



Department of Community Development – Rafe Wysham, Director
619 Division Street
Port Orchard, WA 98366

STAFF REPORT

2025 Year of the Rural

DATE: September 15, 2025, Updated October 24, 2025, Final April 10, 2026
TO: Kitsap County Board County Commissioners
FROM: Heather Cleveland, Long Range Planner, Project Lead
SUBJECT: Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update, Code Updates (Child Care, and Agriculture), Reclassification Requests

EXHIBITS:

- A. Draft Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update 2.0 and Draft Land Use Chapter Update
- B. Draft Amendments to Title 17: Agriculture 2.0 and Child Care 2.0
- C. Draft Reclassification Requests Staff Report 2.0
- D. SEPA Determination and Environmental Checklist
- E. Summary of comments between 09/02/25 and 11/10/25 (currently through 09/23/25)
- F. Public Comments received on Draft Documents between 09/02/25 and 09/23/2025
- G. Public Comments received on Draft Documents between 09/24/25 and 11/10/25
- H. Planning Commission Findings of Fact and Recommendations

OVERVIEW

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in December 2024 with a major focus on growth on Urban Growth Areas. To allow for focus on rural communities and lands, rural economies, and specific topics impacting rural areas, the county created the Year of the Rural program for 2025.

The three deliverables for the Year of the Rural include:

- Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update
- Proposed Code Updates
- Rural Reclassification Requests – Recommendations

This report is based on the draft documents as amended by the Kitsap County Planning Commission in the Findings of Fact dated October 21, 2025.

NOTICE GIVEN

Notice of the Kitsap County Planning Commission’s public hearing was properly and timely published in the official County newspaper, the Kitsap Sun, and on the Kitsap County project website, [Year of the Rural](#). Notices were also sent via electronic notification to interested parties through the County’s GovDelivery system.

Notice of the Kitsap County Board of Commissioner’s public hearing was properly and timely published in the official County newspaper, the Kitsap Sun, and on the Kitsap County project website, [Year of the Rural](#). Notices were also sent via electronic notification to interested parties through the County’s GovDelivery system.

SEPA

On September 2, 2025, Kitsap County issued public notice of a *Programmatic Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) and Incorporation by Reference*. This initiated a comment period ending September 16, 2025.

This SEPA DNS specifically incorporates, by reference, the DEIS and FEIS adopted with the 2024 Comprehensive Plan by Ordinance 637-2024 *Relating to Growth Management, Amending the Comprehensive Plan and Map, Capital Facilities Plan, and amendments to Title 16 (Land Division and Development), Title 17 (Zoning), and Title 18 (Environment)*.

This programmatic DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2) and is not appealable. The SEPA Determination and Environmental Checklist are included as Exhibit D.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A comment period for was made available on the project website on September 2, 2025, and the published draft and comment opportunity were promoted through the DCD newsletter, YOTR Gov

Delivery list, presentations to Manchester CAC, Central Kitsap CAC, Kingston CAC, and an announcement to the Suquamish CAC.

Between September 2, 2025, and November 10, 2025, a public comment period was held for the draft Rural and Resource Lands Chapter update, draft code update (agriculture and child care), and reclassification request analysis and recommendations.

A summary of comments received through September 23 is included as Exhibit E.

A table of comments received from 09/02/25 to 09/23/25 is included in Exhibit F.

A table of comments received from 09/24/25 to 11/10/25 is included in Exhibit G.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/PARTICIPATION

Public participation is an essential and required component for updating the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. The list below outlines the public participation events that occurred.

- **Public Project Kick-Off Presentation.** March 4, 2025, County staff hosted a hybrid public project kick-off meeting at Village Green in Kingston for an in-person and virtual presentation of the project charter, scope of work, timeline, and community engagement plan.
- **Workshops and Open House.** County staff hosted an Agriculture Working Group Meeting on April 4 with the Agriculture Working Group Steering Committee and a cross section of additional members from across the agriculture community. Three additional Agriculture Workshops were held in collaboration with Kitsap Community & Agriculture Alliance on May 10 in Kingston; May 14 in Port Orchard; and May 24 in Bremerton to discuss goals, policies, and potential agriculture code updates presented by the agriculture community and Kitsap County. A hybrid project presentation and in-person open house was held on September 11 in the Commissioner Chambers at 619 Division Street with a large virtual (35) and in-person (170) attendance. Community members had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments that were answered live or noted.
- **Working Groups.** An Agriculture Working Group Steering Committee with representatives from the following organizations and networks: WSU Kitsap Extension, Kitsap Conservation District, Kitsap Community & Agriculture Alliance, Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau, and Kitsap Farmland Preservation Coalition. The Steering Committee met monthly January – April and September - December to coordinate feedback during the project. County staff also met with Kitsap Child Care Task Force and Rural Kitsap Business Coalition during the project.
- **Community Consultations and Stakeholder Engagement.** In 2025, County staff convened various meetings or outreach with stakeholder groups to present and discuss the Year of the Rural project. The groups included but were not limited to Kitsap County Child Care Task Force, Kingston Rotary, Kitsap Alliance of Property Owners, Tribal Coordination Meetings,

Great Peninsula Conservancy, a gravel pit owner, Washington DNR, Kitsap Environmental Coalition, Kitsap County Public Health, and reclassification request applicants.

