



City Council Agenda Bill

20177
Bill Number

Subject: Consideration of a recommendation to Whatcom County regarding new populaton and employment growth forecasts to be used to update the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan.

Summary Statement: Bellingham, Whatcom County and the other cities are beginning the process to complete the required review and update of our comprehensive plans. In order to complete this task, new 20-year population and employment growth forecasts are needed. While the County is responsible for adopting the forecasts, each of the cities has been asked to provide recommendations.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on October 10. The Commission voted (4-2) to recommend use of the high range population and employment growth forecasts to update the City's comprehensive plan.

Previous Council Action: N/A

Fiscal Impact: The City contributed approximately \$60,000 to the project for consultant services.

Funding Source: PCD 2013 general fund budget.

Attachments: Staff memo
Planning Commission meeting minutes
Consultant's Technical Report
Public comments

Public Hearing Notice
Written Comment to City Council

Meeting Activity	Meeting Date	Staff Recommendation	Presented By	Time
Public Hearing Council Direction Requested	04-Nov-2013	Provide Direction to Staff	Greg Aucutt, Asst. Director	10 min

Council Committee:

Agenda Bill Contact:
Greg Aucutt, Asst. Director, 778-8344

Reviewed By
Jeff Thomas, PCD Director

Initials	Date
JT	10-23-2013

Committee Actions:

Legal
Mayor

Initials	Date
AAW	10/24/13
KL	10.29.13

Council Action:



PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Planning Division


210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Telephone: (360) 778-8300 Fax: (360) 778-8302

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 15, 2013

To: City Council

From: Greg Aucutt, Asst. Director 

RE: Review of New Population and Employment Growth Forecasts

Background

Bellingham, Whatcom County and the other cities are beginning the process to complete the required review and update of our comprehensive plans and urban growth areas. In order to complete both of these tasks, new 20-year population and employment growth forecasts are needed. While the County is responsible for adopting the forecasts, each of the cities have been asked to provide recommendations.

Consultants working for the County have prepared new growth forecasts that are included in the attached document --"*Whatcom County Population and Employment Projections and Urban Growth Area Allocations*".

Upcoming Review & Approval Process

The Planning Commission and City Council will review the range of new 20-year population and employment growth forecasts provided by the consultants. At the conclusion of the review process, the city's recommendations will be considered by the Whatcom County Planning Commission and County Council. At the conclusion of their hearing process, the County Council will adopt a preliminary county-wide growth forecast and preliminary allocations to all the jurisdictions in a "non-binding resolution" early next year. The City will use the growth forecasts to update the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan. The County will use the forecasts to update UGA boundaries for all the jurisdictions. Both updates to comprehensive plans and UGA boundaries must be completed by mid-2016.

Questions for Discussion

The following questions and answers were developed by staff to provide information and context for review of the population growth forecasts, including background and other information intended to help the Planning Commission and City Council develop recommendations.

Question 1: Why do cities and counties need to forecast future population and employment growth and how are the forecasts used?

Response: Cities and counties in Washington have been required to plan for future growth since the Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted in 1990. The GMA requires the county and all the cities to have comprehensive plans that contain long range (at least 20-year) population growth forecasts. We are also required to show that there is enough developable land in the city and UGA to accommodate the forecasted growth, and that there is a plan to provide the public facilities and services that will be needed. So population growth forecasts are critical to determining:

- how much developable land and how many housing units will be required to accommodate the forecasted population growth;
- how much developable commercial and industrial land will be needed to accommodate the forecasted employment growth;
- what new public facilities (roads, parks, schools, etc.) will be required to serve the forecasted population growth;
- what additional public services (police, fire, etc.) will be needed to serve the anticipated population growth;
- where in the county and in the city the growth should occur and in what form; and
- how much additional tax and other revenues can the City expect to receive from the forecasted population and employment growth.

Question 2: Didn't we adopt population growth forecasts a short time ago?

Response: Yes we did review population growth forecasts created for the City and County in 2008. These forecasts were for the 2009-2029 planning period and included a 2029 population growth forecast for the Bellingham urban area of about 112,000. The forecasts were adopted by the County in 2009 and were used to update all the incorporated and unincorporated UGA boundaries.

The city's current comprehensive plan was adopted in 2006 and it covers the 2002-2022 planning period. At that time the adopted forecast predicted Bellingham and the urban growth area would grow to about 113,000 people in 2022.

Question 3: *So why are we reviewing new population growth forecasts now?*

Response: The County and all the cities are updating the population and employment growth forecasts at this point in time for two reasons:

1. The GMA requires the cities and Whatcom County to update our respective comprehensive plans by mid-2016, and it must cover the 2016-2036 timeframe. The update process must include new 20-year population and employment growth forecasts for the county as a whole, and each of the cities and UGAs. The growth forecasts are key to completing this work. Getting agreement on the growth forecasts now gives us a good amount of time to complete the comprehensive plan update project by the 2016 deadline.
2. The GMA also requires the County to review and update all the UGAs. As part of the UGA update process, the County is required to make sure that each city has enough land and development capacity within their city and UGA to accommodate 20 years of population and employment growth. New 20-year forecasts are needed in order for the County to complete the required evaluation of the city UGA boundaries and land supply.

Question 4: *What is the City's role in the process to adopt new population growth forecasts?*

Response: The GMA places the responsibility for adopting county-wide and city population growth forecasts with the County, in consultation with the cities. The population growth forecast adoption process we are working under includes two phases:

- Phase 1 Technical Allocations. The consultants have provided county-wide and jurisdiction-specific 20-year population and employment growth forecasts. The forecasts are primarily based on historic trends (*See Attachment 1, from Berk and Associates.*)
- Phase 2, Review. The cities are to review the phase 1 forecasts and provide a recommendation to the County. The Planning Commission, City Council and the public have the opportunity to suggest adjustments to the phase 1 forecasts based on factors such as available land supply, or on policy choices such as where and how we want growth to occur as stated in our comprehensive plan. We need to complete this review and forward our recommendations to the County by the end of November.

Question 5: *What are the legal requirements with respect to adoption of population growth forecasts?*

Response: The GMA and hearings board cases have made it clear that population growth forecasts used in the preparation of comprehensive plans must be within the

range provided by the State Office of Financial Management (OFM). The OFM 2036 forecast range for Whatcom County is approximately 225,000 to 330,900 with a “baseline” forecast of 273,900. (OFM lists the baseline forecast as the “most likely to occur” scenario). The OFM baseline forecast uses a slightly lower growth rate than has occurred over the past 20 years. This is due primarily to a slower than historic natural increase resulting from the aging of the “Baby Boom” generation. The County Council has expressed a preference for using the OFM baseline projection for the county-wide growth forecast.

OFM does not provide population growth forecasts for individual cities. It is up to the County, working with the cities, to allocate the county-wide growth forecast to the individual jurisdictions.

Question 6: What population growth forecasts have the consultants developed for Bellingham?

Response: The phase 1 allocations developed by the consultants include a range of growth forecasts. All three forecasts assume that Bellingham will continue to accommodate about 42% of the total county-wide population growth. This is consistent with what has occurred over the past 20 years.

Table 1: Bellingham 2036 Population Growth Forecasts

City + UGA	2013 Population	2036 Forecast	Total Growth	Ave. Annual Growth
Low	93,107	116,491	23,384	1,017
Medium	93,107	121,505	28,398	1,235
High	93,107	129,025	35,918	1,562

For comparison purposes, note that Bellingham grew by an average of about 1,600 people per year from 1990-2000 and 1,400 people per year from 2000-2010.

Previously adopted population growth forecasts include those in the city's comprehensive plan and updated numbers adopted by the County in the 2008 UGA update process. These forecasts are shown below:

Table 2: Previously Adopted Population Growth Forecasts

City + UGA	Total Growth	Ave. Annual Growth	% of Total County Growth
Comp. Plan forecast - 2002 - 2022	31,600*	1,580	51.4
UGA update forecast- 2009 - 2029	22,500**	1,125	40%

*The 2006 comprehensive plan growth forecast was a number higher than historic trends, adopted in a failed effort to reduce the growth rate in the rural areas.

**The 2009 forecast recommended by the City and adopted by the County was much lower than historic trends. This was due in part to the small cities desire to increase their share of total population growth.

Question 7: How much more population growth would Bellingham have to plan to accommodate than is covered by our existing comprehensive plan?

Response: Our current comprehensive plan accommodates a total city and UGA population of 113,055. The 2036 low growth scenario would require Bellingham to plan to accommodate about 3,500 additional residents. Under the medium forecast, we would need to plan for about 8,500 additional residents. Choosing the high scenario results in a need to plan for about 16,000 additional residents by 2036.

Question 8: What have the consultants proposed for a county-wide employment growth forecast for 2036? (Note: OFM does not provide county or city employment growth forecasts.)

Response:

With respect to employment growth, the consultants have provided a range of county-wide employment growth forecasts of between 23,000 and 36,900 new jobs by 2036. Note that total county-wide employment in 2012 was estimated to be 97,410 jobs.

Question 9: What are the proposed employment growth forecasts for Bellingham?

Response: The consultants provided a range of Bellingham-area employment growth forecasts as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Bellingham 2036 Employment Growth Forecasts

City + UGAs	New Commercial and Retail Jobs	New Industrial Jobs	Total New Jobs
2036 Low Forecast	11,233	2,923	14,156
2036 Medium Forecast	13,927	3,624	17,551
2036 High Forecast	17,965	4,676	22,641

In all of the 2036 forecasts, Bellingham would maintain our current share of total county-wide employment of about 64%.

Question 10: What happens with the forecasts after they are adopted by the County?

Response: It is important to remember that the County will adopt the forecasts early in 2014 in a non-binding resolution. The forecasts are preliminary. Once we have the numbers, staff will begin looking at factors such as land supply, capacity of the transportation system, capacity of the water supply system, capacity of the sewage treatment plant and so on. Once this work is done, the growth forecasts can be adjusted as appropriate.

Question 11: How much population and employment growth can be accommodated on the remaining vacant and partially developed land in the city and UGA?

Response: A land capacity analysis (LCA) was produced by the City and County in 2008 when the County was updating the urban growth area boundaries for all the jurisdictions. The results of that study showed that the city and UGA could potentially accommodate a total population of about 121,000.

There have been a number of changes that have occurred since the LCA was completed in 2008. The City has completed a number of urban village plans with associated rezones that added to the residential capacity. Land has also been acquired for parks and open space, reducing the capacity. The County and City are working together to update the 2008 LCA and we should have the initial results of the analysis in the coming weeks.

In terms of employment growth, the County's 2009 LCA indicates that the city and UGA can accommodate an additional 19,850 jobs. This work will also be updated.

Staff Recommendation

Staff believes that the medium forecasts for both population and employment growth forecasts should be used as the starting points for the comprehensive plan and UGA update processes. These are the most likely to occur scenarios. As previously stated, adjustments to these forecasts may be needed as a result of transportation and capital facilities planning work that is to occur in the comprehensive plan update process. The final results of the land capacity analysis may also suggest that adjustments to the growth forecasts are appropriate. But in terms of picking a starting point, and based on the information we have at this time, using the medium forecasts is appropriate.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Commission recommends (4-2) the high growth forecasts for both population and employment growth be used as the starting point for planning purposes. Members acknowledged that growth was going to occur and that it is better to plan for a higher number than potentially underestimating actual growth, and then not having the land area and the public facilities and services needed to effectively manage the growth. It was also stated that, as the largest city in the Whatcom County, the city has a responsibility to accommodate a higher percentage of total county-wide growth to reduce sprawl into the rural and agricultural areas. Finally, the Commission noted that the average growth that has actually occurred in Bellingham and the UGA over the last 20 years is 1,527 people per year. The high growth forecast of 1,562 people per year more accurately reflects historic growth than does the mid-range forecast of 1,235 ppy.

The Commission also felt that population growth and jobs should go hand-in-hand. If Bellingham is going to plan to accommodate a higher percentage of total population growth, then we should also plan for a higher rate of job growth.

See attached Planning Commission meeting minutes for a summary of the Commission's discussion and public comments heard at the October 10 public hearing.

