

## ORDINANCE NO. 02-14

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON ADOPTING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENTS PERTAINING TO THE HAWK PROPERTY SUBAREA; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the city has adopted a comprehensive plan consistent with the provisions of the Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A ("GMA"); and

WHEREAS, the GMA authorizes the preparation of subarea plans; and

WHEREAS, RCW 36.70A.130 exempts subarea plans from the state law requirement limiting comprehensive plan amendments to once per year; and

WHEREAS, the City of Covington has prepared the Hawk Property Subarea Plan after extensive public outreach and participation with the Covington community; from March through November 2013 the planning commission has held workshops, open houses, community meetings, and a public hearing for members of the community to learn more about the Hawk Property Subarea planning process and to provide input on the vision, uses, and impacts of development within the subarea; and;

WHEREAS, the City of Covington, as lead agency, issued a Final Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on November 14, 2013, which identifies the impacts and mitigation measures associated with planned development in the Planned Action Area as identified in the Hawk Property Subarea Plan; the FEIS includes by incorporation the Draft Hawk Property Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement issued on July 26, 2014, (collectively referred to as the Planned Action EIS); and

WHEREAS, appropriate notice was provided and the planning commission conducted a public hearing on November 7, 2013, on the proposed Hawk Property Subarea Plan, and on November 21, 2013, the Planning Commission deliberated and voted to recommend approval of the Hawk Property Subarea Plan to the city council; and

WHEREAS, the Covington City Council has adopted the Hawk Property Subarea Plan, dated February 11, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Hawk Property Subarea Plan includes amendments to the Covington Comprehensive Plan and Municipal Code to implement the vision of the Hawk Property Subarea Plan; and

WHEREAS, the city has reviewed and identified necessary housekeeping amendments as described initially in Appendix G of the Hawk Property Final Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement; and

WHEREAS, housekeeping corrections have been incorporated into the Hawk Property Subarea Plan and associated comprehensive plan and municipal code amendments to address minor changes necessary to maintain internal consistency, correct identified inaccuracies, and ensure current conditions are accurately reflected; and

WHEREAS, the city council finds that adopting this ordinance is in the public interest and will advance the public health, safety, and welfare;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The amendments to the City of Covington's Comprehensive Plan as contained in Exhibits A-F attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference are hereby adopted.

Section 2. The following provision shall hereby be added to the end of Section 10.9 of the City of Covington's Comprehensive Plan Chapter 10, Capital Facility Plan Element as follows:

**10.9 Six Year Capital Facilities Plan**

...

Capital improvements supporting the Hawk Property Subarea Plan are addressed in the Hawk Property Planned Action Ordinance, February 11, 2014, hereby incorporated by this reference.

Section 3. Upon the approval of the City Attorney, the City Clerk is authorized to make any necessary corrections to this ordinance including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener's/clerical errors, references, ordinance numbering, section/subsection numbers, and any reference thereto.

Section 4. If any provision of this ordinance, or ordinance modified by it, is determined to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the remaining provisions of this ordinance and ordinances and/or resolutions modified by it shall remain in force and effect.

Section 5. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect five (5) days after proper posting and publication. A summary of this ordinance may be published in lieu of publishing the ordinance in its entirety.

Passed by the city council of the City of Covington on the 11th day of February, 2014.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Margaret Harto

PUBLISHED: February 14, 2014  
EFFECTIVE: February 19, 2014

ATTESTED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sharon Scott, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sara Springer, City Attorney



# 2.0

## LAND USE ELEMENT

### 2.1 Introduction

Covington's Land Use Element is intended to provide a foundation and guide for the location of a complete spectrum of land uses within the City's boundaries. The Land Use Element is divided into five sections. The Introduction section describes the intent and the relationship to Covington's community-wide vision of the future and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Context section summarizes the interrelationships of the element with the other local governments in the region and how the policies in this element respond to the requirements of the GMA and the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP). The Existing Conditions section provides a review of existing land use, population and employment data, and progress on ratified growth targets through the year 2022. The Future Land Use section designates the general location of land uses for the 20-year planning period with a Future Land Use Map. The Goals and Policies section provides guidance for future development and establishes the conceptual framework from which the more detailed recommendations for housing; transportation; downtown, economic development; parks, trails and open space; natural environment; human services; utilities; and capital facilities; are made in subsequent elements of this Plan.

The Land Use Element helps to achieve Covington's Vision Statement by providing for planned growth and economic development in a manner which supports preservation of the natural environment, and provides for a well-designed and pedestrian-friendly downtown, visually similar to Covington's small-town past. In addition the land use element intends to foster well-maintained and attractive neighborhoods affordable to residents, and a variety of cultural and recreational opportunities. The Land Use Element also contains policies to encourage a stable economic base and to promote more family wage jobs and increased employment opportunities in the City.

### 2.2 Planning Context

The goals, policies, and strategies of this Comprehensive Plan have been developed to reflect the City Council's Vision Statement and Mission, while building on a variety of planning documents and processes, the King County

Countywide Planning Policies, the 2008 King County Buildable Land Report, and the 2008 Population, Housing and Employment Report (see Appendix T-2).

### **2.2.1 Requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA)**

The most important aspect of the GMA is the requirement that other elements of the Comprehensive Plan relate back to the Land Use Element and that the Plan is internally consistent. Therefore, the GMA puts the Land Use Element in the central role of defining the direction of the Comprehensive Plan, and thereby carrying out the vision of the community.

In 1997, GMA was amended to establish a monitoring and evaluating program, known as the Buildable Lands Program (RCW 36.70A.270), to determine if actual growth and development in local jurisdictions is consistent with growth that was planned for in the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) and Comprehensive Plan. Policies within this element take into consideration actual growth as identified in the Buildable Lands Program.

### **2.2.2 Regional Policies and Plans**

There are two regional policy documents that were adopted and ratified by local governments in the Puget Sound area: Vision 2040 and the King County Countywide Planning Policies. Vision 2040, adopted in April, 2008, is the result of a four-county regional planning process undertaken by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Following an extensive review of regional land use and transportation alternatives, PSRC adopted a regional growth strategy that emphasizes targeting growth to regional geography groupings and centers throughout the region. Vision 2040 subsequently has served as the framework for the Countywide Planning Policies for Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, and King Counties.

Countywide Planning Policies address several issues, including the designation of UGAs, promotion of contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development, affordable housing, and policies for joint county and city planning within UGAs. King County's CPP were developed in conjunction with local governments and the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC), a group of elected officials from Seattle, King County, and suburban cities.

Vision 2040 has implications for Buildable Lands and targets in articulating a Regional Growth Strategy, which calls for a preferred distribution of future population and employment growth in the region. Each county is called on to plan for a given share of the region's growth, and within each county, each regional geography grouping (Covington is part of the "small city" geography grouping) is called on to plan for a prescribed share of the county's growth. In developing and adopting new growth targets, the GMPC has been very strongly guided by the Regional Growth Strategy in Vision 2040.

The resulting growth targets for housing and jobs must be accommodated within each local jurisdiction through the land use plan and development regulations. There are a number of GMA provisions that speak to this.

Buildable Lands comes in as a mid-course check, if you will, on how well those local plans and regulations are performing in accommodating that growth, with special focus on achieved densities and the supply of buildable land. Local governments gather data each year, and the next evaluation is in 2012.

Countywide Planning Policies are: 1) adopted by GMPC and then 2) ratified by the county and cities individually. To become effective, a CPP amendment must be ratified by at least 30% of the jurisdictions in the county (including the county itself) containing at least 70% of the county's population.

According to the GMA, the intent of these policies is to establish a framework from which county and city comprehensive plans are developed, and to ensure that county and city plans are consistent as required by GMA Statutes. Therefore, these policies have a significant impact on Covington's local land-use policies and Comprehensive Plan.

## **2.3 Existing Conditions**

### **2.3.1 Existing Land Use**

The City relied heavily upon King County GIS data for analysis of existing land use and is supplemented by City staff and consultants. The existing land use is defined as the current use of a parcel and is NOT based on underlying zoning. The City identified eleven generalized existing land-use categories consisting of: single family residential; mobile home park; commercial; office; industrial; public utility; mining/quarry; schools/library; churches; open space; and vacant lands. Table 2.1 shows the acreage and distribution of each of the existing land-use categories, including potential annexation areas.

Table 2.1: Existing Land Use

Existing Land-Use Category	Total Covington	
	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1813	55.17%
Mobile Home Park	17	0.53%
Commercial	68	2.06%
Office	9	0.29%
Industrial	10	0.29%
Public Utility	107	3.24%
Reclaimed Mining/Quarry and Batch Plant	181	5.52%
Schools/Library	152	4.64%
Churches	67	2.03%
Open Space	137	4.17%
Vacant lands	651	19.82%
Undetermined use	73	2.24%
<b>Total</b> (excluding lakes and roads)	<b>3,286</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

It is important to understand how potential development constraints may impact future growth and development patterns. Overlapping constraints to development are shown as Potentially Constrained Lands as the composite of areas constrained by floodplains, wetlands and associated buffers, streams and associated buffers, landslide hazard areas, seismic hazard areas, erosion hazard areas, power line easements, and gas line easements. Approximately 766 acres of Covington's total land area is potentially constrained, and discussed and mapped in the Environmental Element.

## 2.4 Population and Employment

### 2.4.1 Demographics

#### Population

King County population projections have been prepared by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) for growth management planning purposes. The OFM projections provide high, intermediate, and low population growth expectations for each county. Counties may select a population projection within the high, medium and low projection alternatives. The intermediate series is used in this plan to reflect a moderate growth rate for King County and the central Puget Sound region.

The US Census reports that the 2000 population for the City of Covington was 13,783 persons. Because Covington is a recently incorporated area, historical population data for the area defined by the municipal boundaries is not readily available dating back before the year 1990. However, 2009 OFM population estimate for Covington indicates that the community has a population estimate of 17,530, already surpassing its projected 2020 population (Table 2.2). Factors that contribute to the current population increase in Covington include a combination of reasonable housing costs compared to the rest of King County, recently low interest rates, excellent

soils for site development, and a relatively large supply of affordable land. This combination has created a strong market in the city for housing development. In addition, the City of Covington has been involved in a major planning effort to provide capacity for population, housing, and commercial growth. These factors will likely continue to encourage population growth at a high rate of increase in the future.

**Table 2.2: Covington Population: 2003 - 2023**

Covington Population	2003	2013	2023	% Change 2003-2023
Population	14,850	17,152	19,454	31%

Source: Office of Financial Management 2002; EDAW 2003.

Listing of Chinook salmon by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as “threatened” under the authority of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) will impact many aspects of the planning process for the City of Covington. NMFS requirements to preserve and enhance salmonid habitat potentially affects all activities that impact water quality and quantity, and maintenance activities associated with road, sewer and water systems. Land use review processes and resulting decisions are also affected. Protection of habitat values regulated by ESA was incorporated into Covington’s planning efforts, as is reflected throughout this Comprehensive Plan, especially in Chapter 7, the Environmental Element.

**Age Distribution**

According to US Census and Washington State OFM data, Covington’s population is comprised with a significant percentage (36.5 percent) of residents under 19 and very few seniors (4 percent). The majority of the population is between the years of 20 and 64 years of age (60 percent).

Covington also contains an approximately 12 percent minority population. Covington’s percent of population under the age of 19 is significantly higher than the rest of King County (25 percent) as a percentage of total population. Conversely, Covington has about one fourth the percentages of senior citizens (over 65 years of age) as the balance of King County (3.7 percent vs. 10.4 percent).

**Growth Targets**

Under agreements with the GMPC, the City of Covington is responsible for a target of an additional 1,173 households by 2022. Table 2.3 describes Covington’s household target for 2022.

**Table 2.3: 2022 Covington Household Target**

Covington	2000	2022 Additional HH Target	Housing Units Needed to Meet 2022 Target	Existing Housing Units 2003
Total Households	4,398	1,173	5,571	5,048

Sources: 2000 US Census; 2002 King County Benchmark Report; Personal Communications, Chandler Felt, King County; Covington 2003.

### 2.4.2 Employment

Table 2.4 indicates the relative importance of major employment sectors within the City of Covington based on the number of employees. The data suggest that retail and service jobs (including government and education) are predominant in Covington. In addition, the construction sector is relatively specialized in Covington in comparison to similar sectors in Washington State.

King County employment projections for 2005 and 2010 estimate 1.2 percent growth in the retail sector, 2.5 percent growth in the services sector, and 1.0 percent growth in the heavy construction sector countywide (King County Employment Securities Department Website).

The King County GMPC maintains 20-year job growth targets for the year 2022. County employment targets in urban areas are based on the following criteria (King County CPP 2002):

- The capacity and condition of existing and forecast capital facilities and utilities,

- Proximity to major employment centers,

- Access to existing and projected regional transit,

- Capacity of undeveloped land and potential for redevelopment given the character of existing development,

- The need for a range of housing types,

- Each jurisdiction’s share of affordable housing as required by affordable housing policies,

- Consistency with the Countywide numbers.

**Table 2.4: Number of Covington Employees by Employment Sector**

Employment Sector	2002	Percent of Total
Services (Gov/Ed.)	2,136	42.2%
Retail	1,241	24.5%
Other Industries	780	15.4%
Construction	512	10.1%
Manufacturing	129	2.5%
Wholesale	101	2.0%
Agriculture	93	1.8%
Transportation	38	0.8%
Finance/Real Estate	19	0.4%
Mining	11	0.2%
Communications/Utilities	3	0.1%
<b>Total All Industries</b>	<b>5,063</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Herbert Research 2002.

The City of Covington's employment target for 2022 is 990 new jobs. Table 2.8 (in Section 2.7.2) provides a summary of the City's ability to provide commercial and industrial development capacity to meet this employment target.

Covington strives to have a healthy economic structure by providing for orderly and efficient economic development while at least maintaining, and potentially increasing, its jobs per household balance. This ratio was 1.1 in 2003. The major component of future non-residential development includes diverse opportunities for commercial, office and manufacturing activities, with a significant portion of land appropriate for mixed use buildings. These land uses will provide needed services and jobs to Covington residents and also provides a major component of Covington's tax base through sales and property taxes. Because these kinds of activities typically generate more tax revenue than they consume in commensurate public services and facilities, they are often considered as an important fiscal benefit to the local government tax base.

## 2.5 Future Land Use

### 2.5.1 King County Urban Growth Area Boundary

The King County designated UGA encompasses all cities located within the county. The boundary of the UGA is established by the County in consultation with the cities through consideration of land use demand projections, identification of critical and resource lands, and determination of areas already characterized by urban growth. Open space corridors must be identified within and between UGAs. Covington's UGA contains 3,558.5 acres of incorporated lands and 275.5 acres of unincorporated lands which

have already been identified as falling within the County's designated UGA (Figure 2.1). Of this latter category, nearly 168 acres are included within Covington's Potential Annexation Area and will likely be incorporated in the near future.

A growth boundary defines the limit within which the full range of urban services will be provided. These services are not offered beyond the growth boundary. Growth is first directed into areas already urbanized and that have existing public facility and service capacities to serve this development.

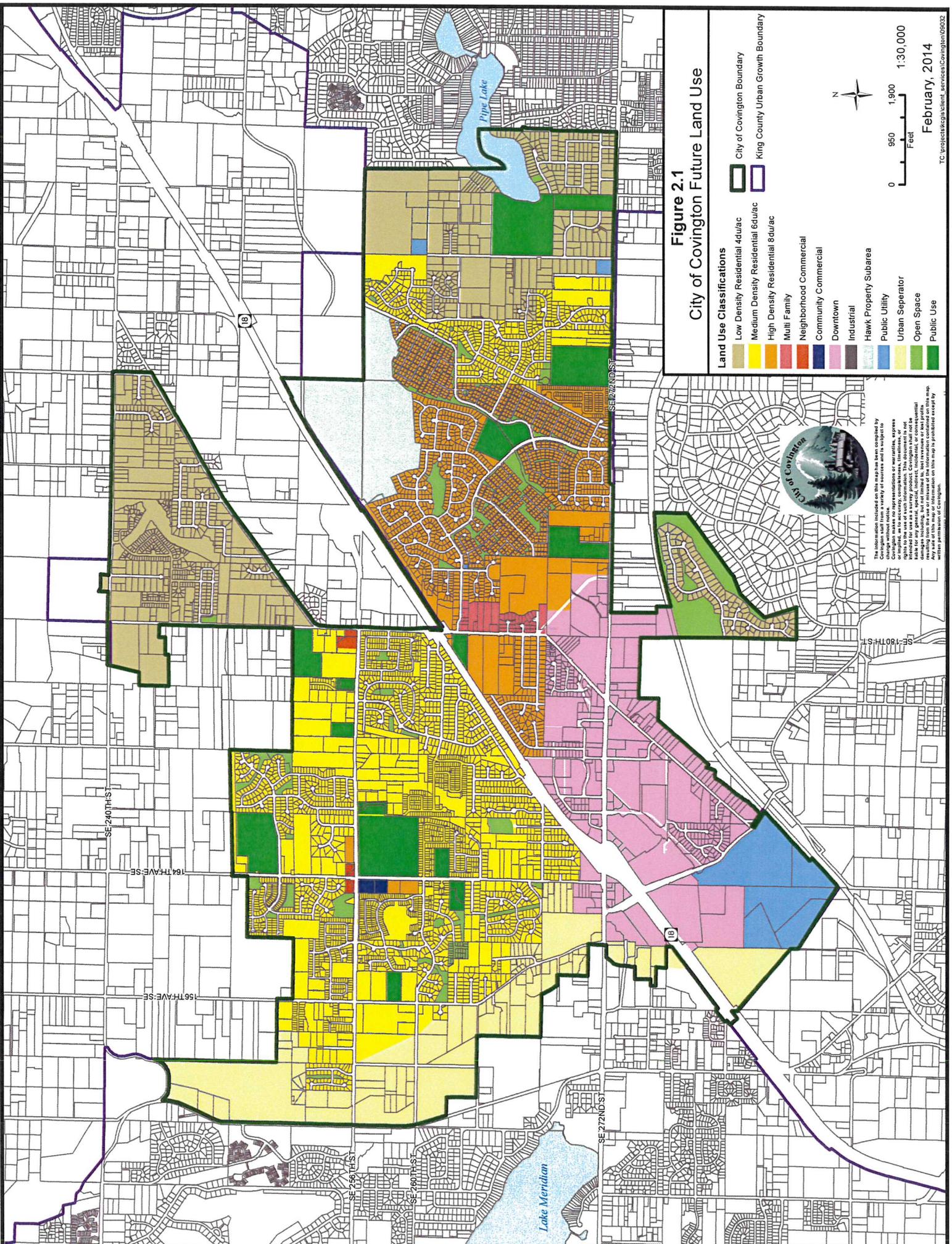
Secondarily, growth is directed to portions of the UGA requiring additional facilities and services. The purpose is to promote more compact urban development within and adjacent to existing urban areas in order to insure efficient utilization of land resources and to facilitate economic provision of urban services.

### **2.5.2 City of Covington Urban Growth Area**

Covington's UGA includes 81 acres of land adjacent to the City limits that have been identified as appropriate for future annexation. Covington's UGA is specific to the City and does not overlap with annexation areas of adjacent cities. Expansion of the City by future annexations shall take place according to policies contained in this Plan and supporting development regulations.

#### **Adjacent Areas of Concern/Potential Future Annexation Areas**

Four unincorporated adjacent areas of concern that are adjacent to Covington's Municipal Boundary and outside of Covington's UGA include Adjacent Areas of Concern (AAC), Northwest (NW), Northeast (NE), Southwest (SW) and Southeast (SE). The four AAC are currently under consideration for future annexation by the City in the future as required to meet Covington's long-term growth needs. (Refer to Figure 2.2).



**Figure 2.1**  
City of Covington Future Land Use

**Land Use Classifications**

- Low Density Residential 4du/ac
- Medium Density Residential 6du/ac
- High Density Residential 8du/ac
- Multi Family
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Downtown
- Industrial
- Hawk Property Subarea
- Public Utility
- Urban Separator
- Open Space
- Public Use

**City of Covington Boundary**

**King County Urban Growth Boundary**

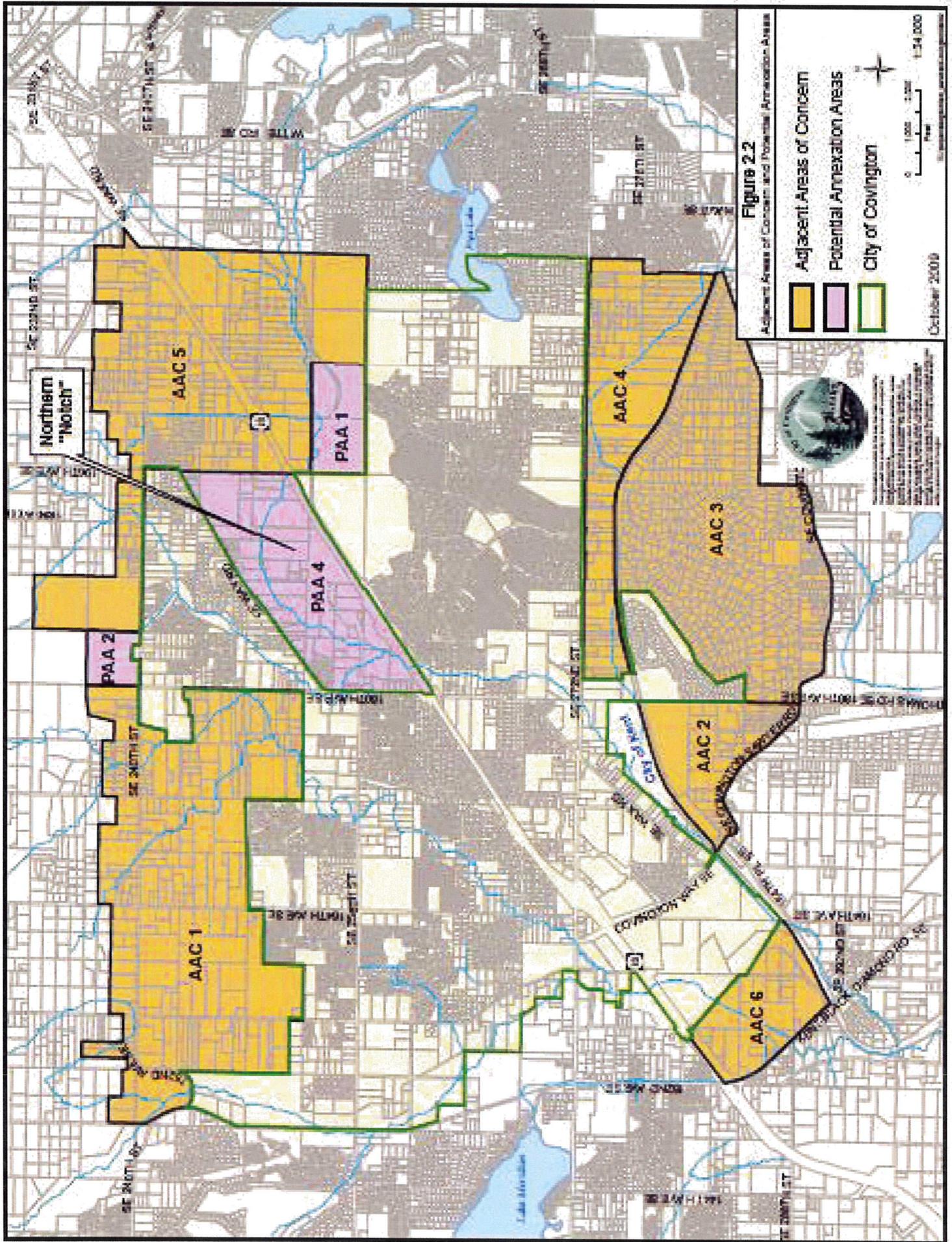
0 950 1900 1:30,000  
Feet

TC:\projects\gis\client\_services\Covington\09032

February, 2014



This map is a planning tool and is subject to change without notice. Covington staff have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained on this map. However, the information is provided for informational purposes only and should not be used for any legal, financial, or other purposes. Covington staff will not be held responsible for any errors or omissions on this map. The information contained on this map is provided for informational purposes only and should not be used for any legal, financial, or other purposes. Covington staff will not be held responsible for any errors or omissions on this map.



Future annexation of these areas would require adjustment of the UGA boundary. These four areas are currently under the jurisdiction of the King County Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations, provided that the potential annexation areas contained within the larger southern area are joint planning areas. The City is committed to being involved in future land-use decisions regarding any major developments in these areas.

## 2.6 Future Land Use Categories

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 2.1) contains the location of generalized future land uses through the year 2020 that Covington intends to achieve through adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and supporting development regulations. However, for Public and Public Utility uses the map shows only existing locations. The future locations of Public and Public Utility uses may occur throughout the City pursuant to Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and Development Regulation provisions, which are intended to reduce impacts on surrounding land uses. The Preferred Future Land-Use Map is based on the following considerations:

- City of Covington's Vision Statement
- Community preferences and needs as expressed through community forums and workshops, the City Council, Planning Commission, Parks Commission, Youth and Family Services Commission, Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC) and Covington Chamber of Commerce and other means;
- The GMA and CPP;
- Protection of critical areas, urban separators, and natural resources consistent with salmonid protection and NMFS ESA Section 4(d) rules; and
- Theoretical land capacity analysis to determine if appropriate developable land is available to meet growth targets.

### 2.6.1 Single Family Residential

The City's existing neighborhoods are primarily characterized by attractive single family residential development. Existing platted subdivisions fall predominantly within the range of four to eight units per acre. The Plan recommends that the remaining vacant properties in residential areas develop in the range of four to eight units per acre to meet most of the projected housing needs of the community and to maintain compatibility with the existing neighborhoods and open space corridors.

Minimum density standards for residential developments shall be utilized to ensure that land is used efficiently, that urban density standards of the GMA are met, and that low-density sprawling development does not occur. This Plan supports a variety of densities in order to provide for housing types and prices that meet the needs of the community.

Appropriately sited mixed-use, in or near, Downtown, will help to provide housing options and meet the variety of housing needs in Covington.

Cottage Housing is allowed within the City's downtown as an alternative housing style and provides options for infill development. Cottage Housing provides a benefit to the city by allowing a diversity of housing, and potentially a new form of affordable housing in our downtown and adjacent to commercial, retail, and office development.

### **2.6.2 Multifamily**

Structures designed to accommodate several unrelated households. Multifamily residences include duplexes, apartments, townhomes, and condominiums. These buildings may be communities, or a collection of separate entities. Multifamily dwellings are potentially an affordable alternative to the single family home.

Major concentrations of multifamily units should be avoided by dispersing apartment complexes throughout the city. High density residential and downtown commercial designations should be evaluated to accommodate multifamily structures, specify densities and type multifamily housing. This evaluation will further the city's goals of developing sound neighborhoods and ensuring variety and affordability of housing types consistent with the needs of the population.

### **2.6.3 Mixed Uses**

The concept of mixed uses provides a wide array of integrated employment and housing opportunities for the City. The mixed use concept encourages buildings where retail and office uses may locate in close proximity to residential uses. The land uses within a development shall be compatible with each other and surrounding land uses.

Mixed use developments are intended to promote well-designed pedestrian and transit friendly development and to create attractive areas where people may be able to live, work, play and shop in close proximity to one another. Such developments are seen as an innovative technique to accommodate affordable housing needs and to disperse commercial activities into smaller more manageable clusters with fewer impacts than large concentrated commercial centers.

### **2.6.4 Downtown**

The Downtown Commercial designation entails mixed use located entirely within the Downtown Subarea and 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 Commercial 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 vehicles occupied by one person. Residential uses integrated with commercial uses in mixed-use buildings are encouraged. Additional housing in the Downtown Commercial designation would add

vitality to the area and help meet community housing needs.

The design of the Downtown Commercial area should reflect the character of Covington and contain central public spaces such as public plazas that serve as community gathering places. Residents recognize a healthy and vital downtown as an important element of the City's future identity and key to a healthy tax base structure. The Downtown should consist of four inter-related land use designation as follows and as described in more detail in the Downtown Element:

- **Town Center:** The town center should be concentrated south of the SE 272<sup>nd</sup> Street corridor between Covington Way, SE Wax Road, and 168<sup>th</sup>/165<sup>th</sup> Place SE.
- **Mixed Commercial:** The mixed commercial should adjoin the town center to the west, north and northeast. These areas are the "gateways" to downtown Covington from Kent to the west and Maple Valley to the east.
- **Mixed Housing and Office:** The mixed housing and office should be located along SE Wax road to the east and some portions of the west. Single Family detached housing within the downtown should be considered within the mixed housing and office designation.
- **General Commercial:** The general commercial should be located south of SE 272<sup>nd</sup> Street and west of the town center.

### **2.6.5 Neighborhood Commercial**

The Neighborhood Commercial designation is appropriate for 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 serve to 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, but not required. The design and scale of these areas shall be strictly regulated during the review process to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

### **2.6.6 Community Commercial**

The Community Commercial designation is intended to provide for a broader range of commercial activities and services than those typically found in the Neighborhood Commercial designation but at an intensity of use still compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Community commercial activities should be designed and scaled to serve a range of day-to-day needs for the residents of one or more neighborhoods in the city, but are not intended to provide for the needs of the traveling public who live outside of those areas. Uses should be sized and permitted accordingly to maintain compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



### 2.6.11 Open Space

The Open Space designation includes dedicated public and private open space. Much of this land is part of residential plats, dedicated tracts, or parcels located between plats, that is undeveloped, either because of environmental constraints or in order to provide buffers between areas or passive recreation opportunities.

### 2.6.12 Hawk Property Subarea

The Hawk Property Subarea designation is intended to provide commercial and residential opportunities in an urban village setting with associated recreational and open space amenities. The Hawk Property Subarea should provide both regional and local commercial opportunities, as well as housing options not widely available in Covington, including multifamily, townhome, and small-lot residential development. This designation is appropriate for those properties included in the Hawk Property Subarea, as mapped in the Hawk Property Subarea Plan.

## 2.7 Future Land-Use Plan

The Future Land-Use Plan is shown on Figure 2.1 and is comprised of the future land-use acreages as shown in Table 2.5.

### 2.7.1 Zoning Consistency

The GMA requires that a Comprehensive Plan and its accompanying Development Regulations be consistent. Table 2.6 lists the Future Land-Use Designations and the zoning districts that implement those designations.

