



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office

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Aaron Reardon
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Comp Plan update strikes necessary balance between future population growth and economic needs, Reardon says

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*Executive urges active citizen involvement in review of document that will
shape County policy on land use and environment over next decade*

The recommended 10-year update of the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan strikes a necessary balance between future population growth and the need to create jobs for people who live here, Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon said today.

Executive Reardon urged citizens to be actively engaged in reviewing the plan, which will provide guidance on where the County will accommodate new residents, businesses, public facilities and open space over the next decade.

Planners estimate that as many as 930,000 people could be living in Snohomish County by 2025.

Today, the County population is slightly under 645,000.

“Growth is coming and we must manage it properly,” Executive Reardon said. “Our plan achieves the necessary balance between people and jobs.”

Executive Reardon said County planning efforts are focusing on reversing a trend that today sees 40 percent of local workers commuting to jobs in neighboring King County. This figure has a dramatic and negative impact on the County’s tax base and its ability to generate enough revenue to provide citizens with critical services.

The plan accommodates a 2025 employment base of nearly 350,000 jobs – more than 130,000 more than were working Countywide in 2003.

“We can no longer afford to be a county of commuters, driving to King County for a paycheck and returning home at night,” Executive Reardon said. “The plan recognizes this. We have got to create local jobs for local people.”

Most of the new residential and business development is planned for inside the County’s existing urban growth boundaries – UGAs. They have been expanded only slightly in the recommended plan. But there is significant capacity for building within UGAs that adjoin County cities. Such growth preserves resources by:

- Using existing infrastructure such as roads and utilities;
- Providing ways to partner with cities on design standards for commercial and residential developments;
- Encouraging development of neighborhoods;
- Providing customers for commercial areas;
- Reducing commuting;
- Increasing economic development opportunities.

The comprehensive plan calls for studies that would examine whether the County’s UGA’s should eventually be annexed into neighboring cities, which are geared to providing urban levels of services. Several large sites would also be designated to spur local employment, including land in North Marysville, Cathcart and the Maltby neighborhood.

Executive Reardon said the comprehensive plan also preserves rural areas – particularly farms and forestlands –by directing future growth into UGAs. Rural areas are protected by keeping expansion of existing UGAs to a minimum.

The County’s Department of Planning and Development Services is scheduling a series of open houses that will run over the next three weeks. The first is Tuesday, April 19 at the County Administration East Building’s Main Conference Room. A meeting will be held Thursday, April 21 at the Alderwood Middle School Cafeteria in Lynnwood and a third will take place Thursday, April 28 in Arlington at the Post Middle School Commons. A fourth meeting will be held Monday, May 2 in Monroe at the Monroe Junior High School Commons.

The open houses will start at 5 p.m. and end at 8 p.m.

In addition, any Snohomish County resident whose property is affected by comprehensive plan changes – alterations of UGA boundaries, land use designations or zoning – will be notified by mail.

“We will be listening to people,” Executive Reardon said. “Over the next two months there will be many opportunities for citizens to review, comment and seek changes to the plan.”

Copies of the comprehensive plan will be available in the reference sections of Sno-Isle libraries as early as Saturday. In addition, the plan will be posted on-line at www.co.snohomish.wa.us/pds/10YearUpdate.htm.

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For additional information, please contact:

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