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ATTACHMENT 1

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2013

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON
PUBLIC HEARING**

THURSDAY
October 10, 2013
Video-taped & Audio-recorded

7:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
www.cob.org

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Tom Grinstad, Chairman of the Planning Commission.

ROLL CALL:

Tom Grinstad, Jeff Brown, Danne Neill, Garrett O'Brien, Ali Taysi, Phyllis McKee and Steve Crooks

Present: Tom Grinstad, Danne Neill, Garrett O'Brien, Ali Taysi, Phyllis McKee and Steve Crooks

Absent: Jeff Brown

Staff Present: Jeff Thomas, *PCDD Director*; Greg Aucutt, *Assistant Director*, and Heather Aven, *Recording Secretary*.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes from July 11, 2013 were submitted to the Commission for approval.

MOTION: Phyllis McKee moved to approve the minutes from July 11, 2013 as amended.

SECONDED. VOTE: ALL AYES (*Motion Passes 6-0*)

15 MINUTE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

No testimony given.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Consider the long range population and employment growth forecasts that will be used for planning purposes to update the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Greg Aucutt explained the reason for establishing population and employment growth forecasts and what the City will use the numbers for during the planning process. He stated that although the numbers will be used to update the Comprehensive Plan, they are preliminary figures and can be changed if deemed necessary.

Greg Aucutt explained that the State only provides forecasts for the entire County, not for individual cities. He stated that all of the jurisdictions jointly hired consultants to assist in narrowing the broad range (provided by the State) to a range that is more likely to happen, provide allocations to each of the jurisdictions, and to determine employment growth forecasts, since the State does not provide that information. He referenced page 4 of the staff memo and pointed out that the range, provided from the State was 225,000 - 331,000 (planning period ending in 2036), with the most likely to occur in Whatcom County at 273,900.

Greg Aucutt reviewed the material provided by the consultants and stated that staff recommends the medium growth forecast for both population and employment, as they reflect historic trends and are the most reasonable starting points.

Phyllis McKee wanted to know the disadvantages of under-estimating or over-estimating.

Greg Aucutt provided examples, and reminded the Commission that the numbers are updated every few years; therefore, the projection is not locked in and can be adjusted.

Danne Neill expressed concern that a higher forecast would cause the urban growth area to become larger.

Greg Aucutt stated that with any of the projections, land supply would be considered and then decisions will be made, if necessary, to expand the urban growth area boundaries or commit to accommodating the additional growth within the existing boundaries of the City.

Garrett O'Brien mentioned the major rezones that have occurred in the City recently and wanted to know if they were considered in the analysis.

Greg Aucutt replied that the land supply will be considered during the update process. He reiterated that the recommendations would be a starting point and at any time the City can request that the County adjust the allocations up or down depending on the determinations made during the planning process.

Ali Taysi noted that the medium range growth is lower than what has historically been projected and asked staff to explain why.

Greg Aucutt stated that there are two reasons:

- The consultants forecasted lower growth rates for each jurisdiction in Whatcom County. He noted it is mostly accredited to the aging of the "baby-boomers".
- It is believed that by the early 2030's all growth in Whatcom County will be immigration, rather than a natural increase.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Darcy Jones recommended that the "statistically most likely to occur" projection range be adopted, as those statistics have historically been accurate. He stated that Bellingham should continue to strive for 51% of the over-all county population distribution. He pointed out that there are still goals to be met related to growth and infill. He noted that eight years is not very long, especially since it takes 4 years to go through the process. He stated that the market will move faster than the City can react to it, and he emphasized the importance of getting it right.

Linda Twitchell, BIA expressed their support for the medium base-line figures, as this has been historically the most accurate. She stated however, that if Bellingham was serious about keeping the growth of Whatcom County here, the higher figure should be considered. She referenced page 6 of the staff memorandum and noted that in figuring the land capacity, it would be very beneficial to not only consider the number of acres available to serve housing/people, but also the number of acres zoned for the different housing types. She explained by doing this, the land capacity projections can be compared to the market preferences; which would help with GMA compliance.

Clayton Petree stated that, according to a County Staff Planner, the State's "most likely" (middle) projection has been lower than actual growth 100% of the time. He pointed out that since the 1970's, the population in Whatcom County has consistently grown at a faster rate than the State. He noted that Washington's population growth is rebounding and should be planned for accordingly. He reviewed some of the errors he feels are included in the technical memo. He suggested that a demand analysis be done, which would plan for other needs that should be considered besides just simple population and

jobs. He stated that although he does not feel Bellingham will ever achieve the 62.4% growth again, the 40% projection is too low.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

COMMISSION QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION:

There was a discussion about how to choose the projections without knowing what the existing land supply is; as well as the importance of providing jobs so more people will want to live in Bellingham. Some Commissioners were concerned about making a recommendation without more information about how each of the projections would affect the land supply.

Greg Aucutt reiterated that there are no decisions being made during this meeting, the recommendation that the Commission will forward to City Council will provide a starting point in the planning process.

Garrett O'Brien stated, in his opinion, Bellingham should plan to accommodate for the most growth as we are the largest jurisdiction in the County. He indicated that, although the high projection is on the higher end of what has historically occurred, this is the number that he recommends staff use for their planning analysis.

Phyllis McKee agreed that the high projection should be recommended. She stated that, in her opinion, more growth will be happening in the City.

Ali Taysi stated that he also agreed with the higher projection. He pointed out that the more incorporated cities in Whatcom County need to accommodate the growth to help reduce the sprawl affect as much as possible. He discussed why, in his opinion, this projection would not result in sprawl for Bellingham.

Steve Crooks pointed out that infill has been tried in several areas around Bellingham and each time has been turned about because of the "not in my backyard" mentality. He noted that the high projection just cannot be a reality until a change occurs.

There was another brief discussion of when the County will be making their allocations to the jurisdictions in Whatcom County and the importance of the recommendation.

MOTION: Phyllis McKee moved to accept the higher numbers offered in the staff memorandum for both population and employment. SECONDED

Garrett O'Brien reiterated that this would only be a starting point and expressed interest in obtaining the data related to a higher growth projection. He requested a clearer picture of the land supply, especially as it relates to those major areas within the City that still do not have a zoning designation.

Danne Neill expressed her opposition to the high projection. She pointed out that Staff has recommended the medium number, and she stated that, in her opinion, the projection should be more conservative. She also is interested in the land supply analysis so that a better decision can be made on what Bellingham will be able to accommodate. She expressed concern about urban sprawl and not utilizing the land that we have.

Steve Crooks stated that, given the fact that this projection can be changed after the planning process has begun, there is no difference between recommending the medium or high.

Phyllis McKee stated that she would rather estimate high and be able to accommodate that growth rather than be scrambling because growth was not planned for appropriately.

Ali Taysi agreed with the idea of being proactive. He stated that although he is also concerned with sprawl, he is interested in reviewing the analysis to determine if the UGA would need to be expanded or if it can accommodate the growth projection. He pointed out that the high projection number is between the actual growth of 1600 people per year that was realized between 1990-2000 and the 1400 people per year that was realized in 2000-2010.

VOTE: 4-2 (Motion Passes - Grinstad and Neill opposed)

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Staff / Commissioner Discussion

MOTION: Steve Crooks moved to adopt the revisions to the Planning Commission by-laws changing the regularly scheduled meeting dates to the first and third Thursdays of each month. SECONDED. VOTE: ALL AYES

Planning Director's Report

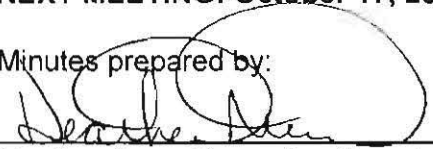
There was a discussion about the creation of a sub-committee to discuss moving some of the Infill Toolkit housing forms into single-family zones. He explained the project that staff is working on and encouraged the Commission to form a sub-committee of 3 members to provide input and assist in that work.

Jeff Thomas announced that some of the recommendation from the CHAT (County-wide Housing Affordability Taskforce) group has been added to the 2014 work program in an effort to make adjustments and bring housing affordability into reality for Bellingham.

ADJOURNED: 8:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: October 17, 2013

Minutes prepared by:


Heather Aven, Recording Secretary

Minutes edited by Planning Commission members and various Planning Staff.

ATTACHMENT 2

Berk and Associates Technical Report:

***“Whatcom County Population and Employment Projections and
Urban Growth Area Allocations ”***



**WHATCOM COUNTY
POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS
AND URBAN GROWTH AREA ALLOCATIONS**

Phase I Technical Report

July 22, 2013

Prepared by: BERK

INTRODUCTION

The Whatcom County Department of Planning and Development Services, in coordination with the cities in Whatcom County, is engaged in a multi-year project to update the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan and conduct an urban growth area (UGA) review by 2016, as required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). An initial step in this process is to develop a reasonable set of projections of future growth in population and economic activity and allocations of where this growth will occur. These projections and allocations of growth are foundational inputs that will inform many aspects of the comprehensive planning process over the next few years.

Projections and allocations of population and employment will be developed using a two-step process. The first step is to develop technical projections and allocations based on existing forecasts, historical trends, and additional data analysis. The second step is to make adjustments to the technical allocations based on local plans, special circumstances, and other policy considerations.

This technical memo addresses the first step in the process – to establish 20-year technical projections of population and employment and then distribute this growth to UGAs and areas outside UGAs. Using these technical projections as a starting point, city and county representatives will then collaborate to make policy-based adjustments to the technical projections and allocations of growth. It is anticipated that final projections and allocations of growth will be adopted by the Whatcom County Council and city councils in 2016.

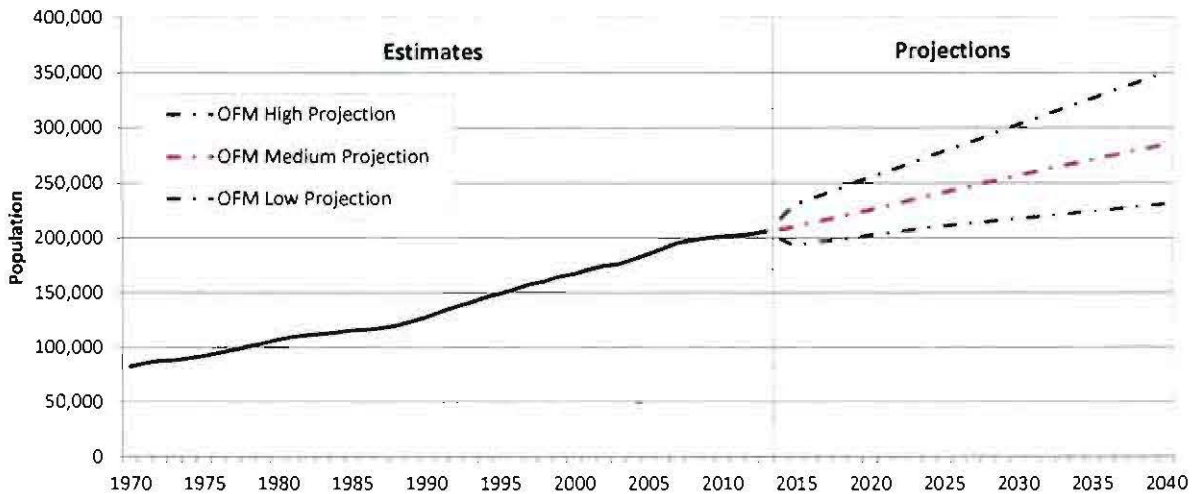
The specific elements documented in this technical memo include the following:

- Countywide projections of population and employment.
- Allocations of population and employment to UGAs and lands outside of UGAs.
- Trend analysis of Whatcom County age cohorts

COUNTY-WIDE POPULATION

The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) updates county and state long-range population forecasts every five years to support Growth Management Act planning. The most recent forecasts out to 2040 were issued in May 2012 and are shown in Exhibit 1. OFM considers the medium projection the most likely (RCW 43.62.035) because it is based on assumptions that have been validated with past and current information. The high and low projections represent the range of uncertainty that should be considered when using these projections for planning purposes.

