

PLAN FOUNDATION



WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER

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

INTRODUCTION

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

**GROWTH
MANAGEMENT ACT
GOALS**

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

**PLANNING MANDATE AND
COORDINATION**

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

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

A major update was completed in 2003. The City updated Land Use and Downtown elements in 2012 and adopted the Lakepointe Urban Village Subarea Plan in 2014. Other minor amendments have been made to individual elements during intervening years.

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

The City must now update its comprehensive plan and development regulations to address the 2015-2035 planning period and demonstrate compatibility with state goals and regional plans. This 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. It translates the community's values and vision into a policy document to guide decisions on the quality of growth, intensity and diversity of land use, transportation modes and street networks, public facilities and services, parks and recreation, and environmental protection. As the City of Covington continues "Growing Towards Greatness" the Comprehensive Plan will guide the physical development of the City, ensure that change is consistent with the community's vision and principles, and coordinate the provision of public services and amenities to support new growth.

The 2035 comprehensive plan satisfies the requirements for periodic updates of comprehensive plans for those cities planning under the GMA, including consistency with King County 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 2015 Comprehensive Plan Logo



Children by Covington Park
Source: City of Covington, 2015

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

Margaret Harto, City of Covington Mayor

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The City provided several opportunities for public involvement and the plan goals and policies directly reflect the input received. The City established a project web page and regulatory provided information and draft documents. A storefront studio was held over 4 days in July 2015 including two public workshops. A series of stakeholder interviews were also conducted during the summer of 2015. The interviews included a mapping exercise. In general, those that provided input support the general direction of the City and in particular plans for the downtown and Lakepointe Urban Village. The City also held Planning Commission meetings, occasionally preceded by an open house. Planning Commission and City Council hearings were held, with published notices. These efforts built on extensive community outreach for the Town Center and Hawk Property Subarea Plans in prior years.

STUDY AREA

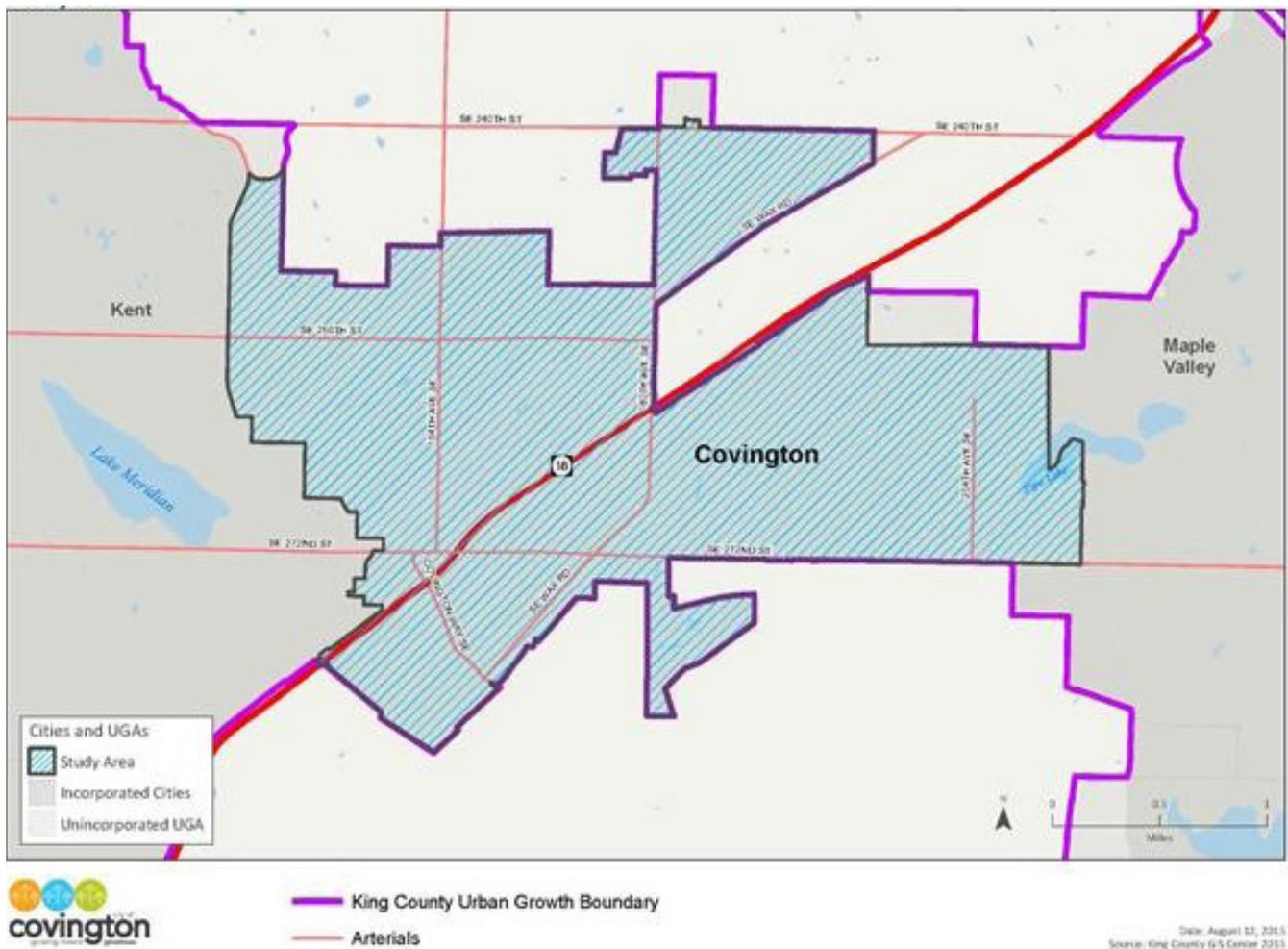
In the Comprehensive Plan Update, the City may choose to combine existing elements to streamline the plan and consolidate related information; the City may also choose to develop selected optional elements that helps it formulate policies and strategies on topics of local concern.