### 2.7.2 Development Capacity

A development capacity calculation is a critical measure of future development potential within the City. Development capacity refers to the projected amount of development that could be accommodated within the city and provides an examination of current land uses to determine the availability of unconstrained vacant and underdeveloped or re-developable lands. It is important to understand that the development capacity is NOT a growth projection and does not take into account the City's current ability to provide municipal services or to fund capital improvements. The analysis is intended to depict full build-out of all buildable vacant land and all underutilized land. For the purpose of this analysis, underutilized land consists of existing improved land suitable for building at a higher use or density than its current use, based on a relatively low value of improvements on the parcel relative to the land value according to King County Assessor. Comprehensive Plan such as dedicated open space, public utilities, parks,

Table 2.5: Future Land Use

Future Land-Use Category	Total Covington	
	Acres	% of Total
Single Family	1,882.19	56.30%
Multifamily	20.21	0.60%
Downtown Commercial	414.25	12.39%
Neighborhood Commercial	5.85	0.17%
Community Commercial	4.37	0.13%
Hawk Property Subarea	216.87	6.49%
Industrial	0	0%
Mineral	0	0%
Public Use	202.69	6.06%
Public Utility	106.59	3.19%
Urban Separator	343.45	10.27%
Open Space	146.92	4.39%
Urban Reserve Overlay	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,343.38</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Future Land-Use Category	Total Covington	
	Acres	% of Total
Single Family Residential	21,549	61.71%
Downtown Commercial	2,465	7.06%
Neighborhood Commercial	110	0.32%
Community Commercial	0	0%
Industrial	1,859	5.32%
Mineral	1,429	4.09%
Public Use	2,359	6.76%
Public Utility	3	0.01%
Urban Separator	3,686	10.55%
Open Space	1,460	4.18%
Urban Reserve Overlay	-0-	-0-
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,919</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 2.6: Corresponding Land-Use Designations and Zoning Districts

Future Land-Use Designation	Consistent Zoning District
SFR Single Family Residential	R-4 Residential 4 Units Per Acre
MDR Single Family Residential	R-6 Residential 6 Units Per Acre
HDR Single Family Residential	R-8 Residential 8 Units Per Acre
DN Downtown Commercial	DN Commercial, Downtown
NC Neighborhood Commercial	CN Commercial, Neighborhood
CC Community Commercial	CC Commercial, Community

<u>HPS Hawk Property Subarea</u>	<p><u>Pending a rezone consistent with Hawk Property Subarea Plan, the Mineral zone applies on an interim basis.</u></p> <p><u>Future zoning consistent with approved Hawk Property Subarea Plan Ord 1-14 includes the following:</u></p> <p><u>R-6 Residential 6 Units Per Acre</u>  <u>R-12 Residential 12 units per acre.</u>  <u>MR Mixed Residential</u>  <u>RCMU Regional Commercial Mixed Use</u></p>
I Industrial	I Industrial
M Mineral	M Mineral
EP Public Use	All underlying zones
EPU Public Utility	All underlying zones
US Urban Separator	US Urban Separator
OSPF Open Space/Public Facility	PF Public Facility
URO Urban Reserve Overlay	UR Urban Reserve

**Residential Development Capacity**

The residential development capacity for Covington is shown in Table 2.7. The estimates were derived from zoning districts that allow residential use and broken down by theoretical additional housing units from either vacant land or from the redevelopment of an existing developed parcel. In summary, 2,224 theoretical additional dwelling units could be developed from vacant land and 5,749 additional units could be redeveloped from underutilized parcels, for a net total of 7,973 additional dwelling units. As shown on Table 2.2, Covington’s housing target by the year 2022 is 1,173 additional households. Comparing the theoretical development capacity with the growth target added to the 2000 housing inventory baseline of 4,398 units results in a gross surplus of 2,402 dwelling units. However, this total must be reduced to account for the influence on the development capacity of land of such factors as the size of the parcels, amount of constrained critical areas, roads and infrastructure reductions, and the assumed density range of the parcel’s future land-use designation, market conditions and other factors.

To address these issues, a 25 percent reduction factor to account for these external impacts and to provide a cushion to allow markets to operate without price distortion must be applied, yielding a net surplus of approximately 1,800 dwelling units. This analysis shows that there may be sufficient, appropriately designated developable land available to meet Covington’s residential growth target for the year 2022.

**Table 2.7: Residential Development Capacity in Relation to Household Target for 2022**

2022 GMPC Household Target	Housing Units Needed	Residential Development Capacity from Vacant Parcels (housing units)	Residential Development Capacity from Redevelopable Parcels (housing units)	Total Residential Capacity (housing units)	Surplus Residential Capacity in Relation to Target (housing units)
B	C = (A + B)	D	E	F = (D + E)	G = (F - C)
1,173	5,571	2,224	5,749	7,973	2,402

Sources: 2000 US Census; King County GMPC; Covington 2003.

It should be noted that the housing units needed by 2023 identified in Table 2.7 do not reflect the GMPC target for the City. The City has almost reached the 2022 GMPC household target in the year 2003. Instead, this analysis represents how much housing the City would need to provide in order to accommodate projected population growth for 2023 as identified in the City’s 2003 Population, Housing and Employment Report.

**Commercial and Industrial Development Capacity**

The commercial and industrial development capacity for the Covington UGA is shown in Table 2.8. The estimates are listed by zoning districts for commercial and industrial lands and employment generating and broken down by net unconstrained acres of vacant and redevelopable land. The last column is a calculation of the additional jobs that could be accommodated by the total net unconstrained vacant and redevelopable acres.

In summary, the existing acres of vacant and underutilized commercial and industrially zoned land could potentially be developed with enough commercial and industrial uses to generate 4,432 additional jobs assuming a density of 15 jobs per acre in industrial and neighborhood commercial zones and 45 jobs per acre in downtown and regional commercial areas. Community Commercial was not considered in this analysis. Covington’s employment target by the year 2022 is at least 990 new jobs on top of the 4,398 jobs located in Covington in 2000. By combining the existing and targeted jobs (5,388) and comparing it with total zoned capacity for only 4,432, jobs it appears that commercially and industrially zoned land will not provide sufficient employment capacity, falling short by some 956 jobs. However, it should be noted that this zoning-based methodology does not account for employment occurring in other zones in the city. For example, the single largest employer in Covington is government/education which employed 2,136, over 42.2 per cent of Covington’s workforce in 2002. Most of these jobs are in schools which are located in the Existing Public land-use designation. Likewise, the fast-growing home-based employment sector will likely to continue to be located in all residential zones but have not been estimated.

**Table 2.8: Commercial/Industrial Development Capacity**

Employment Sectors	2000 Employees	2022 GMPC Employment Target	Jobs Needed	Employment Capacity on Vacant Parcels (jobs)	Employment Capacity on Redevelopable Parcels (jobs)	Total Employment Capacity (jobs)	Surplus Employment Capacity in Relation to Target (jobs)
	A	B	C = (A + B)	D	E	F = (D + E)	G = (F - C)
Downtown Commercial	NA	NA	NA	646	1045	NA	NA
Regional Commercial	NA	NA	NA	657	202	NA	NA
Industrial	NA	NA	NA	559	1297	NA	NA
Neighborhood Commercial	NA	NA	NA	26	0	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,398</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>5,388</b>	<b>1,888</b>	<b>2,544</b>	<b>4,432</b>	<b>-956</b>

## 2.8 Goals and Policies

### 2.8.1 Growth Strategy

LNG 1.0 The City of Covington will encourage a future growth and development pattern that implements the Vision Statement, minimizes urban sprawl, protects critical areas, enhances the quality of life of all residents, and supports a healthy economy and employment growth.

*LNP 1.1 Plan for a fair share of King County growth by accommodating urban development while limiting the conversion of undeveloped land into low-density sprawling development.*

*LNP 1.2 Direct growth as follows: a) first, to areas with existing infrastructure capacity; b) second, to areas where infrastructure improvements can be easily extended; and c) last, to areas requiring major infrastructure improvements.*

*LNP 1.3 Emphasize environmental standards for urban development that allow maximum permitted densities and uses of urban land while protecting critical areas.*

*LNP 1.4 Utilize mitigating measures that serve multiple purposes, such as drainage control, ground water recharge, stream protection, open space, cultural and historic resource protection and landscaping.*

- LNP 1.5 Provide areas of low, medium and high-density single family residential development, multifamily residential and mixed-use areas so that existing neighborhoods and open space areas are preserved and transit opportunities are enhanced.*
- LNP 1.6 Designate a Town Center that concentrates employment, multifamily residential, mixed-use, infrastructure, and transit improvements.*
- LNP 1.7 Review all new development against guidelines of the Vision Statement to preserve community character and neighborhood quality.*
- LNP 1.8 Collaborate with regional agencies and neighboring communities when amending the Comprehensive Plan and implementing regulations in a manner that is consistent with Washington State law.*

### **2.8.2 Urban Growth Area and Potential Annexation Areas**

- LNG 2.0** The City of Covington will designate a UGA and Potential Annexation Area which will define Covington's planning area and projected city limits for the next 20 years.
- LNP 2.1 The UGA boundary is determined by King County in consultation with the City of Covington, pursuant to RCW 36.70A. The UGA will reflect the growth management population projections as provided by the state's office of financial management, the regional growth vision as expressed in Vision 2040 and the Countywide Planning Policies, and the vision, goals and policies provided in the city's Comprehensive Plan.*
- LNP 2.2 The UGA shall provide enough land to accommodate at least twenty years of projected growth of households and employment.*
- LNP 2.3 Monitor the available land capacity within the city's UGA as build out occurs and make necessary adjustments in coordination with King County, consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies.*
- LNP 2.4 Include all unincorporated urban areas adjacent to Covington within the Potential Annexation Area, working with King County, adjacent cities and jurisdictions, and citizens in Unincorporated King County.*
- LNP 2.5 Coordinate future planning and interlocal agreements for Potential Annexation Areas (PAA) with the appropriate agencies and jurisdictions. Work with King County to develop an interlocal*

*agreement between the City and County for pending development applications in the PAAs to be processed by the County in a manner that is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan policies.*

- LNP 2.6 Consider only annexations that are within the Potential Annexation Area. Annexations shall be phased to coincide with the ability of the City, public services districts and utility purveyors serving the area to provide a full range of urban services to areas to be annexed.*
- LNP 2.7 Confer with water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, electric, natural gas, telecommunication and other public service providers to ensure their services can support the planned growth in the City and UGA, and meet desired customer service needs while maintaining existing levels of services in the City.*
- LNP 2.8 The City Council shall not make a decision on any annexation request until a cost benefit analysis is completed and the City Council has had adequate opportunity for review.*
- LNP 2.9 Annexation areas should be able to pay its determined fair share of required services and should not have a negative financial impact on the City. Funding of certain facilities and services by property owners and residents of the annexation area may be a requirement of annexation.*
- LNP 2.10 Owners of land annexing to the City of Covington shall be subject to their proportionate share of the City's bonded indebtedness.*
- LNP 2.11 Designate future "Potential Annexation Areas" to facilitate long-range planning and decision making consistent with Covington's long term growth needs.*
- LNP 2.12 Actively pursue extensions of the UGA to include both sides of roads to enable roadway corridor improvements to be consistent on both sides of the corridor. Individual annexations should evaluate abutting roadways and intersections to assign responsibility for their construction and maintenance to a single jurisdiction. In some instances it may be appropriate to annex frontage lots on both sides of the road for consistent development.*
- LNP 2.13 Individual annexations should have access from a City street or state highway, and should represent a*

- logical and timely expansion of the City's street network. Future street grid system plans should be considered.*
- LNP 2.14 *Actively pursue extensions of the Urban Growth Boundary to include City-owned lands.*
- LNP 2.15 *Identify preferred future land uses in the Comprehensive Plan for the Potential Annexation Areas.*
- LNP 2.16 *Appropriate zoning districts should be designated for property in an individual annexation proposal; zoning in the annexation area should be consistent with the comprehensive plan land use designations.*
- LNP 2.17 *Individual annexations should improve environmental quality through identification and protection of open space corridors and critical areas, and the dedication and construction of trail and park systems, where appropriate.*
- LNP 2.18 *Annexations should serve to square off City boundaries, and not divide lots or neighborhoods. The intent is to ensure practical boundaries in which services and infrastructure can be provided in a logical, effective and efficient manner.*
- LNP 2.19 *Individual annexation areas should be part of the logical, orderly growth of the city and avoid irregular boundaries that create an island, peninsula or bottle-neck of incorporated or unincorporated land.*
- LNP 2.20 *Annexation proposals should include areas that would result in City control over land uses along major entrance corridors to the City.*
- LNP 2.21 *Urban development within a Potential Annexation Area should not occur without annexation; unless there is an interlocal agreement with King County defining land use, zoning, annexation phasing, urban services, street and other design standards and impact mitigation requirements.*
- LNP 2.22 *Prior to annexation, ensure an orderly transfer to the city of all review authority for development applications pending review in King County. Where possible, joint development review should occur. An interlocal agreement should be considered between the City and County for pending development applications in annexed areas. Preference is for pending development application to be processed by the County on behalf of the City; but with City*

*review to ensure that land develops under the City of Covington's Comprehensive Plan policies.*

*LNP 2.23 Annexation requests should not be supported when the action would facilitate vested development proposals that are inconsistent with City standards, regulations and policies, unless waiving that requirement would achieve other City goals.*

*LNP 2.24 Shoreline Master Program environmental designations, including those for associated wetlands, should be established during the annexation process.*

### **2.8.3 Property Rights**

LNG 3.0 The City of Covington will not take private property for public use without just compensation. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.

*LNP 3.1 Minimize impacts on private property rights, when feasible and consistent with the Vision Statement.*

*LNP 3.2 Protect the rights of private property owners from arbitrary and discriminatory actions while continuing to make land-use decisions that promote the Vision Statement, public health, safety and welfare of its citizens.*

### **2.8.4 Permits**

LNG 4.0 The City of Covington will process permit applications in a fair and timely manner to ensure predictability, public health, safety and welfare.

*LNP 4.1 Allocate adequate resources to the permit review process.*

*LNP 4.2 Establish and utilize policies and procedure for permit reviews in a manner that is consistent, fair and predictable.*

### **2.8.5 Community Involvement**

LNG 5.0 The City of Covington will provide for and promote public participation in the development and amendment of City policies and implementing regulations.

*LNP 5.1 Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.*

### 2.8.6 Historic Resources

LNG 6.0 The City of Covington will preserve significant historic and archaeological properties and identify strategies and incentives for protection of these resources for the enrichment of future generations.

*LNP 6.1 Encourage the protection, preservation, recovery and rehabilitation of significant archaeological resources and historic sites.*

*LNP 6.2 Consider the impacts of new development on historical resources as part of its environmental review process.*

*LNP 6.3 Encourage efforts to rehabilitate sites and buildings with unique or significant historic characteristics.*

### 2.8.7 Residential Development

LNG 7.0 The City of Covington will accommodate the City's UGA allocated 20-year housing target.

*LNP 7.1 Provide adequate land and densities in the Future Land- Use Plan to accommodate housing targets while protecting and enhancing the character, quality, and function of existing residential neighborhoods. Average net residential densities should be at least four units per acre in order to adequately support urban services.*

*LNP 7.2 Monitor residential development to determine annually the total number of new and redeveloped units receiving permits and units constructed, housing types, developed densities and remaining capacity for residential growth.*

*LNP 7.3 Plan and finance City transportation and capital facilities in the city to accommodate the City's housing targets. Coordinate with King County and adjacent jurisdictions on the phasing of public services and expenditures in the unincorporated area.*

*LNP 7.4 Provide urban level facilities and services prior to or concurrent with development to mitigate the subsequent impacts of resident populations. These services include, but are not limited to fire and emergency medical services, water, sewer service, schools, and roads. Where appropriate, it also includes transit, parks, recreation, and human services.*

*LNP 7.5 Provide higher density housing opportunities in a*

*manner that is compatible with the existing neighborhood character and require all residential construction to adhere to design standards.*

*LNP 7.6 Phase development according to the availability of adequate public services.*

### **2.8.8 Housing**

LNG 8.0 The City of Covington will provide opportunities for a variety of housing types, options, and densities.

*LNP 8.1 Increase the opportunities for affordable home ownership and rental housing in the community by providing for a variety of higher density housing forms, such as townhouses, apartments, senior housing, mixed-uses with residences above or attached to businesses, cottage housing, duplexes, and manufactured home parks.*

*LNP 8.2 Establish a minimum density for new construction in each residential district.*

*LNP 8.3 Encourage urban water and sewer systems for all new construction. However, septic systems, private wells, and/or small water systems may serve isolated single-lot development until urban services are available.*

*LNP 8.4 Provide for single family detached housing at densities ranging from 4 to 8 dwelling units per acre.*

*LNP 8.5 Provide for a mix of detached single family and multifamily residential opportunities, including accessory dwelling units, in the single family residential designation.*

### **2.8.9 Economic Development**

LNG 9.0 Provide for orderly and efficient economic development to serve an increased population in accordance with the Goals and Policies of the Economic Development Element.

*LNP 9.1 Promote varied job opportunities and work training for all residents, especially for unemployed and economically disadvantaged persons, and encourage economic growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of Covington's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.*

*LNP 9.2 Work cooperatively with King County on a regional basis and with private sector participation to*

*evaluate the trends, opportunities and weaknesses of the existing economy and to analyze the economic needs of key industries.*

- LNP 9.3 Foster a business climate that is supportive of business formation, expansion, and retention and recognizes the importance of small businesses in creating new jobs.*
- LNP 9.4 Seek to achieve an appropriate balance between the needs for economic growth and the need for protecting the environment. Work cooperatively with businesses to help them comply with environmental protection regulations.*
- LNP 9.5 Foster the development and use of private/public partnerships to implement economic development policies, programs and projects.*
- LNP 9.6 Seek to maintain an appropriate balance of jobs and housing.*
- LNP 9.7 Allow resident-owned home occupations and home industry in residential areas with appropriate restrictions on uses, signs, traffic/parking, and employees, to ensure compatibility with neighboring residences.*

### **2.8.10 Downtown Commercial**

- LNG 10.0** Provide for a variety of employment opportunities in a well-designed and pedestrian-friendly commercial core, in accordance with the goals and policies in the Downtown Element.
- LNP 10.1 Downtown Commercial should primarily provide shopping and other services for residents of Covington and the surrounding area and should include a mix of uses such as public open space, pedestrian and public transit oriented development, and residential dwelling units with appropriate commercial/office uses.*
- LNP 10.2 Development in the downtown area shall provide for complementary functional relationships between various land use designations.*
- LNP 10.3 Establish development standards that promote flexible and cohesive design in the downtown and in accordance with the goals and policies of the Downtown Element.*

### 2.8.11 Neighborhood Commercial/Community Commercial

LNG 11.0 Develop appropriately located community and neighborhood commercial areas, auxiliary to downtown, to serve the needs of neighborhoods.

*LNP 11.1 Neighborhood and Community Commercial should provide for: public facilities; pedestrian-oriented design; appropriately sized commercial uses and activities.*

*LNP 11.2 Establish development standards for the Neighborhood and Community Commercial zone that promote flexible and compatible designs with the adjacent neighborhood character.*

*LNP 11.3 Encourage the grouping of businesses and joint use of parking so that persons can make a single stop to use several businesses located at a central area.*

### 2.8.12 Public Utility

LNG 12.0 Public utility land use should be designed in a manner which is compatible within nearby uses.

*LNP 12.1 Establish criteria in the Public Utility designation to allow for expansion and operation both now and in the future.*

*LNP 12.2 Buffers and other techniques should be used to protect public utility uses and nearby uses from land-use conflicts.*

*LNP 12.3 Coordinate with all utility providers to ensure that quality services are available to meet community needs, consistent with local community Comprehensive Plans and the State Growth Management Act.*

### 2.8.13 Public Use

LNG 13.0 Provide sufficient land for 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.

*LNP 13.1 Limit the Public Use land-use designation to land used for public and semi-public purposes owned by local, state, and federal government agencies, special districts, and charitable and community institutions.*

### 2.8.14 Design Standards

LNG 14.0 Encourage high-quality site and building design for public use, commercial, multifamily and mixed-use developments.

*LNP 14.1 Establish design guidelines for all public use,, commercial, Multi family and mixed-use development in relation to the goals and policies of the Downtown Element The guidelines will encourage architectural form and site design that are pedestrian in scale, contribute to a fully accessible, lively, attractive and safe pedestrian streetscape, and encourage design that will enhance the overall coherence of an area's visual character.*

### 2.8.15 Mineral

LNG 15.0 Facilitate the efficient utilization of mineral resources and effective site reclamation and enhancement when consistent with maintaining environmental quality and minimizing impacts.

*LNP 15.1 Designate active mineral resource operations to conserve mineral resources, promote compatibility with nearby land uses, protect environmental quality, maintain and enhance mineral resource industries, and as a method to inform nearby property owners and residents of existing and prospective mineral resource activities.*

*LNP 15.2 Review periodically the Future Land-Use Map and consult with mine operators to remove those designated mineral resource sites that no longer can be used for mineral extraction.*

*LNP 15.3 Approve mineral extraction and processing proposals within the Mineral designation following site-specific environmental study.*

*LNP 15.4 Work with the State Department of Natural Resources and landowners/operators to ensure that mineral extraction areas are reclaimed in a timely and appropriate manner.*

*LNP 15.5 Prevent or minimize land-use conflicts between mining and processing operations and adjacent land uses by continuing to keep potential impacts of developments adjacent to the mine to a minimum.*

*LNP 15.6 Work with the mining operator and potential future owners to ensure that the site's plans are consistent with the City's long term planning goals.*

### 2.8.16 Urban Separator

LNG 16.0 Provide for the protection and enhancement of valuable natural areas that will help Covington develop as a distinct community while maintaining an identity and sense of place.

*LNP 16.1 Establish urban separators as permanent low-density lands which protect adjacent resource lands, rural areas, and critical areas and create open space corridors within and between Urban Areas which provide environmental, visual, recreational and wildlife benefits. Low density residential development of up to one dwelling unit per acre is appropriate.*

*LNP 16.2 Retain designated urban separators and do not redesignate in the future (in the 20-year planning cycle) to other urban uses or higher densities. King county will be informed of all new development modifications.*

*LNP 16.3 Explore opportunities to acquire property within the Urban Separator as a means of further protecting the natural character of the area.*

*LNP 16.4 Establish development standards to implement the goals of this land use designation. Such development standards would support cluster site development for all land uses and require a minimum of 50 percent open space and a maximum of 30 percent impervious surface per parcel.*

### 2.8.17 Essential Public Facilities

LNG 17.0 Essential public facilities will be prioritized, coordinated, planned, expanded and sited through an inter-jurisdictional process.

*LNP 17.1 Locate proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan.*

*LNP 17.2 Share essential public facilities with King County, the City and neighboring counties and cities, if advantageous to both to increase efficiency of operation.*

*LNP 17.3 Ensure that no racial, cultural or class group is unduly impacted by essential public facility siting or expansion decisions.*

*LNP 17.4 Site essential public facilities in coordination with King County equitably countywide. No single community should absorb an undue share of the impacts of essential public facilities. Siting should*

*consider environmental equity and environmental, technical and service area factors.*

*LNP 17.5 A facility may be determined to be an essential public facility if it has one or more of the following characteristics:*

- a) the facility meets the Growth Management Act definition of an essential public facility;*
- b) the facility is on a state, county or local community list of essential public facilities;*
- c) the facility serves a significant portion of the County or metropolitan region or is part of a Countywide service system; or*
- d) the facility is difficult to site or expand.*

*LNP 17.6 Site proposed new or expansions to existing essential public facilities based on the following:*

- a) an inventory of similar existing essential public facilities, including their locations and capacities;*
- b) a forecast of the future needs for the essential public facility;*
- c) an analysis of the potential social and economic impacts and benefits to jurisdictions receiving or surrounding the facilities;*
- d) an analysis of the proposal's consistency with policies County and City Policies;*
- e) an analysis of alternatives to the facility, including decentralization, conservation, demand management and other strategies;*
- f) an analysis of alternative sites based on siting criteria developed through an inter-jurisdictional process;*
- g) an analysis of environmental impacts and mitigation; and*
- h) extensive public involvement.*

*LNP 17.7 Actively regulate and monitor designated essential public facility operations to ensure that such facilities do not cause or create a public nuisance.*

### **2.8.18 Commercial Areas**

LNG 18.0 Provide sufficient land for a variety of appropriate economic development opportunities.

- LNP 18.1 Establish Downtown Commercial, and Neighborhood Commercial areas and development policies to accommodate appropriate commercial, office and attached residential activities. The pattern and scale of developments should be suitable to their location and the population they will serve.*
- LNP 18.2 Create relatively high density areas that allow people to live, shop, and possibly work without being dependent on their automobiles.*

### **2.8.19 Hawk Property Subarea Urban Village**

LNG 19.0 Plan for and create a new Urban Village within the Hawk Property Subarea that serves as a safe, vibrant, well-planned commercial and residential center that offers opportunities to live, shop, and recreate in proximity to regional commercial and park and greenspace facilities .

*LNP 19.1 Encourage a variety of commercial, residential, and recreational development types.*

*LNP 19.2 Encourage a variety of housing types at various densities to provide housing choices not currently available in one location within Covington.*

*LNP 19.3 Adopt design standards for the urban village that facilitate development in the Hawk Property Subarea as the northern entrance to Covington.*

*LNP 19.4 Ensure that the public realm provides places for a variety of ages, interests, and experiences and is easily accessible.*

*LNP 19.5 Ensure that the pond 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.*

*LNP 19.6 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.*

*LNP 19.7 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.*

# 5.0 TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

## 5.1 Introduction

The City of Covington is required, under the GMA, to develop a transportation element as part of its Comprehensive Plan.

The Transportation Element is closely linked to the Land Use Element, Downtown Element, Parks, Trails and Recreation Element and the Capital Facilities Element. The transportation element provides the City with a plan for improving and developing the facilities and services of its transportation system. It supports existing and future travel needs, while maintaining consistency with the overall goal and vision for the City. Transportation system resources are major factors in the development of land use planning; while conversely; land use policies greatly influence the need and location for transportation improvements. The transportation improvement program, concurrent with land use planning, will allow the City of Covington and adjoining jurisdictions to develop a comprehensive transportation system that responds to the transportation issues facing the City.

The transportation element identifies specific strategies and programs to implement the City's transportation goals and policies. It serves as a dynamic planning tool for developing a balanced transportation system that promotes economic growth and development by means of an efficient, yet cost-effective program. To maintain effectiveness and consistency, it is critical that this transportation element be reviewed and updated as land use plans and downtown element are updated and decisions on major regional transportation projects are adopted. It should also be systematically amended, as necessary, to incorporate changes in land use planning and/or local and regional policy direction.

The transportation element is a comprehensive, policy-based document, which consists of:

- The Transportation Chapter with narrative of existing and future transportation conditions and policy language

- An inventory of existing transportation facilities and services
- Travel forecasting based on land use plans
  - 20-year Capital Improvement Plan, adopted herein by reference
  - Strategies for concurrency, implementing and funding the transportation plan
  - Intergovernmental coordination

The City's transportation element meets the requirements set forth by GMA. The City of Covington plan is based on a 20-year horizon to maintain consistency with the land use element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The analysis of existing transportation system conditions, in conjunction with the 2020 planning horizon, provides the City with a response to its most immediate short term transportation needs, and defines the needs for longer-range transportation improvements.

The City of Covington transportation element was developed to be consistent with the King County Countywide Planning Policies. The City's plan is multi-modal, and provides a balance between land use, improvements, and financing needs. The plan identifies the most direct routes for movement of freight and goods, as well as mobility for residents and people that work and shop within the city. Overall, the plan improvements and policies should provide an adequate, cost-efficient, transportation system to serve the city and adjacent areas over the next 20 years.

The transportation element includes a recommended improvement program for meeting both the short-term and long-range transportation requirements. Additional non-motorized transportation needs for the community, such as trails and bicycle facilities are addressed in the City's Parks and Recreation Plan.

### 5.1.1 Planning Area

Figure 5.1 shows the primary transportation planning area, existing city boundaries, and significant roadways, including arterials and collectors. In addition, some local roadways providing access/circulation within neighborhood communities and the downtown area are shown. Not all of the roadways within the City's planning area have been shown in order to make the graphics more readable and to focus the information on the City's key roadways.

The City of Covington is located in the southeast region of King County and is within the King County Urban Growth Areas (UGA). The Cities of Kent, Black Diamond, Maple Valley, and unincorporated King County surround the City of Covington.

The City of Covington, neighboring cities and communities, King County, and the Washington State Department of Transportation

(WSDOT), in conjunction with the Puget Sound Regional Council PSRC, intend to work cooperatively to coordinate transportation system improvements. The goal is to provide consistency with the planning efforts of all jurisdictions within the study planning area.

## 5.2 Inventory of Existing Transportation System

The transportation system for the City of Covington includes streets and highways, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and transit. An inventory of the existing system was conducted in March 1999 and updated in July 2003. The inventory creates a baseline for the transportation element and provides a basis for identifying transportation issues. It documents roadway classifications and traffic control, traffic volumes and level of service, accident history records, truck routes, transit service, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. It also provides information on current Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP). Roadway features and traffic controls identified in the inventory are used in the transportation model to forecast future traffic volumes.

### 5.2.1 Roadway Functional Classification

The functional classification system used by city, state, and federal transportation agencies provides for a hierarchy of roadways. Roadway facilities are classified by the relative amounts of through traffic and land-access service they provide. The functional classification system defines the level of mobility a roadway provides to the users. The functional classifications are used to establish eligibility for roadway funding projects and to define appropriate street design standards and traffic operating characteristics.

#### Classified Roads

The functional classifications for area roadways are shown in Figures 5.2a and 5.2b. Figure 5.2a shows the classifications of the major roadways based on the City's method for classifications. Figure 5.2b identifies major roadways based on the Federal classification system. Three classification categories of arterials are defined as follows for the City of Covington (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 – Functional Classification Definitions**

Classification	Primary Function	Definition
Principal Arterial		Provides for movement across and between large subareas of an urban region and serves predominantly "through traffic" with minimum direct service to abutting land uses. This category includes freeways and major highways (SR 18 and SR 516) under the jurisdiction of the Washington State Department of Transportation.
Minor Arterial		Provides for movement within the larger subareas bound by principal arterials. A minor arterial may also serve "through traffic" but provides more direct access to abutting land uses than does a principal arterial.
Collector Arterial		Provides for movement within smaller areas which are often definable neighborhoods, and which may be bound by arterials with higher classifications. Collectors serve very little "through traffic" and serve a high proportion of local traffic requiring direct access to abutting properties. Collector arterials provide the link between local neighborhood streets (i.e. non-arterials) and larger arterials.

