

## **Introduction**

Snohomish County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) UG-2c and HO-9 require that Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) develop and implement a coordinated, long term growth and housing monitoring program. Policy UG-2c1 lists a series of data indicators that need to be addressed annually as part of this effort. Results of the monitoring program required under UG-2c are to be published in an annual growth monitoring report to be reviewed by the Snohomish County Tomorrow Steering Committee. This report is prepared to satisfy this requirement for 1999.

The 1999 Growth Monitoring Report (GMR), presented to the SCT Steering Committee on December 15, 1999, not only updates information contained in the 1997 and 1998 GMR, but provides more detailed information on residential densities in recorded formal plat subdivisions countywide since 1995. The impetus for this enhancement for this year's GMR originates from the 1997 amendments to the Growth Management Act (GMA) that established a requirement for Snohomish County and five other urban counties to monitor buildable land supply within urban growth areas (UGAs) at five year intervals. Counties and cities are required to use actual residential, commercial and industrial densities achieved since the adoption of their GMA comprehensive plans as the basis for testing the adequacy of remaining buildable land supply within UGAs. The tracking and reporting of residential densities in recorded subdivisions countywide since 1995 represents the continued effort to develop more fully an important data series necessary for conducting the 5-year buildable lands review and evaluation in Snohomish County. Also included in the 1999 GMR is an update of employment estimates by city, UGA and rural/resource areas for 1995, 1997 and 1998.

The report is divided into five main sections: (1) population growth trends; (2) employment growth trends; (3) annexations and incorporations; (4) residential development trends; and (5) housing market trends.

The residential development trends section of the report describes rural cluster subdivision activity trends as required by the county's General Policy Plan (GPP) LU 6.B.8 which reads:

Monitor the rate and pattern of development created by rural cluster subdivisions and report to the county council annually to ensure that a pattern of urban development is not established in rural areas.

This monitoring policy was added to the GPP as part of the county's response to the Growth Management Hearings Board's remand on rural plan densities and zoning. The county adopted a number of comprehensive plan designation and zoning changes within the rural area which went into effect December 12, 1996. Amendments to the county's Rural Cluster Subdivision (RCS) ordinance also went into effect that day. Consequently, the monitoring of RCS activity in this report deals only with rural cluster subdivisions submitted after December 12, 1996.

The main purpose of the GMR is to provide baseline growth-related information as part of the annual growth monitoring data collection responsibilities agreed to by cities and the county in CPP UG-2c. The report does not contain policy recommendations that would currently warrant action by the SCT Steering Committee. However, the empirical data contained in this report may lead to future land use policy discussions regarding whether comprehensive plan or growth target changes are warranted.

This report is the result of the efforts of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) and PAC subcommittee formed in August 1996 to begin work on the scope of work for this report. Jurisdictions with staff participating on the PAC subcommittee included Snohomish County and the cities of Edmonds, Everett, Marysville, Mill Creek, Monroe and Mukilteo. Several public outreach meetings were held in the fall of 1996 with interest groups wishing to comment on the PAC subcommittee's draft growth monitoring proposal. Over the past three years, the PAC subcommittee has continued to develop and refine the technical approaches and methodologies used for this report.