



July 14, 2009

King County Executive Kurt Triplett
Chair, Growth Management Policy Council
King County Office of the Executive
King County Chinook Building
401 5th Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Draft Update to King County Housing and Job Growth Targets and Proposed CPP Amendment

Dear Executive Triplett,

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) would like to thank the King County Growth Management Policy Council and its staff for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft housing and employment growth target ranges being presented at its meeting on Wednesday, July 15, 2009.

As the staff report accompanying the draft targets notes, the current effort to update King County's local Growth Management Act (GMA) targets is being undertaken to reflect the new regional growth strategy established in VISION 2040, in addition to addressing the state Office of Financial Management's most recent population projections and to support the GMA-required local comprehensive plan updates due in 2011. We would like to express our appreciation for the directness and clarity with which VISION 2040 has been incorporated into the county's target development process and methodology, as reflected in the draft target materials and proposed amendment to the countywide planning policies.

VISION 2040—the region's long-range growth management, environmental, economic and transportation strategy that was adopted by the PSRC General Assembly in April, 2008—provides regional guidance regarding how future growth is to be planned for and accommodated throughout the region. The framework is embodied in the plan's regional growth strategy that seeks to:

- **Reduce *Rural* growth**
- **Focus more growth into the region's urban core, particularly within the region's major *Metropolitan cities* and *Core cities* with designated regional growth centers, and *Larger cities***
- **Restrain growth in *Small cities* and *Unincorporated urban* communities in more distant parts of the region's urban growth area that are not well connected to urban infrastructure and services**
- **Improve *jobs-housing balance* across the region, by redirecting a moderate amount of additional residential growth to King County and employment growth to Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties**
- **The overall strategy aims to protect and preserve the region's natural environment and resources, focus development strategically within the region's urban core where existing infrastructure and**

new investments can be used more efficiently, and make meaningful progress to reduce carbon emissions and minimize the region's contribution to climate change.

The current round of target updates through the year 2031 represents a key opportunity to reinforce policy course, to continue to "bend the historical trend" toward a more focused growth pattern as envisioned by VISION 2040 and its regional growth strategy. Our assessment of the county's draft housing and employment target ranges indicates that King County and its municipalities have made significant progress toward that goal, and we would like to offer our recognition of the solid technical and planning efforts that have supported the target update process to date.

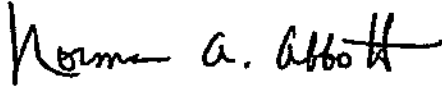
We highlight the following observations:

- We are pleased that the methodology used to establish countywide population and employment targets clearly reflects and implements VISION 2040's policy direction to improve the balance of jobs and housing across the region.
- We also appreciate that the county is proposing to amend its target methodology and guiding countywide planning policies to reflect a new multicounty planning policy (*MPP-DP-3, VISION 2040, p.47*) that requires counties and their municipalities to adopt local residential targets in housing units (rather than households or population). Housing units provide a consistent unit of measurement that local jurisdictions can both regulate and monitor.
- The draft housing and employment target ranges at the level of VISION 2040's six regional geographies—1. Metropolitan cities, 2. Core cities, 3. Larger cities, 4. Small cities, 5. Unincorporated urban areas, and 6. Rural areas—reflect a solid commitment to "bending the trend" of future growth to align with the regional growth strategy. We are comfortable with the housing and employment ranges set for each regional geography. We are particularly pleased with the assertive effort by the county's Metropolitan cities to accept substantial shares of future growth, as well as the degree to which the county has sought to minimize rural development. Other regional geography groupings still have room for additional progress to be made in future rounds of target setting, but we recognize the effort undertaken in this initial round of targeting under VISION 2040 has been significant.
- We are supportive of the county's approach of breaking down its overall target for the unincorporated urban area to potential annexation areas (PAAs) affiliated with each city. We feel this helps to reinforce VISION 2040's preference for directing unincorporated urban growth primarily to areas affiliated with cities for future annexation, as opposed to unaffiliated areas. PSRC would be happy to provide data and technical assistance to support the remaining work being done in this area.

Per the memorandum to the King County Growth Management Planning Council -- Inter Jurisdictional Team dated August 18, 2008 (attached), PSRC requests an opportunity to review and comment on the draft final local housing and employment targets prior to formal adoption. To facilitate this process, we ask the county to submit their draft final targets to the Puget Sound Regional Council, Attn: Norman Abbott, Director of Growth Management Planning, along with a brief memo that explains how the targets are part of a larger, long-term strategy for accommodating future growth in a manner consistent with the VISION 2040 regional growth strategy.

The Puget Sound Regional Council would like to thank King County and its municipalities for the commitment they have demonstrated through their target update process to implement VISION 2040 and its shared regional aspirations for how to better accommodate future growth. Our staff is available to support your efforts with data and technical assistance as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norman A. Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Norman Abbott, Ph.D, AICP
Director of Growth Management Planning
Puget Sound Regional Council

Enc: Memorandum RE: VISION 2040 and GMA Growth Targets – Initial Guidance

**cc: Paul Reitenbach, King County Department of Development and Environmental Services
Karen Wolf, King County Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Management
Chandler Felt, King County Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Management
Michael Hubner, King County Suburban Cities Association**