

SKAGIT POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING GROWTH MONITORING REPORT GUIDELINES

METHODOLOGY

Draft August 2026

Purpose: Establish a simple, consistent, and repeatable process for monitoring growth toward the adopted 2045 planning allocations and document via a report.

The Growth Monitoring Report will include subjects identified in the Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), Appendix B.4. Growth Allocation Procedures, Long Term Monitoring.

- 1. Population Growth**
- 2. Employment Growth**
- 3. Annexations and Incorporations**
- 4. Residential and non-residential development trends**
- 5. Estimated housing growth in Area Median Income (AMI) categories defined by the Washington State Department of Commerce**

One area not included in the current methodology is a uniform method of tracking land consumption countywide. Local jurisdictions conduct land capacity analyses for urban growth areas to inform periodic comprehensive plan updates, but there is currently no countywide mechanism to track land consumption associated with population and employment growth on an annual basis. If a uniform method of collection by jurisdictions and distribution of land consumption information to SCOG is created, a future methodology can incorporate these data – coupling estimated population and employment growth with associated land consumption.

Growth monitoring is an information and accountability function; it is not, by itself, a determination that a jurisdiction is compliant or noncompliant with the Growth Management Act or the CPPs.

BACKGROUND

The Board of Skagit County Commissioners adopted changes to the Skagit County Countywide Planning Polices (CPP) on March 25, 2025, as part of the Washington state Growth Management Act.

Policy 1.9: Urban Growth states, “Skagit County, the cities and towns will establish a common method to monitor urban development and housing development to evaluate the rate of growth and maintain an inventory of the amount of buildable land remaining and the amount of housing produced in the different AMI categories provided by the Department of Commerce. The GMATAC shall develop a monitoring process, prepare annual monitoring reports and present the reports to the Growth Management Act Steering Committee annually. (O20250002)”

Furthermore, Appendix B.4. Growth Allocation Procedures, Long Term Monitoring states, “4. Long Term Monitoring: Subsequent to reconciliation, the GMASC shall maintain a long- term monitoring process to review annually population, and employment and housing growth allocations contained in the CPPs.

- a. Skagit County, the cities and towns shall jointly monitor the following:
 - i. Estimated population and employment growth;
 - ii. Annexations and incorporations; and
 - iii. Residential and non-residential development trends.
 - iv. Estimated housing constructed per area median income (AMI) categories determined by the Department of Commerce requirements for housing allocations.
- b. Results of the monitoring program shall be published in a growth monitoring report developed by the GMATAC and recommended to the GMASC.
- c. The GMASC shall review and approve the annual report by resolution. (O20250002)

On January 25, 2015, SCOG and the jurisdictions that have ratified the 2002 Framework Agreement, which include: Skagit County, the Cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and the Towns of Concrete, Hamilton, La Conner, and Lyman, entered into an interlocal agreement with the Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) for administrative, staff support, technical studies, and work set forth in the annual work plan adopted by the Growth Management Act Steering Committee. The workplan traditionally includes producing an annual growth monitoring report.

1. POPULATION GROWTH

This section of the Annual Report will show the prior year, current year, annual change, and comparison with the adopted 2045 allocation. Population estimates are generated for Skagit

County and each of its ten UGAs. The Annual Report also tracks annexed population for all cities and towns.

Data Sources

- 2024, SAEP Version: will be noted
- Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting and Research Division, *Population of Cities, Towns and Counties*, Version: to be noted
- Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting and Research Division, *Postcensal Estimates of April 1 Population, 1960 to Present*, Version: to be noted
- Skagit County, 2045 Population Allocations from adopted *Countywide Planning Policy 1*, Adopted: March 25, 2025

The Small Area Estimates Program uses an April – March timeframe for each year of estimates, these are not estimates for the calendar year.

