



Kitsap County

Critical Area Ordinance Update 2024

Public Participation Plan



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Introduction

Kitsap County is required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) to update its Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) and development regulations by December 31, 2024. The 2024 Critical Areas Ordinance will plan for protecting critical areas to preserve the natural environment, wildlife habitats, and sources of fresh drinking water while encouraging public safety by limiting development in areas prone to natural hazards. The County's Critical Areas Ordinance will be updated to ensure compliance with state mandates, maintain consistency with local regulations, and provide predictability and clarifications..

To complete the update, County staff will be reviewing and updating the CAO and reaching out to residents, community groups, businesses, and Tribes in Kitsap County, to inform, engage, and obtain input. The overarching goal of this outreach is to generate a CAO that ensures a high quality of life for all residents while protecting the County's natural resources for present and future generations.

The GMA requires the county to create and broadly disseminate a Public Participation Plan (RCW 36.70A.140) for this CAO update. The purpose of this plan is to provide a unified public outreach approach for the various components of the update. This includes defining the county's public participation goals, identifying key partners and interested parties, and developing a communications approach and schedule. This plan describes how the county will implement early and continuous public participation opportunities throughout the update process and ensure that effective engagement and outreach is extended to historically underserved communities and residents.

This plan is a working document and will be adjusted, as needed.

1.0 Goals and Objectives

- Provide the public with timely information and opportunities to review and comment on the Critical Areas Ordinance review and potential amendments. These comments on the formal draft proposal will be forwarded to Kitsap County Planning Commission and Kitsap County Board of Commissioners.
- Ensure transparency and predictability throughout the process by engaging with the public early and often.
- Provide guidance to the public on best practices for writing and submitting comments on the draft CAO.
- Provide opportunities for formal public input throughout the review process and especially at key milestones prior to decision making by local officials.
- Consult and consider recommendations from federal and state agencies, and Native American Tribes in Kitsap County.

- Engage a diverse population equitably and inclusively, especially communities that have been historically underserved, so that the resulting Critical Areas Ordinance is well-grounded in the experiences and knowledge of the public.

This plan will guide County staff in gathering public comments and ideas on Kitsap County’s quality of life, public safety, growth, and economic development. The plan will also help create positive community engagement, build trust, ensure transparency, foster healthy discussion about growth management, and improve coordination between jurisdictions within the County. The plan provides for robust public participation, vital to creating a practical, inclusive, and implementable Critical Areas Ordinance.

Critical Areas Ordinance Update topics include:

- Wetlands
- Areas with critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- Frequently flooded areas
- Geologically hazardous areas

2.0 Team Roles and Responsibilities

Name	Organization	Role	Responsibility
Jeff Rimack	Kitsap County	DCD Director	Program Management
Scott Diener	Kitsap County	Planning Manager	Program Management
Mark Daniel	Watershed Co.	Consultant Project Manager	
Dan Nickel	Watershed Co.	Consultant Project Manager	
Colin Poff	Kitsap County	Planning Supervisor	Project Management
Kirvie Mesebeluu-Yobech	Kitsap County	Environmental Planning Supervisor	Project Management
Carla Lundgren	Kitsap County	Planner	Project Lead, Public Engagement
Jim Rogers	Kitsap County	Planner	Public Engagement, Events
Kathlene Barnhart	Kitsap County	Planner	Technical Support, Current Planning
Brittany Gordon	Kitsap County	Natural Resource Coordinator	Technical Support, Environmental Programs
Cindy Read	Kitsap County	Technology Analyst	Website, Information Services

3.0 Public Engagement Opportunities

The County is committed to providing various opportunities for the public to learn about and participate in the CAO update process. Input will be solicited throughout the project, with two formal public comment periods anticipated in April 2023 and again in early 2024 (focusing on the

draft ordinance). The County will use different modes of communication to inform the public and encourage their participation.

3.1 Website

<https://www.kitsapgov.com/dcd/Pages/Critical-Areas-Ordinance-Update-2024.aspx>

The County has a 2024 Critical Areas Ordinance Update webpage where interested citizens and community members may visit for status updates, draft documents, official notices, and other project information. This webpage will be the primary repository of all information related to the Critical Areas Ordinance update process. An e-mail link for questions or comments will be provided. Website visitors will also be invited to sign-up for the County's email distribution list.

