

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Anticipated start time is 2:30 p.m. following the SCOG Board of Directors meeting

[GoToMeeting](#)

Dial In: 1 (866) 899-4679

Access Code: 634-074-949

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call** – *Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County, Chair*
2. **Written Public Comments** – *Mark Hamilton, Skagit Council of Governments*
3. **Approval of [June 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes](#)** – *Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County, Chair*
4. **[Land Capacity Methodology Assessment](#)** – *Katie Bunge, Skagit Council of Governments*
5. **[2021 GMA Support Work Program and Budget Discussion](#)** – *Kevin Murphy, Skagit Council of Governments and Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County, Chair*
6. **Next Meeting:** Wednesday, December 16, 2020, 2:30 p.m., *[Location To Be Determined](#)*
7. **Adjournment**

[Meeting Packet](#)

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT STEERING COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Commissioner Ron Wesen.....Chair Mayor Steve SextonVice-Chair

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND VOTES

Anacortes.....1	Lyman.....1
Burlington1	Mount Vernon1
Concrete.....1	Sedro-Woolley1
Hamilton.....1	Skagit County3
La Conner1	

QUORUM REQUIREMENT

A quorum consists of a majority (6) of the members (11).

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 17, 2020

GoToMeeting Remote Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County, Chair; Mayor Jill Boudreau, City of Mount Vernon; Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt, Skagit County; Mayor Laurie Gere, City of Anacortes; Commissioner Lisa Janicki, Skagit County; and Mayor Julia Johnson, City of Sedro-Woolley.

STAFF PRESENT

Kevin Murphy, Executive Director; Katie Bunge, Assistant Planner; and Mark Hamilton, Senior Transportation Planner.

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC PRESENT

One member of the public attended the meeting.

OTHERS PRESENT

The following Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (GMATAC) members attended the meeting: John Coleman, Planning Director, City of Sedro-Woolley; Hal Hart, Planning Director, Skagit County; Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager, Skagit County; Brad Johnson, Community Development Director, City of Burlington; and Scott Thomas, Town Administrator, Town of La Conner.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call: Commissioner Wesen called the meeting of the Growth Management Act Steering Committee (GMASC) to order at 2:30 p.m. Roll was taken with a quorum present.
2. Public Comment: Mark Hamilton noted that while a verbal public comment period would not occur at this meeting due to the remote meeting format, written public comments were accepted in the week before the meeting, after the meeting agenda was made available. During this time, written public comments were received by SCOG staff. Mr. Hamilton read these public comments into the record for the meeting.

The comments were submitted by Ellen Bynum on behalf of Friends of Skagit County, and related to proposed changes to the Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). Friends of Skagit County disagrees that all of the proposed changes are needed to clarify the policies, and is concerned that the changes may change the intent and application of the CPPs. Comments also addressed the lack of opportunities for public participation in Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (GMATAC) meetings, and requested a legal review be conducted by Skagit County on the proposed CPP changes.

3. Approval of December 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes: Commissioner Dahlstedt moved to approve the December 18, 2019 meeting minutes. Mayor Johnson seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Election of 2020 Vice-Chair: Commissioner Janicki made a motion to nominate Mayor Steve Sexton as the 2020 Vice-Chair of the Growth Management Act Steering Committee. Mayor Johnson seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Land Capacity Methodology Presentations: Kevin Murphy introduced the land capacity methodology presentations, and reminded the GMASC of the context and background of the land capacity analyses. Task 2.1 of the 2020 GMA Work Program calls for SCOG to complete an assessment of these methodologies by the end of the year. The Growth Management Act calls for certain counties and cities to include urban areas and densities sufficient to accommodate urban growth for the next 20 years. Land capacity analyses should take into account a market factor, as well as a range of uses for housing and employment. CPP 1.8 also calls on local jurisdictions to conduct consistent land capacity analyses.

