

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 18, 2010
TO: Pierce County Regional Council
FROM: Norman Abbott, Director of Growth Management, Puget Sound Regional Council
SUBJECT: **Recommended 2008-2030 Pierce County Population, Housing and Employment Allocations**

Introduction

PSRC would like to thank the Pierce County Regional Council (PCRC) for the opportunity to review and comment on the recommended package of 2008-2030 population, housing and employment growth allocations for Pierce County jurisdictions. PSRC would also like to express our appreciation to the Growth Management Coordinating Committee (GMCC) for its work over the past many months to develop the package.

VISION 2040 set forth new requirements related to local GMA growth targets. The plan calls for adoption of local housing and employment targets in addition to population targets. The updated targets must also be developed in a manner consistent with new policy guidance set forth in the Regional Growth Strategy. PSRC recognizes that implementing these provisions constitutes a new undertaking for Pierce County jurisdictions, and appreciates the substantial effort made to address them within the current allocation process.

VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy

The VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy—adopted by the PSRC General Assembly in April 2008, and amended by its Executive Board in May 2009—sets forth the following policy goals regarding future development:

- Reduce and minimize growth in rural areas;
- Focus population and employment growth within the region’s designated urban growth area (UGA);
- Within the UGA, concentrate jobs, housing and other activities in cities and centers;
- Relative to current plans and policies, increase the share of future growth directed to metropolitan, core, and larger cities, and decrease growth to smaller cities, unincorporated urban areas and rural areas;
- Within unincorporated urban growth areas, direct more growth to areas affiliated for annexation; and

- Improve the balance of jobs and housing across the region by accommodating more residential growth in King County, and encouraging more employment growth in Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

Achieving these objectives are critical to the success of the plan’s broader goals: Minimizing the environmental impacts of future development, protecting important resource lands, making efficient use of existing infrastructure and public investments, improving mobility, supporting economic prosperity and preserving and improving quality of life for the region’s residents.

PSRC Comments on Recommended Allocations

PSRC’s evaluation of the recommended allocations package is based on an assessment of how well the allocations serve to “bend the trend” of historical development patterns toward the vision and goals embodied by the Regional Growth Strategy.

Positive Elements:

The recommended allocations, on the whole, represent an important first step toward implementing the VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy at the local level. Specific elements of the package are to be commended for making strong, decisive steps toward implementing the policy aims of the Regional Growth Strategy.

- Allocation Methodology: The methodology by which the proposed allocations were developed was thoughtfully designed to directly incorporate the policy guidance set forth in the VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy.
- Bending the Trend: Overall, the proposed allocations represent a concerted effort by Pierce County jurisdictions to “bend the trend” of historical development patterns toward the new goals collectively established by the region.
- Cities: We applaud the significant commitments being made, in particular, by the cities of Tacoma, Puyallup and University Place to “bend the trend” by accommodating increased levels of growth, much of which is intended to occur in planned growth centers. Likewise, the Small Cities as a class have reduced their share of planned future growth, as is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.
- Rural: The goal of reducing future levels of development in the county’s rural areas is also considered extremely positive.

Areas of Concern:

While there are a number of very encouraging elements of the proposed allocations package, we also direct attention to the following areas of concern in which the allocations are significantly at odds with the regional guidance in VISION 2040 (see enclosed Appendix A for figures cited below):

- Unincorporated Urban: A primary point of concern is the high population—and accordingly, housing—allocation being recommended for unincorporated urban Pierce County. Regional policy seeks to reduce the amount of future development occurring in unincorporated urban areas, and to redirect this growth to more central places within the incorporated urban core that are well served by existing infrastructure and services and where public investments can be efficiently targeted.

The Regional Growth Strategy guides the county to seek to limit the share of 2000-2040 population growth slated for its unincorporated urban areas to 20.6%. The recommended 2008-

2030 population allocation for unincorporated urban Pierce County, contrary to this guidance, is set significantly higher at 28.8%. This reflects zero improvement over existing allocation policies in which the 2000-2022 population allocation for unincorporated urban areas was set at 28.5%.