Exhibit 1
Whatcom County Population, 1970-2040



Source: Office of Financial Management historical data and May 2012 projections.

The medium and low projections are very similar to OFM's 2007 forecasts, which were considered during the Whatcom County 2009 Comprehensive Plan update process. The high projection has been reduced significantly in the 2012 forecast, shifting from a 2030 population of 324,000 in the 2007 forecast to 302,500 in the 2012 forecast.

Components of Population Change

Population growth is driven by three components of change: births, deaths, and migration. The difference of births minus deaths is considered the natural component of change, and net migration is considered the migration component of change. Exhibit 2 shows that in both Whatcom County and Washington State, the net migration component has been and is expected to be larger than the natural component of population increase. Whatcom County has a larger percentage of its population growth come from net migration than the State.

The OFM forecasts assume a gradually decreasing natural component of population growth largely due to growth in elderly population, a trend explored further in the Age Cohort Analysis section of this report.

The migration component of population change is more variable than the natural component. Major economic, social, or policy changes can generate spurts or slowdowns in migration that are difficult to predict. The Office of Financial Management cites uncertainty about the pace of economic recovery and possible changes in U.S. immigration policy as factors that could affect migration trends in the future. The 2012 OFM forecasts do not attempt to predict the timing or magnitude of major long-term migration shifts but OFM will track migration closely for future forecast updates.

Exhibit 2
Components of Population Change, 1980-2040

		Whatcom County				Washington State			
		Net Migration	Natural	Total Population Growth	Percent Migration	Net Migration	Natural	Total Population Growth	Percent Migration
Estimates	1980-1985	4,569	4,213	8,782	52.0%	101,529	181,903	283,432	35.8%
	1985-1990	8,595	3,702	12,297	69.9%	267,625	183,253	450,878	59.4%
	1990-1995	17,838	4,324	22,162	80.5%	328,454	201,452	529,906	62.0%
	1995-2000	12,858	4,026	16,884	76.2%	316,328	181,246	497,574	63.6%
	2000-2005	14,475	3,664	18,139	79.8%	227,982	176,691	404,673	56.3%
	2005-2010	11,975	4,200	16,175	74.0%	222,154	203,570	425,724	52.2%
OFM Medium Forecast	2010-2015	5,313	3,597	8,910	59.6%	104,909	192,751	297,660	35.2%
	2015-2020	11,814	3,443	15,257	77.4%	210,000	179,777	389,777	53.9%
	2020-2025	12,873	2,958	15,831	81.3%	217,000	164,196	381,196	56.9%
	2025-2030	13,727	1,778	15,505	88.5%	225,000	136,020	361,020	62.3%
	2030-2035	14,020	479	14,499	96.7%	225,000	104,435	329,435	68.3%
	2035-2040	14,028	-269	13,759	102.0%	225,000	82,353	307,353	73.2%
10-yr Trend	2000-2010	26,450	7,864	34,314	77.1%	450,136	380,261	830,397	54.2%
20-yr Trend	1990-2010	57,146	16,214	73,360	77.9%	1,094,918	762,959	1,857,877	58.9%
30-yr Trend	1980-2010	70,310	24,129	94,439	74.5%	1,464,072	1,128,115	2,592,187	56.5%

Source: Washington Office of Financial Management, May 2012 projections.

Note: The percentage of total growth that is attributed to migration exceeds 100% in 2035-2040 because the natural component is negative.

Historical and Projected Population Growth Rates

Exhibit 3
Whatcom County Population Growth Rates, 1970-2040

	Whatcom County			Washington State	
	Population	Growth in Previous 10 yrs		Population	10-year Avg Annual Growth Rate
Avg Annual Pop Growth		Avg Annual Growth Rate			
Historical Data					
1970	81,983	1,167	1.5%	3,413,250	1.8%
1980	106,701	2,472	2.7%	4,132,353	1.9%
1990	127,780	2,108	1.8%	4,866,663	1.6%
2000	166,826	3,905	2.7%	5,894,143	1.9%
2010	201,140	3,431	1.9%	6,724,540	1.3%
OFM Projections					
Low Projection					
2020	202,405	127	0.1%	6,650,247	-0.1%
2030	217,625	1,522	0.7%	7,014,757	0.5%
2040	230,907	1,328	0.6%	7,291,723	0.4%
Medium Projection					
2020	225,307	2,417	1.1%	7,411,977	1.0%
2030	256,643	3,134	1.3%	8,154,193	1.0%
2040	284,901	2,826	1.1%	8,790,981	0.8%
High Projection					
2020	255,016	5,388	2.4%	8,323,502	2.2%
2030	302,510	4,749	1.7%	9,545,795	1.4%
2040	350,000	4,749	1.5%	10,676,166	1.1%

Source: Washington Office of Financial Management, May 2012.

Note: 10-year annual average growth rate values represent the annual average growth rate for the previous 10 years.

- Ever since the 1970s, the Whatcom County population has consistently grown at a faster rate than the State. The 50-year annual average growth rate from 1960-2010 is 2.1% for Whatcom County and 1.7% for Washington State.
- By 2040, the spread between the OFM high and low population projections is about 119,000 (approximately 231,000 for the low projection and 350,000 for the high projection).
- By 2036, the horizon year for Whatcom County's 2016 Comprehensive Plan update, the difference between high and low projections is about 105,000 (approximately 226,000 for the low projection and 331,000 for the high projection).
- Growth rates assumed in the Whatcom County low projection are much lower than any period during the past fifty years. The medium projection also assumes growth rates lower than historical averages. The reduction in the growth rate is partially due to a slowing of the natural component of population growth shown earlier in Exhibit 2.
- The 30-year (2010-2040) annual average growth rate for Whatcom County under the high projection is 1.9%, which is the same rate of growth experienced between 2000-2010.

Considerations for 2016 Comprehensive Plan Alternatives

For the Comprehensive Plan update, the OFM long-range projections serve as bookends within which local decision-makers and planners can work. The OFM medium projection is considered the most likely future, but for planning purposes, it is also reasonable to explore different ranges of growth alternatives within the OFM high and low ranges. The migration component of population change is difficult to forecast and can vary significantly depending on political and economic shifts. For this reason, alternative high and low population projections were developed to estimate sensitivity to variations in migration. Exhibit 4 shows these alternative projections and how they compare to 2036 OFM population projections.

Exhibit 4
Alternative Projections Compared to OFM Projections

	Low Projection	Medium Projection	High Projection
OFM Projections			
2036 Population	225,580	273,911	330,869
2013-2036 Growth			
Total Population Growth	19,780	68,111	125,069
Avg Annual Pop Growth	860	2,961	5,438
Annual Avg Growth Rate	0.4%	1.3%	2.1%
Alternative Projections			
2036 Population	261,886	-	291,949
2013-2036 Growth			
Total Population Growth	56,086	-	86,149
Avg Annual Pop Growth	2,439	-	3,746
Avg Annual Growth Rate	1.1%	-	1.5%
Difference from OFM Projections			
2036 Population			
Total Population Difference	36,306	-	-38,920
Percentage Difference	16.1%	-	-11.8%
2013-2036 Growth			
Avg Annual Pop Growth Diff.	1,579	-	-1,692

Source: BERK, 2013

The alternatives were developed using the following rationale:

- **Medium projection.** No adjustments were made to the OFM medium projection, which is considered the most likely future. The OFM medium projection forecasts a slower annual growth rate between 2013-2036 (1.3%) than was experienced over the past 20 years (2.3% annually between 1990-2010).
- **Low projection.** The OFM low projection assumes growth rates much lower than historical averages. Over the past 30 years, there has not been a five-year period with an average annual growth rate as low as the rate OFM is projecting between 2013 and 2036 (0.4%). In the early-mid 1980s, five-year annual average growth rates slipped to 1.2%, and most recently the annual average growth rate between 2008 and 2013 was 0.8%.

The alternative low projection results in a 2036 population of about 262,000. It is based on an assumption that migration will be 20% less than under the medium projection, and the natural component is the same as the medium projection. The resulting 2036 population projection is about 16% (36,000 population) higher than the OFM low projection.

- **High projection.** The OFM high projection assumes an annual growth rate (2.1%) that is slightly higher than the 2000-2010 growth rate (1.9%) the County has experienced most recently. The alternative high projection results in a 2036 population of about 292,000. It is based on an assumption that migration will be 30% higher than under the medium projection, and the natural component is the same as the medium projection. The resulting 2036 population projection is about 12% (-39,000 population) lower than the OFM high projection.

The spread between the three projections is balanced in terms of annual average population growth rate, with the low projection assuming a 1.1% annual average growth rate, the medium projection assuming 1.3%, and the high projection assuming 1.5%.

ALLOCATION OF POPULATION TO UGAS

After establishing a range of countywide growth projections, the next step is to allocate future growth to UGAs. The process to develop technical allocations involves analysis of historical trends in population growth by UGA and assigning future growth based on these trends. The technical allocations will be used as a starting point for collaboration between the County and cities to make adjustments based on local plans, special circumstances, and other policy considerations.

Historical Population Estimates

Historical estimates of population by urban growth areas are shown in Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 6 below. The estimates are based on current 2013 UGA boundaries. The 2010 estimates are based on 2010 Census data. The 1990 and 2000 estimates build on previous work completed for the Whatcom County 2009 Comprehensive Plan update¹, which estimated population using 2009 UGA boundaries. We adjusted the 2009 estimates to reflect UGA boundary changes that have occurred between 2009 and 2013.

Exhibit 5
Population by Growth Area, 1990-2010

	Population			Population Growth		Total 1990-2010
	1990	2000	2010	1990-2000	2000-2010	
Urban Growth Areas						
Bellingham	60,714	76,957	91,251	16,243	14,294	30,537
Birch Bay	2,141	4,163	7,391	2,022	3,228	5,250
Blaine	3,023	3,700	5,058	677	1,358	2,035
Cherry Point	0	0	43	0	43	43
Columbia Valley	454	2,384	3,061	1,930	677	2,607
Everson	1,758	2,248	2,598	490	350	840
Ferndale	6,689	9,180	11,899	2,491	2,719	5,210
Lynden	6,452	9,619	12,167	3,167	2,548	5,715
Nooksack	616	895	1,363	279	468	747
Sumas	792	995	1,319	203	324	527
All Urban Growth Areas	82,639	110,141	136,150	27,502	26,009	53,511
Other Areas Outside UGAs	45,141	56,673	64,990	11,532	8,317	19,849
Total Whatcom County	127,780	166,814	201,140	39,034	34,326	73,360

Source: BERK, Washington Office of Financial Management, 2013

Note: All population estimates are based on current 2013 UGA boundaries, not older historical UGA boundaries, to maintain consistent geographic areas. City totals include population within the incorporated city boundary and their associated UGAs.

Note: The Sudden Valley area, which was a provisional UGA between December 2001 and February 2006, is included in the "Other Areas Outside UGAs" category.

¹ Phase I Allocations of 2031 Growth to Planning Areas. BERK, January 13, 2009.

Exhibit 6
Population Growth Rates by Growth Area, 1990-2010

	Annual Avg Population Growth			Annual Avg Growth Rate		
	10-year Average 1990-2000	10-year Average 2000-2010	20-year Average 1990-2010	10-year Rate 1990-2000	10-year Rate 2000-2010	20-year Rate 1990-2010
Urban Growth Areas						
Bellingham	1,624	1,429	1,527	2.4%	1.7%	2.1%
Birch Bay	202	323	263	6.9%	5.9%	6.4%
Blaine	68	136	102	2.0%	3.2%	2.6%
Cherry Point	0	4	2	NA	NA	NA
Columbia Valley	193	68	130	18.0%	2.5%	10.0%
Everson	49	35	42	2.5%	1.5%	2.0%
Femdale	249	272	261	3.2%	2.6%	2.9%
Lynden	317	255	286	4.1%	2.4%	3.2%
Nooksack	28	47	37	3.8%	4.3%	4.1%
Sumas	20	32	26	2.3%	2.9%	2.6%
All Urban Growth Areas	2,750	2,601	2,676	2.9%	2.1%	2.5%
Other Areas Outside UGAs	1,153	832	992	2.3%	1.4%	1.8%
Total Whatcom County	3,903	3,433	3,668	2.7%	1.9%	2.3%

Source: BERK, Washington Office of Financial Management, 2013

Note: All population estimates are based on current 2013 UGA boundaries, not older historical UGA boundaries, to maintain consistent geographic areas. City totals include population within the incorporated city boundary and their associated UGAs.

