



Legislation Text

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AN ORDINANCE establishing a framework for public engagement in
unincorporated areas of King County.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Findings:

A. King County serves as a regional government for all county residents and as a local government for unincorporated area residents.

B. The unincorporated area population is two hundred eighty-four thousand one hundred, which is equivalent to the second largest city in Washington state.

C. Consistent with the Growth Management Act, urban unincorporated areas are to be annexed to cities, which are the appropriate providers of urban services.

D. Until all urban unincorporated areas are annexed, King County has a responsibility to provide services to those areas and to engage and communicate with residents.

E. Also consistent with the Growth Management Act, rural unincorporated areas are to remain under the jurisdiction of King County in perpetuity.

F. King County has an ongoing responsibility to protect rural character, rural-based economic activity and the natural environment, and to engage and communicate with rural residents.

G. To better serve unincorporated area residents, King County employs a broad spectrum of public engagement and communication practices, including the use of county boards, commissions and expert review panels; unincorporated area councils and citizen advisory groups; public meetings and forums; newsletters and press releases; surveys and questionnaires; mailed and published notice; brochures and other printed materials;

and email, websites and social media.

H. Use of these practices is guided by county codes, policies established by council-enacted legislation and executive orders, administrative procedures, professional standards and other protocols.

I. In 2010, King County adopted a King County strategic plan that contains goals, objectives and strategies for public engagement.

J. The King County strategic plan provides a unifying framework for the county's public engagement practices.

K. From 1994 until adoption of this ordinance, public engagement in unincorporated areas has been guided by executive order PRE-7-1, which directs implementation of the citizen participation initiative.

L. As part of the 2011 budget, the council adopted a proviso directing the executive to develop a new framework for public engagement in unincorporated areas.

M. King County's outreach strategy for both incorporated and unincorporated areas should be guided by the public engagement goal contained in the King County strategic plan.

SECTION 2. The council hereby adopts the following framework, which shall guide county branches, departments, agencies and offices in their interactions with unincorporated area residents. The executive is hereby directed to take the following steps, in coordination with other county elected officials, to implement this framework with existing staff resources and within existing budgets by January 1, 2012:

A. Establish unincorporated community service areas, that take into account demographics, natural features, existing political, administrative and community boundaries and with logical boundaries that together cover all of unincorporated King County;

B. Identify a single staff contact from county government for residents in each unincorporated community service area familiar with that service area's community for the purpose of facilitating service delivery between unincorporated areas and the county;

C. Host public meetings in each unincorporated community service area at least once each calendar

year, in collaboration with the elected King County councilmember for that area, which shall be broadly advertised;

D. Annually develop, in collaboration with each community, an interbranch work program for each community service area, including a plan for public meetings for the year, and status report on the previous year's work programs and any significant issues affecting the community service areas for transmittal to the council;

E. Create interbranch teams to better coordinate public outreach and service delivery across King County government;

F. Within each service area, identify and engage with community based organizations such as unincorporated area councils, community councils, community development associations and other groups. The groups engaged shall include groups that meet the following criteria: location and operation within the service area, with resident, volunteer officers or directors; broad-based community focus; conduct of open public meetings available to all area residents; and systems where meeting attendees may participate in discussion and decision making;

G. Provide regular opportunities for community based organizations and residents to meet with King County elected officials and senior management;

H. Develop mechanisms to involve cities in public engagement and work programs for unincorporated community service areas that are within cities' potential annexation areas;

I. Identify an appropriate county department to co-lead implementation of this effort with the executive;

J. Create and update at least monthly a website that residents and organizations in the unincorporated community service areas can use as a resource for obtaining information, such as information on federal state and private grant opportunities and community events; and

K. Transmit to the council with the 2012 executive proposed budget a status report on the steps above along with any legislation necessary to implement this framework such as revisions to existing code, staffing or

organizational changes, except that any changes to the King County Comprehensive Plan needed to implement this framework shall be transmitted with the 2012 Comprehensive Plan update.

SECTION 3. The executive is establishing goal teams for each of the goals of the King County strategic plan, in order to facilitate accountability and coordination of all branches, departments, agencies and offices of county government regarding implementation of the strategic plan. During implementation of the new framework through 2012, the public engagement goal team shall include at least one member who serves on an unincorporated area council. The public engagement goal team will develop a detailed plan to address the following objectives:

A. Expand opportunities to seek input, listen, and respond to residents;

B. Empower people to play an active role in shaping their future; and

C. Improve public awareness of what King County does in service of the strategic plan goal to promote robust public engagement that informs, involves and empowers people and communities. The framework adopted in section 2 of this ordinance for public engagement with unincorporated areas will be incorporated into the implementation plan developed by the public engagement goal team. In developing the transmitted implementation plan, the executive shall engage with existing unincorporated area council members to help determine the mechanisms for services and activities that enable and facilitate the county's public engagement efforts. The plan will identify

potential funding sources and recommend strategies to the community service areas for pursuing funds.