John Coleman introduced Sedro-Woolley's land capacity analysis and explained that the terms buildable lands analysis (BLA) and land capacity analysis (LCA) are very similar, and could be used interchangeably in this context. In the Skagit region, this analysis began in 2015 as part of the 2016 comprehensive plan update process. Mr. Coleman reminded the Steering Committee that urban growth areas (UGAs) are reviewed as part of periodic comprehensive plan updates, which occurs every eight years. Skagit County is not required to conduct a buildable lands analysis according to GMA; however, the CPPs do guide jurisdictions in preparing local land capacity analyses. As part of the UGA review, the GMASC adopts 20-year population and employment projections for the region. Cities and towns then determine if their existing UGA and policies can accommodate projected future growth.

Mr. Coleman explained the methodology used by the City of Sedro-Woolley to conduct their land capacity analysis. The analysis conducted was parcel-based, where each parcel was analyzed separately for its development potential. The analysis used geographic information systems (GIS) data including aerial photography and assessor's office data. Methods and definitions are identified in the methodology document. The analysis considered vacant and partially vacant lands, and assumed that new development would occur at the maximum allowable density by zone. Employment capacity was estimated using a similar method. For employment, forecast employment for the SWIFT Center was already available as part of its environmental impact statement (EIS), so these numbers were included in the employment total. Deductions were applied as a part of the analysis for critical areas, infrastructure and a general market factor. Results of the land capacity analysis indicated that Sedro-Woolley could accommodate 4,427 residents with the existing UGA and development regulations, which was just under the forecast of 4,555 residents. Because of this, Sedro-Woolley chose to slightly expand the UGA to accommodate the forecast.

Brad Johnson introduced Burlington's land capacity analysis and explained that a land capacity analysis is a tool to inform decision making. These analyses show how a city can accommodate population and employment under current conditions, but do not act as a real estate development analysis tool and cannot model results of possible future changes.

Mr. Johnson explained that the City of Burlington has very little vacant land, and because of this, almost all residential growth was expected to be accommodated through infill and redevelopment. The City of Burlington used a mathematical model and GIS to analyze assessor's office data. Factors considered in the analysis included parcel size, the value of existing structures

compared to land value and ownership of the land. The analysis assumed that land owned by government agencies, churches and charities would be unlikely to redevelop. Residential development was assumed to occur at the maximum density permitted by zoning, and redevelopment potential for single family residential areas was different from multifamily and commercial/industrial areas. A 15% factor was applied for infrastructure.

Results of Burlington's land capacity analysis indicated that the city could accommodate its forecast of 3,808 population, as a total of 4,006 population could be accommodated. However, only 3,209 of 3,516 forecast employment could be accommodated. Also, while future population could be accommodated, there was a mismatch in housing development type and an imbalance in the residential land supply. As an outcome of this, the city decided to decrease single family zoned lands and increase lands zoned multifamily. Mixed use development was permitted in gateway areas, and more mixed use development was encouraged in commercial areas. Small lot development was also encouraged.

Mayor Boudreau thanked the presenters, and mentioned that knowing that the analysis work is happening is helpful.

Commissioner Wesen noted that the land capacity analysis does not consider vacancy rates or housing cost compared to the workforce, and wondered what else could be done to understand these issues. Mr. Johnson agreed that those questions are important, and should be addressed in the housing element of local comprehensive plans.

Commissioner Wesen also mentioned that commutes are an issue, with employment being located far from housing supply. Mayor Boudreau noted that land for employment and residences both need to be accommodated, and the comprehensive plan must balance out these requirements at a jurisdictional level. Mr. Coleman agreed that each jurisdiction has a transportation element and a housing element in the comprehensive plan, which should be consistent across all elements.

Mr. Hamilton mentioned that SCOG is currently in the process of acquiring location-based services cell phone data as a part of its Household Travel Survey, and this data can help to assess travel patterns across counties. More information will be coming out of these data in the future.

Mr. Murphy noted that the state Growth Management Act requires consistency among comprehensive plans and the Skagit 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, which uses forecasts and allocations consistent with the CPPs. For the most recent forecast process, the GMASC chose the medium residential forecast from the state Office of Financial Management, but increased employment allocations. This could be revisited as well in future allocations. Commissioner Wesen noted that the GMASC has the ability to encourage trends regionally. Mr. Murphy agreed that the CPPs, UGAs and growth allocations all begin with the GMASC per the 2002 Framework Agreement.

