



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Growth Management Coordinating Council  
FROM: David Stalheim, Director  
DATE: February 19, 2009  
RE: City UGA Proposals

The Growth Management Act anticipates that cities make Urban Growth Area proposals to a county. Due to time constraints as well as need for clarity, city and county planning staff have worked to provide an outline of what a city proposal for Urban Growth Areas would entail, and when such proposals should be done.

### **City Proposals – Input Needed**

The cities have indicated a desire to hold their own public meetings and work with their citizens on visions for growth to 2031 for their communities to develop city proposals for growth. Our department supports this approach as being consistent with Growth Management Act efforts. Clear deadlines and expectations need to be laid out, however, because it is Whatcom County that is found in non-compliance with the GMA.

Whatcom County will focus during this time period on the following two public outreach objectives: 1) the UGAs that we are responsible for planning for and implementing: Birch Bay, Cherry Point and Columbia Valley; and 2) issues of regional or rural land use planning, such as regional distribution of growth into rural and urban areas, etc.

Since Whatcom County has the responsibility for the overall 10-year Urban Growth Area (UGA) review requirement and makes decisions on growth and UGA boundaries in consultation with the cities, coordination between the County and cities is necessary. Thus the County needs to be kept in the loop on local public outreach efforts for its records.

Following is a bulleted list of items that allow for a coordinated process and that constitute a UGA proposal.

### **Process Coordination**

- Cities would implement their own public participation strategies and copy Whatcom County on a regular basis for the County's project record.
- Whatcom County will support the City's outreach activities in any manner the city requests. The first review of the land suitability analysis and the second generation of the land capacity analysis will be provided to cities in the first half of March.

## City Proposals – Provide a UGA proposal

Without knowing whether or not the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board will grant a time extension, city and county staff have agreed that cities will potentially be able to deliver only part of a proposal if the time extension isn't granted.

### City Proposal without Time Extension

City staff believe that the only item that they can get done without a time extension is a proposal to Whatcom County for the Phase II growth allocation for the next twenty year planning period. This would include an allocation for both population and employment.

Due Date: March 25, 2009  
Proposal: 2029-31 Population and Employment Allocation

### City Proposal with Time Extension

In addition to the above Phase II growth allocation, city proposals would include the following:

Due Date: May 31, 2009  
Proposal:

- Land Capacity Analysis – The land capacity analysis results published in early February were based on planned densities rather than achieved densities. Cities may propose using different assumed densities, but are asked to provide justification and address any mitigation with respect to increasing UGA sizes.
- Non-urban densities in UGAs – for those cities with less than 4 units per acre, we need a proposal or justification for why those densities meet GMA requirements and county's Hearings Board order.
- Growth location/boundaries. What is the city's preferred growth boundaries that support the request for growth allocations?
  - ❑ Are these boundaries within the range of the EIS suitability analysis study area? If it differs significantly, has there been environmental review that could support it?
  - ❑ Which areas are considered higher or lower priorities for infill or expansion or subtraction?
  - ❑ How do these priorities relate to the result of the land capacity analysis? E.g. if there's a deficit of capacity, what areas are proposed for intensification or expansion? Of there's a surplus how to the priorities balance land capacity and demand?
  - ❑ How do these priorities relate to GMA requirements, Countywide Planning Policies, neighboring community plans, and suitability analysis?
  - ❑ Are areas of intensification or extension supported by capital plans? If not, when would the information be available?

- Land use. What is the city's proposed land use categories for areas proposed infill or expansion areas?
- Economic Development. What are the city's plans for economic development that support larger employment base or land base for employment than shown in the land capacity analysis or preliminary employment allocation?
- Reconciliation. What issues does the city want to defer to, or reconcile during the 2011 plan and update process? Examples might include:
  - ❑ Adding areas and deleting others to the UGA.
  - ❑ Addressing any infill strategies or Transfer of Development Rights to address UGA sizing or Rural land use issues.
  - ❑ Addressing any urban service or facility planning issues.