### Roadway System and Traffic Controls

Figure 5.3 depicts the existing number of through travel lanes for freeways, arterials, and some local roadways serving the City of Covington and the adjacent communities in the planning area. It also shows existing intersection traffic controls.

#### 5.2.2 Major Transportation Facilities

Primary access to the City of Covington is via two major state highways: SR 18 and SR 516. These two highways intersect at the western edge of downtown Covington. SR 18 provides access between Auburn/Federal Way to the southwest and I-90 to the northeast. Currently SR 18 has a four lane segment, access-controlled highway southwest of Covington and northwest of the City up to the approach to Tiger Mountain Summit where it transitions to a two-lane segment with limited passing lanes.

SR 18 is classified as an Urban-Principal Arterial by WSDOT, and has a posted speed limit of 55 mph. There is a full access interchange for SR 18 at SR 516 and SE 256<sup>th</sup> in Covington. SR 18 continues northeast through Covington, crossing under 180th Avenue SE continuing to I-90.

#### SR 516

SR 516 provides primary access to Covington from the east and west. SR 516 passes through the center of the downtown. SR 516 is classified by WSDOT as an Urban-Principal Arterial upon entering the city from the west; its classification changes to Urban-Minor Arterial just east of the SR 18 interchange.

There are nine signalized intersections along this route, including Covington Way SE, 164th Avenue SE, 168th Avenue SE, SR 18,

168th Place, 172<sup>nd</sup> Ave SE, SE Wax Road, 185<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, and 192<sup>nd</sup> Ave SE.

### **164<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE**

164th Avenue SE is a two-lane collector arterial providing access between SR 516 and SE 256th Street, continuing north past SE 240th Street, ultimately connecting with SE 224th Street. This roadway generally has 1- to 5-foot-wide paved shoulders with only a few short segments of sidewalks that have been constructed as frontage improvements adjacent to past urban developments.

### **180th Avenue SE**

180th Avenue SE is a collector arterial located between the north/south segments of SE Wax Road. This section of 180th Avenue SE consists of segments of two-lane and segments of three-lane road. It has a posted speed limit of 35 mph. The pedestrian facilities consist of an intermittent 5-foot-wide sidewalk on the west side of the road. There is signalized control at SE 256th Street and an all-way stop control at the northern SE Wax Road intersection.

### **SE Wax Road**

SE Wax Road is divided into two sections, with 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE providing the connection between the two sections. The northern section is between 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE (the roadway continues northeast of 196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street). This section is a two-lane minor arterial. This section has 2- to 4-foot-wide paved shoulders with no separate pedestrian facilities. There is an all-way stop control at the northern section of 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. The southern section between 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and Covington Way SE is a two-lane collector arterial with a posted speed limit of 35 mph. There are 3- to 5-foot-wide paved shoulders with no separate pedestrian facilities. This route has a school speed zone located approximately between Covington Way SE and SE 278<sup>th</sup> Place. The school speed zone is posted for 20 mph and is activated “when children are present.” There is signalized control at the intersections of SE Wax Road with Covington Way SE and at SR 516.

### **SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street**

SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street provides the other major east/west route. This route travels into/out of the City of Kent to the west and connects to SR-18 just east of 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. The roadway is currently a two-lane minor arterial with a posted speed limit of 40 mph. The

shoulders vary from 3- to 8-feet of pavement to 3- to 8-feet of gravel. The only sections of sidewalk are along the frontage of newer developments. The roadway has signalized control at 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and at 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

### **SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street**

SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street is a two-lane principal arterial with a posted speed limit of 35 mph. The roadway has 2- to 5-foot-wide paved shoulders with no separate pedestrian facilities. The north/south approaches of minor streets with SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street are stop controlled. The SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street/ 196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE intersection is controlled with an all-way stop.

### **156<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Place SE**

156<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Place SE is currently not classified as an arterial. The southern terminus of the roadway is at SR 516. The roadway connects to the north to SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street, continuing on to 224<sup>th</sup> Street SE. It operates as a local street. The roadway is a two-lane facility. The roadway has 2- to 5-foot-wide gravel shoulders with intermittent sidewalks on both sides. The sidewalks are located along the frontage of newer developments. This roadway is stop controlled at SR 516, SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street, and SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE**

196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE (in the City of Covington) is a short roadway segment providing a connection between SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street and SE Wax Road. This section of roadway is a minor arterial with one lane in each direction. The full length 196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE corridor provides significant access to/from the north, connecting with SR 169 to the north. It has 2- to 5-foot-wide gravel shoulders. There is no posted speed limit or separate pedestrian facilities along the route. This route is stop controlled at both SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street and SE Wax Road.

### **148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE**

148<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE provides a north/south connection between SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street connecting north to SE 192<sup>nd</sup> Street. The roadway is a two-lane collector arterial.. The roadway has 4- to 10-foot-wide gravel shoulders. There is no direct access to pedestrian facilities. However, there is an existing pedestrian trail in the wooded area just off the roadway. The roadway is stop controlled at SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 244<sup>th</sup> Street. 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is not located within the city limits of Covington, but is

immediately adjacent to the city limits between SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 244<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **168<sup>th</sup>/165<sup>th</sup> Place SE**

168<sup>th</sup>/165<sup>th</sup> Place SE provides a connection from SR 516 at 168th Place to Covington Way through the existing Fred Meyer and Safeway parking lots. The alignment varies to accommodate existing developed structures. Two roundabouts; one single lane roundabout at the new intersection of SE 276th Street provides a future extension east to SE Wax Road, and the second roundabout facilitates traffic circulation between the Safeway and Fred Meyer properties. The northern roundabout is two lanes for north / south and one lane for east / west.

The street section is 5-Lanes from SR 516 to the northern roundabout, then 3-Lane Arterial section with bike lanes, landscaped median, landscaped planter strip and 8' wide sidewalks southward to Covington Way SE.

Other local roadways in the area essentially provide access and circulation between residential neighborhoods and the arterial roadways described above.

As shown in Figure 5.3, there are currently 10 signalized intersections in the city. Most of the signalized intersections are at major intersections with the state highways. Seven of these intersections are along SR 516, through downtown. Two are on SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street SE and the remaining one is at Covington Way SE/SE Wax Road. Most of the remaining intersections along the arterials are stop sign-controlled on the minor approaches.

## **5.3 Traffic Volumes and Levels of Service**

### **5.3.1 Traffic Volumes**

Average daily and PM peak hour traffic volumes were collected from a variety of sources including WSDOT, King County, road tube counts and traffic impact analyses for proposed developments in the area. In addition, manual PM peak hour turning movement counts were conducted to supplement previously collected traffic data. The volumes reflect 2008 conditions. The existing daily traffic volumes for the state highways and arterials within the city are summarized in Figure 5.4.

The two state highways, SR 18 and SR 516, carry the highest traffic volumes in the study area. SR 18 carries approximately 44,000 vehicles per day (vpd) in the Covington vicinity. However,

since SR 18 is an access-controlled highway, it only directly impacts the operations of the transportation system at the SR 516 on/off ramps. This location moves a significant amount of traffic that is on the Covington roadway system.

On SR 516 there are approximately 29,000 vpd west of the SR 18/SR 516 interchange, compared to approximately 38,000 vpd east of the interchange. There is approximately 30 percent more daily traffic on SR 516 to the east of SR 18 compared with volumes to the west. Further to the east, traffic volumes decline with approximately 23,500 vpd just east of 192<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE. A review of the PM peak hour turning movement data, between 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE and 192<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE indicates that much of the eastbound traffic drops-off at SE Wax Road and 192<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE. The PM peak hour traffic volumes represent approximately nine percent of the daily traffic volumes on SR 516.

SE 256th Street is the other major east/west route in the Covington area. At SE 256th Street/164th Avenue SE, the daily traffic volumes are approximately 10,200 vpd on the east leg and 14,600 vpd on the west leg. The volume is 13,400 vpd east of 148th Avenue SE.

There are three major north/south routes in the Covington area: 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, and SE Wax Road. 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE carries about 6,500 vpd north of 256<sup>th</sup> Avenue. 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE carries approximately 8,600 vpd north of 256<sup>th</sup> Avenue. North of 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, SE Wax Road carries about 4,200 vpd. Between 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and SR 516, SE Wax Road carries about 12,500 vpd. The volume on SE Wax Road drops to 8,200 vpd south of SR 516.

#### **5.4 Existing Level of Service Standards and Concurrency Program**

Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of both the operating conditions of a traffic system as well as the perceived conditions by drivers and passengers. Level of service is related to the physical characteristics of the roadway and the different operating characteristics of the roadway when it carries different traffic volumes.

Level of service ranges from LOS A, which indicates good operating conditions with little or no delay, to LOS F, which indicates extreme congestion and long vehicle delays. The definition of each service level and the methodology for estimating level of service is provided in the Highway Capacity Manual (Transportation Research Board 2000). At signalized

intersections, level of service is defined in terms of average delay per vehicle. At unsignalized intersections, level of service is typically reported for the delays for the side street traffic movements. Similar procedures are used for roadway segment analysis.

The City of Covington adopted King County's level of service standards and transportation concurrency program. The City desires both short-term and longer-term modifications to the standards, which are presented in Section 5.14. The King County program has two components related to level of service standards: Transportation Adequacy Measures (TAM) and Intersection Standards (IS). The TAM is used for testing roadways for transportation concurrency and the IS is used to implement the development review requirements of SEPA for impacts to intersections.

The two components are used to evaluate traffic impacts of new development proposals. The TAM process is very complex and involves use of a detailed traffic-forecasting model. The TAM process includes six elements:

1. Transit service to set transportation service area thresholds.
2. Exempt facilities with high occupancy vehicle links from the volume/capacity evaluation.
3. Evaluate volume/capacity of a weighted zonal average.
4. Evaluate links, which exceed a critical volume/capacity ratio.
5. Evaluate urban connectors through rural areas.
6. Use prescriptive standards to evaluate non-motorized transportation.

The City of Covington is identified as a Transportation Service Area (TSA) 3 in the King County model. The TSA 3 classification indicates that the area has urban services and that arterials should be constructed or improved, if necessary, to support planned growth. Some transit service is available in a TSA 3 area; however, the area is not a priority for transit service expansion. The TSA 3 designation establishes an areawide average volume-to-capacity (v/c) of 0.89, or LOS D or better. This standard applies to most new developments within the city, although the County system does provide for some exemptions.

The TAM process also involves evaluation of possible Unfunded Critical Links (UCLs). The list of UCLs consists of arterial corridors that the county has identified as being important for countywide mobility, forecasted to have a high traffic congestion level, and having unfunded improvements within the 6 year time frame of the most recent Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These links are monitored and used in the level of service analysis of the TAM for testing concurrency. If links exceed the critical link threshold with a volume- to capacity (v/c) of 1.10 or greater and the link is impacted by 50 percent of a development's peak hour traffic then the development must be denied concurrency.

The unfunded critical link test applies within the City of Covington since SR 516 (from 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to SR 169) is included on the county's list of links to be monitored. The City is only applying the unfunded critical link test to the section of SR 516 within the city limits. This includes SR 516 from just west of 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE to Jenkins Creek (just east of SE Wax Road).

If either the TAM areawide average v/c ratio or unfunded critical link test standard is not met, the development is not issued a certificate of transportation concurrency. A concurrency certificate is required for the development to be approved.

King County's Intersection Standards require that intersections operate at HCM 2000 LOS E or better. The standard applies as part of the SEPA review of development proposals. The standard applies at intersections that are impacted by at least 20 percent of a development's peak hour traffic and at least 30 trips from the development impact the intersection. If a development impacts an intersection that falls below the IS it can mitigate its impact by making improvements or through contribution of a proportionate share of an identified improvement project.

## 5.5 Traffic Safety

The City follows WSDOT and King County guidelines for identifying safety improvement needs. The WSDOT bases its high accident locations on an equation in which weighted values are assigned to fatalities, injuries, and property-damage-only accidents. If this value exceeds an established threshold, the location is deemed a high accident location (HAL). Another value used by WSDOT in defining problem area intersections is based on the number of accidents per million entering vehicles (MEV). An accident/MEV rate of 1.0 is an average rate. Rates above 1.0 may indicate a location with a safety issue. King County often uses the standard threshold of 10 accidents per year at signalized

intersections and 5 accidents per year at unsignalized intersections. The threshold value is less for unsignalized intersections because it is assumed traffic volumes will generally be lower at an unsignalized intersection. Furthermore, an occurrence of 5 or more accidents at an unsignalized intersection may meet warrants for installation of a traffic signal.

## 5.6 Truck Routes

The City of Covington does not currently have a formal adopted truck route ordinance. In lieu of a formal truck route, the City of Covington assumes all arterial roadways are acceptable for truck traffic. These roadways provide access to the major commercial activity centers in the city while minimizing the impacts on residential neighborhoods.

## 5.7 Transit Service and Ridesharing

Figure 5.6 shows existing transit service in the Covington area. King County Metropolitan Transit (Metro) provides transit service in Covington, as well as all other areas of King County. Metro routes 159, 168, and 912 provide transit service to the City of Covington.

Route 159 provides service between Seattle and the City of Covington's Timberlane neighborhood and downtown area. Route 159 operates through the Kent transit center via SR 516. The route operates on 30-minute headways during both the AM and PM peak hours of operation.

Route 168 provides a service link between the Kent Transit Center and the City of Covington's Timberlane and downtown area. Route 168 operates similar to Route 159. The route circulates during both the AM and PM peak hours and operates on about 60 minute headways.

Metro Route 912 provides transit service between Covington and Enumclaw through the City of Black Diamond. The transit route operates during the midday on an approximate 1-hour, 40-minute headway.

Metro has bike racks installed on many buses on its major routes. The addition of bike racks is intended to promote the use of multimodal transportation. Users are able to walk or bike to their destination from the transit stop.

King County Metro also offers a Vanpool and Rideshare Matching Program. The focus of the program is to reduce congestion by

providing alternative modes of transportation. Commuters using the programs can take advantage of the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) system. Vanpools operate with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 riders. The Rideshare Matching Program matches commuters with similar travel characteristics and provides them with the opportunity to carpool. Currently there are two vanpools registered for the Covington area serving Bellevue and Issaquah.

Metro's Six-Year Transit Development Plan for 2002-2007 (King County Department of Metropolitan Services Transit Department 2002) indicates that over the next several years the transit service will continue to evolve to support GMA objectives.

The proposed future system will build on the key elements of the existing service plan and will also include a multi-centered system focused on several transit hubs, where convenient connections can be made. The new service is intended to increase mobility by public transportation to a broader range of destinations, increase transit's overall market share for travel in the county, and improve efficiency in terms of set performance criteria.

The City of Covington is not identified as a regional or urban center and is not in Metro's plans for targeted service improvements or for a transit hub. Existing service with connections to and through Kent would be the primary focus of transit to the Covington area.

## 5.8 Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

A detailed sidewalk inventory and evaluation was performed in 2009 by Gray & Osborne. The City's existing transportation system was historically designed and constructed for vehicular traffic, but has since been improved to include sidewalks and bicycle facilities. The majority of the streets that have sidewalks are located in the City's downtown and along arterials such as 164<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, SE 256<sup>th</sup>, SE Wax Road, 180<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and along SR 516 to SE 185<sup>th</sup> Ave.

When new developments occur, the City requires frontage improvements, dedication of rights-of-way, and construction of sidewalks. This can result in a piecemeal pattern of pedestrian facilities along city streets. The downtown lacks pedestrian "friendly" facilities along much of the frontage along SR 516 due to frequent driveways, which can result in pedestrian-vehicular conflicts. The proximity of the sidewalk to this major arterial also makes the route relatively unfriendly for pedestrian travel. Roadway improvements north of SR 516 provide additional

pedestrian routes parallel to SR 516. Formal bicycle facilities are located along SE Covington Way, 168<sup>th</sup>/165<sup>th</sup> Pl SE, 164<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street, 180<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and SE Wax Road. Otherwise bicyclists in the city must share the road with vehicular traffic or use roadway shoulders.

New bicycle lanes are identified along SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street, between SR 18 and Kent. This is a King County project. Bicycle lanes also are identified as part of the SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street extension and widening.

Regional bicycle routes in and around the city have been identified by King County (Bicycling in King County, King County Department of Transportation 1998). These routes include the Soos Creek regional trail, just west of the city. Covington Way, Covington-Sawyer Road and 168th Avenue extension are identified as bicycle routes south of SR 516. North of SR 516, bicyclists would use SE 256th Street, SE 240th Street, 164th Avenue SE, a segment on 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, SE 270<sup>th</sup> Place, 168<sup>th</sup> Place SE, and part of SE Wax Road.

SR 516 is a route to use with caution, due to high volume of traffic. The access control project for SR 516 between 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE and Wax Road improves bicycle use to some degree, by reducing the number of conflicting traffic movements; however, this route is still subject to high volumes of traffic including trucks and other large vehicles and bicyclists should exercise caution when using this section of SR 516. SR 516 west of Wax Road will be subject to continued CIP projects over the next several years and as such is not recommended as a proposed bike route.

The City's 20-year CIP program in Chapter 10 supports regionally identified bicycle routes through reconstruction and/or widening of arterials. Added traffic control will also assist bicyclists crossing high volume arterials. Refer to Chapter 6 (Parks and Community Services Element) for the Integrated Sidewalk and Trail Plan.

## 5.9 Aviation Facilities

There are no aviation facilities located in the City of Covington. The Port of Seattle provides regional aviation facilities at Sea-Tac International Airport. Travel to/from Covington and Sea-Tac International Airport is primarily via east-west arterials connecting to Kent. These include SR 516, SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street, and SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street. Traffic can also access Sea-Tac International via SR 169 through Renton. Covington area travelers can access SR 169 using 196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and 140<sup>th</sup>/132<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE.

Crest Airpark, located south of Covington, provides general-purpose aviation in the area. The airport is privately owned, but is open to the public. It is accessed off of 179<sup>th</sup> Place SE via Covington-Sawyer Road, approximately ½ mile south of downtown Covington. Crest Airpark's north-south runway directs air traffic over central Covington. The airport is part of the Regional Airport System which is a component of the PSRC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Regional air travel will continue to be provided for Covington residents and businesses by the Port of Seattle at Sea-Tac International Airport. The Crest Airpark will continue to provide general aviation for the area. The City's and other agency's planned transportation system improvements will support access to these facilities.

## **5.10 Planned Transportation Improvements**

### **5.10.1 Covington Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program**

In June 2009, the City of Covington adopted the 2010-2015 Six-Year TIP. The City's TIP includes a range of improvement projects including annual safety and pedestrian improvements. It also includes projects to improve intersections, channelization, and capacity on roadways that operate at low levels of service. The on going update to the TIP is adopted by reference and available for review at the Public Works Department.

### **5.10.2 King County and WSDOT Transportation Plans**

There are many specific transportation improvement projects planned in the vicinity of the study area by King County as part of their Transportation Needs Report (TNR). The King County 2009-2014 Capital Improvement Program lays out the County's six-year plan for capital improvements. These plans are considered in developing the City's 20-year Capital Improvements Plan.

WSDOT is continuing to widen SR 18 to a four-lane limited access freeway. This included reconstruction of the SR 18/SR 516 interchange. As part of the interchange project, Covington Way was realigned crossing SR 18 (grade separated) to the west of the southbound interchange ramps.

WSDOT and the City of Covington completed and implemented an access control plan for SR 516 between SR 18 and SE Wax Road to reduce safety problems and maintain the through capacity of the state highway.

## 5.11 Land Use and Travel Forecasting

Land uses and transportation facilities have a mutually influential relationship. Land use tends to drive trip generation and influence necessary transportation facilities to support the traffic. In turn, existing transportation facilities may influence what types of land uses can feasibly be supported. Transportation planning recognizes this relationship and future transportation needs are planned using land use assumptions.

These land use assumptions are coded into mathematical models where the various land uses are distributed throughout the city in accordance with a proposed Land Use Plan. Vehicle trips are generated based on statistical relationships of the land uses and assigned to the computer roadway network. Intersections and roadways where forecast trips exceed the available capacity can be identified and roadway network improvements can be evaluated.

### 5.11.1 Overview of the Travel Forecasting Process

A transportation model refined for the City of Covington was used, as a tool for analyzing the preferred land use and developing a list of transportation needs. The model is based on a model initially developed by King County. For use in this plan, a new model was developed to add specific detail within the City of Covington allowing a more accurate representation of travel patterns.

Population and employment projections were provided for the proposed land use. The land use provided the basis for calculating trip generation data in the transportation model. The transportation model was used to calculate trip generation data for the 2023 horizon year. The model provided projected transportation volumes on the local street network to help identify deficiencies in the proposed 2023 roadway network.

### Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ)

The original King County TAZ system for the model includes hundreds of zones or external stations; approximately 10 county TAZs cover the City of Covington and adjacent areas. TAZs for the Covington model were created by dividing the 10 King County model zones into 115 City of Covington zones and 126 external zones. This increase in detail results in a better depiction of travel patterns and allows for detailed analysis of local transportation and circulation issues within the city.

### Transportation Network

The transportation network represents the roadway system within the model. Figure 5.6 illustrates the modeling network employed for analyzing Covington's proposed land use alternatives. The Covington model includes all arterial streets (principal, minor, and collector), and freeways as well as key local streets. The representation of the freeway system is done in a manner to show individual ramps. Data are assigned to each street representing the functional class, number of lanes, capacity, and free-flow speed conditions. Capacity data is also assigned to each node (intersection) in the simulation network. The resulting network represents the roadway system within the transportation model.

### **Trip Tables**

Trip tables represent the travel from area to area and are produced from the land use data for each TAZ. Existing land use data for each TAZ included household and employment values for TAZs within the city limits. Existing land use data for the outlying TAZs was derived from the PSRC and King County data files.

Trip generation equations, which convert the land use data to travel, and trip distribution, which identifies the specific zone-to-zone interchanges, are the basic tools for developing the trip table.

The Covington model uses national and local trip generation rates to estimate the total number of trips for each zone. The regional trip distribution is based on regional travel patterns and PSRC land use.

### **Model Calibration**

The final step in developing a travel-forecasting model is to combine the transportation network and trip table to "calibrate" both elements to represent the existing travel patterns and traffic volumes in the area. Calibration is an interactive process in which refinements are made to the model to improve it until a satisfactory result is achieved. The Covington model is a PM peak hour model. Therefore, the goal is to represent actual travel during the afternoon/evening commute. The existing conditions Covington model was calibrated to 2003 measured PM peak hour traffic volumes.

The 20-year Capital Improvement Projects were added to the model network based on WSDOT and King County transportation improvement programs and locally committed improvements such as the widening of SR 18.

### **5.11.2 Consistency with Proposed Land Use Plan**

The travel-forecasting model was used to develop forecasts for year 2023, consistent with PSRC regional and King County planning efforts. For the immediate planning area, land use data reflects the proposed 2023 land use plan for TAZs within the city. The PSRC regional land use data were used for other Covington model TAZs outside the city limits.

## 5.12 Transportation System Evaluation

### 5.12.1 Transportation System Performance

The 2023 transportation forecast for the proposed land use and adopted 20-year capital facility plan shows most roadways operating at link v/c ratios of less than 1.0 with the exception of the SR 18/SR 516 Interchange and sections of the proposed 172nd Corridor Extension.

#### System-Wide Link Analysis

The high v/c ratios at SR 18/SR 516 interchange are the result of high forecast volumes to and from the south on SR 18, destined to Covington and/or through Covington to the east. This is based upon a 20-year forecast considering City of Covington and regional growth projections from PSRC. The v/c ratios improve to acceptable levels outside the influence of the interchange. The interchange will likely accommodate 50 percent of the 20-year travel demand, meeting the 10-year planning horizon required under GMA. SR 18 is a Highway of Statewide Significance (HSS) and as such the City is required to disclose the transportation impacts of the proposed land use plan to WSDOT.

The V/C ratio of the 172nd Corridor extension suggests that the proposed three-lane roadway may require expansion to four to five lanes in the 20-year planning horizon. The three-lane project will likely accommodate 80 percent of the 20-year travel demand, exceeding the 10-year planning horizon required under GMA.

#### System-wide Intersection Operations

The link capacities assumed in the traffic-forecasting model assume downstream intersection constraints. Intersections of links with v/c of under 1.0 for the 20-year forecast are assumed to operate within the Intersection Capacity Utilization (ICU) 2000 by Trafficware volume to capacity ratio (v/c) of 0.90 or better. Intersection projects in the 20-year capital facilities plan including traffic signals and roundabouts are proposed for over 20 locations. Final configurations of the intersection improvement designs may include additional turning lanes to achieve v/c of less than .90 per

the ICU 2000 methodology. The final timing of intersection improvements will be based upon MUTCD signal warrants and intersection concurrency requirements. Intersections that meet Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices MUTCD warrants or cause ICU 2000 v/c's in excess of 0.90 and not on the current 20-year capital improvement plan or Six-Year TIP will require mitigation under SEPA.

## 5.13 Future Transportation Systems Conditions

The findings from the review of existing conditions and evaluation of travel forecasts were used to formulate the future transportation systems plan for Covington. The plan also includes improvements for non-motorized travel and strategies for transit and ridesharing programs. An overview of air transportation programs is also noted.

### 5.13.1 Street and Highway Element

The street and highway element provides a movement of a range of travel modes. It supports general automobile traffic, trucks, and buses. It also provides routes for non-motorized transportation. The following presents the proposed functional classification of the arterials serving the city. Routes for use by trucks are also defined. It is followed by a summary of the planned improvements to serve the city. The improvements include new streets, widening of existing streets, intersection/operations projects, and study projects. Many of the improvements include facilities for non-motorized travel.

#### Roadway Functional Classification

As previously discussed under the inventory of existing conditions, the functional classification system provides a hierarchy of streets to serve a combination of through traffic and access to adjacent properties. General definitions are included in Table 5.1.

The proposed functional classification for the City of Covington is presented on Figure 5.2a and 5.2b. SR 18 is the only limited access facility serving the city. It would connect with arterials at SR 516 and SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street.

Principal arterials will include SR 516 and SE 240<sup>th</sup> Street, consistent with King County's previous designations. The SE 256<sup>th</sup> Street corridor is classified as a minor arterial. The SE 256<sup>th</sup> route also connects with the 180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE/Wax Road/196<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE minor arterial route. This route provides a connection

to/from SR 169, north of the city. Covington Way SE, from SR 516 to the city limits is also classified as a minor arterial.

A series of north-south collector arterials also are identified to serve the city. These include 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, and 164<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. A system of collector arterials also provides access/circulation within the business district. SE Wax Road/180<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is proposed to be a minor arterial.

### Truck Routes

The City of Covington desires to ensure safe and efficient movement of freight and goods within the city. To that extent, the City has identified the SR 18 freeway and all principal and minor arterials (see Figures 5.2a and 5.2b) as primary truck routes. The collector arterial system, other local roads should only be used by trucks to access commercial or residential areas for deliveries; collector arterials, other local roads should not be used for through truck trips.

### 20-year Capital Improvement Plan

Figure 5.7 summarizes the 20-year CIP and Table 5.2 provides an overview of each project. The projects provide capacity to resolve existing and forecast deficiencies. They also are needed to improve safety and access/circulation within the city. The project list also identifies other reconstruction and non-motorized improvement projects. These improvements supplement the non-motorized components of the identified widening and new construction projects. Citywide overlay and safety/operations programs, studies of collector road systems, and bridge replacement projects complete the improvement list.

**Table 5.2 – 20 Year Capital Improvement Program 2010-2029**

Priority	Project	From	To	Description
A	180th Ave SE Ext.	SE 267th Pl	SE 272nd St	Add 2 Through Lanes, Turn Lanes, Sidewalks and Median
B	SE 272nd St	SE Wax Rd	192 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue SE	Add 2 Through Lanes, Bike Lanes, Turn Lanes, Sidewalks and Median
C	SE 256th St	148th Ave SE	160th Ave SE	Add 2 Through Lanes, Bike Lanes, Turn Lanes, Sidewalks and Median
D**	SE Wax Rd (See DTP below)	SE 272nd St	Covington Way SE	Add Bike Lanes, Turn Lanes Sidewalks and Median

E	Covington Way SE	168th Ave SE	SE Wax Rd	Add 2 Through Lanes, Bike Lanes, Turn Lanes, Sidewalks and Median
F	180th Ave SE	SE 261st St	SE Wax Rd (North)	Add Ped overcrossing of SR18, Turn Lanes, Median, Sidewalks and Bike Lanes, +2 Thru Lanes n/o SE 256th St
G	SE 272nd St	160th Ave SE	164th Ave SE	Add 2 Right Turn Lanes, Sidewalks and Bike Lanes
H	SE 256th St	168th Ave SE	180th Ave SE	Add 2 Through Lanes, Bike Lanes, Turn Lanes Sidewalks, and Median

**Additional Projects in Downtown Plan (Downtown Element Chapter 4)**

**	SE Wax Rd (See D above)	SE 272nd St	Covington Way SE	Potential alignment modification and intersection improvements to accommodate pedestrian access.
DTP I	SE 276th St	165 <sup>th</sup> Pl SE	SE Wax Road	New 3-lane street in Downtown Plan to accommodate pedestrian and vehicle access
DTP II	SE 274 <sup>th</sup> Pl	168 <sup>th</sup> Pl SE	172 <sup>nd</sup> Ave SE	New street in Downtown Plan to accommodate pedestrian and commercial access
DTP III	172 <sup>nd</sup> Ave SE	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St	SE Wax Road	Potential alignment modification and intersection improvements to accommodate pedestrian access.
DTP IV	171 <sup>st</sup> Ave SE	SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> St	SE Wax Road	New street in Downtown Plan to accommodate highest level of pedestrian activity and design as a "Main Street". Limit truck and delivery traffic and provide adequate space for emergency vehicles.

**Hawk Property Subarea Projects**

The improvements supporting the Hawk Property Subarea Plan are addressed in the Hawk Property Planned Action Ordinance, February 11, 2014, hereby incorporated by reference.

The relative share assigned to the City of Covington is identified in the following Table 5.3. Some of the identified projects are included in Chapter 10 Capital Facilities; however the forecast is limited to the last forecasts for 2003-2008. The following costs were updated as part of the 2008 Amendment process and will be incorporated into the Capital Facilities, Chapter 10, in the next 7 year mandate by GMA.

