Meeting Notes

**WRIA 7, 8, 9 Joint Technical Workgroup meeting**

May 23, 2019 | 10:00 a.m.-12:30p.m.

## **Location**

Room 1ABC  
Department of Ecology

3190 160th Ave SE

Bellevue

**Committee Chair**

Stephanie Potts (WRIA 8, 9)

Stephanie.potts@ecy.wa.gov  
Ingria Jones (WRIA 7)  
ingria.jones@ecy.wa.gov**Handouts**

Growth Projections Discussion Guide

Committee Representatives and Alternates in Attendance\*

| **Name** | **Representing** |
| --- | --- |
| Ann Savery (phone) | Tulalip Tribes |
| Brant Wood (phone) | Snohomish County PUD |
| Carla Carlson | Muckleshoot Tribe |
| Dan Von Seggern (phone) | Center for Environmental Law and Policy |
| Darryl Williams | Tulalip Tribes |
| David Hartley (phone) | Snoqualmie Indian Tribe |
| Emily Dick | Washington Water Trust |
| Eric Ferguson | King County |
| Ezekiel Rohloff | Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife |
| Frank Slusser | Snohomish County |
| Greg McLaughlin (phone) | Washington Water Trust |
| Jacqueline Reid | Snohomish County |
| Janne Kaje | King County |
| Jason Wilkinson | WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council |
| John MacLellan (phone) | Alderwood Water District |
| Josh Kahan | King County |
| Julie Lewis | Snoqualmie Indian Tribe |
| Kirk Lakey | Dept. of Fish and Wildlife |
| Lisa Tobin | City of Auburn |
| Liz Ablow(phone) | Seattle City Light (ex officio) |
| Matt Baerwalde | Snoqualmie Indian Tribe |
| Mike Wolanek (phone) | City of Arlington |
| Morgan Ruff (phone) | Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum (ex officio) |
| Perry Falcone | Snoqualmie Watershed Member (ex officio) |
| Rebecca Maskin | King County (demographer) |
| Steve Lee (phone) | Covington Water |
| Steve Toy | Snohomish County (demographer) |
| Souheil Nasr (phone) | City of Everett |
| Suzanne Skinner | Center for Environmental Law and Policy |
| Teri Strandberg | Snohomish County |
| Trish Rolfe (phone) | Center for Environmental Law and Policy |
| William Stelle | Washington Water Trust |
| Ikuno Masterson | Snohomish County |

Other Attendees

| **Name** | **Affiliation** |
| --- | --- |
| Stephanie Potts | WA Department of Ecology |
| Ingria Jones | WA Department of Ecology |
| John Covert | WA Department of Ecology |
| Cynthia Carlstad | Northwest Hydraulic Consultants |
| Ruth Bell | Cascadia Consulting Group |
| Bridget August | GeoEngineers |
| Michael august | GeoEngineers |
| Patty Dillon | Northwest Hydraulic Consultants |
| Caroline Burney | Cascadia Consulting Group |

\*Attendees list is based on sign-in sheet

# Welcome

Ruth convened the meeting and led introductions and reviewed the meeting objectives. Meeting objectives were to discuss the methods for growth projections and associated assumptions and data needs, direct the technical consultants on which method or methods to use and which assumptions to make, and to direct the technical consultant to preferred data sources.

# Growth Projection Methods

The purpose of the session was to discuss growth projection methods and preferred approach.

Resources

* Growth Projections Discussion Guide: WRIA 7, 8, & 9 WREC Technical Workgroup
* GeoEngineers [Web Map](https://geoengineers.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e85b3893ec474d3f849ffe0981a89d84)

Ruth introduced the discussion around growth projection methods and provided a recap of the different methods. Bridget August reviewed the tables in the discussion guide on information source options, data needs, and assumptions. Overall goal is to identify how many new single-family residences will rely on permit-exempt wells throughout the watershed and where they will go.