6. Next Meeting: The next meeting is Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. The location is to be determined.
7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin Murphy, Executive Director
Skagit Council of Governments

Date: _____

Approved,

Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County
Growth Management Act Steering Committee Chair

Date: _____

DRAFT

LAND CAPACITY METHODOLOGY ASSESSMENT

Background

The 2020 GMA Support Work Program and Budget includes the following task:

“GMA Task 2.1 – Growth Monitoring:

A. Review local jurisdictions’ land capacity analysis methods. Prepare an assessment of the current land capacity methodologies.”

Work on Task 2.1 began in February 2020. The GMA Technical Advisory Committee has reviewed a comprehensive land capacity analysis comparison at their meetings and provided feedback on the assessment. In addition, the cities of Sedro-Woolley and Burlington presented their land capacity analysis methodologies at the June 17, 2020 Growth Management Act Steering Committee meeting.

Discussion

CPP 1.8 calls for Skagit County, the cities and towns to use “consistent land capacity analysis methods” to determine the amount of undeveloped buildable urban land needed. This assessment reviewed available land capacity analysis methodologies from jurisdictions to understand the degree of consistency in estimating capacity for residential (population) and commercial or industrial (employment) growth.

The assessment also utilized the Department of Commerce’s Review and Evaluation Program Buildable Lands Guidelines (2018) as an example of best practices for buildable lands analyses. Although Skagit County is not required to plan under the Buildable Lands statutes (RCW 36.70A.215), these guidelines were used as a reference/consistency point for the assessment. State laws that apply to all counties, regardless of inclusion in the Review and Evaluation Program, were referenced where applicable. These include RCW 36.70A.110/WAC 365-196-310 and RCW 36.70A.115/WAC 365-196-325.

Table 1 describes the availability of buildable lands analyses for population and employment allocations included in CPP 1. Overall, all four city UGAs have complete land capacity analyses for employment and population. Population analyses are not available for the unincorporated non-municipal UGAs, although an employment analysis has been completed for Bay View Ridge. Population and employment are discussed in town comprehensive plans with some analysis available.

Methodologies were compared among those jurisdictions which conducted a quantitative analysis, estimating the ability of a jurisdiction to accommodate population and employment targets in the context of existing land availability and zoning.

Table 1. Availability of Buildable Lands Analysis by 2036 Initial Growth Allocation:

City or Rural UGA	Population Allocation	Employment Allocation
Anacortes	Yes	Yes
Bay View Ridge	No	Yes
Burlington	Yes	Yes
Concrete	Yes	No*
Hamilton	No*	No*
La Conner	Yes	No*
Lyman	No*	No*
Mount Vernon	Yes	Yes
Sedro-Woolley	Yes	Yes
Swinomish	No	No

*A land capacity analysis did not appear to be available for these allocations, although they were discussed in comprehensive plans.

Conclusion

Similarities

In general, for the jurisdictions whose analyses were compared, common themes emerged which were consistent across the methodologies:

- Most jurisdictions utilized Skagit GIS parcel data or assessor's data to understand land availability and current use;
- Average household size was used as a metric to convert population to dwelling units;
- Employees/acre was used as a metric to convert employment to commercial/industrial land utilization;
- Deductions were applied for public facilities and critical areas; and
- A market factor was applied which was consistent with the Buildable Lands Guidance.

Among all the analyses, land capacity was estimated based on zoning designations: either through minimum lot size, maximum density allowable by zone, or a combination of these two. Although not required for non-Buildable Lands counties such as Skagit County, GMA-implementing regulations suggest estimating land capacity based on historical achieved densities:

WAC 365-196-310 (4)(b)(ii)(E) The land capacity analysis must be based on the assumption that growth will occur at urban densities inside the urban growth area. In formulating land capacity analyses, counties and cities should **consider data on past development**, as well as factors which may cause trends to change in the future.