**Table 5.2 – 20 Year Capital Improvement Program 2010-2029 – Associated Costs**

Priority	City CIP #, Project Name, Termini,	Cost \$1000	Description
A	1124, 185th Place SE Extension Wax Road/180th Avenue SE Roundabout to SE 272nd Street New Route, New Alignment, Access management	11,980	Connect roundabout at Wax Road and 180th Avenue SE to SE 272nd Street. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting near intersections. Install underground utilities. 82' right-of-way, 44', 3 lane street
B	1039, 1127, 1128 SE 272nd Street (SR 516) Wax Road to 192nd Avenue SE Access control, Pedestrian improvements, Signal revisions	28,100	Widen road to 5 lanes. New Stream Crossings of Jenkins Creek. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting along SE 272nd Street. Install Median, Modify existing signal, and underground utilities. 100' right-of-way, 72' street
C	1041, SE 256th Street 148th Avenue SE to 160th Avenue SE Widen & reconstruct, Sidewalks, New signal	19,030	Widen road to 5 lanes. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting along SE 256th Street. Install Median, Modify existing signal, and underground utilities. 100' right-of-way, 72' street
D	1085, SE Wax Road SE 272nd Street to Covington Way SE Widen & reconstruct, Sidewalks, New signal	14,570	Widen Wax Road to 3 lanes. Add turn lanes at major intersections. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting near intersection. Install Median, install new signal, and underground utilities. 84' right-of-way, 44' street
E	1084, Covington Way SE 165th Place SE to SE Wax Road Widen & reconstruct, Sidewalks, New stream crossing	7,330	Widen road to 5 lanes. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting along Covington Way SE. Install Median, Modify existing signal, and underground utilities. 100' right-of-way, 72' street
F	1060, 1061, 1149 180th Avenue SE SE 261st Street to (north) SE Wax Road Widen & reconstruct, Sidewalks, Modify signal	6,770	Widen road to 3 lanes. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting along 180th Avenue SE. Install Median, install new signal, and underground utilities. 84' right-of-way, 44' street
G	1063, SE 272nd Street (State Route 516) 160th Avenue SE to 164th Avenue SE Widen SE 272nd Street. Add turn lanes.	9,260	Widen SE 272nd Street. Add turn lanes. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting near intersection. Install Median, install new signal, and underground utilities.
H	1056, SE 256th Street 168th Place SE to 180th Avenue SE Widen & reconstruct, Sidewalks, New stream crossing	12,050	Widen road to 5 lanes. Install curb, sidewalk and street lighting along SE 256th Street. Install Median, Modify existing signal, and underground utilities. 100' right-of-way, 72' street

TOTAL 20 Year Plan 2010 - 2029

109,090

**DOWNTOWN STREET PLAN**

<b>DTP I</b>	SE 276th Street 165th Place SE to SE Wax Road New Route, New Alignment, Commercial Access	6,150	New Street, New Alignment. Construct new 42' (3 lane) commercial access street in new 84' right-of-way. 10' sidewalks on both sides
<b>DTP II</b>	SE 275th Street 168th Avenue SE to SE Wax Road New Route, New Alignment, Commercial Access	3,210	New Street, Alignment of existing service drive. Construct new 26' access street in 50' right-of-way Grind existing access road, Install curb, gutter and 10' sidewalk on one side.
<b>DTP III</b>	172 <sup>nd</sup> Ave SE Extension SE 272 <sup>nd</sup> Street to SE 276 <sup>th</sup> Street New Route, New Alignment, Commercial Access	1,750	New Street, New Alignment. 80' right-of-way. Construct new 48' (3 lane) access street with 8' sidewalks.
<b>DTP IV</b>	171st Avenue SE SE 272nd Street to Wax Road New Route, New Alignment, Commercial Access	10,650	New Street, New Alignment. 60' right-of-way. Construct new 36' (3 lane) access street with 10' sidewalks. Grind existing parking area, Demolish portions of existing buildings
<b>TOTAL Downtown Street Plan</b>		<b>21,760</b>	

**HAWK PROPERTY SUBAREA PLAN**

The improvements supporting the Hawk Property Subarea Plan are addressed in the Hawk Property Planned Action Ordinance, February 11, 2014, hereby incorporated by reference.

**Maintenance and Operations Program**

The City will maintain a program for annual overlays and safety/operations improvements. These allow the City to maintain and preserve the investment in the existing transportation system. The program will evaluate pavement conditions with a systematic approach. This will help ensure overlays and/or reconstruction projects are programmed before significant problems develop. The overlay program may be used to pave roadway shoulders to provide interim facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.

The maintenance and operations programs should be based on appropriate engineering review and evaluation. Public input also should be taken into account in defining specific improvements implemented with these programs.

Some of the improvements necessary to improve non-motorized travel within and around Covington will connect to the existing network of sidewalks serving the downtown core. The proposed

collector roads north and south of SR 516 will form a network of sidewalks within the downtown core. The City will continue to widen the sidewalks along SR 516, and/or separate them from the high volume travel lanes with a buffer strip.

Other non-motorized projects include pedestrian improvements along school walking routes. These projects are located throughout the city to reduce the need for school buses to transport children that live within walking distance of a school but do not have adequate pedestrian facilities to access the school. These improvements may include sidewalks, paved shoulders or separate pedestrian paths. The type of facility will be decided during preliminary design and are subject to the availability of funding. Many of these projects could be interim phases of larger widening or reconstruction projects. The interim phase provides the City with options to improve high priority pedestrian system locations in a shorter time period.

### **Transit**

As outlined in Section 5.7 Transit Service and Ridesharing, transit service is fairly limited within the City of Covington. King County Metro's six-year service plan does not propose significant changes to existing transit service levels for Covington.

The City should work with King County Metro to install transit shelters at some of the bus stops along SR 516. These would provide some support for higher transit use within the city. It may be desirable to have transit buses divert slightly from SR 516 to the new downtown collector road system, once the new routes are completed. This would enhance the environment for people waiting to catch a bus since traffic volumes would be significantly lower on the new collector arterials compared to SR 516.

### **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program**

The City of Covington Transportation System Plan recognizes the importance of transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, to reduce traffic congestion and to provide viable transportation alternatives. These programs build on the region's programs with refinements to reflect the specific needs/goals of the City of Covington.

In addition to increased transit service, a range of TDM programs are included as part of the City of Covington Transportation Plan. The goal of the TDM program is to reduce the overall amount of travel by single occupant vehicles (SOVs) within the city. The

TDM program must be compatible with state, regional, King County, and adjacent jurisdictions, policies and requirements.

The State Commute Trip Reduction Act (CTR) requires general purpose, local governments in King County to establish goals and guidelines to reduce their employees' use of SOVs in commuting to and from work. CTR defines a major employer as a business with 100 or more employees at a worksite, working a shift that begins between 6 to 9 a.m. The City has adopted its own TDM ordinance that will require new developments to implement strategies to reduce the number of vehicle trips generated during peak commuter periods, consistent with state law.

Individual demand management strategies that are typical elements of the TDM program are different for employment and residential developments. The following highlights TDM program elements for a broad spectrum of employment-based and residential-based developments.

### **Employer-Based Strategies**

Employment-based strategies have been found to be the most effective in reducing peak hour traffic. In most cases, a transportation coordinator or coordinators direct employer-based strategies. Effective strategies include:

**Transit Incentives** - New developments could be required to provide free or reduced rate transit passes to all employees.

**Parking Management** - Limiting the parking supply to slightly less than or equal to the most accurate estimate of parking demand should be considered because it will make driving alone less convenient.

**Compressed Work Week** - Employers can be encouraged to participate in compressed work week programs.

**Flexible Work Schedules** - Employers should be encouraged to allow flexible work schedules that would permit their employees to adjust their schedules (at least minimally) to accommodate carpool, vanpool, or transit opportunities.

**Other Financial Subsidies** - New commercial developments could be required to provide a financial subsidy to employees who commute by transit, carpool, vanpool, or bicycle.

### **Residential-Based Strategies**

Residential-based TDM strategies for the City of Covington will likely rely on increasing the availability of convenient transit service or van/carpools to major employment centers, especially in the Kent Valley, and north towards Renton.

**Site Design** - Sidewalks or other hard surface pathways should be provided on site for new developments connecting to the arterial system. Pedestrian connections on-site should not restrict direct pedestrian access to arterials and existing or possible future bus stops.

## **5.14 Plan Implementation**

The City has defined a range of strategies to assure that the transportation system plan is implemented in a timely and orderly manner. These strategies include defining level of service standards and a concurrency management system. A strategy for using a range of programs to fund the transportation improvements also is critical to the implementation of the transportation plan. The City's transportation plan considers projects to be constructed by WSDOT, King County, and other surrounding jurisdictions as a part of responding to impacts created outside Covington's jurisdiction. This will require coordination between the jurisdictions to design, fund, and construct improvements that form a complete transportation system for the Covington area.

### **5.14.1 Level of Service Standards and Concurrency Management System**

As outlined in Section 5.4 Existing Level of Service and Concurrency Program, the City of Covington has adopted King County's level of service and concurrency program.

With adoption of the transportation element and Comprehensive Plan, the City wants to enhance the existing County LOS and concurrency management system (CMS) to better reflect its definition of adequate transportation facilities.

### **Intersection Standard**

The City of Covington has modified the Intersection Standards by requiring LOS D (calculated with ICU 2000 by Trafficware) or better for all intersections. The revised standard will be applied to intersections with arterials within the city and arterials immediately adjacent to the city. Levels of service for traffic movements from unsignalized non-arterial side streets may be allowed to operate at

LOS E or F, if the City Engineer determines that no significant operations or safety hazard will result. This revision is needed, since mitigation through installation of a traffic signal may not be warranted (per the MUTCD or desirable due to the proximity of other traffic control devices. The City will review unsignalized intersections on a case by case basis to identify appropriate SEPA mitigation.

The City also may choose to modify the traffic threshold that is used for the SEPA review of traffic impacts. A threshold lower than King County's 20 percent and 30-peak hour trip requirement will result in smaller developments contributing SEPA mitigation to identified improvements. The City has adopted a threshold as low as five (5) peak hour trips.

### **Arterial Links**

In order to ensure that the roadway segments operate adequately, the City will create a capacity test for all arterial links. This capacity test will replace the TAM used by King County for determining system capacity. This standard requires that the maximum volume- to capacity (v/c) ratio for arterial links be set at 0.90 (LOS D or better). The test will be applied to all principal, minor, and collector arterials inside the city limits. The City will establish a traffic threshold as part of its implementation ordinance. Mitigation could be in the form of payment of a proportionate share of an identified improvement or construction of additional through or turn lanes.

### **Future LOS/CMS Program Direction**

The LOS/CMS program is established to take advantage of King County's existing travel model and processes. The City intends to work with King County to refine the LOS/CMS tools and processes to more directly meet the City's transportation system needs. Specific changes will be defined over the next couple of years, as the City works with King County staff to refine the travel model and interlocal agreements.

### **LOS Reassessment Strategy**

The City will monitor the operation of its transportation system as the plan is implemented. The monitoring will include review/tracking of the TAM and SEPA evaluations for individual developments. It also will be reviewed as part of the development of the annual Six-Year TIP. Where deficiencies are noted, the City will consider shifting funding resources to make improvements in

a more timely manner. The decision to redirect available funding will consider the funding source and the City's criteria for transportation improvements.

The City may choose to initially focus improvements and funding to support growth in the downtown or other areas to support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Such a strategy may help grow the long-term tax base earlier in the development of the twenty-year growth plan. If over time, transportation funding falls short of expectations, the City could consider revising the adopted LOS/CMS standards. The City also could revise the land use plan or direct additional funding to the transportation element. These would initially be reviewed as part of potential future changes to the LOS/CMS program in approximately two years.

#### **5.14.2 Transportation Financing Strategies**

Funding of the transportation system improvement projects must be taken in the context of the City's overall financial resources. Therefore, the details of the transportation financing program are included in the Capital Facilities Element.

The 20-year Capital Improvement Program summarizes the costs of the identified improvement projects. It also identifies the City's share of projects that would likely be developed jointly with King County or WSDOT. Joining together with other agencies is one strategy that the City will use to leverage its available financial resources. Joining forces with other agencies and the private sector also will be used to pursue state and federal grants.

The City will use a range of programs to help fund its transportation improvements. Funding programs that will be used for specific projects will be defined as part of the Capital Facilities Element and will be reviewed as each project gets closer to implementation. The City will continue to assess its transportation financing needs and consider other options, as appropriate.

Tax Revenue. The City receives a share of state gas taxes, which can be allocated to transportation system improvements. It also can allocate a portion of its share of property and sales taxes to the transportation program. These allocations must be balanced against other city services and facilities identified in the comprehensive plan.

Grant and Loan Programs. The City has applied for and has been awarded grants for specific improvement projects. Low interest loan programs such as the Public Works Trust Fund are also

considered as reliable alternative funding sources for certain projects in the TIP. In order to be successful in pursuit of grants and loans the City will work with other agencies and the private sector to define projects that best meet the criteria of each grant and/or loan program. This includes pooling resources to increase percentage for the local match.

Local Improvement Districts. Where appropriate, the City will establish local improvement districts (LIDs) to help fund parts of the transportation system projects.

Developer Mitigation Fees. As the City continues to work with King County on refining its travel forecasting model and processes related to a future LOS/CMS program, it also will work to revise the MPS program. The revised MPS program will add all capacity related improvement projects that are needed to support. Projects added to the MPS program would not include costs associated with resolving existing deficiencies.

Development SEPA Mitigation. When a development impacts an intersection or roadway section not included in the 20-year CIP that falls below the level of service standard, the City will require mitigation or will not approve the development at that time. Mitigation could be in the form of constructing improvements to bring the facility into compliance with the standard. Alternately, the City may allow mitigation of the project's impacts through payment of a proportionate share of an identified improvement project.

Developer Frontage Improvements. As required by the City's development standards, street frontage improvements will be required to be constructed as part of a new development project. These can include drainage, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, construction of access roads and other elements, such as street trees and street lights.

### **5.14.3 Intergovernmental Coordination**

Preparation of the transportation systems plan and overall transportation element include a review of other agency plans and policies. These included WSDOT, King County, surrounding jurisdictions, and the school districts. The plan acknowledges the importance of coordinating improvement projects with other agencies and ensuring that they work as an overall system. The City's plans and policies do not, however, rely upon implementation of projects by other agencies.

The City has considered significant improvement projects for WSDOT and King County that help support the area transportation system. The City will coordinate with these agencies, the City of Kent and Maple Valley as these projects are implemented.

The City's transportation plan is also consistent with and connects with non-motorized systems of other agencies. The plan includes improved bike and pedestrian facilities to tie in with regional non-motorized travel corridors.

The City's plan also is consistent with Metro's current strategy for providing transit service in the area. The TDM program requirements are compatible with the types of developments within the city and their location at the edge of the urban growth area.

## 5.15 Goals and Policies

Goals and policies were developed to help guide the implementation of the transportation element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. These goals and policies will provide the framework for making decisions on the City's transportation infrastructure, transportation requirements of new developments, prioritization of transportation funding, and coordination with other agencies.

Goals and policies to guide implementation of the City's transportation element are presented below.

### 5.15.1 Long-Range Transportation Plan and Covington Future Land Use

TRG 1.0 The City of Covington shall provide a convenient, safe, cost effective, and efficient multi-modal transportation system that will serve the community and region while minimizing adverse impacts to neighborhoods, businesses, and the natural environment.

TRG 1.1 Implement a comprehensive long-range transportation plan to ensure that transportation planning, decision-making, and funding are coordinated and consistent with the proposed future land use plan.

*TRP 1.1 Adopt a Transportation Roadway Needs Plan that identifies future arterial right-of-way requirements, roadway cross-sections, functional classifications, and implementation strategies.*

- TRP 1.2 Employ professionally accepted methods of determining existing and future traffic conditions, and evaluating the impacts of potential development projects.*
- TRP 1.3 Forecast long-range transportation needs based upon adopted LOS standards and appropriate policies of the Comprehensive Plan.*
- TRP 1.4 Assure that the long-range transportation plans are consistent with regional and local plans.*
- TRP 1.5 Require dedication of right-of-way, as well as design and improvement of roadways consistent with the City's Transportation Roadway Needs Plan.*
- TRP 1.6 The Land Use Element and Transportation Element should be coordinated such that land use designations, transportation funding, and/or level of service standards shall be reexamined when roadway construction or upgrading is not feasible, or where concurrency cannot be achieved.*
- TRP 1.7 Identify transportation improvements, financing strategies, and implementation measures to encourage redevelopment at appropriate locations throughout the proposed Downtown Subarea.*
- TRP 1.8 Develop transportation facilities to enhance the City of Covington Vision.*
- TRP 1.9 Seek to involve the public and adjacent jurisdictions in identifying needs for planning and designing transportation facilities, programs, and services.*
- TRP 1.10 Encourage development of commercial activities and consistent uses in the Downtown Subarea to combine vehicle trips, reduce parking demand, encourage non-motorized travel, and reduce overall trip generation.*

### 5.15.2 Current Deficiencies and Needs

TRG 2.0 Identify currently deficient and unsafe traffic conditions in the City of Covington's street network system and develop corrective solutions.

*TRP 2.1 Evaluate high accident locations and take the appropriate measures to eliminate the problem area(s) and improve safety conditions.*

*TRP 2.2 Conduct studies of local access and neighborhood circulation, and where problems are encountered, implement circulation modifications.*

*TRP 2.3 Implement an on-going traffic count program for the arterial roadway system to monitor traffic conditions and continuing growth.*

*TRP 2.4 Prepare a congestion management plan for areas where traffic congestion during peak periods is of highest concern.*

*TRP 2.5 Establish regulations and strategies that will improve the flow of traffic into and out of retail commercial areas, such as: acceleration/deceleration lanes, wide-radius driveway access, restricted or consolidated access strategies, and parking reduction efforts.*

*TRP 2.6 Develop a proactive approach to access management on arterial roadways. Minimize access and egress to arterials to reduce traffic impediments and improve safety. Adopt access management standards for all arterial roadways.*

*TRP 2.7 Prioritize transportation funding to initially correct safety deficiencies and preserve the existing infrastructure.*

*TRP 2.8 Systematically survey all streets and other transportation-related facilities to ascertain the efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation system.*

### 5.15.3 Level of Service (LOS) Standards

TRG 3.0 Adopt and implement a LOS standard to quantify and qualify the flow of traffic (motorized and non-motorized), and to measure the overall transportation system's ability to move people and goods.

*TRP 3.1 To implement levels of service for the arterial system as minimum standards for roadway planning and land development permitting.*

*TRP 3.2 To provide a methodology for evaluating the impacts of long-term growth and individual development projects.*

*TRP 3.3 Employ professionally accepted methods and measures in determining transportation LOS.*

*TRP 3.4 Address all modes of travel, motorized and non-motorized, in making concurrency determinations.*

*TRP 3.5 The City will develop its own Transportation Adequacy Measure for concurrency purposes. The TAM will include a volume to capacity (v/c) ratio test for all arterial street segments (or links) in the city limits and an intersection volume to capacity (v/c) ratio test for signalized intersections.*

*TRP 3.6 The TAM test for arterials will be based on a volume- to capacity (v/c) ratio of 0.89, which corresponds to LOS D or better.*

*TRP 3.7 The City will adopt LOS D or better for arterial intersections that are signalized or planned to be signalized. The City may allow traffic on the side streets to operate at LOS E or F if the City Engineer determines that no significant safety problem or excessive delays will result. The City Engineer may require mitigation to minimize potential impacts. The TAM test for intersections will be based on*

*Intersection Capacity Utilization volume to capacity (v/c) ratio of 0.90, which corresponds to LOS D or better.*

- TRP 3.8 Evaluate level of service for traffic movements from minor streets at unsignalized intersections, at the time of development review.*
- TRP 3.9 Identify acceptable levels of traffic on lower classification streets through use of street design standards*
- TRP 3.10 Land development review will include coordination of development requirements according to LOS standards, the adopted Transportation Systems Plan, land development regulations, and the availability of transportation system capacity needed to support such development.*
- TRP 3.11 Establish a program to monitor LOS of all arterial roadways and signalized intersections (including those planned for signalization), on a semi-annual basis.*
- TRP 3.12 The City hereby adopts the State-determined LOS of "D" for SR-18.*

#### **5.15.4 Transportation Improvement Plan and Street Maintenance**

**TRG 4.0** Develop and maintain a six-year TIP that is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Roadway Needs Plan, and Capital Facilities Plan.

*TRP 4.1 Ensure that transportation facilities are maintained in a formal method that will optimize safety, traffic flow, and the life of the facility in the most cost-effective manner.*

*TRP 4.2 Prepare a coordinated Six-Year TIP that is updated annually and in accordance with applicable funding strategies.*

- TRP 4.3 Proposed roadway projects shall be evaluated and prioritized according to the following guidelines:*
- a. Project's likelihood of improving public health and safety, to fulfill the City's legal commitment to provide transportation services to its users, or to preserve full use of the existing transportation system;*
  - b. Project's opportunity to increase efficiency of existing facilities, prevents or reduces future improvement costs, provides service to developed areas lacking full service, or promotes development consistent with the future land use plan;*
  - c. Project's ability to improve the general prosperity of the community or represent a logical extension of existing facilities.*
- TRP 4.4 The results of the Concurrency Management System should be used in developing the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.*
- TRP 4.5 The planned transportation improvement program, proposed land use element, and the finance plan shall be consistent and coordinated.*
- TRP 4.6 Proactively seek local, state, and federal funding and grants for the enhancement of the transportation facilities.*
- TRP 4.7 Coordinate funding with other local and regional sources to address transportation improvements that serve multiple jurisdictions and/or are mutually beneficial.*

### **5.15.5 Transit and TDM Strategies**

- TRG 5.0** Work directly with the local and regional transit agencies to increase transit service.

- TRG 5.1 Promote transit and TDM strategies as viable alternatives to single-occupant vehicle use.
- TRG 5.2 Enhance use of transit and TDM strategies by supporting appropriate land use.
- TRP 5.1 Work with KC/Metro to evaluate and make necessary changes to enhance the transit service within the city.*
- TRP 5.2 Proactively participate in the planning of the regional transit system to facilitate the City's transportation needs with regards to transit.*
- TRP 5.3 Promote and facilitate transit-friendly and convenient land use and facilities to increase transit ridership.*
- TRP 5.4 Transit stops and transit access shall be promoted near land uses that attract large numbers of employees and/or customers.*
- TRP 5.5 Encourage an ongoing awareness program for ridesharing, carpooling, and transit in cooperation with KC/Metro.*
- TRP 5.6 Support transit services that meet the needs of persons with disabilities, the elderly, and people with special needs.*
- TRP 5.7 Encourage the use of transit, high occupancy vehicles (HOV), and other travel modes, such as carpools and vanpools, through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and nonmotorized connections.*
- TRP 5.8 Encourage the development of higher-density commercial and residential centers that can be efficiently served by transit.*

### 5.15.6 Street Improvement Standards

- TRG 6.0 Implement a comprehensive transportation program of development regulations, street improvement standards, and traffic circulation standards that will preserve and foster existing neighborhoods and businesses, support

public transportation, safety and emergency response, encourage non-motorized transportation, and serve existing and future land development.

- TRG 6.1 To ensure satisfactory roadway facilities for all types of users, including non-motorized transportation.
- TRG 6.2 Enhance truck access to/from SR 18 and other regional facilities to minimize the impact of trucks on residential areas of the city.
- TRG 6.3 In general, all arterials shall accommodate pedestrian and bicycle movement, as well as automobile and transit traffic.

*TRP 6.1 Streets and arterials should be classified to reflect their desired functional use. The functional classification system should be based, in part, on present and future traffic volumes and by the type of land uses abutting the streets and arterials.*

*TRP 6.2 Adopt design standards for arterials and local streets that are based on the functional classification of the facility and the projected land uses they are intended to serve.*

*TRP 6.3 Consolidate access to properties along principal and minor arterials wherever possible to maximize the capacity of the facilities and reduce potential safety conflicts.*

*TRP 6.4 The primary truck routes should consist of SR 18 and principal and minor arterials. The collector arterial and local road system should only be used for trucks to access commercial or residential developments for deliveries.*

*TRP 6.5 Develop a strategy with WSDOT to develop and implement an Access Management Plan for SR 516. This will reduce the number of access locations on SR 516 within Covington and adjacent communities.*

- TRP 6.6 *Focus major capacity improvements on existing and identified new arterials. Supplement these improvements with high priority safety, capacity, and multi-modal improvements on all streets.*
- TRP 6.7 *Proceed with feasibility, design, and funding studies of upgrading SE 256th Street as a new minor arterial.*
- TRP 6.8 *Develop improved roadway and parking lot designs, including minimum access spacing criteria and access control measures, through engineering and the development review procedures.*
- TRP 6.9 *Locate driveways in a manner that provides adequate sight distance for all traffic movements and does not interfere with traffic operations at intersections.*
- TRP 6.10 *Preserve the safety and character of local residential streets by discouraging non-local (cut-through) traffic and access on local streets.*
- TRP 6.11 *Link local street networks through subdivisions to provide efficient local circulation, as appropriate, and provide additional collector arterial access for major residential areas.*
- TRP 6.12 *Design, construct, and operate the transportation system to accommodate physically challenged persons in accordance with the ADA standards.*
- TRP 6.13 *Design, construct and operate the transportation system to accommodate and support public safety vehicles, emergency response and operation.*
- TRP 6.14 *Link SR 18 and 204<sup>th</sup> Ave SE with an arterial solution that provides efficient circulation while promoting a safe shopping and pedestrian environment.*

TRP 6.15 *Ensure that the arterial link between SR 18 and 204<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE is constructed and accessible prior to the opening of any local street connection from the Hawk Property Subarea to 191<sup>st</sup> Place SE.*

TRP 6.16 *Provide an interconnected system of streets and non-motorized facilities that minimizes vehicular/bicycle/pedestrian conflicts and promotes pedestrian safety. Employ a grid street pattern where practicable.*

TRP 6.17 *Implement streetscape improvements that promote walkability and commercial activity.*

### 5.15.7 Non-Motorized Transportation

TRG 7.0 Develop facilities to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle travel to promote alternative transportation modes and to support recreational activity, access to transit, and access to schools.

TRG 7.1 To provide a safe and convenient transportation system that is supported and enhances walking and bicycling.

TRG 7.2 To recognize the significance of equestrian activities in Covington and seek to contribute towards promoting appropriate facilities for these uses.

TRG 7.3 To provide a local and regionally integrated non-motorized transportation system of sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes to link neighborhoods, businesses, parks, schools and activity centers.

*TRP 7.1* *Require that pedestrian and bicycle friendly design features are incorporated into proposed new developments.*

*TRP 7.2* *Develop facilities for the safe and efficient movement of pedestrian and bicycle traffic with consideration for both modes of travel as a means of alternative transportation as well as for recreational purposes.*

*TRP 7.3* *Recognize pedestrian and bicycle travel as a basic mode of transportation and assure adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities*

*are provided within residential areas and to/from commercial, schools and other public facilities.*

- TRP 7.4 The zoning code should require that new development is accessible by pedestrians from adjacent roads and trails, with access points to major pedestrian destinations.*
- TRP 7.5 Provide good non-motorized access to and from transit stops.*
- TRP 7.6 Develop and sign a system of bicycle routes providing for travel within the city with connections to regional facilities and major local destinations.*
- TRP 7.7 Where feasible, include Class II bike lanes in the design of principal and minor arterials, consistent with road design standards. Class I bike trails should also be considered as an alternative.*
- TRP 7.8 Class III bicycle facilities will be implemented on designated collector arterials or lower classification streets to share the roadway with motorized traffic. Class II bike lanes should also be considered as an alternative.*
- TRP 7.9 Establish a program for construction of pedestrian facilities to complete essential missing segments.*
- TRP 7.10 Seek to enhance the pedestrian environments of Covington, specifically within the Downtown Subarea and within commercial/retail areas.*

### **5.15.8 Environmental Impacts and Streetscape Aesthetics**

- TRG 8.0** Ensure that transportation facilities are developed and maintained in a manner that is sensitive to the natural environment, minimizes adverse impacts to residential neighborhoods and local businesses, and complements the aesthetic character of the City of Covington.

- TRP 8.1 Establish a streetscape plan consisting of private and public improvement projects for specific arterial and local streets that may include (but not be limited to): median landscaping, street furniture, signage, lighting, and sidewalks that will enhance the streetscape aesthetics.*
- TRP 8.2 Implement a pedestrian/bicycle system, comprised of dedicated bike paths and bike lanes.*
- TRP 8.3 Plan, design, and implement transportation improvement projects that minimize impacts to residential neighborhoods.*
- TRP 8.4 Proactively participate in efforts to improve management strategies, which will reduce contamination of street runoff and stormwater. Coordinate these efforts with other jurisdictions, as well as regional and state agencies.*
- TRP 8.5 Endeavor to ensure that all transportation-related improvement projects comply with state and federal guidelines for air quality and water quality responsibilities.*

#### **5.15.9 Coordination, Monitoring, and Reassessment**

- TRG 9.0** To coordinate the long-term transportation plan and short-term improvement programs with other jurisdictions and planning agencies.
- TRG 9.1** To regularly monitor, evaluate, and update transportation plans, standards, and improvement programs for the City's transportation system to ensure effective performance and timely implementation.
- TRP 9.1 Coordinate transportation plans and programs with other jurisdictions, agencies, and districts. Strive to achieve consistency between the City of Covington long-range transportation plan and the region's growth management goals and policies.*
- TRP 9.2 Coordinate land use, long-term transportation planning, and six-year*

*improvement programs with King County in anticipation of potential annexation for adjoining areas.*

- TRP 9.3 Establish programs to work cooperatively with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in planning and managing SR 18 and SR 516.*
- TRP 9.4 Coordinate transportation planning efforts with the transportation and land use plans of neighboring jurisdictions to maximize the cost-effectiveness of transportation improvement projects.*
- TRP 9.5 Institute a monitoring and evaluation program to revise planning documents and programs on a routine basis.*
- TRP 9.6 Encourage public involvement in transportation planning through information exchange efforts.*
- TRP 9.7 Regularly update transportation improvement programs, road standards, and level of service standards to achieve a condition consistent with the City's Vision for accommodating growth and changes in land use planning.*

#### **5.15.10 Concurrency Management System**

TRG 10.0 Ensure that transportation facilities necessary for future development are provided concurrent with actual growth, as required by the Growth Management Act.