3.2 In-person and Online Open House

The County will host two virtual general meetings and one in-person open house for the Critical Areas Ordinance update process. The virtual general meetings will be held in the early stages of the update process and will inform the public about the CAO update process, the topics that are subject for review, the project timeline, and future opportunities for public comment engagement. The County will develop notification materials including email notification and social media advertisements to ensure broad participation from all key partners and interested parties.

At the open house, community members will learn about the content on the website and be able to ask County staff clarifying questions. Contents of the webpage will include an online comment form that will be available during comment periods to broaden awareness and participation, a calendar of upcoming events and all project materials that can be reviewed. Feedback will be collected through these virtual and in-person events. Public feedback will be summarized, compiled, and posted on the County's project website.

3.3 Working Groups

The County will form Working Groups comprised of standing members and technical experts. Standing members will be representatives from local Tribes and community organizations with experience in planning and critical areas. Technical experts will be technical staff from appropriate state agencies with training and expertise in the critical area topic being discussed. The Working Group is not a decision making body, but a group assembled to review, comment on, and make TECHNICAL recommendations related to the CAO. All recommendations developed through the Working Group will be presented to the Department of Community Development, the Kitsap County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners, as the County works to update the CAO.

3.4 Consultations

The County will offer consultations throughout the CAO update process with support from Watershed to connect with key communities. These communities include but are not limited to:

- Community Advisory Councils

- Department Advisory Group,
- Local associations,
- Minority and low-income communities,
- Young residents of Kitsap County,
- Property owners and businesses directly impacted by CAO legislation,
- Local developers
- Environmental interest groups.

In a formal government to government approach, the County, with support from Watershed, will consult with the Port Gamble S’Klallam, Suquamish, Skokomish, Puyallup, and Squaxin Island Tribes. Bi-weekly meetings are already being held with Tribes through the Comprehensive Plan Update process, and those meetings will be utilized to this end. Additional consultation with Tribes will be scheduled as necessary. Tribal members may also be standing members of working groups as described in Section 3.3

3.5 Notice Mailing List

The County will utilize the “Kitsap County Code Update Announcement” GovDelivery to establish an e-notice mailing list of interested persons and organizations. Members of the community will be able to sign up for the e-notice by visiting the County’s CAO Update webpage. The County will also send a notification to contacts on the “Comprehensive Plan Announcement” GovDelivery mailing list to provide information on how to receive email updates on the CAO.. Notices will provide general information about the project, contact information for submitting comments, and times of public meetings or hearings.

3.6 News Media

The County will keep local news media, such as the Kitsap Sun and Kitsap Daily News, up to date on the process and receive copies of all official notices and communication materials.

3.7 Social Media

The County will utilize its social media accounts, such as Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/KitsapWa/>), to periodically advertise the CAO update and to post information on upcoming events and engagement opportunities.

3.8 Comment

The County will encourage interested citizens, associations, agencies, and Tribes to provide comments by using the County’s online comment form, by letter or by email. All comments will be summarized and included in the project record. The County’s CAO Update webpage will be the central repository for information under consideration. Hard copies of CAO information under public consideration may be provided at Kitsap regional libraries and Kitsap County Department of Community Development permit counter.

3.9 Kitsap County Planning Commission

The Kitsap County Planning Commission is an advisory body that assists the Department of Community Development in carrying out its duties, including providing Findings of Fact and recommendations on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. These Findings of Fact and recommendations are submitted to the Department of Community Development that are then forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners. The County will conduct numerous check-ins with the Planning Commission prior to a Department recommended draft and will have at least two work study sessions with the Planning Commission on the proposed amendments. Once the proposed amendments are released, a 30-day comment period will commence including one public hearing. This will allow interested members of the public to comment on draft amendment documents for the CAO periodic review. Official notices will be published as required by Kitsap County Code.

3.10 Board of County Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners will be the final local decision-making authority on the proposed CAO amendments. Interested citizens are encouraged to participate in the Commissioners public hearing. The Commissioners will have a comment period and public hearing that will encourage verbal and written comments, as described in Section 4, Public Comment, below. Official notices will be published as required by Kitsap County Code.

3.11 Additional Opportunities for Engagement

This CAO update is an opportunity to create a more engaged Kitsap County community for future code and policy updates. The County may invite younger County residents to engage in the CAO update by connecting with local colleges, high schools, and programs focused on land use planning to invite them to participate in the virtual meetings and in-person open house, join the e-notice mailing list and/or request additional time with County Staff.

