

Date: August 28, 2009

To: Norman Abbott, Director of Growth Management Planning,

Puget Sound Regional Council

From: Inter-jurisdictional Staff Team, King County Growth Management Planning Council

Re: Updated Growth Targets and Vision 2040

We are pleased to inform the Puget Sound Regional Council that the King County Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) is nearing completion of its work to update county and city growth targets.

The GMPC initially took on the growth targets update during 2009 as phase one of a two-year process to respond to the newly updated Multicounty Planning Policies contained in Vision 2040. As an interim product, attached to this memo is a staff report and motion for consideration by the GMPC at its next meeting on September 16. Motion 09-2 amends existing CPPs with updated growth targets for each city and Urban unincorporated area. This amendment meets the requirements of the state Growth Management Act and is guided by the goals and policies contained in Vision 2040.

Throughout the year-long process of developing the targets update, King County and its cities have appreciated the support provided by PSRC staff, both in terms of technical data and analysis as well as in the form of guidance on how to interpret the various provisions of Vision 2040. PSRC has also been a valuable forum for sharing information with staff from Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties as an initial effort to foster consistency in growth targets methodology within the region.

The King County Growth Targets Committee, in developing a growth targets recommendation for the GMPC, has endeavored to achieve a high degree of consistency with Vision 2040, especially the Regional Growth Strategy and Multicounty Planning Policies in the Development Patterns chapter. As described in the attached staff report to GMPC, the Regional Growth Strategy contained in Vision 2040 strongly shaped the growth targets update in King County, both in terms of policy framework and ultimately the target numbers themselves. The remainder of this memo describes how the targets align with those policies and with the longer-range goals of Vision 2040.

Growth targets as housing units. Consistent with MPP DP-3, OFM population projections have been converted to housing growth targets. This represents a minor change in practice from the past approach in King County of adopting household targets. This change improves the ease

with which the adopted targets can be compared with current and proposed comprehensive plans and zoning. Progress toward the targets can be measured directly as new units are added to the housing stocks of the county and cities.

Regional jobs-housing balance. As called for in Vision 2040, the recommended targets for King County represent a step toward achieving improved jobs-housing balance within the region. Consistent with the RGS, the targets are predicated on an assumption that King County will absorb about 42% of the population growth expected in the 4-county central Puget Sound region over the 2000 – 2031 period. This amount of growth is slightly higher than the medium, or “most likely,” population projection from the state Office of Financial Management that shows about 40% of the region’s growth going to King County. In addition, consistent with the RGS, King County is planning to accommodate about 58% of the region’s employment growth over the same 31-year period, significantly below the PSRC’s most recent (2006) forecast for employment growth which indicates about 64% of the region’s new jobs will locate in King County. If the region is able to achieve a pattern of growth with more housing in King County and more jobs in the other three counties, both employment and housing opportunities will become more broadly accessible across the region’s Urban areas.

From subareas to Regional Geographies. Current King County growth targets were developed within a geographic framework that included 4 subareas of the King County UGA: SeaShore, East County, South County, and Rural Cities, with the objective of achieving jobs-population balance within each subarea. With the adoption of Vision 2040, the subareas are replaced by the six Regional Geographies established in the Regional Growth Strategy: Metropolitan Cities, Core Cities, Larger Cities, Small Cities, Urban Unincorporated Areas, and Rural and Resource Lands. Using this new framework, the collocation of jobs and housing was addressed at the county level (described above) as well as within each Regional Geography.

Distribution of growth to Regional Geographies. Within King County, allocation of population and employment growth to each Regional Geography was based closely on the percentage shares set forth in the RGS. However, Vision 2040 was not the sole determinant of the target allocations. The GMPC also considered other factors, including recent growth trends, projected market demand, development opportunities and constraints, and the housing and employment capacity provided under existing comprehensive plans and development regulations.

The table below provides a side-by-side comparison of Vision 2040 and King County’s proposed new growth targets. The table shows the percentage shares of overall population and employment growth in King County called for in the Regional Growth Strategy compared with the distribution of growth achieved in the growth targets. As another point of comparison, the table also shows recent trends in population growth within the county. The contrast between recent trends and the proposed population targets makes it clear that King County intends to “bend the trend” from current development patterns.

Table: Comparison of King County Growth Targets to Regional Growth Strategy

Regional Geography	Population*			Employment*	
	Actual Growth 2000-2006	Regional Growth Strategy 2000-2040	Growth Targets 2000-2031**	Regional Growth Strategy 2000-2040	Growth Targets 2000-2031**
Metropolitan Cities	21%	41%	40%	45%	45%
Core Cities	23%	32%	28%	38%	38%
Larger Cities	18%	14%	14%	10%	10%
Small Cities	13%	5%	6%	3%	3%
Urban Unincorporated	18%	5%	8%	3%	3%
Rural Unincorporated	7%	2.8%	3.3%	1%	1%

**Percentages represent share of total King County growth.*

*** Growth targets are for the 2006 – 2031 period based on assumed growth levels for 2000 – 2031.*

Several observations can be made based on the statistics in this table:

- Distribution of population growth used in the targets exercise is close to that called for in Vision 2040, with several minor divergences
- Metropolitan, Core, and Larger Cities are expected to capture a somewhat smaller share of the county's growth than called for in Vision 2040
- However, Core and especially Metropolitan Cities are planning for a significant increase in share of county growth over recent trends
- Small Cities and Urban and Rural unincorporated areas are expected to capture more of the county's growth than called for in Vision 2040, but at a level of growth that is significantly below recent trends
- Employment targets strive for the same distribution of growth during this targets period as called for in Vision 2040

The updated growth targets represent a recommitment to the pattern of growth called for in the existing King County Countywide Planning Policies. The county and cities have, over 15 years of GMA planning, strongly emphasized concentrating growth in cities and Urban Centers while limiting development in the Rural area.

Our targets are also ambitious in calling for even more concentrated Urban area growth, especially in Metropolitan Cities, but also in Core and Larger Cities, as well as less development in the Rural area. Achieving that pattern of growth will require a commitment of policy and resources on a number of fronts:

- Local plans and regulations must demonstrate they can accommodate targeted housing and employment growth. This should include incentives for infill and redevelopment, including steps at the regional and local levels to stimulate and support emerging markets for new development in Regional and Sub-regional Growth Centers.
- Accommodating growth also will require successful tools for fostering housing affordability and economic development.
- Achieving these targets will require a robust economic recovery of the Puget Sound region from the current recession that cannot be guaranteed or clearly foreseen in mid-2009.
- Finally and perhaps most importantly, achieving the growth targets will require adequate and timely funding for regional and local infrastructure and services, including expansion of high capacity transit options linking centers.

Looking out within and beyond this next round of growth targets and plans, we are hopeful that progress in all of these areas will be made, so that King County and its cities can continue to move further toward achieving the Regional Growth Strategy within the 40-year time frame of Vision 2040. We look forward to continued collaboration with the PSRC in monitoring progress toward that vision and in taking meaningful steps toward achieving the development goals set forth in Vision 2040 and in the proposed new growth targets for King County.