- TRP 10.1 Develop a CMS based on the City's level of service standards. It should measure the adequacy of the overall transportation system and key arterials.*
- TRP 10.2 The CMS should include a monitoring system to ensure that transportation improvements are provided in a timely manner and remain consistent with adopted LOS standards. The CMS monitoring results should be considered in the annual*

*update of the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.*

*TRP 10.3 The initial CMS program and level of service standard should be reviewed within approximately two years. Adjustments should be made, if necessary, to support the City's goals.*

*TRP 10.4 The CMS should implement the requirements of GMA to ensure that transportation improvements necessary to support new development are completed within the six-year timeframe.*

*TRP 10.5 The City should pursue opportunities for entering into interlocal agreements for the purposes of cross-jurisdictional concurrency testing.*

#### **5.15.11 Transportation Financing**

**TRG 11.0** To develop a long-range financial component and multi-agency funding program to ensure adequate funding sources and strategies for transportation improvements and maintenance.

*TRP 11.1 The City of Covington should develop a long-range financial program that identifies potential funding sources and strategies to implement the transportation improvement plan.*

*TRP 11.2 An annual six-year financial plan should be developed to address transportation priorities to be incorporated into the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).*

*TRP 11.3 The City should develop and implement a program designed to ensure that new development within the City is required to make a fair share contribution to mitigate potential transportation impacts.*

*TRP 11.4 Develop an MPS specific to Covington to partially fund capacity projects that support new development.*

*TRP 11.5 Require new developments to mitigate their traffic impacts consistent with the level of service standards.*

*TRP 11.6 The City should pursue the opportunity of entering into interlocal agreements for the purpose of collecting impact fees for/from neighboring jurisdictions and WSDOT.*

**ORDINANCE NO. 02-14**  
**EXHIBIT D**

# 6.0

## **PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Element is to provide goals and policies that guide the acquisition, development and management of parks, natural areas, trails and recreation facilities and programs for the City of Covington. This Element is divided into seven sections to address planning context, service standards, community needs, goals and policies, and implementation.

The Parks and Recreation Element is derived from the community planning process and analysis used to develop the 2010 Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, which is a companion document to this Element and is incorporated herein by reference. It provides an inventory of park and recreation facilities and programs in Covington; outlines services standards for parks and facilities; identifies near-term community recreation demand; and presents a strategy for providing additional facilities and programs to meet the needs of the City's residents and visitors.

### **6.2 Planning Context**

This section discusses legislative directives (including the GMA and the CPP) as well as the Parks and Recreation Element's relationship to other Comprehensive Plan elements and other community plans.

#### **6.2.1 Legislative Directives**

##### **Growth Management Act**

While the Parks Element is considered an optional element under the GMA, park and recreation facilities are required to be included in the mandatory capital facilities plan element. The Act identifies 13 broad planning goals to guide the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations (codified in RCW 36.70A). Of these, three goals directly influence the development and implementation of the City's parks, recreation and open space programs.

- Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities. (RCW 36.70A.020(9))
- Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water. (RCW 36.70A.020(10))
- Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance. (RCW 36.70A.020(13))

This Parks and Recreation Element aims to meet the intent of the requirements outlined in the GMA and provide a clear direction toward the protection and expansion of recreation opportunities for the citizens of Covington.

### **Countywide Planning Policies**

The King County Countywide Planning Policies state that an open space system should be provided and that physical and visual access to rivers, lakes, and streams should be protected throughout the county. The Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources chapter of the King County Comprehensive Plan makes significant references to the King County Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan adopted in 2004 and outlines 32 policy statements pertaining to the provision of regional parks, natural areas and resource lands. The plan notes the need for cooperation, coordination and partnerships with public agencies, private groups and individuals to develop the regional parks and open space system.

### **6.2.2 Relationship to Other Comprehensive Plan Elements**

The vision, goals, policies and recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Element have all been coordinated with, and are supportive of, the framework that has been established in Covington's Comprehensive Plan. This Element not only provides for the recreational needs of Covington's residents, but also is supportive of a broader network of regional greenspace and trails to surround the community.

The Parks and Recreation Element functions in concert with the Environmental Element by establishing policies for the acquisition, development and management of City-owned natural areas. The Land Use Element is supported through policies aimed at the continued provision of facilities and services to support anticipated growth. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Element establishes

policies for the coordination of funding and level of service requirements set forth in the Capital Facilities Element.

### **6.2.3 Relationship to Other Parks and Recreation Plans**

In preparing the Parks and Recreation Element, the park, trail and open space systems of the City of Kent, Maple Valley and King County were considered. The planning direction established by Washington's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) program and RCW 36.70 also provided a regional basis for the Parks and Recreation Element. In addition, several planning documents and studies have been prepared since Covington incorporated in 1997 that have influenced parks and recreation service in the City. A summary of each of these is listed below.

#### **2006 Covington Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Plan**

This strategic plan is based in the Parks and Recreation Department's mission, vision and values and has three major purposes: present a long-term vision of success to direct planning and management efforts; prioritize projects to focus funding and budgeting; develop a management process that considers existing commitments when new requests and initiatives are presented.

#### **2006 Community Forestry Plan**

This draft plan includes the City's tree ordinance, tree establishment and maintenance procedures, a park and open space tree inventory and a 2007-2013 action plan. The Arbor Day program and the annual application to the Tree City USA membership program are highlighted as part of the educational component of the action plan.

#### **2003 Arts Comprehensive Plan**

This 6-year plan outlines the goals, objectives and performance measures for the Arts Commission and the Parks Department. The plan promotes the use and appreciation of the arts in the City's activities and facilities, while assisting the City in meeting the planning requirements for potential funding sources.

#### **2002 Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan**

The plan outlines a specific focus for city recreation services and identifies key recreation policies and practices to facilitate service delivery. The plan lists the vision, guiding principles, goals,

implementation strategies and a pricing policy for recreational programming.

#### 6.2.4 Community Vision for Parks & Recreation

The future vision for Covington's park and recreation system is summarized as follows:

- *Covington is responsive to community needs.* The City will establish specialized recreation services and acquire additional parkland to meet the needs of its growing and diverse community. Partnering with other agencies, Covington will pursue opportunities and innovative solutions for new facilities and inclusive access to services.
- *Covington promotes active lifestyles, personal fitness and a greater sense of place and community.* Through joint marketing efforts and partnership development with regional health and fitness providers, Covington will strive to be one of the healthiest cities in Washington.
- *Covington is a walkable community with an expanded trails network connecting parks and natural areas with neighborhoods and downtown.* This includes a comprehensive system of on-road bicycle routes as well as off-road trails, so people have alternative transportation options and access to passive recreation opportunities for wellness and exploration.
- *Safe, attractive, well-kept parks and natural areas will be a key contributor to the city's health and economic prosperity.* Community outreach and education will build awareness of the benefits of parks, trails and recreation, along with encouraging residents to participate in improving their park system.

#### 6.2.5 Planning Area Description

The City of Covington is situated in King County, between the cities of Kent and Maple Valley and maintains a modest system of neighborhood and community parklands, along with providing an aquatic center and aquatics programming. Additionally, a significant number of small, private pocket parks and greenspaces have been added throughout the City as a result of significant new residential development over the past ten years.

Covington's landscape character includes rolling foothills divided by three major creek drainages: Soos Creek, Little Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek. These drainage courses and forested slopes are among some of Covington's most striking features. With the exception of the commercial town center, most of the community retains natural greenbelts, and the vegetation and topography of

these greenspaces offer a variety of recreational, aesthetic and educational opportunities which serve as the context for the Parks and Recreation Element.

### 6.3 Park System Definitions and Standards

This section provides information for adopted service standards and describes the following park classifications within the City:

- Community parks
- Neighborhood parks
- Pocket Parks
- Natural Areas & Greenspaces
- Trails & Bikeways
- Special Facilities

#### 6.3.1 Community Parks

Community parks are larger sites developed for organized play, contain a wider array of facilities and, as a result, appeal to a more diverse group of users. Community parks are generally 20 to 50 acres in size, should meet a minimum size of 20 acres when possible and serve residents within a 1-mile radius of the site. In areas without neighborhood parks, community parks can also serve as local neighborhood parks.

In general, community park facilities are designed for organized or intensive recreational activities and sports, although passive components such as pathways, picnic areas and natural areas are highly encouraged and complementary to active use facilities. Since community parks serve a larger area and offer more facilities than neighborhood parks, parking and restroom facilities are provided. Community parks may also incorporate community facilities, such as community centers, senior centers or aquatic facilities.

#### 6.3.2 Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are small park areas designed for unstructured play and limited active and passive recreation. They are generally 3 to 5 acres in size, depending on a variety of factors including neighborhood need, physical location and opportunity, and should meet a minimum size of 2 acre in size when possible.

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve residential areas within short walking distance (up to ½-mile radius) of the park and should

be geographically distributed throughout the community. Access is mostly pedestrian, and park sites should be located so that persons living within the service area will not have to cross a major arterial street or other significant natural or man-made barrier, such as ravines and railroad tracks, to get to the site. Additionally, these parks should be located along road frontages to improve visual access and community awareness of the sites.

Generally, developed neighborhood parks include amenities such as pedestrian paths, picnic tables, benches, play equipment, a multi-use open field for youth soccer and baseball, sport courts or multi-purpose paved areas, landscaping and irrigation. Restrooms are not provided due to high construction and maintenance costs. Parking is also not usually provided; however, on-street, ADA accessible parking may be included.

### **6.3.3 Pocket Parks**

Pocket parks are very small and serve a limited radius (up to ¼-mile) from the site; they provide passive and play-oriented recreational opportunities. Examples of pocket parks can include a tot lot with play equipment such as a climber, slide or swings; a viewpoint; or waterfront access areas such as at street ends. A small urban plaza or civic recognition project may also be considered a pocket park. Parking is not provided at pocket parks, although lighting may be used for security and safety.

### **6.3.4 Natural Areas & Greenspaces**

#### **Natural areas**

Natural areas are those which are preserved to maintain the natural character of the site and are managed to protect valuable ecological systems, such as riparian corridors and wetlands, and to preserve native habitat and biodiversity. In managing for their ecological value, these natural areas may contain a diversity of native vegetation that provides fish and wildlife habitat and embodies the beauty and character of the local landscape. Low-impact activities, such as walking, nature observation, and fishing are allowed, where appropriate, and horseback riding is also permitted on certain sites.

#### **Greenspaces**

Greenspaces are passive-use open spaces and turf areas without developed amenities or structured functions.

### 6.3.5 Trails & Bikeways

#### Trails

Trails are non-motorized transportation networks separated from roads. Trails can be developed to accommodate multiple uses or shared uses, such as pedestrians, in-line skaters, bicyclists and equestrians. Trail alignments aim to emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment and may not provide the most direct route from a practical transportation viewpoint.

#### Bikeways

Bikeways are different than trails in that they are within road rights-of-way and their principal focus is on safe and efficient transportation routes. Bikeways serve distinctly different user groups than trail users. Typical bikeway user groups would include bicycle commuters, fitness enthusiasts and competitive athletes. Their emphasis is on speed, which can create conflicts with recreation-type trails and their respective user groups.

### 6.3.6 Special Facilities

Special facilities include single-purpose recreational areas such as skateparks and display gardens, along with community centers, aquatic centers and public plazas in or near the downtown core. Additionally, publicly-accessible sport fields and play areas of public schools are classified as special facilities; while they often serve as proxies to public parks, school sites have restricted daytime access and offer limited recreational use during non-school hours.

### 6.3.7 Service Standards

Service standards for park facilities are one recognized method of expressing the quantity of recreation service provided for a given level of demand. It is represented as a ratio of quantity versus demand, and it is commonly expressed as a number of acres or miles of facilities per a given population, such as 3 acres of neighborhood park per every 1,000 people or 0.75 miles of trail per 1,000 people.

Table 6.1 shows the adopted service standards for parks and recreational facilities, including trails, in Covington. It is important to bear in mind that the suggested standards are an expression of minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of Covington. The service standards are a starting point for local level of service assessments. Only the four (4) service standards that will be

adopted for the purposes of funding in Chapter 10 (Capital Facilities Element) are presented in the section below.

**Table 6.1. Parks & Recreation Service Standards**

Classification	Size Guideline	Proximity Guideline	Service Standard
Community Parks	20-50 acres; 20-acre minimum desired	up to 1-mile radius	5 acres / 1,000
Neighborhood Parks	3-5 acres; 2-acre minimum desired	up to 1/2-mile radius	3 acres / 1,000
Pocket Parks	NA	up to 1/4-mile radius	
Natural Areas & Greenspace	NA	NA	6 acres / 1,000
Trails & Bikeways	NA	NA	0.75 miles / 1,000

*Neighborhood and pocket parks are combined for a service standard of 3 acres per 1,000 residents.*

## 6.4 Park Inventory and Facilities

This section provides a summary inventory and overview of Covington's existing public and private developed parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

Covington provides nearly 170 acres of public parkland and natural areas distributed among 24 city-owned sites. A number of other public and private open spaces exist throughout Covington and add to the City's recreation resources.

The major non-city, public open space is Soos Creek Park, a 731-acre regional park which partially lies within the western edge of the City's boundaries. This park forms a greenbelt that separates Covington from Kent and includes the Soos Creek Trail, a 1.4-mile multi-purpose trail with parallel equestrian trail. Lake Meridian Park, operated by the Kent Parks Department, is located immediately west of Soos Creek Park and is also heavily used by Covington residents.

Covington residents are also served by several small parks operated by homeowner associations as private parks. The largest privately-owned, publicly-accessible open space is Camp McCullough, a 38-acre Christian campground, located on the western shore of Pipe Lake.

Schools of the Kent and Tahoma School Districts provide additional open space and active recreation opportunities for area youth with athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts and playgrounds. Since the City does not own or operate any athletic

fields at the present, individual sports leagues work with each school district via use and maintenance agreements to facilitate practice and game play for local youth sport teams.

Table 6.2 summarizes the existing parks and facilities inventory by park type. The maps on the following pages (Figures 6.1 & 6.2) identify public parks, trails and natural areas managed by the City of Covington. A detailed inventory and assessment of existing parks, natural areas and recreational facilities is contained in the PROS Plan.

**Table 6.2. Park System Inventory by Type (Summary)**

Type	Number of Sites	Acreage
Community Parks	2	51.98
Neighborhood Parks	10	68.95
<i>Public, City-owned</i>	3	4.46
<i>Private</i>	7	64.49
Pocket Parks	11	5
<i>Public, City-owned</i>	1	0.39
<i>Private</i>	10	4.61
Natural Areas & Greenspace	30	182.4
<i>Public, City-owned</i>	16	109.75
<i>Private</i>	14	72.65
Special Facilities	3	39.56
<i>Public, City-owned</i>	2	1.41
<i>Private</i>	1	38.15
County	5	276.5
Schools	8	77.9
	<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>702.29</b>

**Figure 6.1. Existing City-owned Parks and Natural Areas**

[ Map to be inserted -- Page left intentionally blank ]

Back of Figure 6.1.

[ Page Left Intentionally Blank ]

**Figure 6.2. Existing Trails, Bikeways and Paths**

[ Map to be inserted -- Page left intentionally blank ]

**Back of Figure 6.2.**

[ Page Left Intentionally Blank ]

## 6.5 Needs Assessment

This section summarizes the core needs resulting from a review of the park system, community feedback and stakeholder input. A summary of level of service (LOS) measurements for park and trail facilities is also provided.

### 6.5.1 Parks & Natural Areas

A gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the current distribution of parks throughout the City. The analysis reviewed the locations and types of existing facilities, land use classifications, transportation/access barriers and other factors as a means to identify preliminary acquisition target areas. The gap analysis showed that much of the city lacks reasonable access to public parkland, with significant gaps in the west-central and eastern areas of the City. A total of nine potential acquisition areas were identified and discussed in more detail in the PROS Plan.

The greatest documented need is for additional community park sites to provide the land base for a blend of passive and active recreation opportunities, such as sport fields, picnicking and walking. The City should consider an acquisition along Pipe Lake to provide for these recreational needs and to also provide water access. Secondly, new neighborhood parks are needed to improve overall distribution and equity, while promoting recreation within walking distance of residential areas. Also, the need for an urban plaza in the downtown core was identified, as was the need for the acquisition of natural area to connect current City ownership south of Jenkins Creek Park.

Regarding park development, the planned construction of the Covington Community Park will provide needed recreation opportunities and improve the City's level of service. The redevelopment and renovation of Jenkins Creek Park as a second community park serving the City is also a noted priority. Although many Covington residents benefit from access to private, homeowner parks, the City should remain committed to developing additional neighborhood parks, especially for those residents not affiliated with private park amenities.

### 6.5.2 Sport Fields & Sport Courts

The City currently does not provide youth athletic programs, but it works in support of the various youth leagues and organizations with regard to field access and broad dialogue about long-term needs and facility planning. A significant deficit of sport fields

exists for local practice and game play, as well as for quality tournament play. To help address this need, the City should continue to facilitate discussions with area leagues and staff from Maple Valley and Black Diamond for the purposes of field planning and coordination, addressing geographic proximity of fields to the player base and for strategizing about long-term financing opportunities. In addition to the needs of the existing leagues, field demands exist for rugby, football and lacrosse which also should be considered.

Aside from field sport needs, a current deficiency and limited distribution of sport courts exist. School sites provide limited access to basketball courts, and no public tennis or volleyball courts exist within the City.

### **6.5.3 Trails**

Currently many of the existing bicycle and pedestrian trails are limited in length, and few connect to the regional trail network, schools, parks or other key destinations. The pathway system is further hindered by physical barriers, such as SR-18, which bisects the City. The PROS Plan identifies the development of several trail segments and corridors in an effort to create a robust trail network that provides logical connections to key destinations and are convenient for the community to use. In support of an expanded trail network, the City should continue to pursue the purchase or dedication of access easements or greenspace corridors to facilitate linkages with existing trail segments.

### **6.5.4 Recreation Facilities & Programming**

Community events, fitness programs and educational classes were ranked as the most desired programming options. While the City participates in Covington Days and other community events, such as the tree lighting and run/walk events, the City should consider incremental growth in recreation services to focus on programs not currently offered by local or regional providers, such as health and fitness education for youth and fall prevention programs for seniors. As the City considers offering more events, it should seek to share costs with private sponsors and develop a series of seasonal activities.

Past discussions regarding the development of a community recreation center were also reviewed in light of current community attitudes and potential operational challenges. One option includes the expansion of the Covington Aquatic Center. While this center can accommodate a second story for a fitness room, it would not

be large enough to accommodate extensive recreation programming or a teen center.

Recent discussions by city officials have expanded the concept of a recreation center to discuss the potential of a multi-jurisdictional facility to support residents of Covington, Maple Valley and Black Diamond. Such a facility would be jointly funded by the cities and/or require voter support from the wider area. Given the interest in recreation facility space for programming, it is recommended that an additional review of alternatives for providing recreation center “services” be performed, while addressing the initial financial considerations, understanding and modeling user demand and analyzing options for facility and program cost recovery.

### **6.5.5 Repair, Renovation & Safety Projects**

A major theme from community planning process for the PROS Plan was that the maintenance and upkeep of public parklands is paramount to residents’ use and enjoyment of the facilities. Covington residents are keenly interested in the renovation of their parks and natural areas system. The desire for better and more consistent maintenance of parks and facilities, along with a variety of suggestions for specific site upgrades and enhancements suggests that the City’s park system must improve its facilities to establish the respect and patronage of its citizens. Several renovation projects are noted in the Capital Facilities Plan, with special attention toward improvements at Jenkins Creek Park.

### **6.5.6 Level of Service Assessment**

A level of service (LOS) assessment was conducted as a means to understand the distribution of parkland acreage and trails by classification and for a broader measure of how well the City is serving its residents with access to these recreation amenities. Using the service standards discussed above, Table 6.3 illustrates the current and projected levels of service for parkland, natural areas and trails for Covington.

**Table 6.3: Current & Projected Levels of Service by Park Classification**

Facility Type	Service Standard	Existing Inventory	Current Surplus / (Deficit)	Projected Surplus / (Deficit) (2020) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Parks:</b>		<i>acres</i>	<i>acres</i>	<i>acres</i>
Community	5 acres / 1,000	39.7 ac.	(36.9) ac.	(49.7) ac.
Neighborhood & Pocket	3 acres / 1,000	52.0 ac.	(13.6) ac.	(21.3) ac.
Natural Areas & Greenspace	6 acres / 1,000	109.8 ac.	3.0 ac.	(12.3) ac.
<b>Trails:</b>		<i>miles</i>	<i>miles</i>	<i>miles</i>
Trails	0.75 miles / 1,000	4.7 mi.	(8.6) mi.	(10.6) mi.
Bikeways	0.75 miles / 1,000	7.1 mi.	(6.3) mi.	(8.2) mi.

<sup>1</sup> Assumes growth projection between current population of 17,785 and 2020 population of 20,335.

The current level of service for community parks is 2.9 acres per 1,000 residents, which includes the undeveloped properties of the Covington Community Park and Jenkins Creek. The current deficit of 37 acres is expected to grow to approximately 50 acres by 2020. A small current deficit exists for neighborhood parks, which is expected to grow to approximately 20 acres. The current level of service for natural areas is meeting the standard, but it is also expected turn to a deficit in the coming 10 years.

The current level of service indicates a deficiency of over 8 miles of pathways and over 6 miles of bikeways; however, the pathway system expansion projects listed in the Capital Facilities Plan will help ameliorate some of this projected deficit and create a dynamic network of on-street and off-street pathways linking major destinations throughout Covington.

## 6.6 Goals and Policies

The following section presents the goals and policy statements that have been developed through the community planning process for the PROS Plan. These statements have been derived by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the existing park system; input of Covington residents’ responses to the Parks Survey; review and feedback from the Parks and Recreation Commission; national and local recreation trends and issues; and from identifying opportunities for strategic progress during the next 5 to 10 years.

### 6.6.1 Community Engagement

PRG 1.0 Encourage meaningful public involvement in park and recreation planning and engage residents through department communications.

- PRP 1.1 Involve residents and stakeholders in system planning, park site facility design and recreation program development to solicit community input, facilitate project understanding and engender public support.*
- PRP 1.2 Use a variety of methods and media to increase resident awareness about Parks and Recreation Department activities via community events, interpretive tours, presentations to neighborhood, homeowner and civic groups and other venues.*
- PRP 1.3 Expand and update the city's web site to enhance citizen communication, expand access to information and improve public outreach and marketing.*
- PRP 1.4 Prepare and publish a comprehensive park and trail facilities map for online and print distribution to highlight existing and proposed routes and promoting Covington as an active-lifestyles community.*
- PRP 1.5 Host special events, festivals, concerts and cultural programming to promote wellness and community identity, foster civic pride and promote tourism and the benefits of recreation.*
- PRP 1.6 Expand community-based volunteer and stewardship development and improvements opportunities, such as planting and restoration activities, in conformance to established City standards.*
- PRP 1.7 Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Commission, City Council and other commissions to improve coordination and discuss policy matters of mutual interest.*

### **6.6.2 Health, Wellness & Programming**

- PRG 2.0 Establish a varied and inclusive suite of recreation programs that accommodate a spectrum of ages, interests and abilities.

- PRP 2.1 Leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver recreation services and secure access to existing facilities (e.g. schools) for field sports and other community recreation.*
- PRP 2.2 Emphasize service provision to children, teens, seniors, people with disabilities and other population groups with limited access to market-based recreation options.*
- PRP 2.3 Explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services, such as MultiCare, Valley Medical Center and the King County Health Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.*
- PRP 2.4 Promote and expand special events and programming, such as summer programs and environmental education. Utilize the region's parks, trails, waterfronts and recreation facilities as settings to provide and/or facilitate a wider array programs and activities.*
- PRP 2.5 Continue to foster the partnership with the Kent and Tahoma School Districts to utilize school sites to provide active recreation facilities. Explore opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools.*
- PRP 2.6 Explore options with Maple Valley, Black Diamond and King County for the development of a joint community facility for recreation, fitness and leisure activities.*
- PRP 2.7 Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.*

*PRP 2.8 Study and create cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.*

*PRP 2.9 Coordinate with the Covington Art Commission to encourage participation in, appreciation of and education in the arts and to improve the capacity of local arts agencies in providing art programs that benefit community residents.*

### **6.6.3 Parks, Natural Areas & Trails**

**PRG 3.0** Acquire and develop a high-quality, diversified system of parks, recreation facilities and open spaces that is attractive, functional, accessible and safe – providing equitable access to all residents.

*PRP 3.1 All city residents should live within one-half mile of a developed neighborhood park and one mile of a developed community park.*

*PRP 3.2 Provide a combined service standard of 8 acres per 1,000 resident-equivalents of developed neighborhood and community parks.*

*PRP 3.3 Provide an overall parks and natural areas service standard of 14 acres per 1,000 resident-equivalents.*

*PRP 3.4 Preserve and protect parks and open space within Covington’s boundaries. Prepare and adopt a “no net loss” of public parks policy, such that the City will consider parkland losses only when converted parkland is replaced in equal to or better size and/or quality.*

*PRP 3.5 Designate parks, recreational areas, trails and natural areas to be of local or regional significance if they contain significant recreation or cultural opportunities or facilities, unusual or special botanical resources, environmentally sensitive areas that serve a significant role or provide a significant function in the natural systems within the City, or public art and are*

*associated in a significant way with an historic event, structure or person with a significant effect upon the City, state or nation.*

*PRP 3.6 Adopt plans, development and building regulations, and review procedures to protect locally or regionally significant parks, urban separators, and recreation and open space areas from adverse physical and environmental impacts caused by incompatible land uses in the vicinity of these resources.*

*PRP 3.7 Develop and implement minimum design and development standards for park and recreation amenities within private developments to maintain minimally-acceptable standards of development and to address community facility needs, equipment types, accessibility and installation procedures.*

*PRP 3.8 Identify and protect areas of local or regional significance and increase and enhance public access to shoreline areas.*

*PRP 3.9 Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to preserve open space and greenbelts, including the use of conservation easements, current use assessment and development covenants.*

*PRP 3.10 Actively plan and coordinate with King County, Kent, Black Diamond and Maple Valley for the acquisition of parks and open space within or in close proximity to the urban growth area.*

*PRP 3.11 Encourage and support the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations, which offer options and alternatives to development in the interest of preserving desirable lands as a public benefit.*

*PRP 3.12 Encourage large residential and mixed-use developments to include publicly accessible gathering spaces to serve as neighborhood focal points and event venues.*

PRG 4.0 Protect and manage the City's environmentally-sensitive lands, remnant open spaces and natural and cultural resources to highlight their uniqueness and local history.

*PRP 4.1 Retain as open space those areas having a unique combination of open space values, including the separation or buffering between incompatible land uses; visual delineation of the City or a distinct area or neighborhood of the City; aquifer recharge areas; floodwater or stormwater storage; stormwater purification; recreational value; aesthetic value; and educational value.*

*PRP 4.2 Retain and protect as open space those areas that provide habitat for rare, threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species, may serve as a corridor for wildlife movement, and may include and encourage public use for wildlife interpretation and observation.*

*PRP 4.3 Develop management plans for the City's larger natural areas and greenspaces and facilitate community-based volunteer restoration. Plan for and manage the use of natural areas in coordination with the City's Critical Areas Ordinance and other resource protection guidelines.*

*PRP 4.4 Manage vegetation in natural areas to support or maintain native plant species, habitat function and other ecological values; remove and control non-native or invasive plants as appropriate.*

*PRP 4.5 Coordinate with King County, Kent, Black Diamond and Maple Valley to explore opportunities to preserve and enhance the ecological function, habitat quality and*

*recreational value of the Soos Creek, Little Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek corridors.*

- PRP 4.6 Coordinate with other public agencies and private landowners for the protection of valuable natural resources and sensitive lands through the purchase of development rights, easements or title and make these lands available for passive recreation, as appropriate.*
- PRP 4.7 Recognize that designating private property for open space uses does not establish or promote any public access rights to such property.*
- PRP 4.8 Revise and adopt the draft Covington Community Forestry Plan to articulate a long-term strategy for tree protection, urban forestry management and public education and outreach.*
- PRP 4.9 Consider creating community-based volunteer and stewardship opportunities as a ways to inform and engage residents about urban forestry issues, such as tree planting, tree care and management and the benefits of urban trees.*
- PRP 4.10 Analyze the City's existing tree canopy cover, establish canopy cover goals and promote urban forestry programs in order to maintain healthy atmospheric conditions.*
- PRP 4.11 Establish and promote a recognition program for the City's Heritage Trees.*
- PRP 4.12 Comply with the Evergreen Communities Act (RCW 35.105) and obtain and maintain Evergreen Community status.*
- PRP 4.13 Maintain Tree City USA status.*
- PRP 4.14 Promote the installation and management of street trees as an extension of urban habitat and providing green infrastructure benefits.*

*PRP 4.15 Where feasible, encourage use of wetland buffers, stream buffers, and habitat corridors for passive recreational use, such as wildlife viewing and trails, provided that such uses would not have a negative impact upon the protected natural resources.*

*PRP 4.16 In the Hawk Property Subarea, develop park and greenspace areas as both publicly accessible recreational and habitat amenities.*

PRG 5.0 Develop a high-quality system of shared-use park trails and bicycle & pedestrian corridors that connect significant local landscapes, public facilities, neighborhoods and the downtown core.

*PRP 5.1 Create a network of interconnected, shared-use trails for walking, hiking and cycling to promote connectivity between parks, neighborhoods and public amenities.*

*PRP 5.2 Provide a trails service standard of 0.75 miles per 1,000 resident-equivalents.*

*PRP 5.3 Integrate the siting of proposed trail segments into the development review process. Require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate the trail as part of the project.*

*PRP 5.4 Work with local agencies, utilities and private landholders to secure trail easements and access to greenspace for trail connections.*

*PRP 5.5 Require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate the trail as part of the project. Sensitive area buffers within proposed subdivisions and short-subdivisions shall be widened to accommodate additional open space and a public easement for future trails.*

*PRP 5.6 Designate publicly-owned trails and City-dedicated easements on private lands as*

*community trails and manage the use, maintenance and operation of each trail accordingly.*

*PRP 5.7 Coordinate with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad for a potential rail-with-trail opportunity.*

*PRP 5.8 Coordinate with King County, Kent, Black Diamond and Maple Valley for the joint planning, development and maintenance of a regional pedestrian-bicycle trail system, to include linkages to the Soos Creek Trail, Lake Wilderness Trail, Cedar River Trail and the proposed SR-18 Trail.*

*PRP 5.9 Address pedestrian safety and access across Kent-Kangley Road, SR-18 and the railroad tracks.*

*PRP 5.10 Provide trailhead accommodations, as appropriate, to include parking, wayfinding signage, restrooms and other amenities.*

*PRP 5.11 In the Hawk Property Subarea create a trail network that connects to the surrounding neighborhoods and regional trail system. At the time of commercial or residential development, trail connections and on-site segments of regional trails should be provided connecting development to surrounding neighborhoods.*

*PRP 5.12 Development of all or part of the regional trail system within or adjacent to the Hawk Property Subarea shall be phased as commercial and/or residential development occurs and shall be connected to other trails to provide continuous pedestrian routes.*

*PRP 5.13 In the Hawk Property Subarea create a walkable and safe community with an integrated system of sidewalks and trails. Non-motorized connections should be provided to increase pedestrian safety and reduce overall vehicle trips.*

### 6.6.4 Concurrency

PRG 6.0 Ensure that new park and recreational services are provided concurrent with new development.