4.0 Public Comment

The Board of County Commissioners will conduct a public hearing and comment period to consider public testimony on the CAO update. The Commissioners will take into consideration Planning Commission's recommendation and public comments received during their formal comment opportunity stage of the project. Public notice of the public hearing with the Planning Commission and the public hearing with the Board of Commissioners will state the date/time, review body, and location of the public hearing. Notices will be published per Kitsap County Code and e-notices sent to key partners and interested parties listed in section 5.0.

5.0 Community Partners and Interested Parties

The County will engage the following audiences – individual and agencies – to request that they participate in the Critical Areas Ordinance update, and each will participate in the process in the ways that they are comfortable.

Members of the Public

- Interested residents
- Landowners
- Business owners

Tribal Governments/Commissions

- Suquamish Tribe*
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe*
- Skokomish Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe
- Squaxin Island Tribe
- Point No Point Treaty Council
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

**Reservation land in Kitsap Co.*

County Officials

- Kitsap County Planning Commission
- Board of County Commissioners

Appointed and Separately Elected County Departments and Services

- Public Works
- Parks
- Human Services
- Emergency Management
- Prosecutors Office

Other Local Government

- Cities
 - o Bainbridge Island
 - o Poulsbo
 - o Bremerton
 - o Port Orchard
- Ports
 - o Bremerton
 - o Brownsville
 - o Keyport
 - o Manchester
 - o Poulsbo
 - o Illahee
 - o Silverdale

- o Tracyton
- o Waterman
- o Indianola
- o Kingston
- o Eglon

- Conservation district
- Public Utility districts
- Sewer districts
- School districts
- Kitsap Public Health District

State Government

- Department of Ecology
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Parks
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Health
- Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Federal Government

- Naval Base Kitsap
 - o Keyport
 - o Bremerton
 - o Bangor
 - o Jackson Park
 - o Manchester
- US Fish and Wildlife Services
- NOAA Fisheries
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Navy

Associations and Community Groups

- Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners
- Kitsap Environmental Coalition
- Kitsap Building Association
- Kitsap Realtors Association
- Kitsap County Department of Community Development

Advisory Group

- Central Kitsap Community Council
- Suquamish Citizen Advisory Council
- Manchester Citizen Advisory Council
- Kingston Citizen Advisory Council
- Keyport Neighborhood Group
- Illahee Community Group
- Kitsap Economic Development Alliance
- Stillwaters Environmental Center

Non-profit organizations

- Great Peninsula Conservancy
- Washington Environmental Council
- Puget Sound Restoration Fund
- Hood Canal Environmental Council
- Futurewise
- Forterra
- The Nature Conservancy
- Recreational
- Agricultural

6.0 Inclusive Outreach

Based on demographic data pulled from the 2020 U.S. Census, Kitsap County is 75% White, 9% Hispanic, 5% Asian, 3% Black, 1.5% American Indian, 1% Pacific Islander. Census data also shows that 12% of households make less than \$25,000 a year.

In order to reach out to all demographic segments, including outreach to minority and low-income groups, the County will offer consultations to community organizations.

The County will invite younger County residents to participate in the surveys, events, meetings, and formal public comment periods. This will include schools, college and university programs associated with the County.

The County is also committed to providing accommodations to people with disabilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To request ADA accommodation for disabilities and/or materials in a format for the visually impaired, please reach out to the County using the contact information below.

Organization	Contact information
Kitsap County Department of Community Development	Amanda Walston 360-337-5777 awalston@co.kitsap.wa.us
Kitsap County Commissioners Office	Dana Daniels 360-337-5777 ddainels@co.kitsap.wa.us

7.0 Process and Schedule

<p>Phase 1 – Best Available Science and Initiate Public Participation January – April 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop outreach and engagement materials • Launch website • Distribute surveys • Project kick-off public presentation • Identify members for Working Groups
<p>Phase 2 – Technical CAO Development April 2023 – December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold virtual public meetings & in-person Open House • Hold Working Group meetings and provide summary documents • Consultation meetings with community groups as needed/requested • Briefings and/or work studies with Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners
<p>Phase 3 – Review and Adoption Process January – June 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Commission public hearing to receive public comments on final draft plan and make recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners • Board of County Commissioners public hearing to receive public comments and make final decision to adopt, deny or modify final draft plan