- **Events.** Kitsap County attended various events to engage people on the Year of the Rural project and public engagement process including Silverdale Music in the Park and Discover Kingston.
- **Community Advisory Council (CAC) meetings.** County staff provided updates and presentations to the Manchester Community Advisory Council (MCAC), Central Kitsap Community Council (CKCC), Suquamish Community Advisory Council (SCAC) and Kingston Community Advisory Council (KCAC).
- **Tribal Coordination Meetings.** County staff provided a project presentation early in the process, held several staff-to-staff meetings mid-year, and additional meetings and presentations in September with Tribal staff from Tribal governments (Suquamish, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Squaxin Island, and Point No Point Treaty Council).
- **Internal Review Team.** To ensure internal consistency, the County convened an Internal Review Team comprised of various departments and service providers within the County, including Parks, Public Works, and Emergency Management, and Kitsap County Department of Community Development Divisions: Community Planning, Current Planning, Building and Fire Safety, and Environmental Programs.
- **Public Noticing.** Meetings, events, and public comment periods were noticed through the electronic GovDelivery system, posted on the project webpage, and in some cases posted using social media. Proper noticing procedures were followed for all public hearings and release of the draft and final environmental impact statement, such as posting in the Kitsap Sun Newspaper, or sending to the Ecology SEPA register.
- **Project webpage.** Kitsap County created a dedicated webpage for the Year of the Rural project, [Year of the Rural](#). The webpage provides an opportunity for the public to stay current with emerging issues and events related to the Plan update, as well as provide comments, sign up for notifications, and review all draft documents and maps related to the update.
- **Planning Commission Briefings and Work Sessions.** The Planning Commission conducted regular information sharing and work study sessions throughout the Plan update process. All sessions were open to the public. These briefings and work sessions were held during major milestones of the project and generally occurred in relationship to the (1) initial project kick off, scoping, and direction, (2) outreach and timeline, and (3) review of draft documents and recommendations.
- **Board of Commissioners Briefings and Work Sessions.** The Board of County Commissioners conducted regular information sharing and work study sessions throughout the Plan update process. All sessions were open to the public. These briefings and work sessions were held during major milestones of the project, and general occurred in relationship to the (1) initial project kick off, scoping, and direction, (2) outreach and timeline, and (3) review of final draft documents and adoption.

BACKGROUND

The most recent periodic updates of the Comprehensive Plan occurred in 2024, 2016, 2012, and 2006. The Comprehensive Plan has generally undergone limited amendments on an annual basis.

The Washington Department of Commerce (Commerce) does not have approval authority over the Comprehensive Plan but does review for consistency with the Growth Management Act and ensure that jurisdictions remain in compliance by meeting the legislatively appointed deadlines for updates. A Notice of Intent to Adopt (NOIA) for the proposed Year of the Rural amendments was provided to Commerce on October 6, 2025.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in December 2024 with focus on growth in Urban Growth Areas. To allow for focus on the rural communities and lands and specific topics impacting rural areas, the County created the Year of the Rural program for 2025.

The three deliverables for the Year of the Rural include:

1. **Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update.** The purpose of the Chapter is to define and provide policy directions to preserve and enhance the rural character in the unincorporated portions of Kitsap County outside urban growth areas (UGAs) and will work in tandem with the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Map.
2. **Development Regulations.** The County prepared draft development regulations to Title 17 *Zoning*. Draft amendments relate to various topics, including but not limited to:
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Child Care
3. **Rural Reclassification Requests.** The Board of County Commissioners removed 14 residential reclassification requests by updating the docket in June 2025. The remaining three reclassification requests are requesting either Rural Commercial or Rural Industrial classifications.

The following are the Growth Management Act directives for this update:

1. The GMA, RCW 36.70A.020(8), Goal 8, Natural Resource Industries requires the County to “Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.”
2. The GMA, RCW 36.70A.070(5) directs that Kitsap County shall include a rural element including lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources.
3. The GMA, RCW 36.70A.130(1), mandates that Kitsap County’s Comprehensive Plan and corresponding development regulations, including the Zoning Code and Map, be subject to continuing review and evaluation.