Considerations and Discussion

* Counties are likely to use more than one method for growth projections. King County is using a developable lands approach and analyzing past building permit data. Snohomish County is also using a developable lands approach and analyzing historical growth patterns using its as-built data from their assessor’s database.
* The developable lands approach considers land use zoning, size of lots, and land use designations. It estimates potential development, does not have a time limit, and could be used as the upper limit for the potential number of new homes and well connections within a WRIA or subbasin. The developable lands approach analysis assists with assigning anticipated growth to subbasins, since the anticipated growth should not exceed the actual capacity for growth within a subbasin.
* Growth projections need to account for new single family homes that will rely on domestic permit-exempt wells for their water supply. Projections must account for new well connections, not the number of new wells.
* Committees do not need to offset stock watering and industrial uses, but they can choose to go beyond the minimum requirements.
* Adopted growth targets show where growth has been assigned within a county. As part of the Growth Management Act, King and Snohomish Counties must complete a Buildable Lands Analysis to compare growth and development assumptions with actual growth and development that has occurred. Where actual growth does not align with targets, the GMA requires the counties to identify and take reasonable measures, other than expanding the urban growth area, to bring it into alignment, such as changes to zoning and land use policies.
* Growth projections from OFM take into account national economic trends, but do not account for climate change. OFM tracks migration in and out of state with data from the Department of Licensing, however OFM has limited data on how climate change will affect migration.
* There was a recommendation to analyze low, medium, and high population estimates.
* The committees can decide by consensus to go above and beyond the legislation in terms of timescale, however a 20 year projection needs to be included for NEB determination.

King County

* King County is refining its water availability study, which uses a developable lands approach to understand where new single-family homes relying on permit-exempt wells may occur. The County is also analyzing building permits to understand past growth trends.
* The County does have a growth target for the rural area, but monitors rural growth using building permit data.
* Rural growth has slowed in recent years. The County had a small share allocated to rural area as a part of vision 2040, but anticipates that share to decrease further in Vision 2050. Rural growth in King County is trending slightly lower than Vision 2040 growth targets.
* The County prefers not to create a population projection for rural area, since an estimate using available housing may be a more accurate representation of growth in next 20 years.
* Building permit data is geo-coded. The County has geo-referenced data showing the number of building permits and plotted that for a historical reference of growth pattern.
* King County anticipates rural growth patterns to remain consistent, rather than increase.
* Projections of where development will occur should be tied to a developable lands framework.
* Eric Ferguson has examined what percentage of wells went into water service areas using Ecology’s well log data. Committees need to provide input on hook-up assumptions for homes expected within water service areas.
* King County does not have a direct way to identify if a new home is using a well based on the building permits. When a building permit has a corresponding parcel number, it can be located in the assessor’s database which identifies whether the parcel is served by public water. The County does not have a 1-1 connection between well log data and building permit.

Snohomish County

* Snohomish County is also using a developable lands approach to examine where single-family homes may rely on permit-exempt wells. They are also examining the past 10 years of as-built assessor’s database to understand historical patterns.
* The County has started with the assumption that parcels within UGAs, cities, national and state forest lands would not have new domestic permit exempt wells. They also started with the assumption that lots that are ½ acre or less are not sub-dividable, that water would be provided to homes within 100 feet of existing water lines, and that rural cluster subdivisions within ¼ mile of a water line will rely on piped water. The last two assumptions correspond to proposed changes to the County’s code (in progress), which would require hookups to water service in this instance.
* To understand historical home building trends, the County has begun analyzing as-built assessor’s data using the same assumptions as spatial buffers.
* To understand where growth has gone in the past and where it is likely to go on a subbasin level, the County has assigned this data to specific HUCs (sub-watersheds). For parcels on the boundary line they have taken the centroid of the parcel and assigned it to a HUC. The smaller the subbasin boundaries, the more assumptions need to be made for parcels that straddle boundaries.
* The County also plans to compare current growth trends suing as-built parcel data to its 20 year growth target. Rural growth in the past 2-3 years has been approximately 9%, slightly higher than the target or 8.5%.

# Assumptions, data, and implications

The purpose of the session was to discuss assumptions for growth projection methods and implications for subbasin delineations. The workgroup discussed how growth management policies impact growth targets, what is considered in population forecasts, and key assumptions around the likelihood of a new home connecting to a water purveyor.