- As displayed in the countywide totals, many UGAs grew faster in the 1990s than in the 2000s.
- The fastest growing UGAs since 1990, in terms of annual average growth rate, have been Birch Bay and Columbia Valley.
- In terms of absolute population growth, Bellingham UGA has grown by about 30,000 since 1990.
- Growth rates in urban areas outpaced growth rates outside UGAs in the 1990s and this trend continued in the 2000s.

Exhibit 7
Shares of Population by Growth Area, 1990-2010

	Share of Population			Share of Population Growth		Total 1990-2010
	1990	2000	2010	1990-2000	2000-2010	
Urban Growth Areas						
Bellingham	47.5%	46.1%	45.4%	41.6%	41.6%	41.6%
Birch Bay	1.7%	2.5%	3.7%	5.2%	9.4%	7.2%
Blaine	2.4%	2.2%	2.5%	1.7%	4.0%	2.8%
Cherry Point	0.0%	0.0%	0.02%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Columbia Valley	0.4%	1.4%	1.5%	4.9%	2.0%	3.6%
Everson	1.4%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.0%	1.1%
Ferndale	5.2%	5.5%	5.9%	6.4%	7.9%	7.1%
Lynden	5.0%	5.8%	6.0%	8.1%	7.4%	7.8%
Nooksack	0.5%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	1.4%	1.0%
Sumas	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	0.9%	0.7%
All Urban Growth Areas	64.7%	66.0%	67.7%	70.5%	75.8%	72.9%
Other Areas Outside UGAs	35.3%	34.0%	32.3%	29.5%	24.2%	27.1%
Total Whatcom County	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: BERK, Washington Office of Financial Management, 2013

Note: Green shading indicates areas that increased their share of population the most between 1990 and 2010. Orange shading indicates areas that decreased their share of population the most over the same time period.

Note: All population shares are based on current 2013 UGA boundaries, not older historical UGA boundaries, to maintain consistent geographic areas.

- Overall, UGAs have captured a larger share of growth since 1990. Specifically, UGAs captured 70.5% of growth from 1990-2000 and 75.8% of growth between 2000-2010. This pattern of growth has resulted in UGAs increasing their share of overall population from 64.7% in 1990 to 67.7% in 2010.
- Most UGAs have increased their share of population since 1990, with Birch Bay, Columbia Valley, Ferndale, and Lynden seeing the largest increases.
- Birch Bay, Blaine, Ferndale, Nooksack, and Sumas have seen an increased share of growth in the 2000-2010 decade compared to the 1990s.
- The UGA that has seen the most decrease in population share is Bellingham, which shifted from 47.5% of the County's population in 1990 to 45.4% in 2010.

Alternative Growth Scenarios

The scenarios included in this section are preliminary alternatives representing simple allocations based on historical trends. We have developed allocations for the OFM medium, alternative high, and alternative low countywide projections shown in bold in Exhibit 4.

These scenarios are the technical allocations that will be used as a starting point for collaboration between the County and cities to make adjustments. The technical alternatives will be augmented and adjusted in the policy phase of the planning process.

In the exhibits below, the allocations of growth for the high, medium, and low projections are based on the share of growth observed between 2000 and 2010. The only exception is Cherry Point, which was not assigned any

growth. During this time period, more growth has started to occur in UGAs, and this pattern of growth is expected to continue as jurisdictions support policies consistent with the Growth Management Act.

Exhibit 8
Population Allocation by Growth Area, 2013-2036
LOW PROJECTION

	2013 Population	2036 Population	Population Growth 2013-2036		
			Total Pop Growth	Annual Avg Pop Growth	Annual Avg Growth Rate
Urban Growth Areas					
Bellingham	93,107	116,491	23,384	1,017	1.0%
Birch Bay	7,737	13,019	5,282	230	2.3%
Blaine	5,177	7,398	2,221	97	1.6%
Cherry Point	45	45	0	0	0.0%
Columbia Valley	3,204	4,312	1,108	48	1.3%
Everson	2,670	3,243	573	25	0.8%
Femdale	12,778	17,226	4,448	193	1.3%
Lynden	12,879	17,048	4,169	181	1.2%
Nooksack	1,436	2,202	766	33	1.9%
Sumas	1,449	1,979	530	23	1.4%
All Urban Growth Areas	140,482	182,963	42,481	1,847	1.2%
Other Areas Outside UGAs	65,318	78,923	13,605	592	0.8%
Total Whatcom County	205,800	261,886	56,086	2,439	1.1%

Source: BERK, 2013

Exhibit 9
Population Allocation by Growth Area, 2013-2036
MEDIUM PROJECTION

	2013 Population	2036 Population	Population Growth 2013-2036		
			Total Pop Growth	Annual Avg Pop Growth	Annual Avg Growth Rate
Urban Growth Areas					
Bellingham	93,107	121,505	28,398	1,235	1.2%
Birch Bay	7,737	14,151	6,414	279	2.7%
Blaine	5,177	7,875	2,698	117	1.8%
Cherry Point	45	45	0	0	0.0%
Columbia Valley	3,204	4,549	1,345	58	1.5%
Everson	2,670	3,365	695	30	1.0%
Ferndale	12,778	18,180	5,402	235	1.5%
Lynden	12,879	17,942	5,063	220	1.5%
Nooksack	1,436	2,366	930	40	2.2%
Sumas	1,449	2,093	644	28	1.6%
All Urban Growth Areas	140,482	192,071	51,589	2,243	1.4%
Other Areas Outside UGAs	65,318	81,840	16,522	718	1.0%
Total Whatcom County	205,800	273,911	68,111	2,961	1.3%

Source: BERK, 2013

Exhibit 10
Population Allocation by Growth Area, 2013-2036
HIGH PROJECTION

	2013 Population	2036 Population	Population Growth 2013-2036		
			Total Pop Growth	Annual Avg Pop Growth	Annual Avg Growth Rate
Urban Growth Areas					
Bellingham	93,107	129,025	35,918	1,562	1.4%
Birch Bay	7,737	15,850	8,113	353	3.2%
Blaine	5,177	8,589	3,412	148	2.2%
Cherry Point	45	45	0	0	0.0%
Columbia Valley	3,204	4,905	1,701	74	1.9%
Everson	2,670	3,550	880	38	1.2%
Ferndale	12,778	19,611	6,833	297	1.9%
Lynden	12,879	19,282	6,403	278	1.8%
Nooksack	1,436	2,612	1,176	51	2.6%
Sumas	1,449	2,263	814	35	2.0%
All Urban Growth Areas	140,482	205,732	65,250	2,837	1.7%
Other Areas Outside UGAs	65,318	86,217	20,899	909	1.2%
Total Whatcom County	205,800	291,949	86,149	3,746	1.5%

Source: BERK, 2013

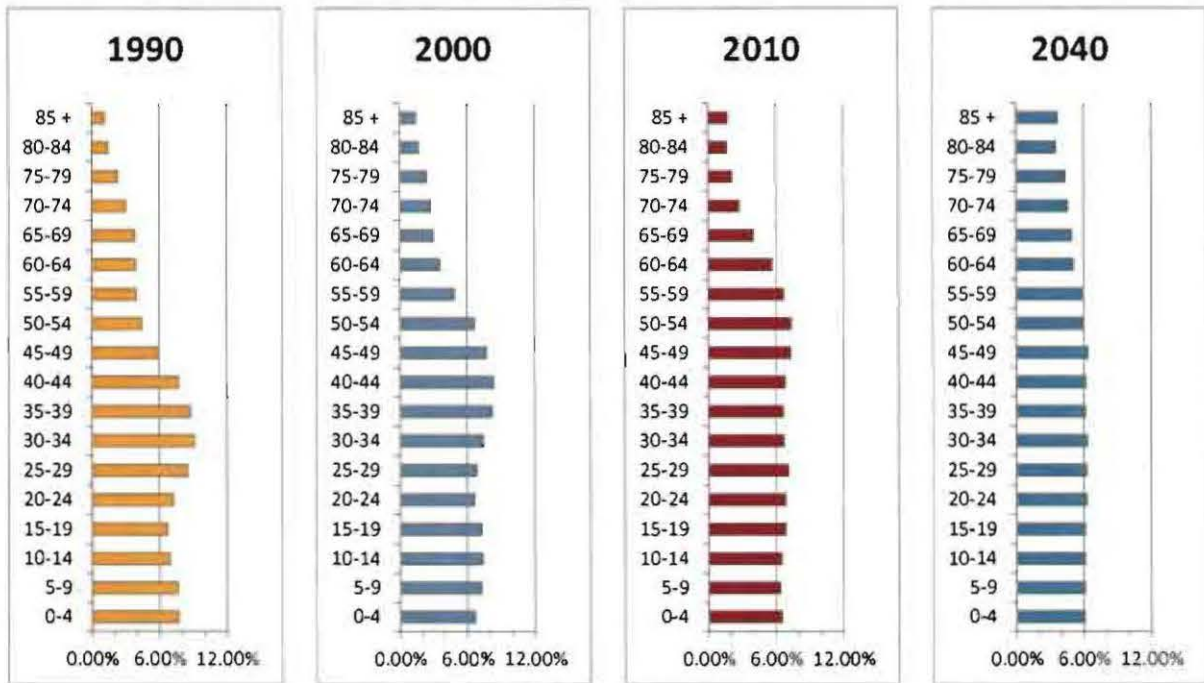
AGE COHORT ANALYSIS

Age cohorts in Whatcom County and Washington State were analyzed to provide context for some of the broader population changes being projected by the Office of Financial Management.

Exhibit 11 and Exhibit 12 on the following page show the age distributions in Washington State and Whatcom County over the past twenty years and how they are projected to change by 2040.

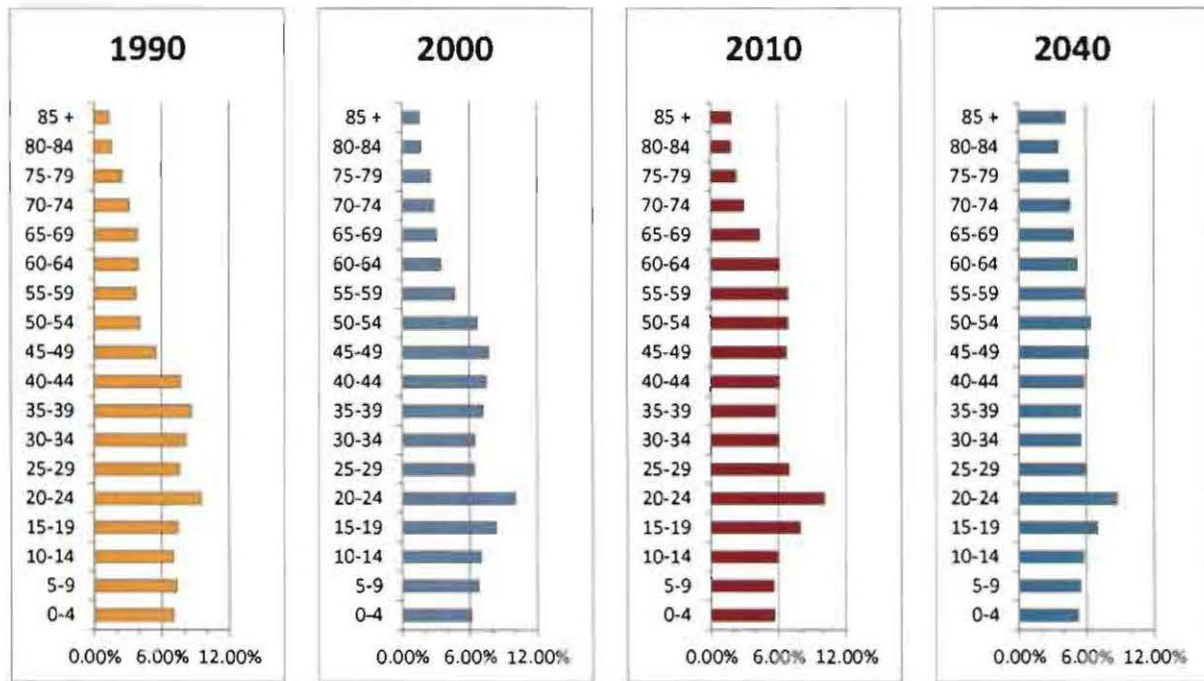
- In the Washington exhibit, the baby boom generation is clearly visible like the crest of a wave moving up the age categories before eventually flattening out by 2040.
- The Whatcom County exhibit shows the same baby boom pattern but also exhibits a consistent spike in the 20-24 age group. This represents the consistent influx of college students to attend universities in Whatcom County. This spike does not carry forward as the cohort ages because many of the incoming students leave Whatcom County once they graduate.