*PRP 6.1 New development shall provide funds or parkland for concurrent park development and maintenance.*

*PRP 6.2 Require on-site (or nearby off-site) development of recreation facilities or appropriate and usable parkland in conjunction with the approval of any development project involving more than 20 new dwelling units. The development of recreational amenities shall conform to the City's minimum guidelines and the general needs outlined in this Plan. Fees in lieu of development may be accepted by the City if such mitigation is not practicable.*

*PRP 6.3 Mixed use development involving more than 20 new dwelling units in the downtown area shall be exempted from the requirement to develop on-site park, recreation or open space facilities. Instead, upon approval by the City, in lieu of fees may be accepted for such mixed-use developments, to be spent on designated park, recreation or open space resources within the City that serve the development.*

*PRP 6.4 New commercial development shall be responsible for financing and providing downtown amenities such as parks, open spaces and public art.*

### 6.6.5 Management & Operations

PRG 7.0 Provide a parks, trails and open space system that is efficient to administer and operate, while providing a high level of user comfort, safety, aesthetic quality and protection of capital investment.

*PRP 7.1 Provide sufficient financial and staff resources to maintain the overall parks system to high standards.*

- PRP 7.2 Maintain all parks and facilities in a manner that keeps them in safe and attractive condition; repair or remove damaged components immediately upon identification.*
- PRP 7.3 When developing new facilities or redeveloping existing facilities, review and consider the projected maintenance and operations costs prior to initiating design development. Emphasize the maintenance, enhancement and renovation of existing parks prior to the development of new facilities.*
- PRP 7.4 Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each city park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.*
- PRP 7.5 Design and maintain parks, trails and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age. All facilities shall conform to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and requirements.*
- PRP 7.6 Incorporate sustainable development and low impact design practices into the design, planning and rehabilitation of new and existing facilities. Prepare sustainability best management practices for grounds maintenance and operations. Consider the use of non-invasive, native vegetation for landscaping in parks and natural areas to minimize maintenance requirements and promote wildlife habitat and foraging.*
- PRP 7.7 Standardize the use of graphics and signage to establish a consistent identity at all parks, trailheads and other facilities.*
- PRP 7.8 Standardize park furniture (trash cans, tables, benches, fencing, water fountains) to reduce inventory costs and improve appearance of, and maintenance consistency within, parks.*

- PRP 7.9 Coordinate park planning, acquisition and development with other City projects and programs that implement the comprehensive plan. Seek partnerships with other public agencies and the private sector to meet the demand for cultural and recreational facilities in the City.*
- PRP 7.10 Encourage volunteer park improvement and maintenance projects from a variety of individuals, service clubs, scouting organizations, churches and businesses.*
- PRP 7.11 Periodically evaluate user satisfaction and numerical use of parks, facilities and programs; share this information with staff, Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council as part of the decision making process to revise offerings or renovate facilities.*
- PRP 7.12 Pursue alternative funding options for the acquisition and development of parks and facilities, such as through private donation, sponsorships, partnerships, county, state and federal grant sources, among others. Place priority on maximizing grants and other external sources of funding, or inter-agency cooperative arrangements, to develop the City's park resources.*
- PRP 7.13 Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Commission members and key volunteers, to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) and the Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA).*

## 6.7 Implementation

The PROS Plan summarizes information found elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan that is required as basic elements of a capital facilities plan under the GMA, including the inventory of existing facilities and a forecast of future needs. In addition, a table listing

proposed new facilities with estimated acquisition and development costs can be found in the PROS Plan CIP. Additionally, park and recreation facilities are included in the Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 10).

The total amount of funding to support the documented community demand for parks and recreation services exceeds the City's current financial capacity. Since park projects and recreation services must compete for funds with many other vital City functions and services, the proposed park and trail capital improvement projects identified in the PROS Plan were prioritized according to high, medium and low priorities, in consideration of an analysis of the community's needs, population and geographic distribution, project opportunities and potential funding. The PROS Plan also addresses various sources of park and recreation funding that are available to the City of Covington. Some of these sources are limited to particular types of projects or programs, while others are more general and may be applied to most any park project.

A number of strategies exist to improve service delivery for the Covington Parks and Recreation Department; however, clear decisions must be made in an environment of competing interests and limited resources. A strong community will is necessary to bring many of the projects listed in the PROS Plan to fruition. Given the current operating and capital budgets for the Department, general fund and grants alone will be unable to support both land acquisition and development for the highest priority projects, and a future bond, levy and/or special assessment backed by the support of local voters may be necessary.

### **6.7.1 Capital Facilities Planning**

The Capital Facilities Element summarizes information, provided in more detail in the PROS Plan, regarding the proposed park and trail facilities for Covington's 6-year capital improvement projects. Figure 6.3 illustrates the locations of the capital improvement plan projects identified in the PROS Plan.

**Figure 6.3. Parks and Recreation Capital Improvements Plan Map**

[ Map to be inserted -- Page left intentionally blank ]

**Back of Figure 6.3.**

[ Page Left Intentionally Blank ]

# 7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

## 7.1 Introduction

The aim of the Environmental Element is to identify, designate and protect the quality of the natural environment to improve the quality of life for Covington residents. In order to balance the need for development with the requirements for wildlife native to the area, the City must adopt land use and implement maintenance protocols consistent with this goal. Recent listing of Chinook salmon as “threatened” under the ESA will, in large part, direct the form of several efforts, through WRIA 9, watershed and other activities.

## 7.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Environmental Element of the Comprehensive Plan is to articulate the community’s commitment to the stewardship of natural resources, and to provide a basis of information upon which to write regulations to guide City decisions that affect the natural environment. The City of Covington recognizes that the natural environment is a complex system of inter-related components including air, water, soils, plants, and animals. All of these systems are affected by human activity. The value of this understanding is to ensure that the relationship between Covington residents and the natural environment is a mutually supportive one, balancing competing objectives to the maximum extent possible.

## 7.3 Planning Context

### 7.3.1 Growth Management Act

The State GMA contains the following goal:

to “... protect the environment and to enhance the state’s high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.”

To implement this goal, the GMA contains specific requirements for the designation and protection of “critical areas,” defined by the GMA as wetlands, areas with recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas. The

GMA requires jurisdictions to identify critical areas and adopt regulations to protect those areas.

In 1995, the state Legislature updated the Act to require jurisdictions to review and, if needed, revise their critical areas policies and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.172).

Specific requirements of the 1995 update require jurisdictions to:

- Incorporate the Best Available Science when developing policies and regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas; and
- Give special consideration to conservation or protection measures to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

Rules found in WAC 365-195-900 through 925 provide guidance for jurisdictions in identifying and including Best Available Science in updating policies and demonstrating that “special consideration” has been given to anadromous fisheries (including salmon).

### **7.3.2 Near-Term Action Agenda for Salmon Habitat Conservation (WRIA 9)**

In May 2002, the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Water Resource Inventory Area 9 (WRIA 9) Steering Committee produced a document titled Near-Term Action Agenda for Salmon Habitat Conservation (NTAA). The NTAA recommends projects, policies, and programs for WRIA 9 that have a high potential for benefiting salmon. Actions are focused on Chinook salmon and bull trout, which were listed as threatened under the federal ESA in 1999 (see separate discussion of the ESA in Section 7.3.3). Its recommendations are based on the scientific foundation of the WRIA 9 Habitat Limiting Factors and Reconnaissance Assessment Report, produced in December 2000.

The NTAA provides guidance for salmon habitat conservation in the WRIA 9 watershed and is intended to be used by local jurisdictions in setting resource protection priorities over the next 2 to 4 years. The City of Covington adopted the NTAA by reference in this Comprehensive Plan; therefore, the goals and policies set forth in the NTAA are considered a component of the Environmental Element. Furthermore, by adopting by reference this document, the City of Covington meets GMA requirements to identify and include Best Available Science in updating policies and demonstrating that “special consideration” has been given to anadromous fisheries.

### 7.3.3 Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The ESA was adopted in 1973 in an effort to protect rare species of plants and animals from the threat of extinction. In March of 1999, the NMFS declared the Puget Sound Chinook Salmon “threatened” under the authority of the ESA. This designation will require that private and government entities throughout the Puget Sound Region modify the way in which they conduct business to promote survival and recovery of Chinook salmon. The City of Covington lies within the Duwamish River Basin in WRIA 9. Big Soos Creek and Covington Creek, which flow through the City, provide habitat for Chinook and coho salmon. Jenkins Creek provides habitat for coho salmon. These waters also provide habitat for chum salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout. Streams within the City of Covington that do not directly provide spawning or rearing habitat for Chinook, do provide instream flows for the larger streams. Therefore, it is important for the City to protect water quality and flows in these streams, as well.

Three recommended approaches for compliance with the ESA are listed below:

1. For actions that involve funding, permitting or approval by a federal agency, Section 7 of the ESA requires intergovernmental consultation with the agency responsible for recovery of a listed species; in the case of Chinook salmon, the NMFS. These consultations generally lead to the development of a “biological opinion” discussing the Agency’s concerns in regard to potential impacts to listed species and any mitigation measures required to minimize these impacts. They can also lead to denial of a project, if unavoidable impacts to listed species would be too severe.
2. Private or government entities concerned about their liability for “take” of listed species under Section 9 of the ESA can develop Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP’s), which describe in detail the steps the entity will take during the course of its day to day operations to minimize “incidental take” of listed species. Habitat Conservation Plans are developed in cooperation with the federal agency responsible for protection of the listed species. Once a Habitat Conservation Plan is approved by the federal services, an “Incidental Take Permit” is issued. These permits allow a specified amount of “take” of a listed species under specific circumstances. They contain detailed requirements for reporting of take on a regular basis. The City of Covington’s small size and relatively recent incorporation would probably preclude development of a Habitat Conservation Plan at this time. The City may, however

wish to incorporate certain aspects of HCPs produced by neighboring governmental entities and corporations in development of regulations designed to comply with Section 4(d) of the ESA.

3. Under Section 4(d) of the ESA, the listing agency is required to propose and publish rules that will aid private citizens, corporations and local governments in development of protocols for the execution of their usual and accustomed activities while promoting preservation and recovery of the listed species. In the case of the City of Covington, these protocols would be developed for land-use decisions, maintenance of roads, water, sewer and drainage facilities, and protection of the stream corridors on Big Soos, Covington and Jenkins Creeks.

King County is a member of a Tri-County Group (with Snohomish and Pierce Counties), that is working with NMFS on the 4(d) rule for Chinook salmon. A proposed 4(d) rule was published by NMFS in the Federal Register in early January. The final rule should be promulgated by the end of June 2000.

King County is investigating a wide range of land-use and management options for compliance with the 4(d) Rules. The City of Covington will elect to maintain and fund programs for which it presently is responsible. Responsibility and funding for activities that will affect the entire watershed would be pooled with neighboring jurisdictions, and the City will contribute information and resources as necessary. Regional planning and conservation principals will be developed on the Tri County level. Participation in WRIA 9 planning will be a pooled responsibility with contributions from the City. King County, or another watershed-wide entity, should be responsible for preparation and submission of complete WRIA plans to NMFS.

#### **7.4 Critical Areas Inventory**

This section is divided into the following categories for purposes of discussion and mapping: the natural water system (watersheds, sub-basins, lakes and wetlands, streams and floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas); soils and topography (including geologic hazard areas); and plants and animals (including wildlife habitat).

The critical areas located in the City of Covington include streams and wetlands, erosion hazard areas, and aquifer recharge areas which underlay most of the City. Flood plains, landslide areas, erosion and seismic hazard areas are generally associated with Big Soos Creek and Little Soos Creek. According to the Tahoma Raven Heights and Soos Creek Communities Plan, sensitive areas

that are of significant concern in the Covington area and surrounding communities are stream corridors, flood hazard areas, aquifer recharge areas, and wildlife habitats.

#### **7.4.1 Natural Water System**

The natural water system in Covington, as shown in Figure 7.1, exists primarily within the Green River watershed. Watersheds are comprised of sub-basins, wetlands, lakes, and a dynamic exchange between the surface and ground water flows. Covington is located within the sub-basins associated with Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek. The primary sources of water for Covington's lakes and wetlands is direct precipitation, surface water runoff, flows from rivers and streams, and subsurface flows of groundwater. The water leaves wetlands and lakes primarily through direct evaporation, surface outflows, and seepage into groundwater.

Protection of the water system is important for many reasons, including protection of drinking water, as well as flood control and habitat protection. The source of Covington's drinking water has historically been groundwater. The benefits of watershed protection are discussed below.

#### **Watersheds**

Covington rests in the 25 square mile combined Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek Basins. The larger eastern half of the City of Covington, including a majority of the proposed downtown area is located in the Jenkins Creek Basin. It drains in a southwesterly direction into tributaries of Big Soos Creek, which originates in the northeast corner of the glacially molded upland known as the Covington Drift Plain, then joins the Green River east of Auburn. The west portion of the City north of SR 18 is mostly located within the Soos Creek Basin.

#### **Lakes and Wetlands**

Covington's lakes and wetlands and associated riparian areas, shown in Figure 7.2, perform valuable functions within Covington's ecosystem. They receive surface water from the surrounding area and filter pollutants entering the system by a combination of physical, chemical and biological processes. They also provide drainage, flood storage, and wildlife habitat. The historic practice of clearing of vegetation in wetlands, or grading, filling, draining, and other land development activities, has, in some cases, destroyed the wetlands and streams, or in other cases decreased their ability to provide these important functions.

Pursuant to Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers defines wetlands as follows:

“those areas that are inundated or saturated by ground or surface water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Where the vegetation has been removed or substantially altered, a wetland shall be determined by the presence or evidence of hydric or organic soil, or by documentation, such as aerial photographs, of the previous existence of wetland vegetation.”

Wetlands in Covington were mapped as part of the King County Wetlands inventory, and can be found in the King County Sensitive Areas Map Folio. This inventory focused on the larger wetlands of the County. In 2002, an inventory of wetland and stream resources within the City limits was completed. Thirty-two wetland areas were identified.

Most wetlands in Covington are generally associated with major streams and tributaries, and Pipe Lake. The larger wetland areas occur along Big Soos Creek on the west side of the City, along Jenkins Creek adjacent to Wax Road just south of Kent-Kangley, and along the upper portions of Jenkins Creek in the north part of the City. Pipe Lake is 52-acre lake with a shoreline wetland and is the only lake located within the current City limits. A portion of Pipe Lake is located in the City of Covington, with the balance located in the City of Maple Valley. The lake has a mean depth of 27 feet and a maximum depth of 65 feet. It does have one small easement for public access, and is currently not managed for any particular species, except for hydrilla control program.

### **Streams**

Streams in Covington, as shown in Figure 7.2, are regulated by the CDC, Chapter 21A.24, Environmentally Sensitive Areas. This chapter defines and classifies streams and sets forth buffer widths and development standards for streams as follows:

- Class 1 streams are those inventoried as “Shorelines of the State” under King County’s Shorelines Management Master Program. They usually require a 100-foot buffer of vegetation as measured from the ordinary high water mark.
- Class 2 streams are those smaller than Class 1 streams that flow year-round during years of normal rainfall or those

Figure 7.1

**Back of Figure 7.1**

Figure 7.2

**Back of Figure 7.2**

that are used by salmonids. Class 2 streams with salmonids usually require a 100-foot buffer of vegetation as measured from the ordinary high water mark. Class 2 streams without salmonids usually require a 50-foot buffer.

- Class 3 streams are those that are intermittent or ephemeral during years of normal rainfall and are not used by salmonids. Class 3 streams usually require a 25-foot buffer of vegetation as measured from the ordinary high water mark.
- Unclassified streams are those for which a water course has been identified but for which the defining characteristics of a Class 1, 2 or 3 stream have not been determined. Further study is necessary to classify these streams.

The Green River is a Class 1 stream located several miles south of Covington, connected to many of Covington's streams through Jenkins Creek and the Soos Creeks. The Green River has some of the best water quality in all of Puget Sound. The streams in Covington that feed into the Green River are listed and described below.

**Jenkins Creek:** portions are classified as a state shoreline and thus meet the criteria for Class 1 streams; the remaining segments meet the criteria for Class 2 streams due to their perennial nature and presence of salmonids. Portions of Jenkins Creek were "daylighted" through the King County Surface Water Management Program.

**Big Soos Creek:** portions south of SR 18 to the Green River are classified as a state shoreline and thus meet the criteria for Class 1 streams; the remaining segments meet the criteria for Class 2 streams due to their perennial nature and presence of salmonids. A portion of this creek was also "daylighted" by King County.

**Little Soos Creek:** is classified as a Class 2 stream with salmonids north of SR 18.

Most of the streams in the Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek sub-basins have relatively good water quality. Only localized water quality degradation has been observed, such as high fecal coliform levels in some small creeks, and concentrated nutrient levels in Pipe Lake. However, as one of the fastest developing areas in the Green River Basin, Covington is beginning to see the surface water effects of development. These effects are mainly in the form of increased stormwater runoff, but also include flooding, erosion, sedimentation, destruction of fish habitat and water quality degradation. These problems are caused by many types of development action, (e.g., filling or siting development in

wetlands, stream channelizations, loss of forested stream corridors, fish passage barriers, dewatering, and high flows and sediment movement). The long term effects of surface water problems include rising pollutant levels that can pollute domestic water supply wells (especially in areas with coarse gravelly soils). Under these conditions, the use of streams for water supply, fish habitat and recreation becomes less possible in the future.

### **Flood Plains**

As shown in Figure 7.3, the 100-year flood plains in the City as mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) occur along Big Soos Creek, Little Soos Creek, and the southern reaches of Jenkins Creek. During significant storm events, the creeks can overflow their banks and spread out into adjacent lands. Water overflows the streams' banks and enters wetland soils which act like groundwater reservoirs, storing surplus water as groundwater during wet periods and discharging this stored water into streams later to augment base stream flows.

### **Aquifer Recharge Areas**

Aquifer recharge areas, shown in Figure 7.4, are surface portions of the land that have high soil permeability and permit the percolation of rainwater into subsurface saturated zones, or aquifers. The aquifer recharge areas that are of concern are those "areas highly susceptible to groundwater contamination," as mapped by King County. The aquifers affected by these recharge areas are one of the sources of drinking water in Covington and surrounding communities. In the last decade, development in the Cedar River Basin, for example, is estimated to have reduced groundwater recharge by 5 to 10 percent. It is likely that a similar condition exists in the drainage basins within and around the City.

The aquifer recharge areas in Covington cover basically the entire City. These areas are characterized by highly pervious glacial soils which drain rapidly into the underlying water-bearing soil layers. The recharge areas are classified as either High Recharge or Medium Recharge areas. The High Recharge areas cover the majority of the City's area. The Medium Recharge areas occur around SE 256th Street in the west portion of the City and adjacent to Pipe Lake on the east. Care must be taken to ensure future site development mitigates the potential for pollutant infiltration into the underlying aquifer.

The major concern with recharge areas is maintaining the appropriate density and type or intensity of development that would not threaten groundwater (e.g., generators of hazardous waste, etc.). For example, the Covington Water District has a well

**Figure 7.3**

**Back of Figure 7.3**

Figure 7.4

Back of Figure 7.4

head located adjacent to the regional electrical substation near the intersection of Covington Way SE and SE Wax Road. The entire area of downtown and the adjacent industrial lands in the south end of the City all occur above an area of High Recharge.

#### **7.4.2 Soils and Topography**

Soils and topography are important source of information for determining the degree to which an area is susceptible to geologic hazards. Geologic hazards include erosion hazard areas, landslide hazard areas, and seismic hazard areas. Steep slopes coupled with certain soils and drainage characteristics indicate potential areas of landslides and other geologic instability.

##### **Soils**

The geology of the area is largely the result of prehistoric glacial activity and subsequent lee retreats. The United States Department of Agriculture and the Soil Survey of King County, mapped and analyzed the soils in the area. The most common soil type in the area is known as the Alderwood series, which includes moderately well drained gravely sandy loams that are 24 to 40 inches deep over consolidated glacial till. The next most common type, is the Everett series. Everett soils are gravely and are underlain by sand and gravel. In certain areas, principally basins and lowlands, organic materials, including peat, can occur in depths up to ten feet.

##### **Geologic Hazard Areas**

The City of Covington has gently rolling terrain, with a few areas prone to erosion located in the west portion of the City. Most of the geologic hazard areas are located along Big Soos Creek. Topographic features are shown in Figure 7.5.

Landslide Hazard Areas. Landslide hazard areas within the City of Covington are shown in Figure 7.6. Landslide hazard areas are generally those areas subject to a severe risk of landslide, due to a combination of factors, including:

1. Any area with a combination of:
  - a. slopes 15 percent or greater
  - b. impermeable subsurface material (typically silt and clay), frequently interbedded with granular soils (predominantly sand and gravel)
  - c. presence of springs or seeping groundwater during the wet season.

2. Steep slopes of 40 percent or greater.
3. Any areas located on a landslide feature that has shown movement during the past 10,000 years or which is underlain by mass wastage debris.

Landslide hazard areas in Covington roughly correspond to the erosion hazard areas discussed above.

**Erosion Hazard Areas.** Erosion hazard areas within the City of Covington are shown in Figure 7.7. Erosion hazard areas are those areas containing soils which have historically led to a severe, or very severe, erosion hazard. Erosion Hazard Areas are found in the northwest corner of the City and are associated with some extreme topography along Big Soos Creek. It is recommended that development in these areas be either clustered, at low density, or avoided.

**Seismic Hazard Areas.** Seismic hazard areas within the City of Covington are shown in Figure 7.8. Seismic hazard areas are those areas subject to severe risk of earthquake damage as a result of seismically induced settlement or soil liquefaction. These conditions occur in areas underlain by “cohesionless” soils of low density, usually in association with a shallow groundwater table.

The seismic hazard areas in Covington run along the entire length of Big Soos Creek as it passes through the City.

### **7.4.3 Plants and Animals**

#### **Plant Life**

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

#### **Fish and Wildlife**

Covington has a wide variety of fish in its waters. The Green River, and many of its tributaries, contain salmon that have just recently been listed as endangered. Most common small fur animals can found in Covington, including opossum, skunk, cottontail rabbit and pheasant. Along the waterways, beaver, river otter, raccoon, and muskrat are not uncommon.

**Figure 7.5**

Back of Figure 7.5

Figure 7.6

Back of Figure 7.6

Figure 7.7

**Back of Figure 7.7**

Figure 7.8

**Back of Figure 7.8**

#### 7.4.4 Potentially Constrained Lands

There is a significant amount of land within Covington's UGA that is potentially unsuitable for future development. It is important to understand how potential development constraints may impact future growth and development patterns. This Comprehensive Plan defines Potentially Constrained Lands as the geographic union of floodplains, wetlands and associated buffers, stream buffers, landslide hazard areas, seismic hazard areas, erosion hazard areas, power line easements, and gas line easements. Potentially Constrained Lands within the City of Covington are shown in Figure 7.9. Approximately 800 acres (or 21 percent) of Covington's UGA are potentially constrained. Potentially Constrained Lands are only intended for a generalized analysis of impediments to future development, and are not intended to be a mapped area where development may not occur.

#### 7.4.5 Opportunities

King County offers surface water management advice, training, technical assistance and grant sponsorship to help communities monitor and manage lakes in King County. For example, surface water runoff and pollution can be maintained by establishing buffers of filtering native plants around lakes' shorelines and along banks of inflowing streams. Plants also prevent shoreline erosion, and improve fish and wildlife habitat. Developing adequate land clearing, grading, buffering and sensitive areas regulations which protect these resources will be a key challenge to the Comprehensive Plan.

### 7.5 Goals and Policies

#### 7.5.1 Incentives, Planning and Regulations

EVG 1.0 Foster recognition of the significant role played by natural features and systems in determining the overall environmental quality and livability of the community.

*EVP 1.1 Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas via the adoption of City regulations and programs that encourage well-designed land-use patterns such as clustering and planned unit development. Use such land-use patterns to concentrate higher urban land-use densities and intensity of uses in specified areas in order to preserve natural features such as large wetlands, streams, steep slopes, and wooded areas.*

- EVP 1.2 Ensure that the City's environmental policies and regulations comply with state and federal environmental protection regulations regarding air and water quality, hazardous materials, noise and wildlife and fisheries resources and habitat protection. In particular, the City shall include best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas consistent with RCW 36.70A.172.*
- EVP 1.3 Demonstrate support for environmental quality in land-use plans, capital improvement programs, code enforcement, implementation programs, development regulations, and site plan review to ensure that local land-use management is consistent with the City's overall natural resource goals.*
- EVP 1.4 Support waste reduction and recycling programs in City facilities and in the city at large.*
- EVP 1.5 Ensure that decisions regarding fundamental site design are made prior to the initiation of land surface modifications.*
- EVP 1.6 Start site restoration if land surface modification violates adopted policy or if development does not ensure within a reasonable period of time.*
- EVP 1.7 Provide incentives for environmental protection and compliance with environmental regulations. Foster greater cooperation and education among City staff, developers, and other citizens. Determine the effectiveness of incentives by establishing monitoring programs.*
- EVP 1.8 Protect and enhance environmental quality via maintenance of accurate and up-to-date environmental data, and by City support of environmental management programs, park master programs, and environmental education and incentive programs.*

Figure 7.9

**Back of Figure 7.9**

- EVP 1.9 Provide to property owners and prospective property owners general information concerning natural resources, hazard areas, and associated regulations. Ensure developers provide site-specific environmental information to identify possible on- and off-site constraints and special development procedures.*
- EVP 1.10 To the extent possible or feasible, require that developers and property owners provide to the City accurate and valid environmental information.*
- EVP 1.11 Use incentives to protect or enhance the natural environment whenever practicable. Incentives may include buffer averaging, density bonuses, lower tax assessment for land preserved in open space (King County Public Benefit Rating System), and appropriate non-regulatory measures.*
- EVP 1.12 Use acquisition, enhancement, incentive programs, and appropriate regulations to preserve critical areas as permanent open space where development may pose hazards to health, property, important ecological functions, or environmental quality.*
- EVP 1.13 Establish regulations to prevent unmitigated significant adverse impacts on natural features shall be based on the importance of their functions and values as well as their sensitivity to human activity.*
- EVP 1.14 Assign zoning designations which will protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas to any additional land annexed to the City.*
- EVP 1.15 Maintain current versions of critical areas maps and potentially constrained lands maps.*
- EVP 1.16 Develop appropriate regulations to protect those productive agricultural uses which the City Council has designated as having long-term commercial significance for agricultural production.*

*EVP 1.17 Conduct a detailed review of the King County Chapter of Environmentally Sensitive Areas and the County Shoreline Plan, both currently adopted by the City, to assure they meet current standards. In addition, the City will develop a wellhead protection ordinance.*

## **7.5.2 General Water Resources Protection**

**EVG 2.0** Insure that land-use development policies protect the City's water quality.

*EVP 2.1 Reduce the environmentally detrimental effects of present and future runoff in order to maintain or improve stream habitat wetlands, particularly water quality, and protected water-related uses.*

*EVP 2.2 Integrate the management of surface water with other agencies who provide the City's drinking water and wastewater treatment in order to provide a comprehensive, efficient water resource system. This shall include playing a role in the Countywide effort to protect and enhance surface waters on a watershed basis by working with the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, City of Kent, Covington Water District and King County Water District #111 to analyze water quality and quantity problems and their impacts on fish and wildlife habitat, as well as to control stormwater runoff problems in local watersheds.*

*EVP 2.3 Work cooperatively with King County Surface Water Management Division, the Washington Department of Ecology, and other affected jurisdictions and tribes to implement water quality management strategies and to comply with Municipal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System regulations to address non-point pollution.*

*EVP 2.4 Use incentives, regulations, and programs to manage water resources (groundwater, streams, lakes, and wetlands) and to protect and enhance their multiple beneficial uses,*

*including flood and erosion hazard reduction, aesthetics, recreation, water supply, gardening, and fish and wildlife habitat.*

- EVP 2.5 Regulate development in a manner that maintains the ecological and hydrologic function of water resources based on pre-development quality and quantity measurements. This includes avoiding negative adverse impacts on water quality or water quantity. Surface water management facilities that use natural streams and lakes for storage should ensure that those natural features are not adversely impacted by their inclusion in the surface water system.*
- EVP 2.6 Actively promote conservation measures (e.g. low-flow shower heads, lawn watering schedules) of water resources in cooperation with schools, business owners, residents, adjacent jurisdictions and water purveyors whose water source and service area are linked to the regional aquifer.*
- EVP 2.7 Utilize erosion control measures and appropriate mitigation measures for grading and any work in or adjacent to wetlands, streams or lakes and their associated buffers.*
- EVP 2.8 Protect aquifers by ensuring that development is adequately mitigated with regard to pollutant infiltration.*
- EVP 2.9 In the Hawk Property Subarea, actively promote the use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to reduce stormwater runoff quantity and pollutant loading, particularly in areas adjacent to Jenkins Creek.*
- EVP 2.10 In the Hawk Property Subarea, transform the existing detention facilities into a unique publicly accessible community amenity, which may continue to serve as a stormwater management facility.*

### 7.5.3 Groundwater

EVG 3.0 Protect the quality and quantity of groundwater used for public water supplies in cooperative efforts with the City of Kent, Soos Creek Water and Sewer District, Covington Water District and King County Water District #111.

