

## Smart Growth And Growth Management

Different areas of the U.S. began looking for relief from sprawl. In the 1970s, Oregon adopted a sweeping new growth management law that directed urban growth into designated urban areas and prevented it on farm and forest lands. In 1990, Washington adopted a growth management law with some similarities to Oregon's. The main thrust in both cases was not to stop growth, but to direct it toward compact development patterns in urban areas and to preserve natural resource lands, open space, and environmentally sensitive areas. More recently, Maryland adopted "smart growth" policies to accomplish the same goals through incentives.

Under Washington's growth management act, every city is automatically an "urban growth area." Certain other areas also can be designated as urban growth areas. Because of the broad definition for such areas, they vary a lot in character and scale. However, each must provide urban services, like sewer, and each must allow urban-type development in appropriate places. In Snohomish County, the Municipal Southwest Urban Growth Area encompasses Mountlake Terrace and several other cities. Some unincorporated land, adjacent to the cities, is included too.

### Buildable Lands

Under a state program that took effect in 1997, counties and cities in the Puget Sound region track how they are providing for buildable lands, achieving urban densities, and meeting other goals. Each jurisdiction has a target population and a target number of jobs that is expected to occur by 2012. These targets are based on countywide population forecasts, combined with local data on transportation, employment, development trends, and land supply. Snohomish County has adopted the targets into countywide planning policies. The County and the cities are each responsible for meeting the targets.

Mountlake Terrace and other cities in Snohomish County have been achieving at least minimum urban densities, according to the draft 2002 Buildable Lands report by Snohomish County Tomorrow. Also, the draft report concludes that the county's urban growth areas are adequately sized until 2012. These conclusions are based on data gathered from each jurisdiction about what growth had been planned, what developed during the past five years, and what capacity remained. To determine capacity, certain "reduction factors" were applied to buildable lands to account for properties that would not be for sale or that were constrained by environmental regulations.

Each city must review the objectives and targets in its comprehensive plan, compared with what has happened in the intervening five years, and evaluate whether the plan and reality are consistent with each other. If they are not, the city must take reasonable measures to correct the problem.

A review of Mountlake Terrace's 1996 comprehensive plan, compared with current events, shows that the city is experiencing difficulty in meeting two plan objectives: (1) accommodating its population target of 22,100 residents by the year 2012; and (2) adequate traffic flow<sup>1</sup> at some intersections. However, it is more than meeting its goal for 4,798 jobs<sup>2</sup> by 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Level of Service discussion in the Transportation Element regarding the traffic flow objective.

<sup>2</sup> See the Economic Vitality Element for more information regarding the employment objective.