



JEFFERSON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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MEMORANDUM

To: Board of County Commissioners, Planning Commission, and Interested Parties

Fr: Department of Community Development

Date: May 7, 2002

Re: Unified Development Code (UDC) Required Findings Related to Comprehensive Plan Amendments. Section 9.5.4(b) – growth management indicators

Unified Development Code Requirements

Pursuant to UDC section 9.8(b), all recommendations regarding amendment to the Comprehensive Plan must be based upon an inquiry into the growth management indicators listed at UDC section 9.5.4(b). Practically speaking, this means that all of the Comprehensive Plan amendments considered during the 2002 cycle must be reviewed in the context of the seven (7) growth management indicators listed on pages 9-3 and 9-4 of the UDC. These growth management indicators address:

- Growth and development rates
- Ability to provide services
- Availability of urban land
- Community-wide attitudes towards land use
- Consistency with state law and local agreements

These indicators are not necessarily amendment specific but rather are meant to provide a snapshot of Jefferson County's status during this 2002 amendment cycle. This memorandum will serve to promote consideration and inquiry into these seven growth management indicators and is intended to be a starting point for broader community consideration before the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.

While this review of the growth management indicators provides some basic analysis related to County demographics it is not intended to measure our progress in achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan – that task is reserved for the state mandated Comprehensive Pan update which has an anticipated completion of December 2004.

Unified Development Code (UDC) Section 9.5.4(b) – growth management indicators

Each of the growth management indicators are discussed as listed in Section 9.5.4(b) of the UDC.

- (1) Whether growth and development as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan is occurring faster or slower than anticipated, or is failing to materialize.

*Discussion: The Office of Management is the state agency responsible for compiling population projections under the Growth Management Act (GMA). The most recent OFM Population Determination for Jefferson County, based on a corrected Federal Census count, shows a year 2001 population of **26,299**. The 1996 “base year” population estimate used in the Comprehensive Plan (see page 3-3) was identified as 25,756 residents. This represents an increase of 545 individuals over that five year period between 1996 and 2001 or a 2% growth rate over the last five years. Should this trend continue over the next five years, Jefferson County would see a 2006 population of 26,824 – a number that falls below the 2006 projected population of 32,116 adopted by the City and the County based on the Watterson Report (see Jefferson County Resolution 17-96). The Office of Financial Management projects an intermediate series population of 28,308 for Jefferson County by the year 2005.*

That said, growth trends are difficult to predict. Washington and its counties have tended to exhibit growth spurts interrupted by periods of slower growth, stagnation, and even decline. For example, the “rural rebound” growth trend experienced by most western states in the early 1990’s – at the time of GMA adoption -- was the result of an exodus by nearly 2 million people leaving California during a severe regional economic recession. Rural and nonmetropolitan growth in Washington, and Jefferson County, during the 1990s was far greater than anticipated but slowed as California’s economy recovered in the mid-1990s (Washington State County Population Projections For Growth Management, Office of Financial Management, March 2002).

YEAR	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2001
County Population	8300	6420	8346	8918	11618	9639	10661	15965	20406	26299
Port Townsend	4181	2847	3970	4683	6888	5074	5241	6067	7001	8430
Percent in Port Townsend	50%	44%	47%	53%	59%	53%	49%	38%	34%	32%

Jefferson County Population 1910-2001

Source: United States Census, Washington State Office of Financial Management

As reference to the table above indicates, an interesting trend for Jefferson County is an ongoing decrease in the percentage of residents living in the city of Port Townsend. Since 1950, the percentage of residents living in the city has dropped from 59% to 32%, with County residential

units accounting for nearly 70% of the population base. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that this shift towards residence in unincorporated areas has resulted in an increased demand for services outside of Port Townsend.

- (2) Whether the capacity of the county to provide adequate services has diminished or increased.

Discussion: The number of service providers in the County has not decreased and the County, with the exception of policy decisions made as a result of economic conditions, continues to be equipped to provide the same level of services available at the time of Comprehensive Plan adoption. As noted last year, completion of capital facilities and provision of services analysis related to the potential designation of an Urban Growth Area (UGA) at the Tri Area could result in a situation whereby the level of service available in the County increases.

- (3) Whether sufficient urban land is designated and zoned to meet projected demand and need.

Discussion: Based on the current population allocation contained in Joint County and City Resolution No. 17-96 and the fact that current and projected growth rates are less than anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan it is assumed that sufficient urban land is designated and zoned to meet projected demand and need. As an unincorporated area, Jefferson County is comprised of rural and natural resource lands – no urban population was allocated to the unincorporated area. Based on the city's 2002 Annual Comprehensive Plan Assessment dated April 15 there appears to be adequate vacant land in all zoning categories to accommodate future anticipated urban growth.

- (4) Whether any assumptions upon which the Comprehensive Plan is based are no longer found to be valid.

Discussion: Four years following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the majority of assumptions made as part of the Plan continue to be valid. However as discussed in last years memorandum, based largely on analysis done as part of the Glen Cove/Tri Area Study and specific case law that has come before the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board, two of the assumptions made during the Comprehensive Plan process require revisiting. These include decisions related to the application of RCW 36.70A.070(5) regarding the designation of rural commercial lands and assumptions made regarding the amount of commercial land that may be necessary to serve existing and projected population.

In the four years since Comprehensive Plan adoption, Jefferson County has completed a Regional Economic Analysis and Forecast (January 26, 1999, Richard Trottier) which suggests that the County has a deficit of commercially and industrially zoned land that exceeds 200 acres. This analysis, which was referenced and anticipated in the Comprehensive Plan, provides general direction for the County regarding the designation of rural commercial lands or potential designation of Urban Growth Areas.

- (5) Whether changes in county-wide attitudes necessitate amendments to the goals of the Plan and the basic values embodied within the *Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement*.

Discussion: The most effective way to judge whether changes in county-wide attitudes have occurred, aside from reference to local election results, is through statistically significant public

opinion surveys. The last such survey in Jefferson County took place in 1991 through the Jefferson 2000 Public Opinion Survey conducted by Elway Research. Many of the opinions expressed through this survey are reflected in the policy assumptions that form the basis for the Comprehensive Plan. That said, the opinions expressed through the Jefferson 2000 survey were not intended to predict the future and an updated survey would be the most effective way to gauge whether changes in county-wide attitudes have actually occurred.

- (6) Whether changes in circumstances dictate a need for amendments.

Discussion: To some degree, circumstances have changed since Comprehensive Plan adoption in August of 1998. Taken from a broad perspective, these changing circumstances include: issues surrounding affordable housings, specific salmon species listings under the Endangered Species Act, County adoption of final development regulations which are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Act, Growth Management Hearings Boards clarifications through case law related to specific provisions of the GMA, the adoption of Unified Development Code amendments establishing a process for locating Major Industrial Development, and the completion of the Tri Area/Glen Cove Special Study. Changes in circumstance such as these suggest that components of the Comprehensive Plan may need to be amended.

- (7) Whether inconsistencies exist between the *Comprehensive Plan* and the *Growth Management Act* or the *Comprehensive Plan* and the *County-wide Planning Policy for Jefferson County*.

Discussion: While the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with both the Growth Management Act and the County-wide Planning Policy. Pursuant to the Growth Act, the county is in the process of conducting a review of the Comprehensive Plan and the UDC to ensure consistency between those documents and the Growth Management Act. Per the GMA, this review and any changes necessary must be completed by December 2004.

[END]