Products for Annual Report

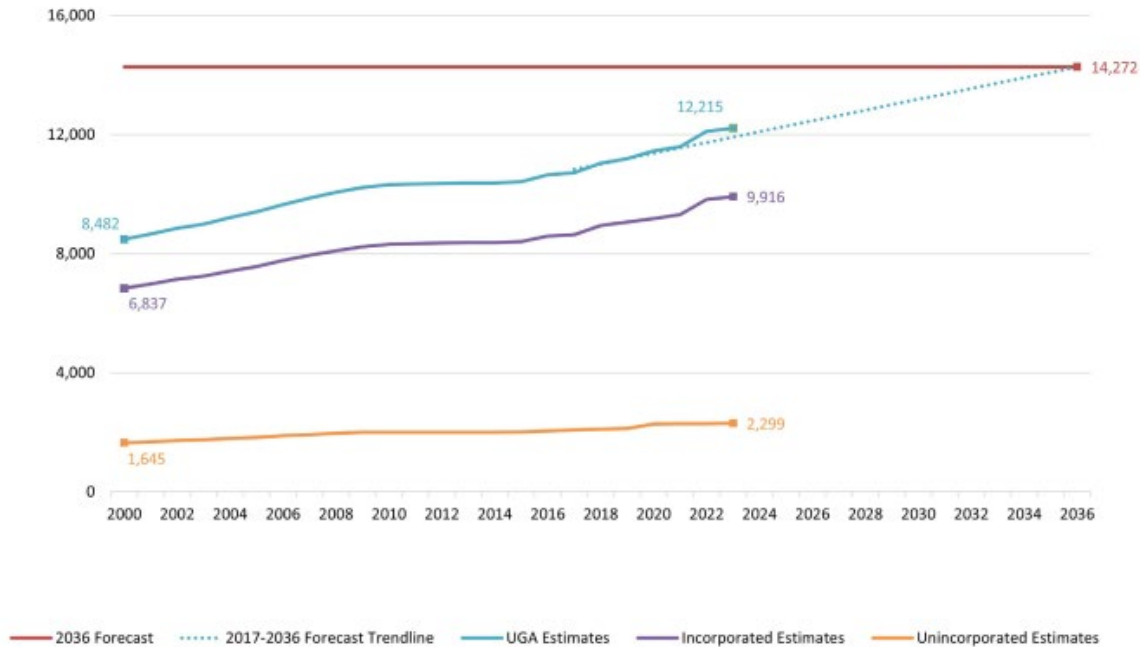
The table below shows final tabular results for all UGAs. Figures in the methodology are for illustrative purposes only and are not based on actual population estimates by UGA or Rural area. Final results are included in the Annual Report.

Urban Growth Area	2022 Incorporated Population	2022 Unincorporated Population	2022 Total Population	2036 Forecast Population
Anacortes	18,022	101	18,123	22,293
Burlington	9,916	2,299	12,215	14,272
Mount Vernon	35,602	2,169	37,771	47,403
Sedro-Woolley	12,909	1,491	14,400	17,069
Concrete	810	139	949	1,193
Hamilton	296	5	301	427
La Conner	990	0	990	1,226
Lyman	425	0	425	605
Bayview Ridge	0	1,696	1,696	1,883
Swinomish	0	2,570	2,570	3,416
UGA Subtotal	78,970	10,470	89,440	109,787
Rural (outside UGAs)	0	42,560	42,560	45,665
Grand Total	78,970	53,030	132,000	155,452

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – NOT ACTUAL FIGURES

The primary graph created for each UGA displays historical population estimates from 2022 – 2045.

A solid red horizontal line is used to express the total population forecast in 2045. The baseline population estimate is included as the blue square on the chart. The constant rate of annual growth, determined by the forecast population growth, appears as the dotted line on the chart. Below is an example of a UGA population growth chart.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – NOT ACTUAL FIGURES

2. EMPLOYMENT GROWTH- TO BE COMPLETED EVERY 5 YEARS

Annual employment monitoring will cover the entire county only. This section will show current year, prior year, annual change, annual growth rate as total employment. These calculations are descriptive monitoring measures. They do not establish an annual employment quota.

Annual employment change is calculated as:

Annual change = Current-year Total Employment – Prior-year Total Employment

Annual growth rate = (Current-year Total Employment ÷ Prior-year Total Employment – 1) × 100

For comparison with the adopted 2045 countywide allocation, SCOG will calculate cumulative progress from the 2022 baseline of 59,571 jobs toward the 2045 allocation of 80,100 jobs.

Progress = (Current Employment – 59,571) ÷ (80,100 – 59,571) × 100

Additional detail includes sector breakdown by Bureau of Labor Statistics: Resource, WTCU, Mfg, Retail, FIRES, Edu, Gov, Health, and Self-Employment.

