

King County, Washington

King County is a large county encompassing the Seattle metropolitan area, as well as large farming, forestry, and recreational areas. Under state-mandated growth management requirements, King County established a comprehensive plan that balances the needs of orderly growth, farmland, open space protection, and an adequate supply of housing. To achieve this balance, King County made major changes in its zoning and land development statutes to increase densities and streamline review processes. Thus, even though the county has experienced unprecedented growth and must meet rigorous growth management requirements, homes in the Seattle market area are similar in affordability to those nationally. In the face of restrictions on land supply and increasing demand, Seattle, through regulatory reform, maintains its overall housing affordability.

Specific Actions Taken:

- **Eliminates minimum lot sizes through zoning.**
- **Requires *minimum* densities, reversing a traditional regulatory requirement.**
- **Allows multi-family housing in many formerly single-family residential areas.**
- **Permits mixed use in many formerly residential areas.**
- **Permits, as of right, accessory units in all lots over 10,000 square feet.**
- **Provides new zoning for townhomes and zero-lot-line development.**
- **Allows small cottage housing at twice the normal densities.**
- **Enhances customer service with streamlined environmental requirements for small developments and preapproval of commonly used house plans.**