting, training and welcoming community leaders, and providing an appropriate environment in which to operate will be critical to maintaining a responsive City government.

While Covington will feel like a small town, it has the political and financial wherewithal to be an active, engaged partner in its economic development and the larger regional community. Covington is set in a complex regional context, where its economy is defined largely by influences and actors over which it often has little control. Strategic investment – directed by the community's leaders – will ensure Covington can continue to prosper. 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 (ILA's), and it must create a conducive environment so its future generations of leaders continue doing so.

Covington has several economic development tools at its disposal. A selection of them appears in Table 8.03.

Table 8.03 – Applicable Economic Development Financial Tools

Tool	Applicability	Notes
General obligation bonds	Infrastructure funding	The City will want to consider its debt capacity, the ability to service the debt through the general fund revenues, and interest rates before issuing a bond.
Tax increment financing district (various tools)	Infrastructure funding	These tools are dependent on the amount of future development to generate revenue.
Local improvement district	Infrastructure funding	A special assessment on properties benefiting from infrastructure project to help fund the project.
Transportation benefit district	Infrastructure funding	A special purpose district with limited taxing authority. Proceeds can be used to fund infrastructure projects or maintenance.
Business improvement districts	Infrastructure, maintenance, and program funding	A special assessment on businesses within the district to pay for improvements and maintenance.
Developer agreements	Development of infrastructure, public space or public amenity as part of a development project	Agreement between a developer and the City to include a public benefit not required by code.

Covington has the capacity to incur additional public debt, but the community’s 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. It is a fiscally conservative policy that has served the community well, and one that any proposed bond campaign will need to respect. There are opportunities to leverage public investment, making for more attractive partnership-style strategies where City funds are augmented by investment from others.

Covington’s position as an attractive community relies on continued provision of high-quality services and effective public investment. (Goal ED-D)

Covington’s attractiveness made it a rapidly growing “bedroom” community over the last 185 years. It has relatively affordable housing, high-quality public services, a suburban setting, proximity to employment centers, parks and open spaces, and good schools. Covington’s residents have invested in the community, buying houses, developing relationships, and participating in community activities. They appreciate Covington’s high quality of life and small town feel.

But these households have proven to be relatively mobile, too. According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, more than 66% of Covington households have been in their homes for less than 12 years. They came to Covington because it was more attractive than the places they left. If Covington wants these households to remain, it must sustain the quality of life that attracted them.

This may be something of a challenge. The low-density, single-family development pattern that has defined Covington in the past is changing. A large amount of incoming population will be housed in higher-density housing, like that proposed in the Town Center and Hawk Subarea Urban Village plans. Preserving the character of Covington’s existing neighborhoods is essential, but so is accommodating new population and the development to serve it in a way that enhances Covington’s quality of life and retains those residents who have invested in this town.

This will require the City to prioritize infrastructure investments, find ways to provide services more efficiently, and continue to grow (especially in the Downtown and the Hawk Subarea Urban Village) to support the City’s tax base.

Fiscal balance is a challenge for local government, and Covington is no exception. (Goal ED-E)

Maintaining high-quality public services and supporting necessary redevelopment within the City will cause increased service and infrastructure costs. These costs will strain the City’s budget, placing greater demand for transportation, parks and recreation, stormwater, public safety, and general municipal services. At the same time, there is limited ability for tax revenues to keep pace with increasing financial needs. These revenue limitations are primarily due to the 1% limit on property tax revenue increases and increased competition for retail spending. Sales tax revenues may increase overall as the community’s commercial property develops, but its production per square foot of commercial land may actually remain stable.

Covington’s policies attempt to address some of these challenges by calling for more efficiency in land development, fitting higher intensity into less space. This will help to reduce infrastructure investment and elevate property tax return. The more compact development approach – like that incorporated in the Town Center and Hawk Subarea Urban Village plans – can also make travel by something other than a car an attractive alternative. This can reduce wear and tear on local streets, easing maintenance burdens.