PROCEDURE

1. **Project Kickoff.** In December 2024, The Board of County Commissioners reviewed the proposed 2025 Year of the Rural Scope of Work, Deliverables, Schedule, and Community Engagement Plan.
2. **Land Use Requests.** Kitsap County accepted requests for land use reclassifications from anyone who wished to apply and was free of charge. The submission period lasted between June and August of 2022. Information about the land use request process is summarized in the findings section of this staff report. Seventeen rural-to-rural reclassification requests were deferred to the Year of the Rural project and the site specific review process outlined in KCC 21.08 *Legislative Action Procedures*.
3. **Docket Update.** On June 23, 2025, Kitsap County adopted *Resolution No. 117-2025 Amending Resolution 207-2024 to modify the Kitsap County 2025 Workplan and Final Docket* – “to remove (14) rural residential requests, while retaining the requests for rural commercial/industrial classification for future review.”
4. **SEPA Determination.** On September 2, the County issued a *Programmatic Determination of Non-Significance and Incorporation by Reference*. A Notice of Availability was posted in the Kitsap Sun newspaper, sent to the SEPA Register, and properly noticed to agencies, Tribes and interested parties.
5. **Department of Commerce Review.** On October 3, 2025, the County issued a 60-day NOIA to Commerce. A Commerce letter of acknowledgement of receipt was received on October 3, 2025.
6. **Final Public Comment period.** Following proper noticing, a public comment period was held for the Year of the Rural deliverables – *Rural and Resource Lands Chapter* update, Title 17 *Zoning* updates (agriculture and child care) September 2 through November 10, 2025. Comments received by September 23 were forwarded to the Planning Commission.
7. **Planning Commission Public Hearing.** On September 23, 2025, following timely and effective notice, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider draft Year of the Rural deliverables – *Rural and Resource Lands Chapter* update, Title 17 *Zoning* updates (agriculture, child care, horse facilities).
8. **Planning Commission Deliberations.** On October 7, 2025, the Planning Commission will deliberate on draft Year of the Rural deliverables – *Rural and Resource Lands Chapter* update, Title 17 *Zoning* updates (agriculture and child care).
9. **Updated Documents for Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing.** New versions of the deliverables were created incorporating Planning Commission recommendations and minor clarifying edits based on internal review. The documents are noted with the “updated” date of October 24, 2025 and include the term “2.0” in the file name. Edits were tracked in an edits table and published on the project webpage with the 2.0 documents.

10. **Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing.** On October 27 2025, public notice was provided for the Board of County Commissioners hearing on Year of the Rural deliverables – *Rural and Resource Lands Chapter* update, Title 17 *Zoning* updates (agriculture and child care). In addition to the draft documents, the Board will be provided with this Staff Report and a comment matrix of those comments on the final draft documents to-date.
11. **Board of Commissioners Deliberation.** Deliberations are scheduled to be held on November 24, 2025.
12. **Adoption.** The Board will consider adoption on December 8, 2025.

FINDINGS

Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update and Rural Reclassification Requests

1. The proposed Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map are consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), including the fifteen statewide planning goals contained therein and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).
2. The Comprehensive Plan update is consistent with PSRC’s Vision 2050 and the Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies.
3. The Comprehensive Plan update reflects local circumstances and bears a substantial relationship to the public’s general health, safety, and welfare.

Development Regulations

4. The proposed revisions to Title 17 KCC “Zoning” (Child Care and Agriculture) are consistent with the proposed Comprehensive Plan.
5. The proposed regulations foster access to child care throughout Kitsap county, rural business, and rural economic viability.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Approval of Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update draft dated September 2, 2025, as amended by the Planning Commission shown in Attachment H.
2. Approval of the Kitsap County Code Title 17 “Zoning” (Child Care and Agriculture) draft dated September 2, 2025, as amended by the Planning Commission shown Attachment H.
3. Approval of Reclassification Requests, as amended by the Planning Commission shown in Attachment H.

EXHIBITS A – H

Exhibit A: 2025 Draft Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update 2.0 and Land Use Chapter Update

- 2025 Draft Rural and Resource Lands Chapter Update 2.0:
<https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/PEP%20Documents/20251024%20Draft%20RRL%20Chapter%202.0.pdf>
- 2025 Draft Land Use Chapter Update:
<https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/PEP%20Documents/20251024%20Draft%202024%20Comp%20Plan%20-%20Land%20Use%20Chapter.pdf>

Exhibit B: 2025 Draft Amendments to Title 17: Agriculture and Child Care

- 2025 Draft Agriculture Code 2.0:
<https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/PEP%20Documents/20251024%20Draft%20Ag%20Code%202.0.pdf>
- 2025 Draft Child Care Code 2.0:
<https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/PEP%20Documents/20251024%20Draft%20Child%20Care%20Code%202.0.pdf>

Exhibit C: 2025 Draft Reclassification Staff Report 2.0

<https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/PEP%20Documents/20251024%20Draft%20Reclass%20Request%20.0.pdf>

Exhibit D: SEPA Determination and Environmental Checklist, Dated September 2, 2025 ²

https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/PEP%20Documents/Year%20of%20the%20Rural_Programmatic%20SEPA%20Determination.pdf

https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd/PEP%20Documents/Year%20of%20the%20Rural_Programmatic%20SEPA%20Checklist.pdf

Exhibit E: Summary of comments between 09/02/25 and 11/10/25

- Comments through 09/23/2025: [20251014Comment Summary Document 0902-0923.pdf](#)
- Comments through 11/10/2025: [20251119 YOTR Comment Summary.pdf](#)

Exhibit F: Public Comments received on Draft Documents between 09/02/25 and 09/23/2025

[Y20250923_YearOfTheRuralDeliverablesCommentForm.xlsx](#)

Exhibit G: Public Comments received on Draft Documents between 09/24/25 and 11/10/25

[20251119 YOTR Comment Summary.pdf](#)

Exhibit H: Planning Commission Findings of Fact and Recommendations

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