Exhibit 11
Age Distribution: Percentage of Population by Age Group
WASHINGTON STATE



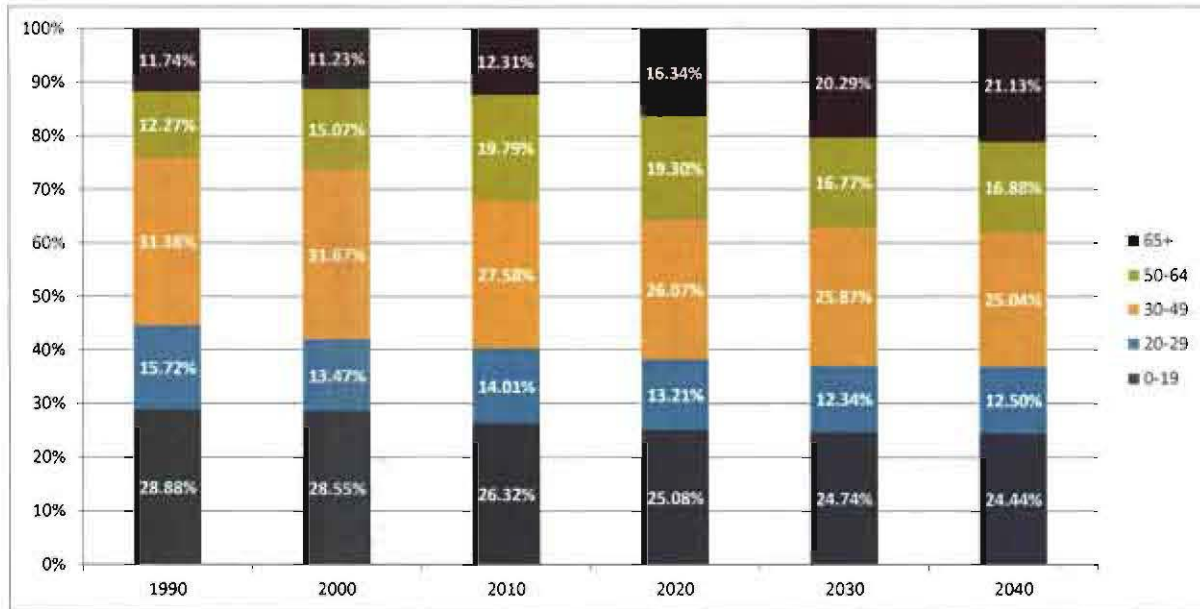
Source: OFM, 2013

Exhibit 12
Age Distribution: Percentage of Population by Age Group
WHATCOM COUNTY



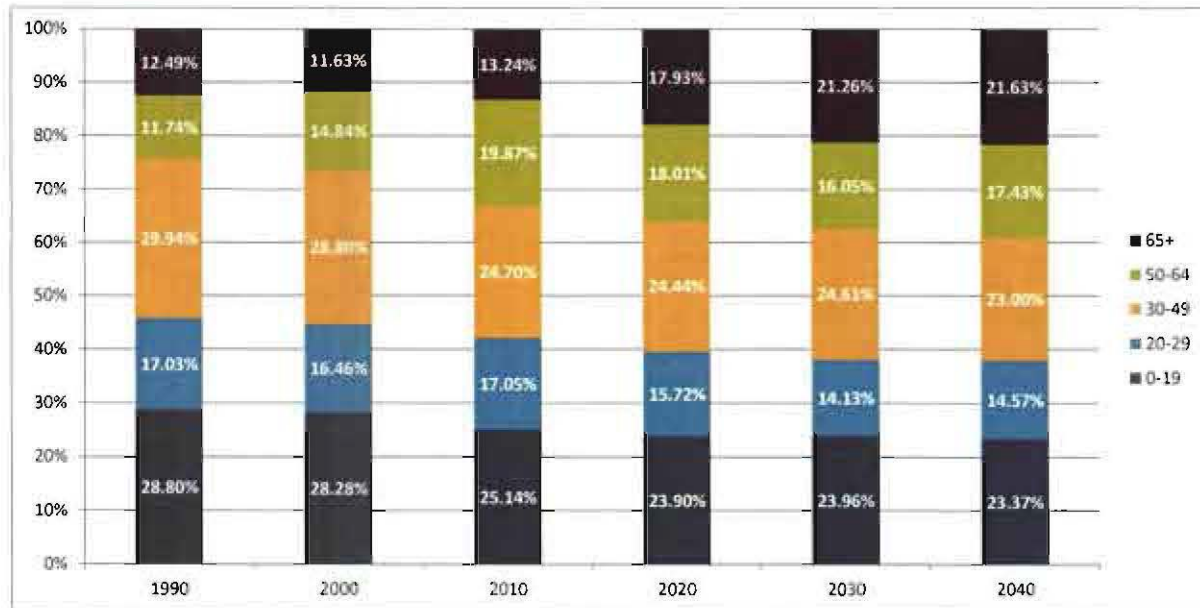
Source: OFM, 2013

Exhibit 13
Age Distribution, 1990-2040
WASHINGTON STATE



Source: OFM, 2013

Exhibit 14
Age Distribution, 1990-2040
WHATCOM COUNTY



Source: OFM, 2013

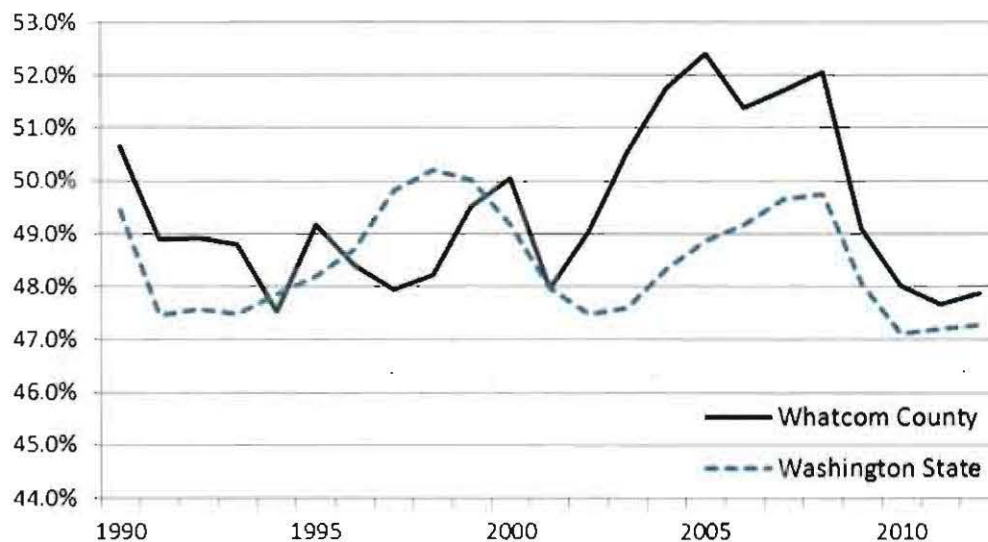
Exhibit 13 and Exhibit 14 show the distribution of population by larger age categories. These exhibits show that Whatcom County has a slightly higher proportion of population age 65 and over than the State average. The proportion of 65+ population had a notable increase in 2010 and it is unclear whether this is signaling a new trend for Whatcom County or not. According to the Office of Financial Management, Whatcom County was not treated

as a retirement community for the 2010-2040 long-range forecasts. It was treated as a metro county, like Snohomish or Clark Counties. These counties were assigned some attraction for 65+ population, compared to King County, due to relatively affordable living and accessibility to services.

COUNTY-WIDE EMPLOYMENT

Neither the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) nor OFM generate long-range employment projections for Whatcom County specifically. Given this limitation, it is useful to examine the historical relationship between employment and population, which are typically correlated. Exhibit 15 shows recent trends in the ratio between employment and population (referred to as the employment rate) for Whatcom County and Washington State. As an example of what the employment rate indicator represents, in 2012, Whatcom County had a population of 203,500 and total employment of 97,410. The employment rate in this case is 47.9% (97,410 divided by 203,500).

Exhibit 15
Employment Rates for Whatcom County and Washington State, 1990-2012



Source: OFM Long-term Forecast of the Washington Labor Force, March 2013; ESD Local Unemployment Statistics, 2013

- Since 1990, except for a brief period in the late 1990s, Whatcom County's employment rate has generally been higher than the State employment rate.
- The Whatcom County employment rate has fluctuated from a high of 52.4% in 2005 to a low of 47.5% in 1994. Most recently, in 2012, the employment rate was 47.9%

Although employment projections are not available for Whatcom County, Exhibit 16 shows how employment, population, and the employment rate are projected to change for the State of Washington.

Exhibit 16
Employment Rates for Whatcom County and Washington State, 1990-2040

	Whatcom County			Washington State		
	Population	Total Employed	Employment Rate	Population	Total Employed	Employment Rate
Historical Estimates						
1990	127,780	64,720	50.6%	4,866,663	2,406,400	49.4%
2000	166,826	83,510	50.1%	5,894,143	2,898,100	49.2%
2010	201,140	96,590	48.0%	6,724,540	3,167,500	47.1%
2012	203,500	97,410	47.9%	6,817,770	3,223,300	47.3%
Projections						
2020	-	-	-	7,411,977	3,456,200	46.6%
2030	-	-	-	8,154,193	3,657,100	44.8%
2040	-	-	-	8,790,981	3,904,300	44.4%

Source: OFM Long-term Forecast of the Washington Labor Force, March 2013; ESD Local Unemployment Statistics, 2013

- According to the OFM Long-term Forecast of the Washington Labor Force, the employment rate is projected to decline over time and approach 44% by 2040. One factor driving this decline is the retirement of the baby boom generation and aging of the State population.

Projections of Countywide Employment

Using the high, medium, and low population projections for 2036, described earlier, it is possible to estimate Whatcom County 2036 employment using an assumption about the future employment rate. Based on the projected Washington State employment rate of about 44.5% in 2036, and the fact that Whatcom County's employment rate has typically been higher than the State's, we have developed Countywide employment projections using an assumption that the Whatcom County employment rate will be 46% in 2036.