WAC 365-196-325(2)(e)(i) Periodic evaluation. Counties and cities ensure sufficient land capacity for development by **comparing the achieved density of development** that has been permitted in each zoning category to the assumed densities established in the land use element using existing permitting data. If existing permitting data shows that the densities approved are lower than assumed densities established in the land use element, counties and cities should review their development regulations to determine if regulatory barriers are preventing development at the densities as envisioned.

Differences

Details related to the analyses differed among jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions chose to analyze each parcel individually, while the City of Burlington utilized a mathematical model to estimate redevelopment potential. These approaches were often tailored to local community and land availability characteristics.

The GMATAC identified some differences between the methodologies that, if addressed, could improve consistency among jurisdictions:

- Agree upon definitions for vacant, semi-vacant, or undevelopable lands; and
- Agree upon data sources/methods to be used for average household size and employees/acre.

A more detailed description of quantitative assumptions utilized in the land capacity analyses is included in Appendix 1 of this memo.

Regardless of the approach taken, the analyses utilized land use data to arrive at a conclusion of whether or not existing available vacant or redevelopable lands could sufficiently accommodate population and employment growth allocations. In this respect, those methodologies are consistent. Ensuring that all jurisdictions conduct such a quantitative analysis for both population and employment would increase regional consistency as per CPP 1.8.

Appendix 1 – Quantitative Assumptions

The following sections describe some of the quantitative assumptions used in the buildable lands analyses.

Market Factor

Market supply factors, or market factors, are applied as a deduction to net developable area in order to account for land that will likely remain unavailable during the planning horizon. Such land may be unavailable because of land banking, speculative holding, or personal reasons. Table 2 describes the market factors included in land capacity analyses by jurisdiction:

Table 2. Market Factors by UGA

UGA	Vacant Residential	Partially Vacant Residential	Commercial/Industrial
Anacortes	15%	20%	15%
Bay View	-	-	25%
Burlington	25%*	25%*	25%
Concrete	30%	30%	-
Hamilton	-	-	-
La Conner	25%	25%	-
Lyman	-	-	-
Mount Vernon	20%	20%	15%
Sedro-Woolley	15%	20%	25%
Swinomish	-	-	-

*Only applies to multifamily residential. Single family and duplex residential had categorical deductions applied based on redevelopment potential.

In the buildable lands analyses reviewed, market supply factors did not vary between incorporated and unincorporated UGA lands.

The Department of Commerce’s Buildable Lands Guidance (2018) identifies a range of most commonly used market factors. These are displayed in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Common Ranges for Market Factors from Buildable Lands Guidance

Land Type	Vacant Residential	Under-Utilized Residential	Vacant Employment	Under-Utilized Employment
Incorporated UGA	0% to 50%	0% to 50%	0% to 20%	0% to 40%
Unincorporated UGA	10% to 15%	25% to 30%	10% to 20%	25% to 50%

Population and Employment Metrics

Table 4. Population and Employment Metrics by UGA

UGA	Average HH Size	Average HH Size Source	Employees/Acre Commercial	Employees/Acre Industrial	Employees/Acre Source
Anacortes	2.25	2010 Census	21.8, 15.0	7.8	-
Bay View	-	-	-	7.2	Medium density scenario based on 2012 University of Oregon research
Burlington	2.629	American Community Survey	17	8	Averages from ESD Employment data
Concrete	2.35	2010 Census	-	-	-
Hamilton	2.83	-	-	-	-
La Conner	Varies by housing type	Office of Financial Management (OFM)	-	-	-
Lyman	-	-	-	-	-
Mount Vernon	2.76	2010 Census	Varies by employment type	Varies by employment type	ESD Employment data
Sedro-Woolley	2.59	OFM	20 (includes government)	6.5	1995 Skagit County OEDP and 2003 countywide allocations
Swinomish	-	-	-	-	-

Infrastructure/Public Facilities Deductions

Table 5. Infrastructure and Public Facility Deductions by UGA

UGA	Vacant Residential	Partially Vacant Residential	Commercial/Industrial
Anacortes	10%	5%	10%
Bay View	-	-	15%
Burlington	15%	15%	15%
Concrete	20%	20%	20%
Hamilton	-	-	-
La Conner	7%	7%	7%
Lyman	-	-	-
Mount Vernon	5-25%*	5-25%*	20%
Sedro-Woolley	25%	25%	25%
Swinomish	-	-	-

*5% deductions for short plat single family and multi-family residential; 25% deduction for long plat residential areas.