Data Source:

- The preferred annual countywide source is the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Employment by County series. Washington ESD/QCEW covered employment and other employment measures may be used as supplemental context but will not replace Total Employment as the primary monitoring measure.

2B. GEOGRAPHIC EMPLOYMENT REVIEW- TO BE COMPLETED EVERY 5 YEARS

Every five years, SCOG will review employment distribution at the county, city, town, and other relevant planning-geography levels for which comparable data are available. The review will compare employment at the beginning and end of the five-year period and evaluate the change against the adopted 2045 employment allocations.

SCOG will not create annual city or town employment estimates solely to populate the annual Growth Monitoring Report. If a comparable jurisdiction-level source is unavailable, the report will state the limitation rather than create an unsupported allocation of county employment.

The best available source of data on numbers of employees and their locations in Skagit County are included in administrative records maintained by Washington state's Employment Security Department (ESD). These records are generated from quarterly reports by employers to ESD on numbers of employees, total wages and industry classification of the employer. These records are part of the state's unemployment insurance program and only those employees who have unemployment insurance are included in the data and considered "covered" – a term

describing their unemployment insurance coverage. The methodology accounts for all employees, even those that are not covered by unemployment insurance, and the process of applying a multiplier for doing so (“covered employment” to “total employment”) is included later in the methodology.

Every year, SCOG processes these ESD records for employment in Skagit County and uses the results to inform annual estimates of employment included in the Annual Report.

Data Sources

- Washington Employment Security Department, *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*, Skagit County, April 1, xxxx – March 31, xxxx, Version: to be noted
- Skagit County GIS, *Incorporated and Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas*, Version: to be noted
- Skagit County GIS, *Road Centerlines with Address Ranges*, Version: to be noted
- ESRI, *USA Zip Code Areas*, Version: to be noted

SCOG will maintain a user guide to process the ESD data, utilizing the urban growth area shapefile from Skagit County GIS to determine employment by incorporated and unincorporated areas within UGAs and outside of all UGAs. A road centerline shapefile is used to create address points from the ESD data – which does not have geographic locations but does have address numbers, streets, city and zip code data by employer.

Products for Annual Report

The table below shows final tabular results for all UGAs and Rural area. Figures are for illustrative purposes only and are not based on actual geocoded employer locations. Final results are included in the Annual Report.

Urban Growth Area	2023 Incorporated Employment	2023 Unincorporated Employment	2023 Total Employment	2036 Forecast Employment
Anacortes	7,817	856	8,673	10,480
Burlington	10,507	89	10,596	13,412
Mount Vernon	16,327	382	16,709	21,288
Sedro-Woolley	4,106	20	4,126	9,179
Concrete	293	27	320	467
Hamilton	(suppressed)	(suppressed)	(suppressed)	288
La Conner	1,005	0	1,005	1,420
Lyman	(suppressed)	(suppressed)	(suppressed)	38
Bayview Ridge	0	2,703	2,703	3,455
Swinomish	0	1,047	1,047	1,247
UGA Subtotal	40,524	5,124	45,648	61,274
Rural (outside UGAs)	0	8,306	8,306	9,343
Grand Total	40,525	13,429	53,954	70,617

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – NOT ACTUAL FIGURES

3. ANNEXATIONS AND INCORPORATIONS

Reporting of any annexation and incorporations will be included as it occurs, which may not be on an annual basis.

4. RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Housing units completed every year are reported to the Office of Financial Management by all cities, towns and Skagit County. These jurisdictions also report housing that has been removed from the housing stock, such as demolitions. OFM produces a report every year utilizing these components of housing unit change for every city, town and for unincorporated Skagit County.

Unlike the primary Population Growth Monitoring and Employment Growth Monitoring data sources, Housing Growth Monitoring is not tracked for urban growth areas as housing counts by type (e.g. single-family, multi-family) for these geographies are not available. For cities and towns, housing data is reported by the jurisdictions within incorporated areas. For Skagit County, data is for all unincorporated areas, which includes municipal urban growth areas contiguous to cities and towns and the two non-municipal UGAs in Skagit County – Bayview Ridge and Swinomish.

Interested parties should contact local jurisdictions' planning departments with any question about any official housing forecast for that jurisdiction.