*EVP 3.1 Develop a City of Covington Hazard Area Development Limitations Map based on existing information contained in the Wellhead Protection Plans of the City of Kent, Covington Water District and King County Water District #111, and as new information about recharge areas and wellhead protection areas becomes available.*

*EVP 3.2 Ensure that uses, densities, and development patterns support the goals and policies of the Green-Duwamish Watershed Nonpoint Action Plan.*

*EVP 3.3 Account for the potential impacts of land-use actions on aquifers that serve as potable water supplies in order to avoid the depletion or degradation of aquifers needed for potable water supply. The potential for aquifer contamination shall be identified, and a detailed mitigation plan shall be developed and implemented to compensate for the potential lost supply. Water contamination potential will be determined through coordination with the King County Water and Land Resources Division's clean water program.*

*EVP 3.4 Protect groundwater recharge quality by working with groundwater users and purveyors (including the County and neighboring jurisdictions) to implement appropriate wellhead protection ordinances and programs.*

*EVP 3.5 Protect groundwater recharge quantity by promoting methods that infiltrate runoff where site conditions permit, except where potential groundwater contamination cannot be prevented by pollution source controls and stormwater pretreatment.*

- EVP 3.6 Protect regional groundwater quality by requiring the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for future residential, commercial and industrial development within designated wellhead protection areas.*
- EVP 3.7 Protect regional groundwater quality by requiring stormwater treatment facilities to meet or exceed Department of Ecology and King County Surface Water Design Manual standards.*
- EVP 3.8 Recognizing existing stormwater regulations do not require aquifer recharge, Covington will protect regional groundwater quantity by developing stormwater management and groundwater protection policy in cooperation with the City of Kent, City of Maple Valley, Covington Water District and King County Water District #111. This policy will require all future development within the designated wellhead protection area to maintain aquifer levels through stormwater infiltration and other BMPs that ensure recharge to the aquifer.*

#### **7.5.4 Streams and Lakes**

**EVG 4.0** Develop and implement a comprehensive water quality plan that will protect and restore stream habitats, and other surface and groundwater resources. The intent is to protect and enhance water resources for multiple benefits, including recreation, fish and wildlife resources and habitat, flood protection, water supply, and open space

*EVP 4.1 Maintain major and minor streams in their natural state. Rehabilitate degraded channels and banks via public programs and in conjunction with proposed new development.*

*EVP 4.2 Evaluate the adequacy of the existing building setback and stream buffer requirements in relation to goals for water resource and fisheries and wildlife resource protection. When necessary, modify the requirements to achieve goals.*

- EVP 4.3 Protect and restore stream channels for their hydraulic and ecological functions, as well as their aesthetic value as discussed in the Stormwater Management Plan. Diversion of stream channels through culverts should be discouraged. Stream channels shall not be diverted through culverts when there are reasonable alternatives and subject to approval of appropriate jurisdictions. Where culverts are used, the installation and type of culvert should allow passage by, and not be injurious to, migratory fish.*
- EVP 4.4 In partnership with King County and other jurisdictions, promote restoration of stream channels and associated riparian areas to enhance water quality and fish and wildlife habitat and to mitigate flooding and erosion. The City shall encourage such restoration as a condition of development adjacent to streams.*
- EVP 4.5 Comply with the standards set forth in the 1998 King County Surface Water Design Manual. These standards should be implemented in a way most suited to the local environment to protect the biological health and diversity of the Cedar River and Soos Creek Basins.*
- EVP 4.6 Protect and enhance lakes by proper management of watersheds and shorelines, by improvements in water quality, by removal of invasive plant species, and by restoration of fish and wildlife habitat.*

### **7.5.5 Endangered Species Act Compliance**

**EVG 5.0** Comply with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act through adoption of land-use policies and infrastructure maintenance protocols designed to promote recovery of Chinook salmon.

- EVP 5.1 Protect the City from citizen lawsuits for non-compliance with the ESA through adoption of rules and practices consistent with ESA Section 4(d) Rules promulgated by the National Marine Fisheries Service.*

- EVP 5.2 Develop Inter-Local Agreements with neighboring cities and King County to promote salmon recovery on a watershed scale and county-wide basis.*
- EVP 5.3 Maintain or improve water quality and Chinook salmon habitat in Covington streams through acquisition and restoration of riparian and in-stream areas within its jurisdiction.*

### 7.5.6 Wetlands

**EVG 6.0** Protect wetlands with a standard of no net loss of wetland functions or values within each drainage basin. Wetland functions are natural processes performed by wetlands. Wetlands promote food chain production, provide fish and wildlife habitat, maintain and improve water quality, retain water for recharge and discharge into groundwater aquifers, moderate surface water and storm water flows. Other functions include, but are not limited to those discussed in U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations (33 CFR 320.4(b)(2), 1988). Wetland values are estimates, usually subjective, of the benefits of wetlands to society, and include aesthetics, education, scientific research, and recreation.

- EVP 6.1 Maintain the quantity and quality of wetlands via current land-use regulation and review; and increase the quality and quantity of the City's wetlands resource base via incentives and advance planning.*
- EVP 6.2 Protect wetlands not as isolated units, but as ecosystems, and essential elements of watersheds. Base protection measures wetland functions and values, and the effects of on-site and off-site activities.*
- EVP 6.3 Coordinate wetland protection and enhancement plans and actions with adjacent jurisdictions and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe when jurisdictional boundaries are involved*
- EVP 6.4 Work with King County, the State, and other jurisdictions, tribes and citizen groups to utilize the most current and appropriate Countywide wetlands policies and*

*classification system. Standards for delineating wetlands shall use scientifically accepted technical criteria and field indicators which meet, at minimum, the 1987 Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands.*

- EVP 6.5 Utilize acquisition, enhancement, and incentive programs independently or in combination to designate wetlands as permanent open space, and to protect and to enhance wetland functions.*
- EVP 6.6 Locate development adjacent to wetlands such that wetland functions are protected, an adequate buffer around the wetlands is provided, and significant adverse impacts to wetlands are prevented.*
- EVP 6.7 Allow alterations to wetlands where necessary to:*
- a. Accomplish a public agency or utility development, utilizing the necessary mitigation measures as detailed in the agency's or utility's Best Management Practices Plan;*
  - b. Provide necessary utility and road crossings, utilizing the necessary mitigation measures as detailed in the agency's or utility's Best Management Practices Plan; or*
  - c. Avoid denial of reasonable use of the property, provided that all wetland functions are evaluated, the least harmful reasonable alternatives are pursued, and affected significant functions are appropriately mitigated.*
- EVP 6.8 Allow public access to wetlands for scientific, educational, and recreational use, provided the public access trails are carefully sited, sensitive habitats and species are protected, and hydrologic continuity is maintained.*
- EVP 6.9 Protect areas of native vegetation that connect wetland systems, preferably through*

*incentives and appropriate non-regulatory mechanisms.*

*EVP 6.10 Utilize mitigation proposals for wetland functions lost due to development to replace or enhance the lost functions. The goal for these mitigation projects shall be no net loss of wetland functions per drainage basin. Mitigation sites shall be located strategically to alleviate habitat fragmentation.*

*EVP 6.11 Utilize mitigation projects to contribute to an existing wetland system or restore an area that was historically a wetland. Where restoration or enhancement of an existing degraded wetland system is proposed, it must result in a net improvement to the functions of the wetland system.*

*EVP 6.12 Develop special regulations for wetlands created as a result of a surface or stormwater detention facility which are considered wetlands for regulatory purposes.*

*EVP 6.13 Utilize flexible wetland mitigation requirements to allow for protection of systems or corridors of connected wetlands. A tradeoff of small, isolated wetlands in exchange for a larger connected wetland system can achieve greater resource protection and reduce isolation and fragmentation of wetland habitat.*

*EVP 6.14 Require developers of projects for which wetland mitigation is required to provide monitoring and maintenance until the success of the site is established. Land used for wetland mitigation shall be preserved in perpetuity. If conditions change such that wetlands can no longer be maintained on the land, it shall be preserved as open space.*

### **7.5.7 Floodplains**

**EVG 7.0** Preserve the existing hydraulic (flood storage and conveyance) and ecological functions of floodplains, associated with streams, lakes and wetlands to

minimize future flood hazards. Where possible, these floodplain areas shall be enhanced or restored.

*EVP 7.1 Any floodplain land use and floodplain management activities shall be carried out in accordance with the King County Flood Hazard Reduction Plan or its successor.*

### **7.5.8 Stormwater Management**

**EVG 8.0** Manage stormwater runoff through a variety of methods, including seasonal clearing restrictions, retention/detention, discharge and infiltration standards, and BMPs, as set forth in The 1998 King County Surface Water Design Manual. Infiltration of stormwater shall be encouraged where feasible, given geological, engineering, and water quality constraints. Surface water management methods which are land consumptive will need to be balanced with the need to protect the supply of developable land.

*EVP 8.1 Initiate a periodic storm drainage/environmental inspection program to ensure constant maintenance and upkeep of storm systems and ongoing compliance with general environmental processes.*

*EVP 8.2 Manage stormwater runoff caused by development to prevent unmitigated significant adverse impacts to water resources and downstream properties caused by flow rates, flow volumes, or pollutants. Non-structural methods of stormwater runoff control should be encouraged wherever possible. City stormwater management regulations shall include provisions to:*

- a. Preserve water quality, and protect or enhance the hydraulic and habitat functions of the natural drainage system;*
- b. Control peak runoff rate and quantity of discharges from new development to approximate predevelopment levels; and*
- c. Maintain stable stream channels and adequate low flows, and reduce future storm flows, erosion, and sedimentation. Stormwater runoff from development which is situated on or adjacent to steep*

*hillsides or adjacent to ravines shall be routed so that it does not cause gully erosion, lead to mass wasting, or create erosion at the bottom of the slope.*

*EVP 8.3 Develop and adopt a Stormwater Management Plan that details specific strategies for managing stormwater throughout the City, particularly in those areas where the level of service requirements of the 1998 King County Surface Water Design Manual may not provide sufficient protection for public safety, the environment, or private property.*

### **7.5.9 Vegetation**

**EVG 9.0** Minimize the loss of vegetation as new development occurs. Continue to recognize the value of trees and other vegetation in increasing the livability of the City of Covington.

*EVP 9.1 Promote and support a systematic approach to enhancing the City through carefully-planned plantings and ongoing maintenance of street trees, public landscaping, and public greenbelts.*

*EVP 9.2 Require protection of valuable vegetation, when possible, during all phases of land-use development. In cases where development necessitates the removal of vegetation, require an appropriate amount of landscaping to replace trees, shrubs, and ground cover which were removed during development.*

*EVP 9.3 Establish protected and recorded greenbelts to preserve existing natural vegetation on steep hillsides, along stream banks and other habitat areas, and where visual buffers between uses or activities are desirable.*

*EVP 9.4 Utilize regulations, incentives and non-regulatory means to preserve, replace, or enhance native vegetation that contributes to the City's scenic beauty.*

*EVP 9.5 Encourage the incorporation of native plant communities into development proposals where possible.*

*EVP 9.6 Actively encourage the use of environmentally safe methods of vegetation control. Herbicide use shall be minimized.*

*EVP 9.7 Encourage the use of native plants in landscaping requirements and erosion control projects, and in the restoration of stream banks, lakes, shorelines, and wetlands.*

*EVP 9.8 Encourage the preservation of a green space buffer which may include public trails along the southern border of the Hawk Property Subarea adjacent to the existing residential development.*

*EVP 9.9 Within the Hawk Property Subarea, minimize tree removal in critical areas and their buffers for the purposes of trails, utility corridors, and similar infrastructure. Apply mitigation sequencing and critical area regulation standards.*

#### **7.5.10 Fish and Wildlife Habitat**

**EVG 10.0** Adhere to the intent of the ESA Section 4(d) rules as they evolve in order to preserve and recover “threatened” Chinook salmon, which are present in the Soos Creek Watershed. These conservation efforts may eventually be extended to protect coho salmon, which are “candidate species” for listing protection under the ESA. If coho are listed, conservation efforts would be extended to the Jenkins Creek Watershed as well.

*EVP 10.1 Adopt a clearing and grading code to protect upland habitat as well as site designations and special restrictions relevant to Covington’s construction standards and detention criteria.*

*EVP 10.2 Maintain habitats that support the greatest diversity of fish and wildlife species consistent with the City’s land-use objectives. Fish and wildlife habitat shall be maintained through conservation and enhancement of terrestrial, air, and aquatic*

*habitats, preferably in open spaces and sensitive areas.*

- EVP 10.3 Protect and preserve habitats for species which have been identified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive by the State or federal government. Where these habitats occur within a proposed development the proponent should be required to assess the impacts of the proposal on the habitat and provide measures necessary to minimize or avoid any adverse impacts on these areas. Stream and wetland buffer requirements may be widened to protect such habitats, as appropriate. Whenever possible, density transfers and/or buffer averaging shall be allowed.*
- EVP 10.4 Designate and protect the critical areas as mapped and adopted in the City's Comprehensive Plan, as well as coordinate with King County and adjacent cities for the long term preservation of surrounding natural areas. Public access to critical areas for scientific, educational, and recreational use is desirable provided the public access trails are carefully sited, sensitive habitats and species are protected, and hydrologic continuity is maintained.*
- EVP 10.5 Develop and follow a Shoreline Master Program to protect salmonid habitats. This plan will ensure that land-use and facility plans (transportation, water, sewer, electricity, gas) include, to the maximum extent practicable, riparian and stream habitat conservation measures developed by the City and/or service providers, the County, tribes, or state and federal agencies.*
- EVP 10.6 Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions, the state and federal governments, and tribes to identify and protect habitat networks that cross jurisdictional lines.*
- EVP 10.7 Promote voluntary wildlife habitat enhancement projects by private individuals*

*and businesses through educational and incentive programs.*

### **7.5.11 Geologic Hazard Areas**

EVG 11.0 Regulate development in environmentally critical areas such as steep slopes and landslide-prone areas to prevent harm, to protect public health and safety, and to preserve the remaining sensitive areas in the City.

*EVP 11.1 Adopt zoning and building regulations to ensure that land uses on steep slopes are designed to prevent property damage and environmental degradation, and to enhance open space and wildlife habitat.*

*EVP 11.2 Decrease development intensity, site coverage, and vegetation removal as slope increases in order to minimize drainage problems, soil erosion, siltation, and landslides. Slopes of 40 percent or more should be retained in a natural state, free of structures and other land surface modifications.*

*EVP 11.3 Incorporate erosion control BMPs and other development controls as necessary to reduce sediment discharge from grading and construction activities to minimal levels. Development controls shall include seasonal restrictions on clearing and grading.*

*EVP 11.4 Minimize soil disturbance and maximize retention and replacement of native vegetative cover for any land uses permitted in Erosion and Landslide Hazard Areas.*

*EVP 11.5 Restrict development on Landslide Hazard Areas and areas with slopes of 40 percent or greater unless the risks and adverse impacts associated with such development can be reduced to a negligible level.*

*EVP 11.6 Encourage special building design and construction measures in areas with severe seismic hazards to minimize the risk of structural damage, fire, and injury to occupants during a seismic event and to prevent post-seismic collapse.*

### **7.5.12 Air Quality**

EVG 12.0 Insure that the City's land-use development policies protect the City's air quality.

*EVP 12.1 Support regional efforts to improve outdoor and indoor air quality.*

*EVP 12.2 Reduce air pollution associated with land uses by:*

- a. Requiring measures to minimize particulate emissions associated with land clearing and construction activities;*
- b. Limiting the amount of aerial spraying;*
- c. Promoting the use of clean-burning fuels;*
- d. Encouraging the proper use of wood stoves and fireplaces; and*
- e. Promoting land-use patterns and public facility sitings that reduce the quantity and length of single-occupancy vehicle trips.*

# 12.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

## 12.1 Introduction & Planning Context

For Covington, this Economic Development Element is being added as a new element of the Covington Comprehensive Plan. This element is consistent with pertinent statewide growth management planning, the Covington City Council's Vision Statement for the community, and more recent economic development initiatives of the City Council and Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC).

### 12.1.1 Statewide Growth Management Planning Context

At the time the Washington State Legislature adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990, economic development was an optional rather than a mandatory element for local jurisdiction planning. To date, the City of Covington Comprehensive Plan has not included an economic development element.

In 2002, the Legislature recognized the need to more "strategically position our state and local communities to compete successfully in a changing economy" by making economic development a required element of local Comprehensive Plans. As stated by RCW 36.70A.070 (as amended):

An economic development element establishing local goals, policies, objectives and provisions for economic growth and vitality and a high quality of life. The element shall include: (a) A summary of the local economy such as population, employment, payroll, sectors, businesses, sales, and other information as appropriate; (b) a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy defined as the commercial and industrial sectors and supporting factors such as land use, transportation, utilities, education, work force, housing and natural/cultural resources; and (c) an identification of policies, programs, and projects to foster economic growth and development and to address future needs.

### 12.1.2 City of Covington Vision Planning

The City's Vision Statement provides that:

The City of Covington is a place where community, businesses and civic leaders are partners in building a city that is family-oriented, safe and pedestrian-friendly. A community that proudly invests in enhancing our small town character and natural environment, and provides diverse recreational opportunities, as well as remaining financially responsible.

The Covington City Council has further identified five elements essential to achieving this vision – centered on themes of downtown, residential, environment, design standards, parks and open space.

### 12.1.3 Economic Development as a Public-Private Priority

As part of its 2008 City Council Objectives (adopted February 12, 2008), the role of economic development has been further articulated to:

Continue economic development activities in Downtown Covington and other commercial/industrial neighborhoods through the partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the Covington Economic Development Council. Complete the economic development policy document, create a work plan to implement the Downtown Plan and economic development policy document, and review efforts with the City Council.

Subsequent to this policy direction, the Covington Economic Development Council has adopted (on February 28, 2008) economic development goals, objectives and strategies. The overall intent of this CEDC document is articulated by the first goal, namely to *“ensure that the City of Covington is a safe and attractive place to work, live, recreate, shop and visit.”*

### 12.1.4 Economic Development Planning Process

This Economic Development Element has been prepared as part of a planning process conducted in 2008 involving:

- Joint participation of City Council and Planning Commission in partnership with the Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC) and private organizations such as the Covington Chamber of Commerce.
- Community outreach which included stakeholder interviews, a community survey and community open house event.

- Preparation of an economic profile to serve as a baseline understanding of recent trends and current conditions affecting business and economic development prospects for the community.
- Summary assessment of economic development strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (or SWOT).

## 12.2 Economic Profile

Topics covered by this economic profile include population and demographic trends, economic trends, City of Covington financial indicators, potential future annexations and development trends and capacity.

### 12.2.1 Population & Demographic Trends

Covington's economic profile contains information on the following geographies:

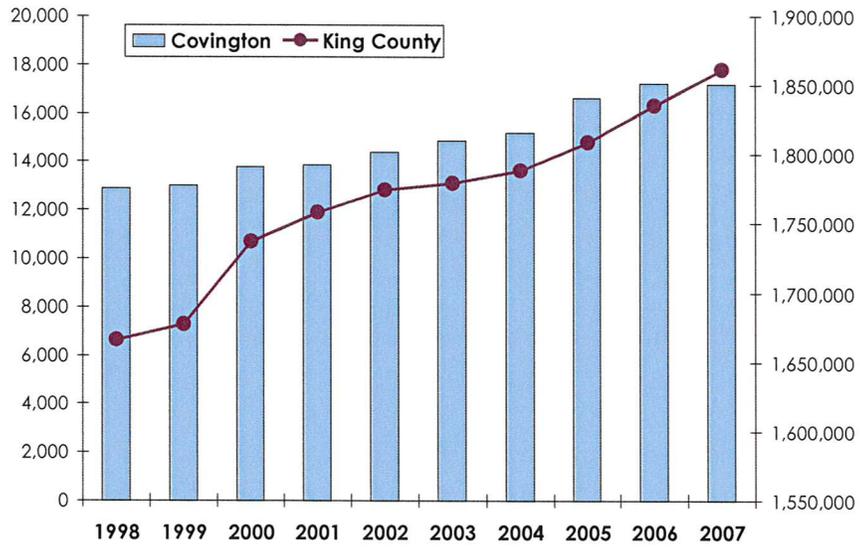
- City of Covington (and with some information also provided, as available, for the UGA)
- A retail trade area (extending beyond Covington to encompass the 98042 zip code of the city and three adjacent zip codes of 98038, 98010 and 98051)
- South King County (consistent with the geography used previously by the *South King County Economic Engine* analyses)
- King County
- State of Washington (as a broader point of comparison)

#### Population

As of 2007, Covington had an estimated 17,190 residents – representing just under 1% of King County's population of approximately 1.86 million. King County accounts for 29% of the entire state population of nearly 6.5 million, and represents a much smaller (3.2%) portion of Washington's geographic land area.

Of the sixteen cities in a South King County region of 463,200 residents, Covington ranks 10th in size of population. However, since 2000, Covington has also been experiencing more population growth that is 2 ½ times as rapid as the south county region as a whole. Between 2000 and 2007, population city-wide increased at rates averaging 3.2% per year – much more rapidly than annual rates of growth experienced within South County, King County and across the state – all of which have ranged from 1.0% to 1.4% per year.

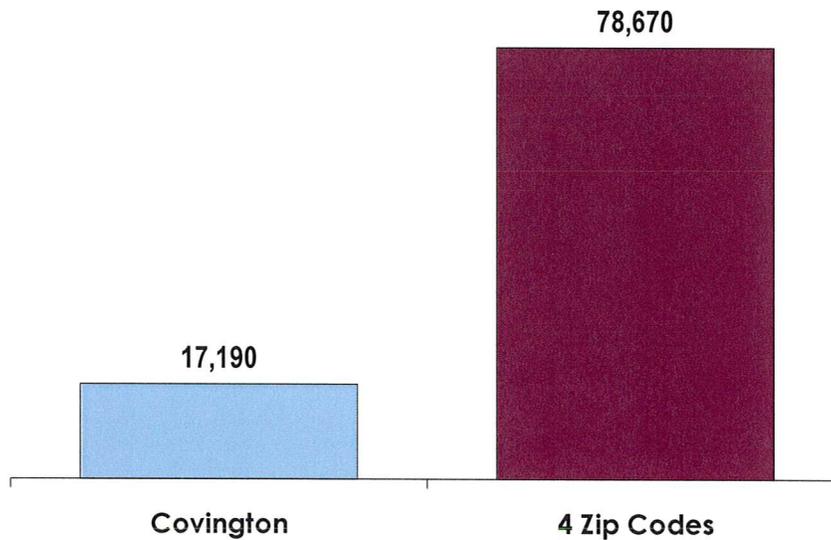
**Figure 12.1: Covington & King County Population (1998-2007)**



Source: Washington Office of Financial Management.

As of 2007, the population within the 4 zip codes of 98042 (Covington), 98038 (Maple Valley), 98010 (Black Diamond) and 98051 (Ravensdale) totals nearly 78,700 residents. Taken together, these four zip codes serve as one potential measure of a retail trade area served by Covington businesses. For some businesses, the trade area from which customers are drawn may be substantially larger – reaching into Kent and Auburn or over the hill to the I-90 corridor.

**Figure 12.2: Covington & 4-Zip Code Area Population**



Source: Washington Office of Financial Management and ESRI.

According to the city's adopted *Comprehensive Plan*, a long-term anticipated growth rate of 1.4% is estimated between 2003 and 2023. With this rate of growth, the City of Covington would have just under 19,500 residents by 2023. However, with population growth in the city occurring at rates more than double the forecast, the city could reach this population growth target by as early as 2011 – unless growth rates recently experience are substantially abated in the years ahead for reasons such as changed economic, housing and/or transportation conditions.

### **Race/Ethnicity**

Covington is less diverse in terms of race and ethnicity than all of King County and the state. The city is also diversifying more slowly than the rest of the South County cities.

### **Education**

Overall, the most recent available data (as of the 2000 Census) indicates that Covington residents (age 25 and over) are relatively well-educated when compared with their counterparts in South King County and the entire state – though not as highly educated when compared to King County as a whole.

### **Households**

Compared with the rest of King County, Covington has a high proportion of family households with children and has large-lot housing at relatively affordable prices. According to the 2000 Census, Covington had nearly 4,400 households, with an average size of 3.13 residents per household. This is significantly above the comparable South County area average of 2.52 residents per household, and also above the King County average of 2.37 and statewide average household size of 2.53 residents per household.

For 2007, average household size in Covington decreased slightly to an estimated 3.10 persons per household, and is projected to remain at about this level through 2012. Nationally, the expectation until recently has been one of declining household size due to aging baby boomers. However, this has been offset in some communities by household characteristics of in-migrants and higher housing costs – pushing household size back up. Similar trends of little or no change in household size are currently predicted for South County, King County, and Washington State.

### **Age of Population**

Covington is similar to other South County cities, King County and the entire state in the proportion of population age 16-64, but quite different for younger and older age categories. Covington has higher proportions of

children age 0-15. Conversely, the population in the city is underrepresented by those 65 and above.

### 12.2.2 Economic Trends

Economic indicators of importance to Covington and the region include employment, number of firms and average payroll – by major economic sector. Economic trends reviewed also include an assessment of household incomes, work trip commuting patterns within the region, and retail sales.

#### Major Employers

Information compiled by the City of Covington indicates the single largest employer in the community is the Kent School District, with nearly 800 employees. Wal-Mart and Multicare Health Systems are the next largest, each employing approximately 300 workers. The remaining top 5 employers city-wide are Fred Meyer (250) and Costco (200).

**Table 12.1: Major Employers in Covington**

Employer	Service/Product	# of Employees
Kent School District	Education K-12	784
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.	Retail Variety	300
Multicare Health Systems	Health Care	300
Fred Meyer	Retail Variety	250
Costco	Retail Warehouse	200
Home Depot	Retail	125
Kohl's	Retail	125
Safeway	Retail Grocery	90
City of Covington	Municipal	51
QFC	Retail Grocery	50
Valley Medical	Health Care	37
Petco	Retail	33

Source: City of Covington 2008 Budget.

Currently, Covington's major employers are related to retail, health services or public agency functions.

#### Composition of Job Base

As of 2006, the Covington area had a total of more than 430 firms, with just under 4,720 jobs. Of the major sectors in Covington, *services* represent the largest with nearly 1,840 workers (or 39% of the trade area job base). With 1,430 workers, *retail trade* is the second largest employment sector in the Covington area, followed by *construction* (with 610 jobs) and then manufacturing (180 jobs).

The Covington area has only an estimated 0.41 jobs per working age person. This is well below the South County region average of 1.22 jobs per working age person. Comparable figures for King County and the state

of Washington are 0.97 and 0.77 jobs per working age persons, respectively. As a result of a low jobs ratio, the Covington area experiences considerable out-commuting as local residents drive elsewhere to work.

**Average Pay (or Wage)**

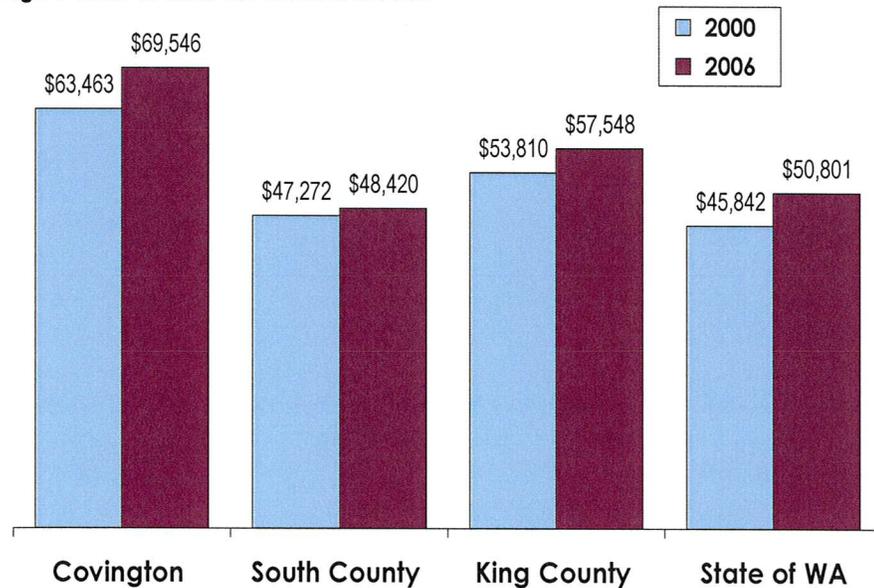
Average annual wage for all employees in King County covered by unemployment insurance is estimated at just under \$53,500 as of 2006. For the 98042 zip code encompassing Covington, the comparable wage was \$29,300. This is approximately 55% of King County’s average wage (and 68% of the statewide average covered wage of \$42,900).

Average wage paid to those who have jobs located in Covington is relatively low due to what appears to be the over-concentration of retail and service employment with limited higher paid industrial park (including technology business) activity.

**Household Incomes**

As of 2006, median household income was estimated at \$69,500 for Covington. This figure is 21% above the King County median of \$57,500.

**Figure 12.3: Median Household Income**



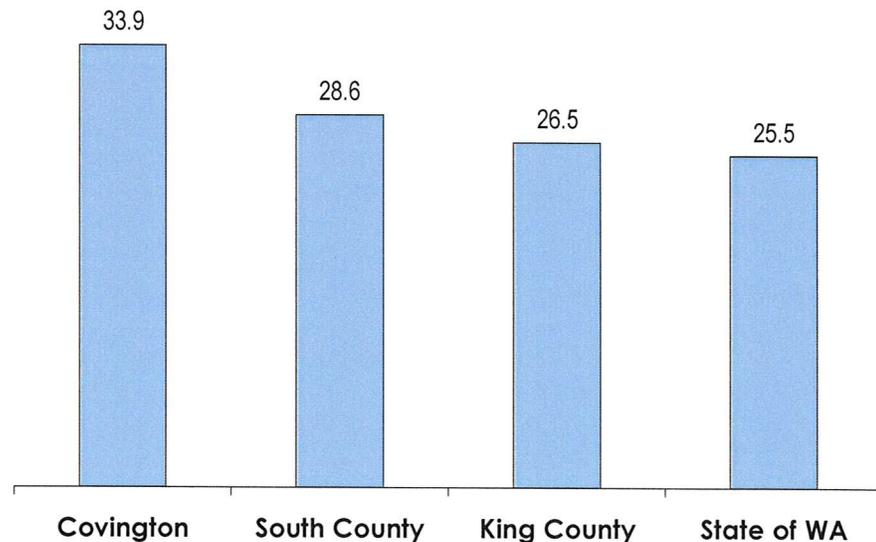
Source: Hebert Research, Inc., 2006 South King County Economic Engine.

The Covington income premium is even more pronounced when compared with the South County geography (44% above) and the entire state (37% above). Relatively high incomes of Covington households can be attributed to the high proportion of residents who commute out of the local community for employment.

### Work Commutes

For the vast majority of the 97% of employees who commute to work, length of commute is *substantially above* counterparts county or statewide. Average travel time to work for employed Covington residents is 33.9 minutes. This is 28% above the countywide average travel time of 26.5 minutes and 33% above the statewide average of 25.5 minutes. South County workers also have longer average commutes (at 28.6 minutes) than county or statewide, though still not as long as for those who commute from Covington.