Economic Development Goals

ED-A	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. (EDG 2.0, EDG 3.0, EDG 6.0)
ED-B	Support local commercial activity and spending power in the community by increasing household disposable incomes and continued population growth within the city. (EDG 4.0, EDG 5.0, EDG 6.0, EDG 7.0, EDG 9.0)
ED-C	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. (EDG 1.0)
ED-D	Build on the City’s existing assets and stable growth, and focus on being a desirable place to live, shop and play by continuing to provide high quality services (including schools, safety, and recreation) and making strategic investments in infrastructure. (EDG 2.0, EDG 4.0, EDG 5.0, EDG 8.0, EDG 9.0)
ED-E	Grow the City’s tax base, prioritize investments, and efficiently provide city services (EDG 1.0)

Economic Development Policies

Economic Balance

ED-1	Partner with regional and state organizations for economic development initiatives of mutual interest (EDP 2.7)
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ED-2	<p>Consider a variety of approaches to achieving a diverse local economy, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Business retention and expansion · Business attraction and diversification including entrepreneurship and small business development, and · Developing and maintaining effective public-private partnerships (EDP 3.1)
ED-3	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 (EDP 3.3)
ED-4	Strengthen Covington’s position as the center of a regional trade area serving Covington and nearby communities readily accessed from the State Route 18 and State Route 516 highway corridors (EDP 5.1)
ED-5	Facilitate continuing education and skill development for residents
ED-6	Encourage regional commercial and employment uses along major transportation corridors to strengthen Covington’s economic position within the region (EDP5.8)
ED-7	Facilitate development of lodging, meeting, event and entertainment venues meeting both resident and visitor needs (EDP 5.5)
ED-8	Foster a business climate and site options supporting large employers offering high-wage jobs together with small business and entrepreneurial start-ups (EDP 6.6)
ED-9	Encourage location of higher wage employment- intensive uses to complement the downtown area and other mixed-use development in Covington (EDP 6.5)

Disposable Income Growth & Local Spending

ED-10	Facilitate commute trip reduction by providing more jobs locally for Covington residents (EDP 2.6)
ED-11	Encourage residential and other forms of mixed-use development in commercial zones to reduce vehicular traffic, provide for shared parking including eventual transition to structured parking at high demand locations, and maintain development capacity for active ground level commercial use (EDP 5.6)
ED-12	Secure options for transit service, ride sharing, pedestrian-friendly development and other means to reduce the need for vehicular travel and reduce transportation costs (EDP 5.7 reworded)

Local Capacity

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ED-13	Review development regulations and processes to assure competitiveness with other selected Puget Sound jurisdictions and to suggest options for continued cost-effective public service enhancements (EDP 1.7)
ED-14	Maintain development regulations that are predictable and that balance cost impact with public benefit (EDP 1.2)
ED-15	Support an economic development effort over time with adequate budgets and staffing to insure that it has an appropriate capacity to address economic development threats and opportunities (EDP 3.2)

Quality of Life/Complete Community

ED-16	Establish and maintain positive and proactive inter-jurisdictional relationships with outside service providers such as water, sewer, gas, electric, fire, phone and cable entities throughout the permitting process (EDP 1.5)
ED-17	Develop downtown, neighborhood, community and regional commercial uses with coordinated provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate transportation, pedestrian and utility infrastructure, • Development and design standards to encourage other mixed use, commercial and residential developments that complement but do not unduly compete with the realization of the downtown vision; and • Allow for open space and parks (EDP 5.2)
ED-18	Seek cost-effective, innovative, and state of the art solutions for utility and telecommunications infrastructure (EDP 8.5)
ED-19	Encourage community policing and other business and neighborhood community watch programs to improve public safety for both businesses and residences (EDP 1.6)

Fiscal Sustainability

ED-20	Facilitate economic development that, on balance, provides positive net revenue to the City of Covington in the short and long term (EDP 8.1)
ED-21	Assure that new development is a fiscal benefit except in instances where clear public policy supports additional public investment (EDP 8.2)
ED-22	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 (EDP 8.3)
ED-23	Encourage a public-private partnership for town center development 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 (EDP 4.2)

Related Goals and Policies

Appendix A lists all plan goals and policies, identifying the interrelationships between them and all of the other plan elements. Goals and policies listed in this chapter may have implications on other planning

topics. Likewise, goals and policies from other chapters may have implications on Covington's economic development policies. The complete listing will help ensure overall consistency between elements and aid staff, local officials and the larger community as they consult this plan for comprehensive policy guidance.

Implementation Actions

These actions include programs and activities to implement Covington's economic development policy. They are enumerated in the appendix. Many economic development implementation actions also advance land use, housing, transportation, and capital facilities policy, and the appendix cross-references these actions to the various other elements as appropriate.

Implementation of Covington's economic development goals and policies will require the successful realization of the Town Center Plan and Hawk Subarea Urban Village Plan. A key aspect of implementing the Town Center Plan will be infrastructure improvements. Beyond those actions, the City should be focused on a redevelopment approach to growth, as well as growing an employment base that offers higher paying jobs.