

Population and Employment

Growth Targets

The GMA requires that the county designate UGAs based upon the 20-year population projection made for the county by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). Specifically, Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) are required to include areas and densities sufficient to accommodate the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period.

At least every eight years, the GMA requires Snohomish County to work with the cities to review and update the UGAs so that they are capable of accommodating the urban growth projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period. The most recent OFM population projections, released in May 2012, are currently being used by the county and the cities to satisfy the 8-year plan update requirement. For Snohomish County, the May 2012 OFM population projections for the year 2035 range from a low of 802,384 to a high of 1,161,003, up from 722,900 in 2012. The medium 2035 population projection is 955,281 (defined as the “most likely” OFM projection as specified in GMA).

Under GMA, OFM is required to provide 20-year population projections at the county level only. Subcounty allocations of the OFM projection, essential for detailed comprehensive planning analyses (i.e., UGA determination, land use, housing, capital facilities requirements, and transportation), are developed collaboratively between the cities and the counties. In Snohomish County, the countywide planning policies (CPPs) define a process for allocating the OFM projection to UGAs, cities, and rural areas through a cooperative and iterative planning process known as Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT).

Snohomish County Tomorrow is an association of the 20 cities and towns in Snohomish County, Snohomish County government, and Tribal governments. It serves as a forum to develop and recommend growth management policies to the county council. SCT fulfills the Growth Management Act requirement that each county, planning under GMA, work in cooperation and collaboration with its cities, towns and federally recognized Indian tribes. SCT is the countywide group that develops and recommends amendments to the countywide planning policies.

The SCT growth allocation process eventually results in a set of population, housing, and employment “growth targets,” adopted into Appendix B of the countywide planning policies by the county council. The growth targets indicate the amount of growth each jurisdiction agrees to be able to accommodate over the 20-year planning period, as described in local comprehensive plans.

The countywide planning policies establish two types of growth targets. *Initial growth targets* are to be used for at least one of the plan alternatives evaluated by jurisdictions for their local plan updates. *Reconciled growth targets* are developed by SCT following the local plan updates. They are intended to resolve any discrepancies between county and city growth target choices shown in the updated local plans. The county council adopts the reconciled targets into the countywide planning policies subsequent to SCT’s recommendation.

In addition to being based on the OFM projections, the CPPs state that initial subcounty allocations of population, housing, and employment must also address the Regional

Growth Strategy (RGS) guidance contained in the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Vision 2040 regional plan. The RGS outlines a new strategic framework for accommodating future population and employment growth in the region which builds upon the UGA emphasis provided in GMA. Specifically the RGS directs significantly greater amounts of population growth into cities with regional growth centers than past targets or trends suggested, while both unincorporated urban and rural areas play a much reduced role in accommodating future population growth than has been the case in the past.

Using the OFM medium population projection for 2035 and the PSRC Vision 2040 RGS, the SCT Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), composed of Snohomish County city and county planners, developed a set of draft recommended initial 2035 population and employment growth targets. The SCT Steering Committee recommended the PAC's initial 2035 growth allocation to the county council in March 2013. The county council adopted initial 2035 population and employment growth targets into Appendix B of the countywide planning policies in June 2013 (Amended Ordinance 13-032).

The county council's adopted initial 2035 targets differed from the SCT recommendation by assigning 2035 population to jurisdictions in a way that more closely matched the numeric guidance provided in the Vision 2040 RGS.

Long-Term Monitoring

The county and the cities will monitor the extent to which the growth targets are being realized in cities, UGAs, and rural areas. This continues several years of interjurisdictional growth monitoring work which started in 1997 with the publication of the first annual SCT growth monitoring report. If the growth monitoring reports show that geographic distribution of actual residential and

non-residential development is not in line with the targets, then the targets may not be accurate or the GMA plans may not be having the intended effects. The development trend data, relative to the targets, become the indicator for a reevaluation of either the targets and/or the plans.

Monitoring the remaining capacity of land within UGAs to accommodate future growth is as important as monitoring the growth targets. This requires monitoring the actual density of new development along with the amount in order to evaluate the adequacy of the remaining land supply within the UGA to accommodate future growth. If actual development densities are lower than originally assumed in the land capacity analysis for the UGA, adjustments to the plan densities, or development regulations may be required to provide for adequate future land supply throughout the remainder of the GMA plan horizon.

Both the target monitoring and UGA land supply monitoring efforts described above are consistent with the GMA's requirements for periodic review and evaluation of development patterns within UGAs. In 1997, the GMA was amended to include a new requirement for Snohomish County and its cities to establish a buildable lands monitoring program that provides for the periodic review and evaluation of residential, commercial and industrial lands. Through this program, the county and the cities are required to ensure a sufficient inventory of buildable land throughout the remaining portion of the 20-year plan horizon. GMA currently requires publication of an updated buildable lands report every eight years.

The assessment of the adequacy of the remaining urban land supply is to be based on actual development densities observed within the UGA since GMA plan adoption or the previous buildable lands report. Three build-

able lands reports have previously been produced: the 2002, 2007, and 2012 reports.

