

GROWTH TARGETS INFORMATION

Council question: What was the process for developing the growth targets in the draft plan, and what is the significance of these numbers?

Overview

The draft Land Use Element includes a set of housing and employment growth targets for the period 2006-31, with an extension of projected growth out to 2035 (Figure LU-2, p. 37 in the Commission-recommended draft plan).

What does the Growth Management Act (GMA) require for growth targets, and why?

The state GMA requires that local growth targets be updated at least every ten years.

Countywide targets, including those for cities within each county, must be able to accommodate the population forecasts issued by the state Office of Financial Management. Additionally, King County's Countywide Planning Policies require each city to have local employment targets as well.

In King County, these local targets are developed by the Growth Management Planning Council, and incorporate the regional geographies set forth in the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2040. Bellevue is one of the two "metropolitan centers" in King County. The GMPC last updated the local targets in 2009, to apply to the planning period of 2006-2031. This was the foundation for the draft plan's growth targets.

What is the significance of the growth targets?

The growth targets are statements of planning policy, indicating the minimum number of housing units and jobs that each jurisdiction will accommodate during their respective 20-year planning periods. A key premise of growth management in Washington State is that counties should have adequate land capacity and zoning to accommodate the growth that is coming. The policy is to *direct* growth rather than shut growth down; e.g. to direct growth from outside the County's urban growth boundary to appropriate places within the growth boundary. Growth targets are coupled with the buildable lands analysis to show that counties, including jurisdictions within each county, have adequate land to accommodate coming growth.

Of note is that the growth targets are not a "guarantee" of a given amount of growth for each jurisdiction. Many factors that influence growth and development are beyond local government control. Key is that local governments show they have adequate land, zoning and infrastructure to accommodate the targets.

How were the Bellevue targets developed?

Bellevue actively participated in the last countywide update of growth targets, for the period 2006-31. These targets included specific numbers for new jobs and housing units for Bellevue and all other cities within the County. They were developed as amendments to the Countywide Planning Policies recommended by the Growth Management Planning Council. For Bellevue,

the growth targets include 17,000 new housing units and 53,000 new jobs. The targets were adopted by the King County Council in January 2010, and later ratified by the Bellevue Council in April 2010 (Res. No. 8088).

For Bellevue's involvement in the development of targets, major factors included the City's adopted plans, land use forecasts, and available zoning capacity for housing and job growth. These were "building blocks" to ensure that the new targets were consistent with the City's internal planning and policy framework, and realistic to achieve, given market forces and zoning in place.

To date, the new CPP targets for the period 2006-2031 have not been incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Plan; that step has been awaiting the current major Comprehensive Plan update. The GMA requirement is that cities plan for 20 years of growth, which is consistent with Bellevue's new Comprehensive Plan horizon of 2035. Since the CPP targets only run through 2031, the draft Land Use Element extends the CPP targets for Bellevue out to 2035. This was done through a simple extension, adding in four additional years at the same annual average rate of growth that would occur under the earlier Council-ratified CPP targets.

What are the potential consequences of having targets too high or too low?

In addition to demonstrating that jurisdictions have adequate land and zoning to accommodate their share of growth, the targets also position the City with regard to local and regional infrastructure needs. If the City's growth targets are set too low, they convey a lesser sense of the importance of transportation and other regional infrastructure and services to support growth in Bellevue's planning area. If the targets are set too high, they may force the City to rezone areas to accommodate higher growth, outside the City's established planning framework. Rather, as noted above Bellevue's approach has been to use our existing policy and planning framework, together with realistic market forecasts, as "building blocks" to determine Bellevue's share of growth.