Exhibit 17
Whatcom County Employment Projections, 2012-2036

	Low Projection	Medium Projection	High Projection
2012 Total Employment	97,410	97,410	97,410
2036 Population Projection	261,886	273,911	291,949
2036 Total Employment @ 46% Emp Rate	120,468	125,999	134,297
2012-2036 Employment Growth			
Total Employment Growth	23,058	28,589	36,887
Avg Annual Employment Growth	961	1,191	1,537
Annual Avg Employment Growth Rate	0.9%	1.1%	1.3%
2012-2036 Non-Ag Employment Growth	22,194	27,518	35,505

Source: BERK, 2013

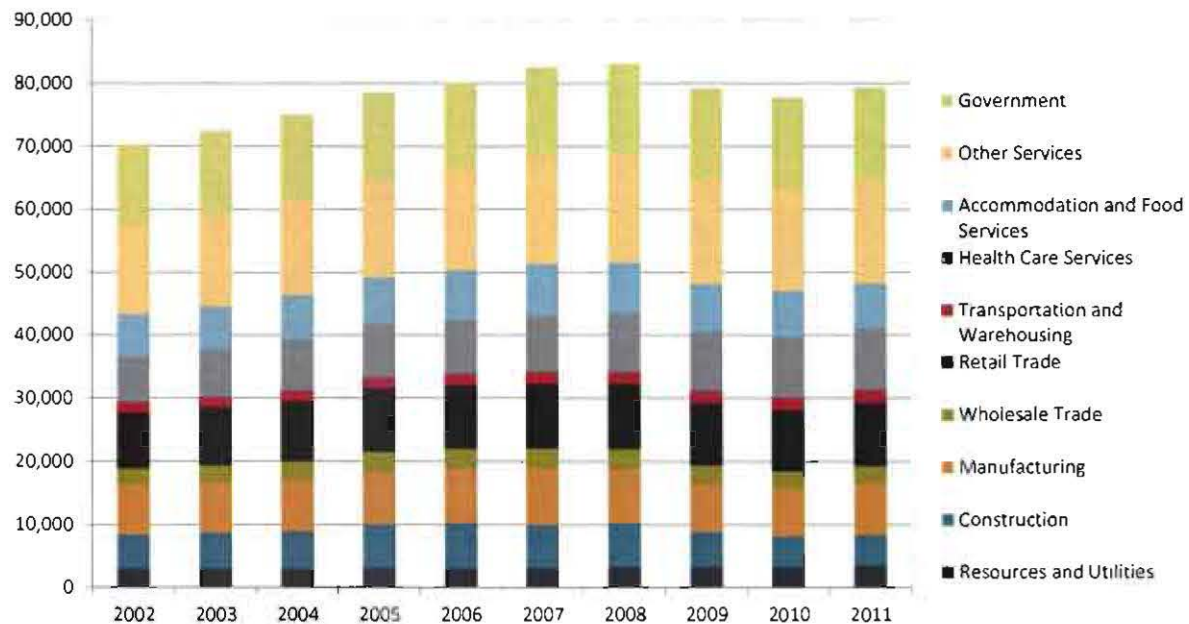
- Using the population ranges established earlier and an employment rate assumption of 46%, employment projections range from a low of about 120,000 to a high of 134,000. This represents employment growth of 23,000 to 37,000 between 2012-2036.
- Exhibit 17 includes a growth estimate of non-agricultural employment, which excludes agriculture and mining employment categories. Non-agricultural employment is what will be allocated to UGAs in the following section, as the comprehensive plan update process focuses on non-agricultural commercial growth and land supply.

Employment by Industry

In addition to total employment, it is also important to assess the distribution of employment by industry. Exhibit 18 shows recent employment shifts by industry in Whatcom County. Each industry represents a selection of North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industry codes.

**Exhibit 18
Whatcom County Covered Employment by Industry, 2002-2011**

NAICS	Industry	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
11, 21-22	Resources and Utilities	3,053	3,110	3,071	3,196	3,097	3,115	3,362	3,336	3,376	3,645
23	Construction	5,471	5,679	6,030	6,906	7,216	6,928	6,979	5,652	4,861	4,845
31-33	Manufacturing	7,932	7,991	8,034	8,324	8,630	9,027	8,695	7,727	7,617	8,242
42	Wholesale Trade	2,465	2,629	2,919	3,127	3,075	2,994	2,971	2,677	2,648	2,552
44-45	Retail Trade	8,877	9,211	9,487	10,012	10,063	10,253	10,295	9,855	9,701	10,029
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	1,562	1,506	1,634	1,707	1,751	1,782	1,827	1,862	1,856	1,950
62	Health Care Services	7,139	7,507	8,086	8,394	8,644	9,015	9,232	9,445	9,625	9,784
72	Accommodation and Food Services	6,818	6,936	7,220	7,544	7,944	8,266	8,159	7,621	7,454	7,257
51-61, 71, 81	Other Services	14,172	14,576	15,056	15,639	16,026	17,084	17,421	16,673	16,295	16,675
	Government	12,817	13,272	13,451	13,652	13,742	14,082	14,224	14,316	14,346	14,291
	Total	70,306	72,417	74,988	78,501	80,188	82,544	83,167	79,164	77,779	79,270



Source: ESD, 2013

Note: "Covered employment" refers to jobs covered by the state unemployment insurance program. Workers excluded from covered employment totals include members of the armed forces, self-employed workers, sole proprietors, and other non-insured workers. Due to these exclusions, total covered employment in this exhibit does not match total employment reported in earlier exhibits.

- Countywide covered employment grew by almost 13,000 jobs between 2002 and 2008, declined during the economic downturn, and started to rebound in 2011. Overall between 2002 and 2011, covered employment grew by almost 9,000 jobs.
- The fastest growing industry is Health Care Services, which grew by about 2,600 jobs between 2002 and 2011, at an annual average growth rate of 3.6%.
- The only industry to decline since 2002 is Construction, a sector hard hit during the economic downturn, which lost about 600 jobs between 2002 and 2011.

In the next section, employment in three broad industry categories (commercial, retail, and industrial), are allocated to UGAs. These three categories each comprise a selection of NAICS codes as shown in Exhibit 19 below. These broad categories are used because they generally correspond to the County's land capacity analysis and allow flexibility when exploring alternative growth scenarios. Later in the comprehensive plan update process, future employment demand will be compared to developable land capacity to determine the ability for jurisdictions to accommodate future employment growth.

Exhibit 19
NAICS Industries Included in Broad Industry Groups

NAICS Codes	Industry	Broad Industry Category For Allocations
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	RESOURCES (Not Included in allocations)
21	Mining	
22	Utilities	INDUSTRIAL
23	Construction	
31-33	Manufacturing	
42	Wholesale trade	
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	
44-45	Retail trade	RETAIL
51	Information	COMMERCIAL
52	Finance and insurance	
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	
54	Professional and technical services	
55	Management of companies and enterprises	
56	Administrative and waste services	
61	Educational services	
62	Health care and social assistance	
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	
72	Accommodation and food services	
81	Other services, except public administration	
	Government	

Source: BERK, 2013

ALLOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT TO UGAS

After establishing a range of countywide employment projections, the next step is to allocate employment growth to UGAs. Due to confidentiality constraints, the Employment Security Department must suppress certain industry employment totals at the UGA-level of geography. Given this constraint, to examine UGA-level employment distributions, we used a 2010 employment database developed by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG). The WCOG database includes employment information at individual business locations and was developed using third-party commercial data from InfoUSA and Dun & Bradstreet, extensive quality assurance and quality control, and direct outreach to local businesses.

The initial technical allocations of employment growth in this section use a simple allocation based on the 2010 distribution of employment within the County. For example, the Bellingham UGA comprises 67% of commercial employment in the County, and therefore will receive 67% of projected commercial growth.

Exhibit 20
Share of Employment by UGA, 2010

	Employment Category			Total
	Commercial	Retail	Industrial	
Urban Growth Areas				
Bellingham	67.4%	72.6%	50.4%	63.8%
Birch Bay	1.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%
Blaine	3.9%	2.7%	4.0%	3.8%
Cherry Point	0.2%	0.0%	9.1%	2.5%
Columbia Valley	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Everson	0.8%	0.8%	1.2%	0.9%
Ferndale	4.8%	5.6%	11.2%	6.6%
Lynden	6.0%	5.5%	6.6%	6.1%
Nooksack	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.3%
Sumas	0.5%	0.7%	1.5%	0.8%
All Urban Growth Areas	85.1%	88.6%	84.9%	85.6%
Other Areas Outside UGAs	14.9%	11.4%	15.1%	14.4%
Total Whatcom County	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total Whatcom Employment in Each Employment Category				
	58.6%	15.2%	26.1%	100.0%

Source: WCOG, 2013

Note: Until the travel demand model calibration process is complete by July 31, 2013, WCOG may make some minor changes to the employment database.

- The Bellingham UGA comprises about 64% of all employment in the County and is the clear economic center of activity.
- Among the employment categories, commercial employment accounts for 59% of the non-agricultural employment base, followed by industrial (26%) and Retail (15%).

Alternative Growth Scenarios

The technical allocations will be used as a starting point for collaboration between the County and cities to make adjustments based on local plans, special circumstances, and other policy considerations. In the exhibits below, the high, medium, and low projections correspond to the total non-agricultural employment projections shown earlier in Exhibit 17.

Exhibit 21
Employment Allocation by Growth Area, 2012-2036
LOW PROJECTION

	Commercial	Retail	Industrial	Total
Urban Growth Areas				
Bellingham	8,777	2,456	2,923	14,156
Birch Bay	134	17	17	168
Blaine	509	90	233	832
Cherry Point	29	0	527	556
Columbia Valley	10	1	6	17
Everson	99	29	72	200
Femdale	625	189	652	1,466
Lynden	778	186	384	1,348
Nooksack	42	6	24	72
Sumas	69	22	87	178
All Urban Growth Areas	11,072	2,996	4,925	18,993
Other Areas Outside UGAs	1,939	387	875	3,201
Total Whatcom County	13,011	3,383	5,800	22,194

Source: BERK, 2013

Exhibit 22
Employment Allocation by Growth Area, 2012-2036
MEDIUM PROJECTION

	Commercial	Retail	Industrial	Total
Urban Growth Areas				
Bellingham	10,883	3,044	3,624	17,551
Birch Bay	166	21	21	208
Blaine	631	112	289	1,032
Cherry Point	36	0	653	689
Columbia Valley	13	2	7	22
Everson	122	35	90	247
Ferndale	775	234	809	1,818
Lynden	965	231	476	1,672
Nooksack	52	8	29	89
Sumas	86	27	108	221
All Urban Growth Areas	13,729	3,714	6,106	23,549
Other Areas Outside UGAs	2,404	480	1,085	3,969
Total Whatcom County	16,133	4,194	7,191	27,518

Source: BERK, 2013

Exhibit 23
Employment Allocation by Growth Area, 2012-2036
HIGH PROJECTION

	Commercial	Retail	Industrial	Total
Urban Growth Areas				
Bellingham	14,038	3,927	4,676	22,641
Birch Bay	214	28	27	269
Blaine	815	145	373	1,333
Cherry Point	47	0	843	890
Columbia Valley	17	2	9	28
Everson	158	46	116	320
Ferndale	1,000	302	1,044	2,346
Lynden	1,245	298	614	2,157
Nooksack	67	10	38	115
Sumas	111	35	139	285
All Urban Growth Areas	17,712	4,793	7,879	30,384
Other Areas Outside UGAs	3,102	619	1,400	5,121
Total Whatcom County	20,814	5,412	9,279	35,505

Source: BERK, 2013

Considerations for the Policy Phase

The technical allocations of population and employment in this memo will be used as a starting point for collaboration between the County and cities to make adjustments. The technical alternatives can be augmented or adjusted in the policy phase of the planning process in following ways:

1. **Adjust Countywide Totals.** The countywide high and low projections of population can be adjusted to represent a broader or tighter range around the OFM medium projection. For the employment projections, alternative employment rate assumptions can be considered.
2. **Adjust Allocation Shares.** There are several market and policy considerations that could justify adjustments in the UGA-level allocations of population or employment. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Targeting growth to specific UGAs that are expected to experience more growth in the future than has been observed historically.
 - Considering developable land capacity to target more growth where developable capacity exists and less growth where there is limited land capacity.
 - Making adjustments to account for infrastructure capacity and constraints.
 - Considering allocation of a declining share of growth to areas outside of UGAs, reflecting a continuation of the trend over the past 20 years.
 - Considering Canadian influences on the housing and commercial markets. This could result in adjustments to allocations for communities affected by the Canadian influence.
 - Factoring in local plans and actions to attract additional development.
 - Considering potential effects of large catalyst projects and the market-changing effects these developments can have on population or employment growth patterns.

It is important to note that the high and low technical allocations of population and employment for each UGA can be adjusted, and should not be seen as high and low brackets for the policy phase discussions.