Buildable lands monitoring may result in revisions to the population, housing, and employment targets in the CPPs. Adjustments to plan densities or development regulations may also be necessary. Snohomish County will continue to work through Snohomish

County Tomorrow to develop and refine specific criteria for monitoring and evaluating the need for target and UGA boundary adjustments.

The following pages list the goals, objectives, and policies for growth allocation, target reconciliation and long-term monitoring.

GOAL PE 1 Establish subcounty allocations of projected population, housing, and employment growth to the planning horizon year 2035 that are consistent with the goals of the Growth Management Act and the countywide planning policies.

Objective PE 1. A Direct future growth in unincorporated Snohomish County primarily into urban areas.

- PE Policies**
- 1.A.1 Snohomish County's portion of the urban growth areas shall receive the majority of the unincorporated county's projected growth as shown in Appendix D-Growth Targets.
 - 1.A.2 The allocations of unincorporated growth to urban areas shall be based on the Regional Growth Strategy guidance contained in Vision 2040, and shall reflect the urban centers designated in the county's comprehensive plan, and any future transit emphasis corridors established in the county's comprehensive plan.
 - 1.A.3 The allocations of unincorporated growth to urban areas shall be located in areas having adequate existing or planned public facility or service capacities to accommodate the growth.
 - 1.A.4 The growth allocations for the unincorporated Southwest UGA shown in Appendix D shall include subtotals for the municipal urban growth areas (MUGAs) associated with each of the nine cities in the Southwest UGA, as depicted in the countywide planning policies.
 - 1.A.5 The population allocation shown in Appendix D may reserve a portion of the 20-year OFM population forecast for potential allocation to UGA expansions associated with TDR receiving areas designated pursuant to LU Policy 1.A.15.

Objective PE 1.B Reduce future growth rates in rural areas and resource lands of the county.

- PE Policies**
- 1.B.1 The allocations shown in Appendix D for areas outside the UGA under county jurisdiction, and any future amendments to the alloca-

tions, shall represent a reduction in the amount of assigned growth compared with pre-GMA growth trends.

- 1.B.2 The population growth allocation in areas outside the UGA under county jurisdiction, and any future modifications to the allocation, shall not exceed 8.5% of projected countywide growth.

Objective PE 1.C Maximize use of the remaining land capacity within cities for allocating future urban growth to cities within Snohomish County.

PE Policies 1.C.1 In combination with the Regional Growth Strategy guidance contained in Vision 2040, information on the remaining land capacity of cities to accommodate additional growth shall be used to establish the allocations of future growth to cities shown in Appendix D.

- 1.C.2 Each city’s GMA reasonable measures program for accommodating additional growth shall be evaluated and used to establish the capacity for and allocations of future growth to cities.

GOAL PE 2 Maintain and support a process for monitoring and adjusting, if necessary, the growth targets.

Objective PE 2.A Maintain and support a target reconciliation process using the Snohomish County Tomorrow process to review and, if necessary, adjust the initial growth targets once the GMA comprehensive plans of jurisdictions in Snohomish County are updated to accommodate the succeeding 20 years of growth.

PE Policies 2.A.1 The county and cities will jointly review the preferred growth targets in updated city comprehensive plans for discrepancies with the target allocation associated with the county's updated plan.

- 2.A.2 The Snohomish County Tomorrow Steering Committee will review and may recommend to the county council an updated growth allocation. The updated allocation shall reconcile any differences revealed during the review of locally adopted targets. The allocation shall consider the plan of each jurisdiction and be consistent with the Growth Management Act and the countywide planning policies.

- 2.A.3 The county council will consider the recommendation of the Steering Committee and may replace Appendix B of the countywide planning policies with reconciled growth targets.

Objective PE 2.B Maintain and support a long-term target monitoring process through Snohomish County Tomorrow to re-

view annually and, if necessary, adjust the growth targets subsequent to target reconciliation.

- PE Policies**
- 2.B.1 Snohomish County and the cities will jointly monitor several indicators within cities, UGAs, MUGAs, rural areas, and resource lands, consistent with Appendix C (3) of the countywide planning policies.
 - 2.B.2 Snohomish County will continue to participate with cities through Snohomish County Tomorrow to refine the monitoring criteria.
 - 2.B.3 Results of the target monitoring program will be published through Snohomish County Tomorrow in an annual growth monitoring report.
 - 2.B.4 The Snohomish County Tomorrow Steering Committee will review, and may recommend to the county council, adjustments to the growth targets. The adjustment shall be based on the results of the target monitoring program and be consistent with the Growth Management Act and the countywide planning policies.
 - 2.B.5 The county council will consider the recommendation of the Steering Committee and may amend Appendix B of the countywide planning policies with adjusted growth targets.

Objective PE 2.C

Review Snohomish County's comprehensive plan for internal consistency following adjustments to the growth targets introduced during either target reconciliation or long-term target monitoring.

- PE Policies**
- 2.C.1 The county shall evaluate through a cooperative process with the cities whether adjustments to planned densities or future land uses are necessary as a result of amendments to the growth targets.
 - 2.C.2 Changes to the target allocation shall be fully incorporated Appendix D-Growth Targets of Snohomish County's comprehensive plan, and into other county comprehensive plan elements where necessary.