

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

December 16, 2020

GoToMeeting Remote Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT

Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County, Chair; Mayor Steve Sexton, City of Burlington, Vice-Chair; Mayor Jill Boudreau, City of Mount Vernon; Mayor Laurie Gere, City of Anacortes; Mayor Ramon Hayes, Town of La Conner; Commissioner Lisa Janicki, Skagit County; Mayor Julia Johnson, City of Sedro-Woolley; and Auditor Sandy Perkins, Skagit County.

STAFF PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

The following Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (GMATAC) members attended the meeting: John Coleman, Planning Director, City of Sedro-Woolley; Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager, Skagit County; Hal Hart, Planning Director, Skagit County; Brad Johnson, Community Development Director, City of Burlington; George Kosovich, Housing Resource Coordinator, Skagit County Public Health. Others present included Elizabeth Sjostrom, Washington State Department of Transportation.

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: Mr. Hamilton mentioned that a verbal public comment period would not occur at the meeting, but written public comments were accepted prior to the meeting, after the meeting materials were made available. No public comments were received.
3. Approval of September 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes: Mayor Gere made a motion to approve the September 16, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Mayor Johnson seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.
4. Approval of 2021 GMA Support Work Program and Budget: Mr. Murphy reminded the GMASC that as per direction from the September meeting, the level of effort included in the 2021 GMA Support Work Program is the same as in 2020, although Task 3 differs in the 2021 work program. As a reminder, the Steering Committee contracts with SCOG to provide GMA support. Task 1 includes coordination of the GMASC and GMATAC meetings. Task 2 includes the preparation of the annual Growth Monitoring Report. Task 3 includes policy support. In 2020, the GMATAC discussed the possible dissolution of the Boundary Review Board, and countywide planning policies which relate to this issue. The group found it helpful for SCOG staff to coordinate information gathering from special districts around the Skagit region regarding the Boundary Review Board, rather than a specific jurisdiction acting in that role. This work is included in Task 3 of the 2021 work program. The total budget for the work program remains at \$37,000.

Mayor Hayes moved approval of the 2021 GMA Support Work Program and Budget as presented, and Mayor Gere seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Land Capacity Methodology Assessment: Ms. Bunge reminded the GMASC that a draft memo for the Land Capacity Methodology Assessment came before them at their September 2020 meeting. Since that time, revisions recommended by the GMATAC have been incorporated into the memo. These recommendations included adding more discussion regarding the market factors used by local jurisdictions in their land capacity analyses, as well as more explanation as to the types of deductions a jurisdiction may apply in a buildable lands analysis, such as stormwater, critical areas, and other infrastructure deductions.

This memo is an output of the Growth Management Act Support Work Program Task 2.1 for this year, and is presented for the GMASC's information. Ms. Bunge reminded the GMASC that for this task, SCOG was asked to review the buildable lands analyses conducted by local jurisdictions as part of their comprehensive planning in order to assess how similar the methodologies were, and what the major differences were.

Commissioner Janicki asked for an explanation of the categorical deductions applied for single family and duplex residential units in the City of Burlington's methodology. Mr. Johnson responded that the deductions applied to single family and duplex parcels in the City of Burlington were based on parcel size, and deductions were applied on a sliding scale. Larger parcel sizes were assumed to be easier to redevelop than smaller ones, depending on the placement of the single-family unit on them. For zones that allow duplexes, the same methodology would apply, but multipliers would be added to the two dwelling units rather than one in the methodology. In the City of Burlington's Buildable Lands Analysis methodology, market factors are deductions applied to the total possible units able to be developed or redeveloped. A gross number of units able to be developed is estimated, and a 25% deduction is applied for parcels that are not expected to be developed during the planning horizon.

Commissioner Janicki asked if actual numbers for dwelling units that are expected to be developed by jurisdiction were included in the land capacity assessment work. Ms. Bunge confirmed that a review of the conclusions of the buildable lands analyses was outside of the scope of work for this task; only similarities and differences in the methodologies themselves were reviewed through Task 2.1. One conclusion to draw from the work is that while many jurisdictions applied a market factor deduction to the gross estimated dwelling units that could be developed during the planning horizon, some jurisdictions did not. Also, the market factors included in these analyses were reviewed against Washington State Department of Commerce's common ranges for market factors from the Buildable Lands Guidance. All jurisdictions who applied market factor deductions as part of their methodology chose a market factor within this range.

Mayor Boudreau noted that the City of Mount Vernon conducts extensive buildable lands analyses by parcel, and the city's methodology is included in its comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Wesen asked if there was a point where jurisdictions reviewed the work that had been done historically, compared to the buildable lands analyses that were conducted. Ms. Bunge noted that the Buildable Lands Guidance recommends that when jurisdictions conduct a buildable lands analysis, they also look backwards at what had been achieved in the past in terms

of development. Many jurisdictions in the region looked at maximum allowable units by zone to estimate how many dwelling units could be constructed in the future, rather than what development patterns have happened in the past. Commerce recommends developing a metric called “achieved density” to estimate future development based on past activity, rather than maximum allowable density. This is something that could be calculated by jurisdictions and incorporated into future buildable lands analyses.

6. 2020 Growth Monitoring Report Presentation: Ms. Bunge reminded the Committee that each year, SCOG completes a Growth Monitoring Report as part of the GMA Support Work Program. This year, the report is not available – SCOG is currently working to update its data sharing agreement with the Washington State Employment Security Department to obtain confidential employment data for inclusion in the report.

Ms. Bunge reminded the GMASC that the Growth Monitoring Program is a process that was introduced in the 2016 amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies, and follows the adoption of population and employment allocations by the Board of County Commissioners for urban growth areas and other areas of Skagit County. The Growth Monitoring Report was first developed in 2017; 2020 is the fourth year of the report. The 2020 report follows the same methodology as the year previously; no new sections have been added, and all data is updated for the current year.

Ms. Bunge presented results from various sections of the Growth Monitoring Report including the population, housing, five-county average, affordable housing, and trends sections of the Growth Monitoring Report. In terms of population, Anacortes, Bayview Ridge, and Sedro-Woolley urban growth areas have the highest average annual growth rate by area since the baseline Growth Monitoring Report in 2017. In general, population appears to be growing faster than the forecast average growth rate. Out of all population growth over the past three years, 72.9% of growth has occurred in urban growth areas, while the remainder has occurred in rural areas; this is a 0.3% increase in urban population growth since last year’s report.

7. Scheduling Quarterly Meetings in 2021: Mr. Hamilton reminded the GMASC that this is the first year they have met in a quarterly meeting format. The March 2020 meeting was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff wanted to include this item on the agenda again, to determine whether the GMASC wanted to continue meeting quarterly in 2021.

GMASC members supported continuing the practice of meeting quarterly in 2021.

8. Next Meeting: The next meeting is Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. The location is to be determined.
9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date:_____

Kevin Murphy, Executive Director
Skagit Council of Governments

Approved,

Mayor Steve Sexton, City of Burlington
Growth Management Act Steering Committee Chair

Date: _____

DRAFT