To: Bellingham Planning Commission
Date: October 10, 2013
Re: Bellingham's Urban Growth Area - "Yew Street UGA Reserve"

Dear Bellingham Planning Commission,

Tonight, you begin what the staff memo calls "Phase 2", which includes the task of recommending population and employment numbers to the council. These are the basic building blocks of planning under the Growth Management Act. Reasonable population and employment growth planning is key to the success of GMA in Whatcom County and especially the City of Bellingham. Bellingham has had tremendous success in the past capturing population and employment growth and with a fresh effort, we believe Bellingham can once again contribute to the reduction of sprawl and the rebuilding of our local economy.

In 2009, our property, located in the Yew Street UGA and adjacent to the city limits, city park land, Wade King Elementary, water, sewer, and a fire station, was abruptly removed from the Bellingham UGA and placed into "reserve" status. Since that time, Bellingham has faced many challenges attracting and encouraging growth within its urban growth area. In addition, the City has declared an affordable housing emergency under special state law RCW 84.52.105, apartment rental vacancy is at a critically low rate, *and the availability of land zoned for family friendly neighborhoods is virtually non-existent*. Multi-family zoned land continues to be consumed with single-family density, reducing the effectiveness of the City Comprehensive Plan.

One key assumption in the 2009 process - that all low density land will be zoned at least to 4du/acre has proven to be politically impossible, as shown by the recent vote in the City of Bellingham on a very low density zoned area. The current Land Capacity Analysis assumes that an additional 2,000 persons of capacity would be available from such a city-wide up zone. (see attached City of Bellingham Testimony). In addition, the city recently purchased a large parcel of land (the 100 acre woods) that had been counted in the Land Capacity Analysis as "permitted" and because of that, did not have an associated parks deduction. This means that capacity was lost and not replaced. The permit was to accommodate 181 family homes and 558 apartment homes (about 1,000 people with vacancy removed). It is not surprising Bellingham has not been able to attract growth in recent years as it has in the past.

As a planning commission, please reject the use of population projections other than the official Washington State projection. Please be aware that what is often called the "middle" number is defined as the "most likely" and that Whatcom County has grown faster than the "most likely" under every projection to date.

The goal of periodic updates such as the Comprehensive Plan Update and 7-year review is to identify problems, create solutions, and implement them. Bellingham, and Whatcom County, have identified problems such as the ones above. As the planning commission, your job is to recommend planning solutions. We look forward to working together with Bellingham to find those solutions.

Regards,
TAL Properties, LLC
Westpac Management Inc.
Cal and Bernetta Leenstra
Mickey and Carloe Ghio

Bellingham UGA
Residential Land Capacity Analysis Summary – Planned Densities

June 11, 2009 Draft - Minimum 4/ac

Land Capacity Analysis	City	Unincorp.	Overall
Inventory - Gross Developable Acres	2,776	1,448	4,224
- Pending or Master Planned Projects	595	39	635
- Critical Areas Subtraction	328	192	520
- Public Uses Subtraction	661	207	868
other pub	60	50	110
Subtotal	1,132	959	2,091
- Infrastructure Subtraction (%)	23.0%	23.0%	23.0%
Subtotal	871	739	1,610
- Market Factor Subtraction (%)	19.0%	21.2%	20.1%
Net Developable Acres	705	582	1,287
x Assumed Net Densities	7.5	5.9	6.6
Dwelling Unit Capacity	5,283	3,460	8,743
- Existing DUs in partially/under-utilized	1,741	690	2,431
+ Pending or Master Planned Project Dwelling	5,859	184	6,043
Dwelling Unit Capacity with Pending or Master	8,401	2,954	12,356
x Occupancy Rate	87.5%	94.4%	89.1%
x Average Household Size	2.1	2.5	2.2
Population Growth Capacity	17,102	7,027	24,130

Land Demand Analysis including within city limits and Urban Growth Area	Land Demand		Surplus (Deficit)	
	Net Developable Acres Needed	2029-31 Population Growth	Acres	Population
SEPA No Action Alternative	1,170	22,580	117	1,550
GMCC Historic Growth Alternative	1,497	26,920	(210)	(2,790)
GMCC Current Plan Policy Alternative	1,812	31,101	(525)	(6,971)
EIS Alternative X	2,238	36,744	(951)	(12,614)
EIS Alternative Y	1,260	23,771	27	359

Acres Needed and Available – City Limits Only

Alternative	Net Acres Needed	Net Acres Available	Surplus (Deficit)
SEPA No Action Alternative	1,170	705	(465)
GMCC Historic Growth Alternative	1,497	705	(792)
GMCC Current Plan Policy Alternative	1,812	705	(1,107)
EIS Alternative X	2,238	705	(1,533)
EIS Alternative Y	1,260	705	(555)

Bellingham UGA
Residential Land Capacity Analysis Summary – Planned Densities

June 11, 2009 Draft - No Minimum 4/ac

Land Capacity Analysis	City	Unincorp.	Overall
Inventory - Gross Developable Acres	2,776	1,448	4,224
- Pending or Master Planned Projects	595	39	635
- Critical Areas Subtraction	328	192	520
- Public Uses Subtraction	661	207	868
other pub	60	50	110
Subtotal	1,132	959	2,091
- Infrastructure Subtraction (%)	23.0%	23.0%	23.0%
Subtotal	871	739	1,610
- Market Factor Subtraction (%)	19.0%	21.2%	20.1%
Net Developable Acres	705	582	1,287
x Assumed Net Densities	8.8	5.9	6.4
Dwelling Unit Capacity	4,777	3,460	8,237
- Existing DUs in partially/under-utilized	1,741	690	2,431
+ Pending or Master Planned Project Dwelling	5,859	184	6,043
Dwelling Unit Capacity with Pending or Master	8,895	2,954	11,849
x Occupancy Rate	82.2%	94.4%	85.3%
x Average Household Size	2.0	2.5	2.2
Population Growth Capacity	15,099	7,027	22,126

Land Demand Analysis including within city limits and Urban Growth Area	Land Demand		Surplus (Deficit)	
	Net Developable Acres Needed	2029-31 Population Growth	Acres	Population
SEPA No Action Alternative	1,325	22,580	(38)	(454)
GMCC Historic Growth Alternative	1,688	26,920	(401)	(4,794)
GMCC Current Plan Policy Alternative	2,038	31,101	(751)	(6,975)
EIS Alternative X	2,510	36,744	(1,223)	(14,618)
EIS Alternative Y	1,425	23,771	(138)	(1,845)

Acres Needed and Available – City Limits Only

Alternative	Net Acres Needed	Net Acres Available	Surplus (Deficit)
SEPA No Action Alternative	1,325	705	(620)
GMCC Historic Growth Alternative	1,688	705	(983)
GMCC Current Plan Policy Alternative	2,038	705	(1,333)
EIS Alternative X	2,510	705	(1,805)
EIS Alternative Y	1,425	705	(719)

Tonight, you will be making population and employment recommendations in what the staff report calls the "Phase 2, Review". There are a few things I believe you should consider in regard to the Phase 1 technical allocations.

The OFM "most likely" projection has been lower than actual growth 100% of the time, according to County Staff planner Matt Aamot. You should question why Whatcom County has always selected a number lower than the most likely. A data driven recommendation would calculate out how much lower the projections have been and adjust based on the local Whatcom County experience.

Pg 5 of the technical memo states, "Ever since the 1970s, the Whatcom County population has consistently grown at a faster rate than the State." I have given you a WA State OFM News Release titled, "Washington population growth accelerates." OFM believes Washington population growth is rebounding, much like after the 9/11 attack and "dot com" economic downturn. You should recommend Bellingham plan adequately now, for what is occurring population rebound wise, and what is expected.

The technical memo ignores basic facts that affect what you are looking at and is misleading without all of the information. Whatcom County and Bellingham did not begin GMA implementation until 1995. The 1990-2000 data used mixes non GMA growth and GMA growth. On LU-9 of the current Bellingham Comprehensive Plan (below) you'll see language about the historical under projecting and discussion of the timeframe after 1995 when Bellingham attracted over 62% of all County growth. I have also given you a page out of a Whatcom County Staff Report showing Bellingham captured 62.4% of all County growth 1995 to 2002, a GMA only timeframe. In addition, the 2000 - 2010 timeframe used in the technical memo does not discuss a major policy change where the UGA areas outside of the city were removed from the buildable land base.

If we want to reduce sprawl and capture growth in Bellingham, *we must plan to achieve that goal*. Don't be the "business as usual" Commission. Bellingham has done horribly since 2002 with very low growth capture rates. When making recommendations regarding planning for our future, take the knowledge from when Bellingham did well and use that to shape our future.

Last, you should recommend Bellingham create a demand analysis. With our documented undersupply of housing, we have several other needs to consider beyond simple population. The first is overcrowding and the second is the abundance of Gen Y population that have not yet been able to move out on their own. Generation Y is larger than the Baby Boomer population, is attracted to the West Coast, and as of about 2012, they are of the age where people begin to look for their own place. That means we have people moving and living here now that are in need of a 1st place whether it's an apartment or a home.

Thank you for your time.

Clayton Petree

Washington population growth accelerates

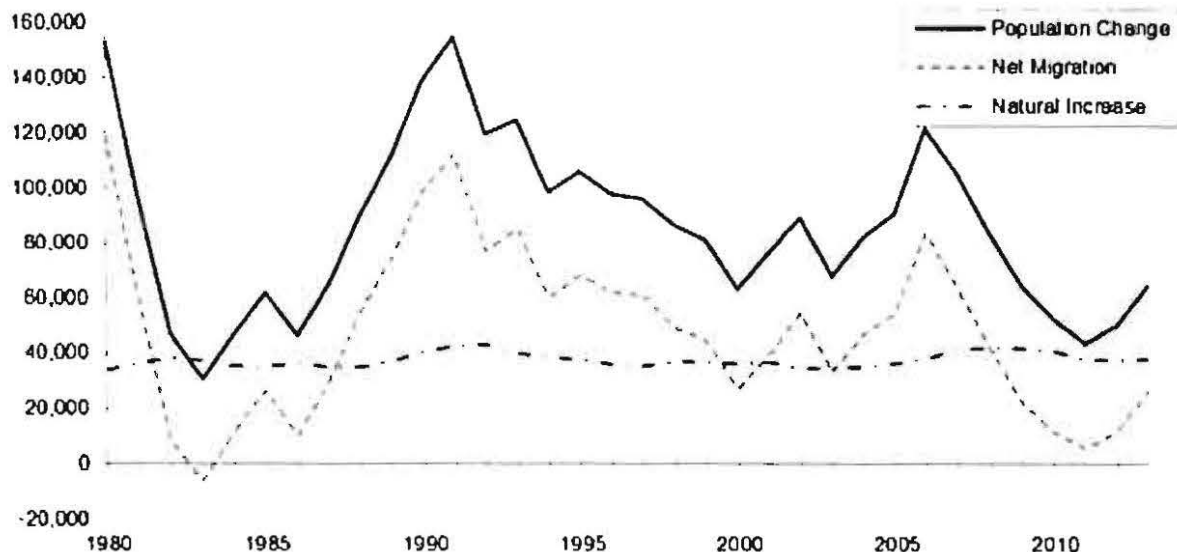
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 27, 2013

Contact: Yi Zhao, 360-902-0592

OLYMPIA — Washington state's population growth rate is increasing. Annual estimates prepared by the Office of Financial Management show that state's population increased by 64,600 between 2012 and 2013, to 6,882,400. A near 1 percent gain, it is the largest since 2010.

The higher growth rate was driven mainly by migration. This year, net migration (26,800) accounted for 41 percent of the state's population growth. In 2011 and 2012, net migration as a percentage of total population growth was 13 percent and 24 percent, respectively. Over the past decade, net migration averaged 45,000 persons per year, accounting for 54 percent of total population growth. Although current migration is lower than the prior decade's average, it is more than twice as high as last year, suggesting that a population rebound may be starting to take hold after several years of slow growth.

Components of state population change



This year's growth is concentrated in large metropolitan counties. Seventy-three percent of the growth occurred in the state's five largest counties: Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish and Spokane. In 2012, these counties accounted for about 65 percent of total population growth.

King County accounted for the largest share of state growth this year, almost 39 percent. The strength of the economic recovery in these metropolitan counties is driving the increase in migration.