Data Sources

- Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting and Research Division, *Postcensal Estimates of Housing Units*, April 1, 2020 to April 1, 2024, Last Modified: Version to be noted
- OFM, Small Area Estimates Program, *Estimates of Total Population, Household Population, Total Housing Units and Occupied Housing Units for Census 2020 Urban Growth Areas*, Version to be noted
- Skagit County Planning and Development Services, *Housing Unit Change in Unincorporated UGAs*, April 1, xxxx – March 31, xxxx, Version to be noted
- Local Jurisdictions, *Housing Unit and Population Survey Forms*, Version will be noted.

The Office of Financial Management estimates for these data sources do not follow the calendar year. Data are from April 1 of one year to March 31 of the next year (e.g. April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024 is the “2024” estimate, but only includes one quarter of calendar year 2024).

OFM only provides housing unit data by type within city limits and total unincorporated area – they do not collect housing counts for unincorporated UGAs. Therefore, data for housing counts in unincorporated UGAs are not available from OFM. A data request is submitted to Skagit County Planning and Development Services every year to supplement the OFM housing data with housing completions for unincorporated UGAs.

Housing Unit and Population Survey forms that jurisdictions submit every year to OFM are requested by SCOG to cross reference the data provided by OFM with what jurisdictions are submitting. This addition to the methodology is in response to feedback about potential inconsistencies between what OFM reports and what local jurisdictions provide.

5. ESTIMATED HOUSING GROWTH IN AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI) CATEGORIES DEFINED BY THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

This section of the annual report will monitor the production of housing in the AMI categories created as part of the Commerce Methodology (see Table B). The housing allocations are

Table 2. Final Allocations of Net New Housing Needed (2020-2045)								
		Final Allocations of Net New Housing Needed 2020-2045						
Urban Growth Areas		0-30% AMI	31-50% AMI	51-80% AMI	81-100% AMI	101-120% AMI	Above 120% AMI	Total
Anacortes		943	604	422	226	201	546	2,942
Burlington		911	584	408	218	194	528	2,843
Mount Vernon		1,659	1,064	743	398	353	963	5,180
Sedro-Woolley		848	544	380	203	180	491	2,646
Concrete		35	22	15	8	7	20	107
Hamilton		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
La Conner		40	26	18	10	8	22	124
Lyman		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bayview Ridge		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Swinomish		38	24	17	9	8	22	118
	UGA Subtotal	4,474	2,868	2,003	1,072	951	2,592	13,960
Rural (outside UGA's)		0	0	501	268	238	2,483	3,490
	Grand Total	4,474	2,868	2,504	1,340	1,189	5,075	17,450

The progress each member agency makes toward meeting each member jurisdictions housing allocations in Table 2 will be part of this report. The proposed categories are in Table B. This assumes market rate for all units, this data tracks new units built in each of these AMI

categories by each city and town. Housing need is a cumulative planning measure and should not be treated as an annual quota.

Each member jurisdiction is responsible for providing the unit production for each of these categories so that number can be removed from the OFM data total and displayed in the correct category. This includes any housing that has fees or impact waivers, density bonus or other housing subsidy. This also includes any known PSH units that were permitted for the year. The member agency is required to provide to Skagit Council of Governments the number of units by structure type that is in the under 100% AMI category and what AMI those units should be allocated in, along with any documentation. PSH units and other units will be cross-referenced with the County Department of Health after the member agency submits their data. Failure to submit the number of units in each AMI category produced by the member jurisdiction will result in OFM data used for the report for that member jurisdiction. This may result in progress made towards housing allocations not appearing in the growth monitoring report.

Table B can be used by member jurisdictions as an example of relating zone categories to housing types and income levels.

Manufactured homes on a single-family lot, and not in a manufactured home community will be categorized as 100-120+ AMI. Only new manufactured homes in a park will be considered for a lower AMI category.

Emergency shelter counts will come from State Data (the Hick's report) and will not be required to be collected from member jurisdictions. The Department of Health will be consulted to obtain this data.