**Figure 12.4: Average Travel Time to Work (minutes)**



Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

### Retail Sales & Leakage

Retail *demand* relates to the volume of retail purchases made by local residents, whether made in the local trade area or elsewhere. *Supply* is defined as the volume of retail sales activity actually experienced by local businesses.

In conditions where demand outstrips supply, *retail sales leakage* occurs as local residents travel outside the immediate trade area to shop. In some communities, the volume of sales will outstrip locally generated demand, meaning that retailers are drawing from well beyond the local trade area.

For the analysis prepared with this economic development element, retail sales and leakage information has been provided for a trade area described as encompassing a four zip code region of 98042 (Covington), 98038

(Maple Valley), 98010 (Black Diamond) and 98051 (Ravensdale). This is the geographic area from which customers may be most often drawn for comparison shopping (including department and discount store activities).

Total *spending potential* for the 78,700 residents in these 4 zip codes is estimated to exceed \$1.08 billion annually. The volume of *retail sales actually occurring* from retail establishments located in the trade area approximates \$463 million. Resulting *sales leakage* is in the range of \$620+ million, equating to approximately 57% of locally generated consumer spending potential.

This retail sales leakage occurs as residents travel elsewhere to shop – and is noted across all retail categories except nonstore retailers. For the trade area encompassing Covington and nearby communities, sales leakage exceeds 50% of local consumer spending potential for motor vehicles, furniture and home furnishings, electronics and appliances, building materials and garden supplies, and apparel.

#### **Retail Space Supported**

Sales leakage data can be translated into estimates of potential commercial space square footage demand. The estimates provided with this Economic Development Element represent *maximum locally generated potentials* assuming up to 100% sales leakage recapture. Also quantified are future retail potentials associated with population growth. This growth is projected for the zip code trade area over a five year time horizon through 2012, with a projected estimated population of 85,800 residents (up by 7,100 residents compared to 2007).

If 100% of *existing* resident-generated spending potential were to be accommodated within this 4-zip code trade area, up to nearly 1.3 million square feet of retail space could be supported, whether in Covington or elsewhere in the trade area. Apparel appears to be the retail category that could support the greatest increase in building space, followed by general merchandise (including department and/or discount stores), then grocery.

Up to an additional 225,000 square feet of retail space may be supported with *population growth* anticipated to 2012 – for total current plus future growth space potential of up to 1.6 million square feet. The strongest categories of potential future (5-year) added space demand in the 4-zip code trade area appear to be with grocery and restaurant activity.

Whether and to what degree Covington captures the retail potentials identified will be influenced by factors including availability of retail sites centrally situated to serve trade area demographics, trade area population large enough to achieve critical mass for large format and other national

retailers, extent of future retail development elsewhere as in Maple Valley and Black Diamond, and supportive public policy.

### 12.2.3 City of Covington Financial Indicators

Financial indicators considered with this overview are tax rates, budgeted city revenues and expenditure, level of service relative to other cities, and available debt capacity.

#### Tax Rates

The City of Covington receives taxes on property, retail sales, utilities, and the sale of real estate.

- The total *sales tax rate* for sales made in the City of Covington is 8.5%, and is distributed to the following agencies:

State of Washington	6.50%
City of Covington	0.85%
King County/METRO	0.60%
Traffic & Traffic Congestion	0.30%
King County	0.15%
King County Criminal Justice Levy	0.10%

Sales tax receipts represent the single largest source of revenue to the city. Revenues are divided between the General Fund (75%), Parks Fund (20%) and Cumulative Reserve Fund (5%).

- The 2008 *property tax levy rate* is \$1.04814 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Property tax receipts are collected in the city's General Fund as the second most important source of revenue to the city.
- In November 2007, Covington's City Council adopted a *utility tax* of 5.5%. This tax is imposed on utilities including electricity, natural gas, telephones, cellular telephones, cable television, solid waste, and surface water. Utility tax revenues are expected to be allocated to the General Fund, Parks Fund, Street Fund, and Capital Investment Fund.
- The City of Covington has a locally imposed *real estate excise tax* (REET) of 0.5%, levied on all sales of real estate. The city's REET is coupled with the state's REET of 1.28%, for a total combined rate of 1.78%. The funds generated by the city's portion of REET are allocated to local capital improvements identified under the capital facilities plan element of the city's Comprehensive Plan.

#### Budgeted Operating Funds

This per capita comparison aligns with similar notes provided by the City of Covington 2008 Budget. As indicated by the budget, the city's current

level of service has not been on par with comparable cities of similar size. This is largely because the city does not provide the full complement of typical municipal services.

The City of Covington is directly responsible for police, parks, streets, planning and general administration, aquatics, stormwater, and human services. Non-city providers are used for services including water, sanitary sewer, and fire protection.

The City Council's recent adoption of a utility tax was intended as an added source of revenue to provide more needed services to the community. Budget priorities identified by the City Council for 2008 and future years include marketing the city to businesses, community groups and the public, and investing in transportation and parks infrastructure.

### **Comparative Revenues & Expenditures**

Based on information from the Washington State Auditors Office, revenues from all fund types to the City of Covington in 2006 totaled \$12.8 million. City expenditures from all fund types for this same year amounted to \$10.9 million.

When compared with *per capita revenues* from all cities in Washington, Covington's revenues of \$741 are 70% below the all city per person average of \$2,500. Per capita revenues for the City of Covington fall well below statewide averages across virtually all revenue categories. Property tax revenues were 38% of the statewide per capita average as of 2006; sales tax revenues were at 57%.

In a similar *per capita comparison of expenditures*, Covington spent 72% less than the average of all Washington cities. As is the case with revenues, expenditures are well below the statewide per capita average across all major expenditure categories.

As noted, a lower level of per capita operating expenditure is to be expected because a number of services typically provided by cities are covered by other special district providers in Covington. This lower level of city-provided service has also made it possible to keep the *city share* of property tax rates relatively low compared to other cities.

The city's revenue picture is changing rapidly due to factors including recent authorization of a utility tax and added sales tax revenue coming on-line with new retail stores opening. However, to the extent that Covington transitions to more of a *full service* city in the future, the city may face unique challenges in securing added revenue sources to fund a broader array of urban municipal services.

### Debt Capacity

Based on a percentage of the City of Covington's total assessed value, the city's debt capacity is estimated at roughly \$141.5 million. As of year end 2007, the City of Covington has outstanding general obligation debt of \$12.555 million in Councilmanic Bonds for three CIP road projects. Special Assessment Debt for a Local Improvement District (LID) for street, sidewalk and storm drainage improvements is just over \$352,000. Also noted is a Public Works Trust Fund Loan for street improvement LID with outstanding debt of \$3.464 million.

Resulting combined debt of less than \$16.4 million represents only 12% of total city debt capacity. This low volume of outstanding debt is one factor that allows the city to maintain a relatively low level of expense compared to many other incorporated jurisdictions.

The significant amount of remaining debt capacity currently available may provide a basis for consideration of community infrastructure or other capital facility priorities that may prove important to the residents and businesses of Covington in the years ahead, provided that necessary resources can also be secured to defray the cost of any indebtedness incurred.

### 12.2.4 Potential Future Annexations

The City of Covington's Comprehensive Plan addresses urban growth area (UGA) needs and potential future annexations. Any annexations of the city are dependent on prior UGA designation by King County.

#### Annexation Opportunity for Economic Development

More detailed information for the two PAAs that could represent a substantial part of the city's economic development potential over the next 20 years is summarized as follows:

- *PAA 1 (east of Lakeside Gravel Pit)* – covers the 80-acre area of vacant forested land adjacent and east of the current Lakeside Gravel Pit operations. While the gravel pit is already part of the city, this adjoining 80-acre parcel (owned by the same party as the gravel pit) is within the UGA but not yet annexed.
- *PAA 4 (Northern Notch)* – comprising approximately 275 acres as a parallelogram-shaped site situated between SR 18 and SE Wax Road, and extending east from 180th Avenue SE to a line extending south from about 195th Avenue SE.

Long-term plans include provision of sewer service to the entire Covington Urban Growth Boundary. Water within the city is provided

by the Covington Water District. A full freeway interchange has been constructed by WSDOT at 256th and Highway 18 – making this one of only two interchanges within the City of Covington. Annexation is dependent on prior King County UGA amendment and reclassification from Rural to Urban designation.

### **Impacts of Future Annexations**

Taken together, properties east of the Lakeside Gravel Pit and Northern Notch areas offer the potential to add an additional 355 acres of land to the City of Covington. Much of this land could ultimately become available for economic development – including creation of added local employment and business-related tax base.

In addition to meeting long-term growth needs of the city and region, a major Comprehensive Plan related purpose of future annexations is to promote more compact urban development in order to “insure efficient utilization of land resources and to facilitate economic provision of urban services.”

From an economic development perspective, annexations may be important to objectives that could include any or some combination of:

- Providing additional land for non-retail related employment (such as business park or office) – helping to reduce resident commutes by providing a land use underrepresented in Covington at present.
- Offering opportunity for additional commercial development to better serve Covington and trade area resident shopping and service needs – albeit with potential ramifications to the existing downtown area.
- Generating added property and sales tax revenue to the city – reducing the proportion of city services funded by residents.

To date, the City of Covington has not had the opportunity to actively plan for these PAAs. Each area will need to be evaluated based on its own merits including consideration of economic feasibility to the city. Other factors that need to be addressed include ability to efficiently provide one or both PAAs with adequate urban infrastructure and public services, extent of anticipated population and employment need to be addressed over the next 20 years, and impacts to city objectives for compact mixed use development and effective mass transit – particularly within the currently designated downtown zones of the city.

### **12.2.5 Development Trends & Capacities**

This final section of the economic profile provides a brief review of information regarding commercial and industrial development trends and

land capacities together with a delineation of longer term employment land needs.

### Existing Land Use

As of the 2005 *City of Covington Comprehensive Plan* update, existing land use comprised a total of approximately 3,286 acres, excluding lakes and roads. Mining and quarry activities accounted for about 5.5% of the total acreage, commercial for 2.1%, with office and industrial uses each at about 0.3%. Vacant lands (of all zoning designations) were estimated at 651 acres, or 19.8% of total land area.

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan updated indicated that there is a significant amount of land that is potentially unsuitable for future development. Approximately 766 acres were identified as potentially constrained – which may limit some or all use of these properties.

### Comprehensive Plan Growth Allocations

The *City of Covington Comprehensive Plan* as updated in 2005 projected employment growth and associated land use needs to 2023. More recent information is provided by the *2007 King County Buildable Lands Report* and by the 2008 city prepared report *Population, Housing and Employment: 2000-2010*.

Starting from a base of 2,588 jobs in 2000, the city's most recent figures show an estimated employment of 3,613 jobs in Covington as of 2006 – reflecting a gain of 1,025 jobs (or 40% increase) over this recent six-year period. Comprehensive Plan related projections as of 2005 provided that the City of Covington had an *employment growth target* to add an estimated 990 new jobs between 2000 and 2022.

A comparison of the 2007 King County Buildable Lands analysis and the 2006 actual in-city job numbers indicate that employment growth already experienced likely exceeds the job growth target set for 2022. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan analysis concluded that commercial plus industrial zoned capacity “will not provide sufficient employment capacity” to meet employment growth needs. However, the analysis also noted that the zoning based methodology does not account for employment occurring in non-industrial/commercial zones of the city including government and education which together account for more than an estimated 42% of total employment in Covington. Consequently, the potential deficit of land for employment purposes may be overstated – albeit by an as yet not fully determined amount.

### Future Land Use

As acknowledged in the 2005 update to the Comprehensive Plan, 3,255 acres were identified for future land use, including Annexation Areas 1-3. The *2007 King County Buildable Lands Report* provides more updated estimates of non-residential land supply as of 2006. This report indicates gross land area of 198.4 acres for employment growth – including 77.9 acres of vacant and 120.5 acres of redevelopable sites.

When adjusted for critical areas, rights of way, public purpose use and a market factor, the resulting estimate of net developable area is 116.4 acres – equating to 54.0 acres of net vacant and 62.4 acres of net redevelopable land. In effect, this added supply provides capacity to accommodate added in-city employment beyond the job targets referenced by the Comprehensive Plan.

### Future Economic Development Prospects

For Covington, economic opportunities clearly can be expected to vary depending on the type of commercial retail, office, and business park that is considered. For *retail* use, the opportunity may be to ride the wave of retail activity in the South King County market, specifically capitalizing on the population growth that has and will occur within a residential trade area conveniently served from Covington. Due to its highway cross-roads location in the middle of a large and growing trade area, Covington continues to have potential for further retail development meeting the shopping and service needs of residents in the city plus adjoining communities.

With *office* use, the question is whether Covington has an opportunity to move into a market for which the South County and Covington have historically had a weak competitive presence. Positioning for increased regional office market capture will require proximity to a large and relatively young labor force looking for job opportunities closer to home. This potential also may be strengthened due to the city's proximity to the I-90/eastside corridors with much stronger office market presence.

For *business park* development, the question is whether Covington has the interest and can generate a competitive advantage similar to what has been demonstrated elsewhere in the Kent Valley/South County area. To date, distance from the Highway 167 and I-5 corridors has proven to be a competitive liability, not as yet offset by Highway 18 proximity. As with office, it may be that Covington's best option is not to compete for the warehouse/distribution market which is strongly oriented to the Kent Valley, but rather begin to draw higher end flex/tech uses just over the hill from the I-90 corridor or from the Renton/I-405 corridor to the west.

## 12.3 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Building from the economic profile, it has been possible to prepare an assessment of Covington area strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (or SWOT) for economic development. Additional information and insights have been provided from activities including:

- Project start-up and *orientation meeting* – with the Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC).
- A series of personal *stakeholder interviews* – with a representative cross-section of 25 business, city and civic leaders.
- A *community survey* – completed by 160 residents.
- A *community open house* – attended by approximately 60 participants.

The SWOT assessment includes a description and preliminary evaluation of strategic options available to the Covington community. Results have been used to further inform and frame the preparation of a recommended vision together with goals and policies provided with this Economic Development Element.

### 12.3.1 Elements of the SWOT Assessment

For purposes of the SWOT assessment, *strengths* are defined as existing assets of the Covington economy – and as potential building blocks for future economic development. *Weaknesses* are liabilities – important to address for Covington to be effective in achieving its economic development objectives. Taken together, strengths and weaknesses represent a present day, internally focused *snapshot*, illustrating what’s working well versus what’s not.

In contrast, opportunities and threats are both more *forward looking* and are often driven by conditions external to the local community. *Opportunities* for Covington occur at the point where statewide and global forces intersect with existing or potential local strengths. To the extent they are recognized and harnessed consistent with local priorities, opportunities could act to propel Covington forward in the years ahead. *Threats* are those local and external conditions or challenges that could serve to undermine or jeopardize future community economic vitality.

### 12.3.2 SWOT Summary

*Existing conditions* that shape and affect Covington’s economic vitality today are outlined in summary form – illustrated by the chart of current strengths and weaknesses provided as follows.

**Table 12.2: Current Economic Development Strengths & Weaknesses**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location on Highway 18 as an emerging growth corridor for King County</li> <li>• Ability to readily serve a relatively young &amp; affluent trade area of nearly 80,000 residents</li> <li>• Strength &amp; depth of Covington's retail core</li> <li>• Commitment of the city to managed growth &amp; development</li> <li>• Potential availability of land to serve anticipated population &amp; job growth</li> <li>• Natural corridors &amp; trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic congestion of the Kent-Kangley / 272nd Street (SR 516) highway corridor</li> <li>• Substantial out-commuting for high-wage employment elsewhere in the region</li> <li>• Need for town center &amp; urban amenities</li> <li>• Limited availability of in-city, shovel-ready land for high-wage job development</li> <li>• Perceptions of the Covington development &amp; permitting process</li> <li>• Limited city financial resources to leverage desired economic &amp; mixed use development</li> </ul>

Of the strengths outlined, only two – location and land availability – fall within the purview of what are viewed as traditional economic development mainstay assets. Community demographics, retail activity and natural amenities are often viewed as important for quality of life – but often less so for on-going economic vitality. However, these views are changing for two reasons:

- Increased state and local jurisdiction dependence on sales tax revenue in the state of Washington;
- Recognition that quality of life increasingly influences where businesses that offer high wage jobs locate.

An important challenge for Covington will be to harness this distinctive set of community assets in ways that better integrate livability with economic vitality and ongoing sustainability.

All of the weaknesses identified can be corrected or mitigated – though actions on some could require substantial public and community effort to address. The level of commitment made will undoubtedly shape whether and how it is possible to build from existing local strengths and to capture future opportunities for economic development and diversification in Covington.

*Looking to the future*, there are emerging west coast, U.S. and global trends that, taken together with existing local conditions, can be expected to affect Covington’s prospects for economic vitality in the years ahead. These future conditions present both opportunities and potential threats (or challenges) for the Covington community.

**Table 12.3: Prospective Economic Development Opportunities & Threats**

Opportunities	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued retail expansion with attendant local sales tax generation</li> <li>• High-wage employment growth</li> <li>• Hotel, banquet, event &amp; entertainment venues</li> <li>• Town center &amp; mixed use development</li> <li>• Strengthened community identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerability to global economic restructuring – especially housing credit &amp; fuel price issues</li> <li>• Uncertain role of Covington vis-à-vis South County &amp; I-90/I-405 corridor neighbors</li> <li>• Challenge of attracting pioneering employment &amp; mixed use development</li> </ul>

Realization of the identified opportunities is by no means assured. Achieving results will depend, in large part, on conscious decisions and actions taken by businesses, citizens and public agencies that have a stake in Covington’s future. While some threats represent external forces over which the community has little direct control, the extent of the threat (or challenge) can be addressed or mitigated, at least in part, through proactive local actions.

**12.3.3 Strategic Options**

From this SWOT assessment, four generalized options distinctive to Covington were considered as a basis to determine an *umbrella framework* most appropriate for future economic development. All of the options listed assume some form of public-private partnership – but predicated on an intentional approach to economic and community development for Covington.

1. **Status Quo.** This can be described as the *default option* – assuming no change in strategic economic development direction for the Covington community. Economic development will continue to occur largely in response to individual business investment decisions made in combination with local and regional planning (including growth management) priorities.

Covington can expect to receive continued commercial development interest – though issues of adequately sized remaining development sites and congestion on SR 516 (272nd Street) may make achieving successful development more daunting in the future. In the absence of concerted public initiative, it is unlikely that the city and community’s vision for a vital town center can be readily achieved.

Covington residents will likely continue to commute out of the area for higher wage jobs – albeit with transportation consuming a much larger portion of the household budget. Worst case, this could serve to weaken Covington’s ongoing desirability as a quality family community.

2. **Town Center Focus.** With this strategic approach, Covington would aim to strengthen and diversify its downtown commercial core but with added emphasis on:
- Achieving the town center vision of a pedestrian oriented commercial core that includes both small and larger scale retail together with a mix of other uses including office, residential, civic buildings and public gathering/open space.
  - Achieving some form of higher density development – as could occur with residential over commercial space and possible structured parking – aided by public investment in amenities that the private sector is unlikely to deliver on its own.

The benefits of this strategic option include realization of a long-standing vision for the Covington community, added retail sales tax generation, and more defined identity (if not branding) for Covington as a distinct and desirable place to live, shop, work and socialize. Potential disadvantages include the need to address traffic implications in the downtown area (especially for SR 516), the potential level of city investment and development expertise required, and the limited or unclear potential to diversify the community toward higher wage jobs.

3. **Family Wage Job Focus.** This third strategic option is focused less on town center commercial and mixed use development and more on a traditional economic development approach targeted to secure added high-wage job opportunities closer to home for Covington residents. Key elements of this strategy could include:

- Office, business and technology park development – most likely in the vicinity of the SR 18/256th Street interchange (including accompanying annexation).
- Active collaboration with land owners – to address planning and infrastructure needs and to attract qualified developers and business users/tenants to Covington.
- Opportunity for a substantial small business development emphasis – targeted to existing and prospective residents with interest to locate and grow a business in Covington.

The chief benefits of this strategy are that it best offers the opportunity to reduce out-commuting and raise the wage profile of Covington area employers. Disadvantages include costs of serving new development coupled with limited ongoing sales tax revenue potential (from on-site non-retail related development). There is also some market risk, as this new focus will require “pioneers” willing to invest in business and technology park projects as yet untested in the Covington area.

4. **Jobs with a Heart.** This represents a potential *hybrid option* – a balanced approach involving concurrent initiatives for town center and high-wage jobs-oriented development:
- Commercial and mixed use town center development would be prioritized at least initially on the existing downtown core (SR 516 and Wax Road areas).
  - Employment development would be focused on the as yet undeveloped area proximate to the SR 18/256th Street interchange (likely including annexation of the property east of the gravel pit and/or northern notch areas).

This strategy offers the most balanced approach to achieving commercial development, high-wage job and tax revenue benefits for the businesses, residents and City of Covington. One downside is the risk associated with trying to accomplish too many things at once – especially if local resources are already strained or the community’s will to implement this more aggressive strategic option is not readily forthcoming. A related challenge will be in determining how to achieve this vision in a manner that remains flexible over time – responding to unique challenges and opportunities with each SR 18 interchange area (including those not yet readily foreseen).

#### **A Preferred Strategy**

After review and discussion of the strategic options, the Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC) has recommended *Option 2 Town Center Focus* as the preferred emphasis for short term implementation. As the town center moves toward realization, communities priorities can be expected to shift toward increased family wage focus – leading to the hybrid *Option 4 Jobs with a Heart*.

The economic development vision, goals and objectives that follow are intended to implement this phased strategy over the 20-year time horizon of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Implementation is further supported by an Action Agenda provided as a companion to this Economic Development Element in conjunction with an annually updated Work Plan.

## 12.4 Economic Development Vision

At its best, Covington's economic development vision will serve to reinforce and further stimulate the already adopted City Council vision for the entire community. This Economic Development Element embodies a minimum 20-year vision for future and ongoing economic vitality of the community – depicted as follows:

Covington is economically distinct, diverse and vibrant – a full-service community offering good paying jobs, places to shop and recreate, and a tax base supportive of quality public infrastructure and services. Covington nurtures families and business entrepreneurs, fosters a pattern of development that will be sustainable for the next generation, and values its location at the interface between the community's built and natural environment.

## 12.5 Goals and Policies

Covington's economic development vision is to be implemented through the following specific Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies adopted with this Economic Development Element.

### 12.5.1 Partnerships for Positive Service Culture

EDG 1.0 The City of Covington recognizes the importance of a positive and supportive relationship among its staff, the citizenry, and stakeholders doing business with the city and is resolved to ensure a responsive service culture within the city organization aimed at sustained economic prosperity and business profitability by listening carefully, solving problems creatively, efficiently and proactively.

*EDG 1.1 Recognize private employment and investment as the primary catalyst for generating a healthy local economy and balanced tax base.*

*EDG 1.2 Maintain development regulations which are predictable and cost effective to all parties.*

*EDG 1.3 Ensure that city licensing and permitting procedures and processes are equitable and efficient.*

*EDG 1.4 Initiate efforts to improve basic criteria for the "over the counter" permit system and process for appropriate permits within resources available.*

- EDP 1.5 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 1.6 Encourage community policing and other business and neighborhood community watch programs to improve public safety for both businesses and residences.*
- EDP 1.7 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 1.8 Continually solicit community and stakeholder input on the development, permitting and licensing process and make relevant improvements based upon quality customer service goals.*
- EDP 1.9 Strive to create and implement opportunities to better communicate with constituents and stakeholders through all forms of the media and the internet/web.*

### **12.5.2 Balanced Economic Development**

- EDG 2.0** Encourage economic development in Covington that responds to the needs and interests of area residents, businesses and investors for services and high paying jobs.
- EDP 2.1 Utilize a definition of “economic development” appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the Covington community as “the creation and sustainability of local employment, incomes, goods, services and local government revenues benefiting Covington residents, workers, visitors and businesses.”*
- EDP 2.2 Increase employment in Covington to better balance jobs with housing.*
- EDP 2.3 Target sustained maintenance of Covington household incomes above the King County median.*

- EDP 2.4 Increase the overall average wage of persons working in Covington.*
- EDP 2.5 Prioritize economic development assistance and incentives to businesses and development projects providing opportunity for higher wages.*
- EDP 2.6 Reduce the average length of commute to work for Covington residents.*
- EDP 2.7 Partner with regional and state organizations for economic development initiatives of mutual interest.*
- EDP 2.8 Formulate an image or branding campaign to raise regional public and business awareness of Covington as a good place to invest – a “City for Entrepreneurs.”*
- EDP 2.9 Establish a short list of measurable benchmarks by which to assess progress toward achieving key public-private economic development objectives for Covington.*

### **12.5.3 Economic Development Strategy**

- EDG 3.0** Covington’s economic development program will be based on a balanced, multi-faceted strategic planning framework that is sustainable over time with an annual Work Plan and a process that tracks the progress of implementation.
- EDP 3.1 The City’s economic development program will consider a variety of approaches to achieving a diverse local economy, including, but not limited to, 1) business retention and expansion, 2) business attraction and diversification including entrepreneurship and small business development, and 3) developing and maintaining effective public-private partnerships.*
- EDP 3.2 The City will adequately support its economic development effort over time with adequate budgets and staffing in order to insure that it has an appropriate existing capacity to address future economic development threats and opportunities.*
- EDP 3.3 The city will 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.*

#### **12.5.4 Covington Town Center**

EDG 4.0 Develop a town center offering shopping, employment, residential, cultural, public, recreation and open space activities within downtown Covington.

*EDP 4.1 Develop a town center as the focal point for Downtown Covington.*

*EDP 4.2 Encourage a public-private partnership for town center development with proactive tools and incentives to leverage the desired mix of private and public uses and achieve a net long-term economic and financial benefit to the City of Covington at the lowest public outlay possible.*

*EDP 4.3 Assure the availability of a site (or sites) adequately sized and appropriately located to meet objectives for a town center mixed use development, incorporating community feedback.*

#### **12.5.5 Commercial & Mixed Use Development**

EDG 5.0 Encourage commercial retail, service and complementary mixed use development that serves the residents of Covington and nearby communities, attracts visitors, and enhances the City's tax base while addressing transportation and other public service issues as they arise.

*EDP 5.1 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 5.2 Develop downtown, neighborhood, community and regional commercial uses with coordinated provision of 1) adequate transportation, pedestrian and utility infrastructure, 2) development and design standards to encourage other mixed use, commercial and residential developments that complement but do not unduly compete with realization of the downtown vision; and 3) allow for open space and parks.*

- EDP 5.3 Focus retail and related commercial development to achieve downtown build-out, provide for convenience oriented neighborhood retail, and encourage mixed use development with planned annexation areas to fully serve the needs of trade area residents and businesses.*
- EDP 5.4 When non-downtown sites are considered, prioritize locations offering proximity to adequate transportation and utility infrastructure and underserved trade area populations.*
- EDP 5.5 Facilitate development of lodging, meeting, event and entertainment venues meeting both resident and visitor needs.*
- EDP 5.6 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 5.7 Secure options for transit service, ride sharing, pedestrian-friendly development and other means to reduce the need for vehicular travel.*
- EDP 5.8 Encourage regional commercial and employment uses along major transportation corridors to strengthen Covington's economic position within the region.*

### 12.5.6 Employment Development

- EDG 6.0** Expand Covington's employment base to achieve jobs-housing balance with King County, raise local wage levels and maintain above average incomes for Covington residents.
- EDP 6.1 Determine employment growth targets and commercial-employment land needs in Covington appropriate to achieve job-housing balance.*
- EDP 6.2 Designate sites suitable for development of office, business and technology park properties at locations effectively served by transportation and other infrastructure.*

- EDP 6.3 Require property owners in planned annexation areas to engage in collaborative public-private land use and infrastructure planning for high quality, master planned development.*
- EDP 6.4 Consider proactive tools and incentives to assist in development of businesses and added employment throughout Covington as consistent with the City's economic development goals and policies.*
- EDP 6.5 Encourage location of higher wage employment-intensive uses to complement downtown area and other mixed use development in Covington.*
- EDP 6.6 Foster a business climate and site options supporting large employers offering high-wage jobs together with small business and entrepreneurial start-ups.*
- EDP 6.7 Consider development standards for live-work units and home-based businesses.*

### **12.5.7 Land Use & Economic Development**

- EDG 7.0** Utilize land use provisions of the Covington Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances as instrumental to facilitate and implement this Economic Development element.
- EDP 7.1 In conjunction with regularly scheduled Comprehensive Plan updates, re-assess needs for commercial and employment land as needed to provide for jobs-housing balance and to effectively serve retail trade area potentials over a 20-year time horizon.*
- EDP 7.2 In cooperation with King County, provide for UGA expansion and annexation of areas most suited to meet 20-year commercial and employment land needs of the City of Covington.*
- EGP 7.3 Create a new zoning district encompassing major office, employment and technology uses along with other traditional mixed-use commercial and residential uses.*
- EGP 7.4 Establish land use goals and policy mechanisms addressing economic, social and environmental*

*sustainability in a manner consistent with this Economic Development Element.*

### **12.5.8 Community Infrastructure & Public Services**

EDG 8.0 Plan, fund and build transportation, utility and civic infrastructure timed to meet the requirements of commercial, employment and workforce development.

*EDP 8.1 Facilitate economic development that, on balance, provides positive net revenue to the City of Covington from sources including property, sales and utility tax revenues.*

*EDP 8.2 Assure that growth pays for growth except in instances where clear public policy supports additional public investment.*

*EDP 8.3 Draw on outside regional, state and federal and private/non-profit resources to assist in meeting community infrastructure and public service needs associated with economic development.*

*EDP 8.4 Develop programs to encourage work trip commute reductions including ride sharing and transit.*

*EDP 8.5 Seek cost-effective, innovative, and state of the art solutions for utility and telecommunications infrastructure.*

### **12.5.9 Hawk Property Subarea**

**EDG 9.0 Develop a secondary economic center in the Hawk Property Subarea that offers shopping, employment, and residential opportunities without competing with the Town Center.**

**EDP 9.1 Encourage both regional and local-serving commercial uses that meet community shopping needs and provide jobs.**

**EDP 9.2 Formulate an image and branding strategy to provide a unique identity distinct from the Covington Town Center, such as a Master Sign Program.**

EDP 9.3 Implement land use and zoning standards that will encourage a mix of regional and local commercial uses and housing densities.

EDP 9.4 Encourage commercial development comprised of a mix of regional retail, iconic/local retail and related uses that will serve local residents as well as residents of neighboring communities.

EDP 9.5 Ensure that commercial areas are sensitive to the natural features around them.