

KING COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

AGENDA TITLE: Growth Target Reconciliation Process
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PRESENTED BY: Interjurisdictional Team (IJT)
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Today's Meeting

The Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) will be briefed on the Interjurisdictional Team's initial recommendation on guiding principles and a reconciliation process to resolve jurisdictional inconsistencies between growth assumptions used in comprehensive plans and growth targets adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies.

Background

Growth Targets are policy statements about the number of housing units and jobs each urban jurisdiction is planning for within their comprehensive plan. The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) related to growth targets were amended in 2021 and 2022 to adopt targets for the 2024 comprehensive plan periodic update and to update and clarify how jurisdictions plan for their growth targets. CPP DP-14(a) states that all jurisdictions shall accommodate housing and employment by using the adopted growth targets as the land use assumptions for their comprehensive plans. Additionally, CPP DP-14(d) states that jurisdictions shall provide sufficient capacity at appropriate densities for the targets and allocated housing need, consistent with the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy.

Coordination among jurisdictions in developing and planning for growth targets is essential to achieving shared countywide and regional planning goals. An individual jurisdiction's planning for housing and employment, transportation, and public services demand affects neighboring communities and the county and region as a whole. In the spirit of countywide coordination, in 2021 CPP DP-13(c) was amended to allow GMPC to create a process to amend growth targets after the periodic plan update, reconciling them with plan growth assumptions to ensure consistency between plans and the CPPs. The policy states:

DP-13 The Growth Management Planning Council shall:...

c) Create a coordinated countywide process to reconcile and set growth targets that implements the Regional Growth Strategy through countywide shares of regional housing and job growth, countywide shares of statewide housing needs, allocations to Regional Geographies, and individual jurisdictional growth targets.

GMPC has duly followed policy DP-13(c) in creating a coordinated process to set growth targets for at least two decades but, as reconciliation is new component of the policy, GMPC has not previously elected to reconcile growth targets with plan growth assumptions after plans have been adopted. A reconciliation process could increase consistency between comprehensive

plans and the CPPs, and potentially help jurisdictions achieve certification during the Puget Sound Regional Council’s plan review process. It also has the potential to disrupt local planning for growth targets already underway in the 2024 periodic update.

Jurisdictions are currently completing required land capacity analyses and other planning for the 2024 periodic update. The City of Snoqualmie [sent a formal communication](#) to GMPC to express interest in planning for growth assumptions significantly lower than their adopted target after analyzing development capacity within their city and the adjacent unincorporated urban growth area.

Scope of Need for Reconciliation and Issue Identification

The Interjurisdictional Team conducted outreach to King County jurisdictions in April and May to assess the need a reconciliation process. The outreach revealed that three cities were likely or intending to use growth assumptions in their plans that differ from adopted Growth Targets. The cities, their adopted targets, and approximate plan growth assumptions are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Cities with Potential Reconciliation Need

City	Adopted Target	Proposed Plan Growth	Approx. Difference	Rationale/Factors Given
Snoqualmie	1,500	719	-781	Water supply shortage, limited development potential from downtown in floodway, planned community built out
Carnation	799	361*	-438	Concern re: population growth, infrastructure
Black Diamond	2,900	6,000*	+3,100	Planned communities under construction, vested

*Cities have not settled on plan growth assumptions. Carnation’s value comes from their 2023 Housing Action Plan; Black Diamond’s value reflects growth in two planned communities.

All three cities are cities in the rural area or at the edge of the contiguous UGA and are categorized in the Cities and Towns Regional Geography in VISION 2050. Currently, the combined growth targets for the Cities and Towns Regional Geography exceeds the share of growth allocated to that geography in the VISION2050 Regional Growth Strategy.

IJT also convened a work group of its members to discuss topics relevant to reconciliation. The group’s discussions highlighted issues for GMPC’s consideration in decision making about a reconciliation process, and potentially for how future growth targets are determined.

Coordinated planning for growth

Growth targets were established through a deliberative process to coordinate accommodating future growth across jurisdictions. While a reconciliation process extends this coordination through comprehensive planning back to the CPPs, it could also be seen or used as a means for circumventing the shared compact the adopted growth targets represent.

Legislative and policy changes to the growth management planning framework

As noted in the background section, the adoption of the CPPs in 2021 more clearly defined how jurisdictions are to use growth targets in their comprehensive plans. Additionally, since the growth targets were adopted in 2021 and amended in 2022, major legislation at the state level (e.g., [SB 1220](#), [HB 1110](#)) has been adopted that has altered the growth management planning framework. These changes led to the development of countywide and jurisdictional affordable housing need allocation and subsequent increases in developable capacity in many detached residential zones. Jurisdictions are currently adapting and implementing these new directives in their comprehensive plans, and uncovering local conditions that could inform future growth allocations.

Circumstances not fully anticipated in growth allocations

Two of the cities that have indicated that they intend to use growth assumptions that differ from adopted targets contain large planned residential developments that have been built out or are under construction. Planned developments commonly have covenants restricting or limiting further development, which could limit the ability to accommodate new growth.

Intersection with housing need allocation

The jurisdictional housing need allocations were developed by the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC), adhering to state guidance on minimum standards, the AHC's equitable guiding principles for the allocation, and a robust allocation methodology. For each jurisdiction and countywide, housing need by income level sums to the growth targets, inherently linking them. It is not clear whether the housing need allocation would be reconciled alongside growth targets, or whether the countywide housing need allocation would remain the same. Should a reconciliation process only address growth targets, GMPC would need to determine whether and how King County, collectively, is to plan for countywide housing need.

Initial IJT Recommendation

The Interjurisdictional Team has developed draft guiding principles to support decision making about reconciliation, and a draft recommendation on holding a reconciliation process or amending growth targets. The draft guiding principles and recommendation are responsive to the scope of need for action and identified issues.

IJT-Recommended guiding principles

1. Reconciliation/amendments may be pursued when significant changes to the planning framework or local circumstances since target adoption have occurred.
2. Reconciliation/amendments may be allowed where adherence to the adopted targets creates a conflict with other GMA goals (e.g., environmental issues, infrastructure to serve growth).
3. Jurisdictions are responsible for demonstrating need, consistent with the threshold and principles for reconciliation, for the requested target change.
4. Jurisdictions should directly request reconciliation or amendment of their target.
5. Amended targets must further King County's alignment with the Regional Growth Strategy and protect the integrity of the growth target setting process.

6. GMPC staff will coordinate with PSRC and Commerce to minimize any risks to plan certification.
7. Growth targets may not be reduced to avoid planning for countywide housing need.
8. Reconciliation should limit impacts to jurisdictions not requesting amended targets.

IJT recommendation on pursuing reconciliation

GMPC should direct IJT to proceed with designing a process to amend or reconcile growth targets, in line with the recommended guiding principles.

Future Activity

IJT staff will incorporate GMPC's June feedback into the guiding principles and recommendation for GMPC's approval at its July meeting. If GMPC chooses to initiate a reconciliation or amendment process, it will be developed in the second half of 2024 according to the guiding principles. GMPC will be briefed on process design at its September meeting.

For More Information

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