However, nonmetropolitan counties experienced a decrease in net migration from last year, declining from about 3,600 migrants in 2012 to about 1,600 in 2013. Consequently, the share of state population growth attributed to nonmetropolitan counties declined from nearly 10 percent last year to about 4 percent this year.

Housing growth also accelerated in 2013. The state added 23,300 housing units, an increase of 4,600 units, or 24 percent, as compared to 2012. Almost 68 percent of all new housing is located in the five largest metropolitan counties, up from 61 percent in 2012. Again King County leads all counties with more than 7,500 new units, or approximately one-third of the state's total housing increase.

Information on OFM's April 1, 2013, population estimates for the state, counties, cities and towns can be accessed at <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/april1/>.

used throughout the comprehensive plan.

See Table 1, Historical Population Growth, Bellingham and Whatcom County

See Table 2, 1995 – 2004 Population Growth, Bellingham and Whatcom County

See Comprehensive Plan Appendix 1, Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecasts

City Population Growth Forecasts – Background

Historically, the City of Bellingham was characterized by slow but steady population growth. That trend changed beginning in the 1990s.

The population has increased significantly in the City of Bellingham since 1990. Between 1990 and 2000, population in the city grew by almost 15,000 people, a 29% overall increase. During the 1990s, Bellingham's growth accounted for 38.5 percent of the county's total growth.

The 1995 Comprehensive Plan estimated that population in Bellingham would grow by about 900 people per year, to 70,000 in year 2010. By 1997, higher than anticipated annual growth rates led staff to revise the 2010 growth estimate to 75,845 (1,200 people per year).

Since the 1995 comprehensive plan was adopted, population growth in the Bellingham urban area (city + UGA) has increased substantially. The State OFM estimated Bellingham's population in 1995 to be 57,830. At the same time, the UGA's population was about 8,700. By year 2000, the City's population had increased to 67,170 and the UGA's population increased to 10,870. Interestingly, the Bellingham urban area received over 62% of the total county growth during this period after the 1995 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan was adopted. The cornerstone of this plan was the infill and sprawl reduction goals.

Because the State OFM has historically under estimated population growth in Whatcom County, the jurisdictions worked together to contract with ECONorthwest to get 10 and 20-year population growth forecasts for the period 2002 – 2022. Each

Growth Share Within UGAs

GMA requires as part of the UGA review an analysis of “the extent to which the urban growth occurring within the county has located within each city and the unincorporated portions of the UGAs.” (RCW 36.70A.130(3)(a)) Table 4A shows that, based on OFM population estimates for 1995 and 2007, 65.9% of the county’s population growth over the past 12 years has occurred within *incorporated* areas of the UGAs alone. However, this statistic includes a small proportion of population that was added by annexation rather than new development, therefore it is more accurate to compare figures for a whole UGA. In the lower part of Table 4B county staff has compiled population estimates for each UGA between 1995 and 2002 (the latest date for which UGA population estimates exist). During that time 88.3% of the county’s population growth occurred within the city UGAs, while 11.7% occurred in the remainder of the county, including the non-city UGA’s for Birch Bay and Columbia Valley. The growth share within the city UGAs exceeded the expectations of the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, which had planned for 76.2% of the county’s growth to occur within those UGAs between 1995 and 2015 (from Table 3, p. 1-8). No 1995 population estimates are available for the latter two non-city UGAs. In the 2004 update, the planned growth share for the city UGAs between 2000 and 2022 increased to 82.5% as the plan adopted high-scenario projections for most of those UGAs (from Table 5, p. 1-8).

Table 4A

Estimated Population Growth by City (Incorporated areas only)	City of Bellingham	City of Blaine	City of Everson	City of Ferndale	City of Lynden	City of Nooksack	City of Sumas	All Incorp. Areas	All Unincorp.	Whatcom County
1995 OFM Estimate	59,544	3,211	1,897	7,156	7,154	821	940	80,723	69,219	149,942
2007 OFM Estimate	75,220	4,650	2,165	10,540	11,150	1,075	1,191	105,991	82,309	188,300

Planning/Comp Plan Amendments/Comp Plan 2007/CMP2007 UGA Review General

UGA Review

January 31, 2008
Staff Report, Page 10

12-Year Growth	15,676	1,439	268	3,384	3,996	254	251	25,268	13,090	38,358
12-Year Growth Rate	26.3%	44.8%	14.1%	47.3%	55.9%	30.9%	26.7%	31.3%	18.9%	25.6%
Growth Share	40.9%	3.8%	0.7%	8.8%	10.4%	0.7%	0.7%	65.9%	34.1%	100.0%

Table 4B

Estimated City UGA Growth Share 1995-2002	Bellingham UGA	Blaine UGA	Everson UGA	Ferndale UGA	Lynden UGA	Nooksack UGA	Sumas UGA	All City UGAs	All Other Areas*	Whatcom County
1995 (1997 WCCP Estimate)	66,543	4,267	2,035	7,745	7,990	854	966	90,400	57,900	148,300
2002 (EconW Estimate)	81,454	5,011	2,330	10,451	10,217	997	1,036	111,496	60,704	172,200
7-Year Growth	14,911	744	295	2,706	2,227	143	70	21,096	2,804	23,900
Growth Share	62.4%	3.1%	1.2%	11.3%	9.3%	0.6%	0.3%	88.3%	11.7%	100.0%

*All Other Areas includes Birch Bay and Columbia Valley UGAs, for which there is no 1995 population data



BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, Washington 98225
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BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Bellingham City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, November 4, 2013, @ 7:00 PM**, or as soon thereafter as possible, in the **City Council Chambers, City Hall, 210 Lottie Street, Bellingham, Washington**, to take public comment on the following:

THE LONG RANGE POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH FORECASTS THAT WILL BE USED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES TO UPDATE THE BELLINGHAM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Detailed information can be found at: <http://www.cob.org/government/public/boards-commissions/planning-materials.aspx>

Staff Contact: Greg Aucutt , (360) 778-8344 or gaucutt@cob.org

Anyone wishing to comment on this topic is invited to attend; or if unable to attend, to send your comments, in writing to the Council Office, 210 Lottie Street, or email to cemail@cob.org, or fax to 778-8101, to be received prior to 10:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 30, to be included in the agenda packet. Comment received after that time will be distributed to Council but not included in the published meeting materials.

FOR OUR CITIZENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, the Council Chambers is fully accessible. Elevator access to the second floor is available at City Hall's west entrance. Hearing assistance is available and a receiver may be checked out through the clerk prior to the evening session. For additional accommodations, persons are asked to contact the Legislative Assistant at 778-8200 in advance of the meeting. Thank you.

Publication date: Friday, October 4, 2013

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Walker, J Lynne L.

From: DonDawson <dawson@sullivan.comcastbiz.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 3:52 PM
To: CC - Shared Department
Subject: Growth
Attachments: Bellingham City Council.docx

Please see attached letter.

Don Dawson

Sullivan Plumbing Inc. 360-384-4022

www.sullivanplumbing.net



Bellingham City Council
Dear Council:

I support using the “high” projections for population and employment figures in the 2016 rewrite of Bellingham’s Comp Plan. Please support your Planning Commission’s recommendation to use the high projections.

The high figures are in line with Bellingham’s historic growth pattern, and are closest to projections used for the update underway at Post Point, which is based on a city/UGA population by 2026 of 122,000 people. Consultant BERK’s “medium” projection would be less than that – only 121,505 people – by 2036, a full 10 years after the projection used to justify the Post Point work. If the city plans to accommodate fewer people, you’ll end up with policies that accommodate fewer people. Then who is going to pay off the bonds for the Post Point update? Would limiting the city to fewer residents require higher taxes from those who are left? If you financially obligate the city according to a certain population projection, I want to see you stick with it.

I also urge the city to ask for 50 percent or more of the county’s projected growth. The consultant involved is suggesting 42 percent. If Bellingham is to remain Whatcom County’s major urban center, taking less than half the area’s growth makes no sense. The Growth Management Act doesn’t let you turn any of that growth away. If Bellingham doesn’t welcome it, surrounding rural lands and small cities are entitled to do so. Building is already cheaper in Lynden, Ferndale and the surrounding rural areas than in Bellingham. Failing to plan to accommodate this growth will only worsen that situation.

Using a low or medium job projection creates similar problems. If you want jobs in town, you have to plan for them – with land, infrastructure and policies that welcome businesses, or encourage the ones we have to stay and expand. Most living-wage jobs in Whatcom County are at Cherry Point, but that doesn’t mean the city couldn’t do some creative planning to encourage them in town. Without higher-paying jobs here, we’re looking at continuing needs for subsidized housing and other services, which means more taxes, which means more people will seriously consider homes in outlying areas instead.

If you’re serious about keeping growth in Bellingham, you need to take action now to welcome it, to provide infrastructure that will support it, and to encourage creation of living-wage jobs. I urge you to do so. Thank You.

Don Dawson

Walker, J Lynne L.

From: Jim Sutterfield <jims@signsplusnw.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 4:46 PM
To: CC - Shared Department
Subject: Population & Employment Projections
Attachments: Jim Sutterfield Population & Employment Projections Letter 102913.pdf

Dear Council Members,

Attached is a letter with my opinion regarding the November 4th hearing on the upcoming Comprehensive Plan re-write.

Thank you,

Jim Sutterfield | Signs Plus Inc

C: 360.303.3192 | jims@signsplusnw.com

Connect with me: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jimsutterfield>

Please Note Effective July 1, 2013 Our New Address;

766 Marine Drive ~ Bellingham, WA 98225 ~ USA

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October 29, 2013

Bellingham City Council
Dear Council members,

You are now considering population and employment projections to use in Bellingham's 2016 Comprehensive Plan rewrite. I urge you to adopt the "high" BERK projections. If you don't plan for growth here, growth will go elsewhere; no growth is not an option under state law. If you're serious about preventing sprawl, the city needs to be proactive about attracting and accommodating incoming residents.

The jobs projection figure also needs to be high. Bellingham, even at its current population, badly needs more living-wage jobs. The city will never have the infrastructure or policies in place to urge businesses to move in, or to stay, unless we plan for their expansion.

The same goes for housing. The city is officially in a "housing affordability" crisis, relying on more and more subsidized housing at taxpayers' expense. Yet building fees here remain high. And with easily buildable land getting scarce, lot prices are doubling. If you don't welcome housing, in a variety of densities and housing types as GMA recommends, people won't come here to live, they'll look to the cheaper surrounding areas. Plan on it.

Look at the city's Sewer Plan – the improvements at Post Point are based on serving 122,000 people by 2026. Consultant BERK's mid-range population projection doesn't go that high by 2036. If you aim low, who is going to pay off the Post Point work? Or pay for other financial obligations the city has made based on earlier population estimates?

Policy and infrastructure follow in the Comp Plan's footsteps. The city needs to target at least half the growth expected for Whatcom County. I urge City Council to take action to make the city welcoming to newcomers – unless you really want to hand it off to the smaller but growing towns around us.

I ask that you vote for the "high" population and employment projections.

Sincerely,

Jim Sutterfield - President



Walker, J Lynne L.

From: Mark Mendenhall <markm@cbwholesale.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2013 10:16 AM
To: CC - Shared Department
Subject: FW:
Attachments: 20131030091810916.pdf

Respectfully,

CB Wholesale



October 30, 2013

Bellingham City Council

Dear Council members,

You are now considering population and employment projections to use in Bellingham's 2016 Comprehensive Plan rewrite. I urge you to adopt the "high" BERK projections. If you don't plan for growth here, growth will go elsewhere; no growth is not an option under state law. If you're serious about preventing sprawl, the city needs to be proactive about attracting and accommodating incoming residents.

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Policy and infrastructure follow in the Comp Plan's footsteps. The city needs to target at least half the growth expected for Whatcom County. I urge City Council to take action to make the city welcoming to newcomers – unless you really want to hand it off to the smaller but growing towns around us.

I ask that you vote for the "high" population and employment projections.

Sincerely,

Mike Madan

**CB Wholesale
Bellingham, WA**

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