Considerations and Discussion

* There was discussion around potential increased growth rate scenarios prompted by climate migrants, strong economy, and rural areas within commuting distance of major cities. The workgroup discussed having a few different scenarios to compare that include different assumptions.
* Committees may include brackets, factors of safety, or buffers around assumptions. All assumptions made should be clearly documented in writing and GeoEngineers will carefully track and document these.
* There was discussion around county policies to target growth in the urban areas and how these policies, such as UGA expansions, are implemented. The counties clarified several policies. Cities and counties are required to guide growth into urban areas, in alignment with targets. Cities can only annex lands that are within their UGA. Annexed areas would be connected to water and sewer services. Cities can propose expansions of their UGA and expansions can occur every 8 years, at the time of comprehensive plan updates. UGA expansions lead to higher density zoning and areas within the UGA will be connected to sewer and water.
* King County has specific policies in place to prevent expansion of UGAs and incentivize protection of rural areas, including purchase of development rights, floodplain regulations, and permanent protections on deeds. Amendment to the County’s open space charter requires a supermajority of the County Council.
* State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land may change ownership and committees may want to identify associated assumptions.
* Both counties developable lands analyses estimates the number of new single-family homes that can be built based on the maximum density allowed by current zoning. Some parcels are large and have the capacity for several houses.
* Rural areas are unlikely to be up-zoned to increase density, but may be down-zoned if they are not meeting growth targets. Up-zoning occurs in UGAs, where water and sewer service is available.
* Snohomish County’s assessor’s office has internal GIS data for larger water service lines, but not smaller lines. Using this data likely results in a conservative estimate of the number of homes that will rely on a permit-exempt well, since some homes may be served by smaller lines and water providers will construct new lines as they implement their water system plans. However, the County cannot compel water districts to serve a home, even within 100 feet of a water system, if there are insurmountable constraints, such as the inability to get an easement.
* King County also has internal data that includes water system lines that is variable in accuracy.
* WA Department of Health (DOH) has data online from yearly water reports on the number of available connections within water service areas. A caveat to this data is that some service areas may not be able to serve all of these connections due to aging infrastructure or water right limitations.
* Water providers are required to produce water system comprehensive plans that are consistent with county comprehensive plans. Some water system plans have not been recently updated or are in the process of being updated. Plans identify water that can be purchased from other providers and identify interties with other providers for emergency backup supply. Even if a provider has sufficient water right capacity, it may still purchase water from another provider.
* There was a concern that while water districts have plans for how they will expand to meet future demands, providers are not always ahead of demand. Near the end of water lines, providers may not have capacity to deliver to new homes without installing a bigger water line.
* OFM has historical population and household estimates by year and by WRIA and can generate estimates by subbasin or census tract. If committees choose this method to identify historical trends, then changing subbasin delineations would require re-calculating projections.
* The workgroups discussed Ecology’s well log database and came to general agreement that the committees should not pursue this method due to the numerous limitations (database does not identify which wells are permit-exempt domestic wells, location is on quarter-quarter section, information is completed by driller and can be inaccurate, etc.). There was still some interest in reviewing well log records along UGAs and within water service areas.
* The workgroups discussed implications for subbasin delineations. GeoEngineers recommends moving forward with growth projections while continuing discussions on subbasin delineations, since using buildable lands analysis and past building permit data or as-built assessor’s database is a spatial approach.

# Next Steps and Action Items

**WRIA 7:**

* Emily Dick will report to the Snohomish WREC at the June 13th Committee meeting.
* Next Snohomish WREC Technical Workgroup Meeting is June 5th from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm via WebEx. Meeting topics include: continue growth projections discussions and provide feedback on Task 1-work plan for development of the WRE plan and critical data needs for minimum requirements of the plan.

**WRIA 8 & 9:**

* Lisa Tobin reported to the WRIA 8 and 9 Committees at the joint meeting on May 28.
* The WRIA 8 technical workgroup will meet Monday, June 10 from 1-2:30pm.
* The WRIA 9 technical workgroup will meet Wednesday, June 12 from 10-11:30am.

# Action Items

* GeoEngineers will develop a growth projections work plan that lays out specific steps to complete growth projections, document assumptions across counties and committees, and identify decision points.
* GeoEngineers will contact counties to identify their process, specific assumptions that have been made to date, and their preferred approach for growth projections.