Final Adopted by Growth Management Act Steering Committee on December 18, 2019

2020 Growth Management Act (GMA) Support Work Program and Budget

As per the GMA support agreement, SCOG will continue to provide administrative support and coordinate Growth Management Act Steering Committee (GMASC) activities and work program. Staff has estimated the work to include administrative and technical support. Annually the GMASC will establish a work program and budget. Tasks 1 and 2.1 are proposed to the GMASC by the Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (GMATAC) for the 2020 work program. Task 2.2 was discussed and consensus was not reached nor was the TAC able to make a recommendation to the GMASC.

Other Tasks considered by the TAC for the work program will be brought to the Steering Committee for discussion and consideration at the October 16 meeting. The TAC reached consensus on pursuing dissolution of the Boundary Review Board (BRB), but lack of a quorum prevented the TAC from making a formal recommendation on any work program items.

Note conducting Task 2.2 would require hiring an additional planner likely at the Associate Planner level. There was no consensus on Task 2.2, with some GMATAC members vigorously supporting it and one member strongly opposed.

GMA Task 1 - Administrative Support:

Provide administrative support and coordinate efforts of the Growth Management Act Steering Committee. Provide administrative support as needed to conduct meetings of the GMASC and the GMATAC. Anticipated activities include preparing agendas, minutes of the GMASC, resolutions and maintaining related supporting materials.

Estimated cost \$12,000

GMA Task 2 - Technical Support:

Task 2.1 - Growth Monitoring

- A. Review local jurisdictions land capacity analysis methods. Prepare an assessment of the current land capacity methodologies.
- B. Participate in and coordinate with the TAC regarding growth allocations and reconciliation process if needed. SCOG staff will coordinate and provide an objective review of the methods, assumptions and coordinate the reconciliation process. No work on reconciliation is planned for 2020.
- C. Prepare the annual Growth Monitoring Report based on the methodology agreed to in 2018 as described in Countywide Planning Policies. Coordinate with jurisdictions on collection and reporting of data. Focus for 2020 will be on updating the baseline report and adding trend analysis.

Estimated cost \$25,000

GMA Task 3 – Policy Support:

Task 3.1 – Boundary Review Board

Begin discussions regarding the dissolution of the Boundary Review Board. Discussions would start with County and City/Town staff in context with CPP 12.17. This work will be led by the GMA TAC, SOG staff will not be involved in doing substantive work.

Estimated cost - None

Cost Allocation: As per the interlocal agreement regarding staffing service for GMA support costs are to be share among the 2002 Framework Agreement participates based on their respective share of population annual reported by the Office of Financial Management (OFM), see table.

Allocation based on 2019 population estimates from OFM.

2020 GMA Work Program Budget					
Total Draft Budget	\$37,000				
	OFM Population		2020	2019	Change from
	2019	%	Cost Allocation	Cost Allocation	2019 to 2020
Skagit County	52,565	40.68%	\$15,053.44	\$12,220.99	\$2,832.45
Anacortes	17,610	13.63%	\$5,043.11	\$4,028.61	\$1,014.50
Burlington	9,140	7.07%	\$2,617.49	\$2,139.98	\$477.51
Concrete	745	0.58%	\$213.35	\$175.47	\$37.89
Hamilton	300	0.23%	\$85.91	\$71.14	\$14.78
La Conner	960	0.74%	\$274.92	\$222.89	\$52.03
Lyman	450	0.35%	\$128.87	\$107.89	\$20.98
Mount Vernon	35,740	27.66%	\$10,235.14	\$8,341.76	\$1,893.38
Sedro-Woolley	11,690	9.05%	\$3,347.76	\$2,691.27	\$656.48
Total	129,200	100%	\$37,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$7,000.00