As such, we find that the recommended population and housing allocations for unincorporated urban Pierce County do not reflect regional guidance, and do not “bend the trend” toward the goals established in VISION 2040.

We understand the allocation was established at this level, in large part, to account for vested pipeline and platted developments. Yet, we remain concerned that excess development capacity in unincorporated urban areas will work in opposition against efforts to stimulate and direct development to regional growth centers and other priority planning areas within the county’s incorporated core. The county must work in partnership with its cities to successfully “bend the trend” toward meeting these important policy objectives.

On the upside, we understand that the county is considering a number of measures to limit and mitigate inconsistent development where possible, as well as encourage unincorporated urban development to coalesce in strategic mixed-use centers and nodes. We strongly support these proposals, and pledge to work with the county as it works to incorporate these concepts into its comprehensive plan update.

- **Countywide Allocations:** The proposed countywide population, housing and employment allocations are somewhat higher than what VISION 2040 and regional best practice advises (as represented by the preliminary countywide totals). The recommended 2008-2030 countywide population allocation of 211,480 is +11,500 persons higher than the preliminary total; the countywide housing unit allocation of 123,036 is between +10,900 to +14,600 units higher than the preliminary; and the countywide employment allocation of 135,253 (excluding uniformed military personnel at Joint Base Lewis–McChord) is +20,500 jobs higher than the preliminary total. We raise this as a point of caution because the higher countywide totals may create expectations that will be difficult to meet.

PSRC recognizes that in many local circumstances, “bending the trend” is no easy task and requires a substantial commitment and endeavor by jurisdictions to develop and implement a variety of new strategies, policies, regulations and incentives to redirect future development. We applaud elements of the proposed package that represent such commitments.

PSRC also understands that some jurisdictions may require flexibility in aligning their growth allocations with the Regional Growth Strategy, i.e. make allocations more aggressive over successive allocation cycles. Pierce County jurisdictions will have the opportunity to revisit their growth allocations and improve consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy during the next round of updates 5 years from now.

Next Steps

Updated growth allocations are the first step in implementing the VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy. Another key step will be updating local comprehensive plans to reflect the new allocations, through developing and implementing strategies and policies to begin “bending the trend.” PSRC staff will be available to provide technical assistance and guidance to local jurisdictions as they work on updating their plans. The PSRC Growth Management Policy Board (GMPB) will also receive a briefing and staff report (in early- to mid-2011) on the new targets being established in three of the region’s four counties.

For questions, please contact Carol Naito, Principal Planner-Demographer at (206) 464-7535 or cnaito@psrc.org.

Enc: Appendix A: Recommended 2008-2030 Pierce County Population, Housing and Employment Allocations in Comparison to 2000-2022 Population Allocations, 2006-2022 Employment Allocations and VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy

cc: Dan Cardwell, Pierce County Buildable Lands Program Coordinator
Ian Munce, Pierce County Growth Management Coordinating Committee Chair
Carol Naito, PSRC
Rocky Piro, PSRC

Appendix A. Recommended 2008-2030 Pierce County Population, Housing and Employment Allocations

In Comparison to 2000-2022 Population Allocations, 2006-2022 Employment Allocations and VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy

Jurisdiction	'00 - '22 Population Allocation	'00 - '22 % Population Shares by Reg Geog	Preliminary Countywide '08 - '30 Population Allocation	'08 - '30 Population Allocation	'08 - '30 % Population Shares by Reg Geog	VISION 2040 Regl Growth Strategy for Population 2000-40	Preliminary Countywide '08 - '30 Housing Allocation	'08 - '30 Housing Allocation	'08 - '30 % Housing Shares by Reg Geog	'06 - '22 Employment Allocation* (excl. JBLM)	'06 - '22 % Employment Shares by Reg Geog* (excl. JBLM)	Preliminary Countywide '08 - '30 Employment Allocation	Final Requested '08 - '30 Employment Allocation	'08 - '30 % Employment Shares by Reg Geog	Final Requested '08 - '30 Employment Allocation (excl. JBLM)	'08 - '30 % Employment Shares by Reg Geog (excl. JBLM)	VISION 2040 Regl Growth Strategy for Employment 2000-40
Metropolitan City	61,676	29.1%		78,600	37.2%	32.4%		43,253	35.2%	35,683	44.5%		64,213	42.8%	64,213	47.5%	45.8%
Tacoma	61,676			78,600				43,253		35,683			64,213		64,213		
Core Cities	27,174	12.8%		27,635	13.1%	19.6%		19,201	15.6%	7,033	8.8%		18,491	12.3%	18,491	13.7%	19.3%
Auburn	7,799			1,345				386		98			206		206		
Lakewood	13,789			13,220				10,716		4,442			9,285		9,285		
Puyallup	5,586			13,070				8,099		2,493			9,000		9,000		
Large Cities	8,183	3.9%		10,000	4.7%	8.0%		5,395	4.4%	2,462	3.1%		7,289	4.9%	7,289	5.4%	7.2%
Fife	4,116			1,900				943		2,254			4,289		4,289		
University Place	4,067			8,100				4,452		208			3,000		3,000		
Small Cities	39,176	18.5%		30,645	14.5%	13.3%		18,977	15.4%	12,920	16.1%		27,642	18.4%	27,642	20.4%	14.2%
Bonney Lake	7,956			5,420				3,022		836			1,141		1,141		
Buckley	1,055			2,940				1,400		167			228		228		
Carbonado	209			145				92		4			5		5		
DuPont	6,648			4,510				2,334		4,336			5,920		5,920		
Eatonville	768			745				517		1,050			1,434		1,434		
Edgewood	4,611			4,105				2,567		91			1,430		1,430		
Fircrest	932			635				535		86			117		117		
Gig Harbor	4,323			3,590				2,509		1,174			1,603		1,603		
Milton	2,019			40				371		325			444		444		
Orting	4,140			1,925				1,029		879			1,200		1,200		
Pacific	-			-				-		1,420			3,976		3,976		
Roy	293			195				243		-7			164		164		
Ruston	1,022			695				445		199			272		272		
South Prairie	448			310				149		163			223		223		
Steilacoom	851			575				715		-23			100		100		
Sumner	3,746			4,710				2,977		2,163			9,307		9,307		
Wilkesson	155			105				72		57			78		78		
Unincorporated Urban	60,516	28.5%		61,000	28.8%	20.6%		28,300	23.0%	22,023	27.5%		31,435	20.9%	16,568	12.2%	10.3%
Unincorporated Urban P.C.	59,089			60,000				28,000		N/A			16,568		16,568		
JBLM	1,427			1,000				300		N/A			14,867		-		
UGA Total	196,725			207,880				115,126		80,121			149,070		134,203		
Rural	15,318	7.2%		3,600	1.7%	6.1%		7,910	6.4%	N/A	N/A		1,050	0.7%	1,050	0.8%	3.3%
Rural P.C.	15,318			3,600				7,910		N/A			1,050		1,050		
Unincorporated Total	75,834			64,600				36,210		N/A			32,485		17,618		
Pierce County Total	212,043	100.0%	200,000	211,480	100.0%	100.0%	108,400 to 112,110	123,036	100.0%	80,121	100.0%	114,735	150,120	100.0%	135,253	100.0%	100.0%

Prelim vs Recomm countywide pop: 11,480

Prelim vs Recomm countywide hsg: 10,926 to 14,636

Prelim vs Recomm countywide emp: 35,385 excl JBLM: 20,518

Notes: 2008-2030 allocations are for 2008 political boundaries; 2002-2022 population allocations are for 2002 boundaries; 2006-2022 employment allocations are for 2006 boundaries; the VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy is based on 2007 boundaries.

2008-2030 and VISION 2040 employment figures are for total employment including uniformed military personnel, except where noted as excluding JBLM; 2006-2022 employment allocations are for total employment including uniformed military personnel excluding Const & Res jobs.

*The 2006-2022 employment allocations did not include an allocation for the rural area; 2006-2022 percent employment shares by regional geography are based on a countywide total that excludes rural employment.