Table A Housing Unit AMI Categories (Based on Washington State Department of Commerce Guidance for Updating your housing element, August 2023 Exhibit 12)

OFM	Percent Allocation by AMI category					
Housing Unit Structure Type	0-30%	31-50%	51-80%	81-100%	101-120%	120%+
1-unit						
2-unit						
3-unit						
5 or more unit						

Accessory Dwelling Unit						
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Table B Example of relating zone categories to housing types and income levels (Department of Commerce Exhibit 12 in Washington State Department of Commerce Guidance for updating your housing element)

Zone Category	Typical Housing Types Allowed	Market Rate (lowest potential income served)	With subsidies or incentives (lowest potential income served)	Assumed affordability level for capacity analysis
Low Density	Detached single family home	Higher income (> 120% AMI)	Not feasible at this scale	High income (>120% AMI)
Moderate Density	Townhomes, duplex, triplex, quadplex	Moderate income (>80-120+ AMI)	Not typically feasible at this scale	Moderate income (.80-120+)
Low-Rise Multifamily	Walk up apartments, condominiums (2-3 floors)	Low income (>50-80% AMI)	Extremely low and very low income (0-50% AMI)	Low income (0-80% AMI) and PSH
Mid-Rise Multifamily	Apartments, condominiums	Low income (>50-80% AMI)	Extremely low and very low income (0-50% AMI)	Low income (0-80% AMI) and PSH
ADU (all zones)	Accessory Dwelling Units on developed residential lots	Low income (>50-80% AMI)	N/A	Low income (>50-80% AMI) – Group with Low-Rise and/or Mid-Rise Multifamily

Data Sources

- Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), Form A New Structures and units permitted, Version to be noted
- Local Jurisdictions to provide data for AMI categories of all new units that are in AMI categories of 100-120 AMI and lower. Year to be noted

- Department of Health to provide emergency shelter counts (State Data- Hick's report?)
Version to be noted

DATA STANDARDS

- Use official or otherwise well-established public data sources whenever practical.
- Record the source, data year, release/vintage, and retrieval date for each primary measure.
- Use consistent geographic definitions from year to year.
- Do not mix different source definitions within a single trend without clearly identifying the change.
- When an agency revises historical data, use the revised series and document the revision.
- Clearly distinguish population, employed residents, jobs, housing stock, housing production, and housing need.

ANNUAL REPORTING PROCESS

Step	Responsibility	Output
1. Collect data	SCOG staff	Annual data file
	Local jurisdictions	Review housing data for AMI category allocations
2. Check definitions and revisions	SCOG staff	QC check
3. Update calculations	SCOG staff	Growth indicators
4. Compare with 2045 allocations	SCOG staff	Progress measures
5. Prepare annual report	SCOG staff	Draft report
6. GMATAC Review findings	Committee/SCOG staff	Comments
7. Prepare final draft	SCOG staff	Final Draft report
8. Present to GMASC for review and adoption	SCOG staff	Adopted report
7. Publish/archive	SCOG	Final report + source data

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Party	Role
SCOG staff	Maintain data, perform calculations, prepare the annual report, document sources and limitations.
Member jurisdictions/ GMATAC	Review jurisdiction-specific information and identify material corrections or contextual information.

GMASC	Review monitoring results and determine whether additional policy or planning discussion is warranted.
Data providers	Provide official estimates and revisions according to their established publication schedules.

GUIDELINES REVIEW

These guidelines should be reviewed periodically and updated when the adopted planning framework, data availability, monitoring objectives, or geographic definitions materially change. Routine annual data updates do not require amendment to these guidelines.

FIXED 2045 BENCHMARKS

The Board of Skagit County Commissioners adopted Growth Allocations for 2045 on March 25, 2025, as part of the update to the Countywide Planning Policies required by the Washington State Growth Management Act.

Measure	Baseline	2045 benchmark	Monitoring use
Population	2022: 131,249	160,830	Annual county and jurisdiction comparison
Employment	2022: 59,571	80,100	Annual countywide; five-year geographic review
Net New Housing Need	2020 baseline	17,450 net new units, 2020–2045	Annual production/progress comparison

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Total Employment	Jobs located in geography; a place-of-work measure.
Employed Residents	People who live in the geography and are employed; a residence-based measure.
Housing Units	Residential dwelling units in the housing stock.
New Housing Units	Units added during the reporting period.
2045 Allocation	Adopted planning allocation used as a long-term benchmark.

Growth Monitoring	Periodic measurement and reporting of actual growth and trends; not an annual quota or compliance determination.
GMATAC	Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee
GMASC	Growth Management Act Steering Committee

DRAFT