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



- The Covington city limits comprising 6.55 square miles or 4,190 gross acres or 3,320 parcel acres.
- Within the UGA, there are two Potential Annexation Areas (PAAs) areas assigned to the City. They include the Tahoma High School site which lies to the north on 36.8 acres, and a portion of the Lakepointe Urban Village which lies to the northeast on 75.6 acres.

Exhibit 1. Study Area



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

Vision: A community's best desired future.

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

VISION AND FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

VISION AND MISSION

Vision – Covington: Unmatched quality of life

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

FRAMEWORK GOALS

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

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



Medical Services
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014

are diverse, safe, accessible, and well-designed.

- FW Goal-V. **Municipal Services:** Plan, develop, implement, and maintain high quality capital infrastructure and services that reflect the needs of a growing community.
- FW Goal-VI. **Customer Service:** Recruit, support, and retain a professional team of employees, volunteers, and stakeholders who offer outstanding customer service, ensure stewardship of the public’s money, and promote the City.
- FW Goal-VII. **Covington’s People are Valued:** Respect the dignity of all people as they seek to live, work and play in Covington.
- FW Goal-VIII. **Community Sustainability:** Advance social, economic and environmental goals in parallel to foster comprehensive community sustainability.
- FW Goal-IX. **Nature in our Neighborhoods:** Honor the connection between community and environmental health by integrating nature in our neighborhoods.
- FW Goal-X. **Mobility:** Ensure all residents, regardless of age, mode or ability, can find safe comfortable ways to travel through the city and welcoming destinations when they arrive.

FW Goal-XI. **Active and Healthy Living:** Promote safety and well-being by creating opportunities for access to a variety of food venues, community services, and active recreation that make healthy choices easy choices.

FW Goal-XII. **Resilience:** Foster resilience by planning for community responses to unavoidable natural and man-made disturbances.

FW Goal-XIII. **Community Arts, Recreation, and Education:** Conserve cultural resources, and promote social connection and opportunities for community celebrations, and access to a variety of arts, recreation, and education opportunities for community members of all ages.



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

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 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.

1. Plan Foundation
2. Land Use
3. Housing
4. Transportation
5. Economic Development
6. Natural Environment
7. Capital Facilities & Utilities
8. Parks, Recreation & Open Space
9. Shoreline

The elements provide policy guidance, identifying the issues that shape the policy response and listing the goals and policies relevant to that particular topic.

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.



Covington Street Signs
Source: Studio Cascade, 2014