

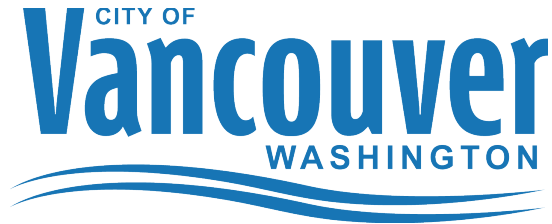
From: [Oliver Orjiako](#)
To: [Jacqui Kamp](#)
Cc: [Christine Cook](#); [Sonja Wiser](#)
Subject: FW: City of Vancouver comment letter for May 2 continued public hearing on countywide population forecast
Date: Thursday, April 27, 2023 4:34:24 PM
Attachments: [23 05 02 COV ltr to County Council 2.pdf](#)

FYI. Thanks

From: Snodgrass, Bryan <Bryan.Snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us>
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2023 12:59 PM
To: Rebecca Messinger <Rebecca.Messinger@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>; Paul Newman <Paul.Newman@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: City of Vancouver comment letter for May 2 continued public hearing on countywide population forecast

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Thank you



April 26, 2023

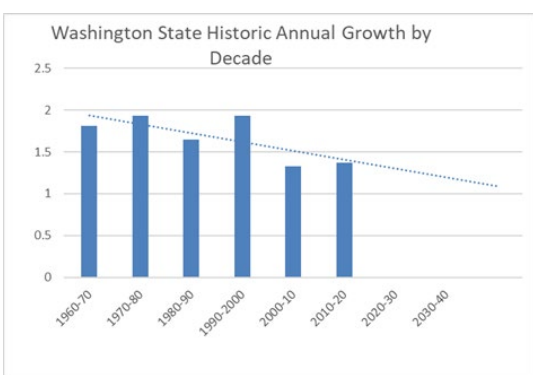
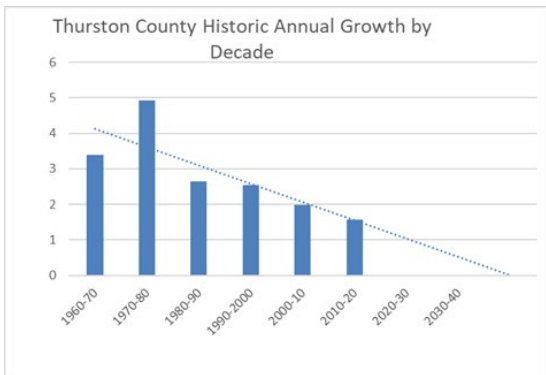
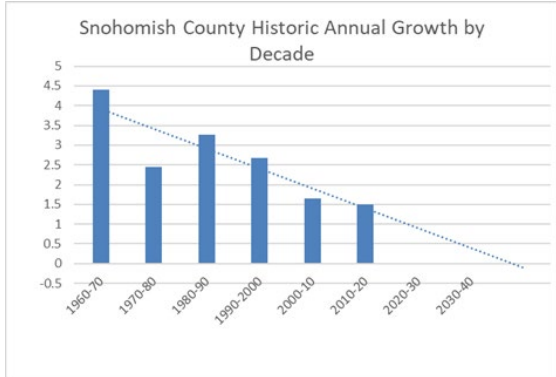
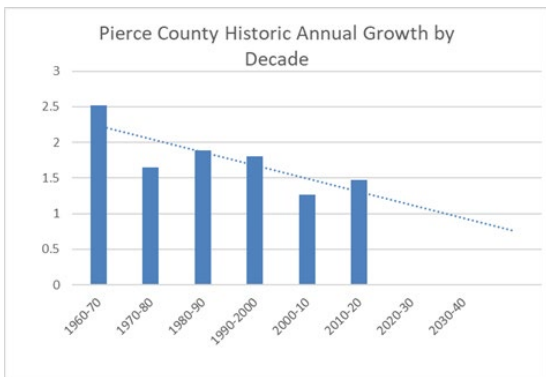
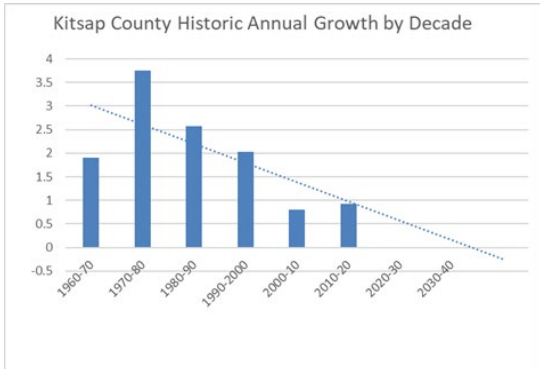
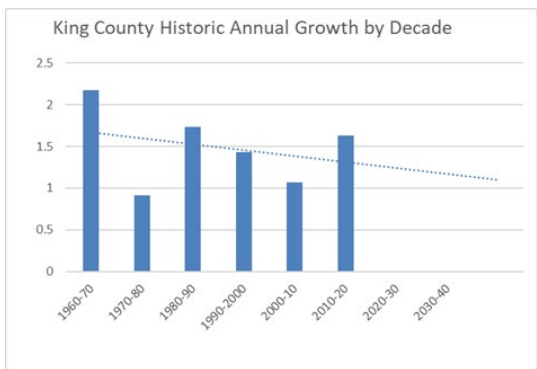
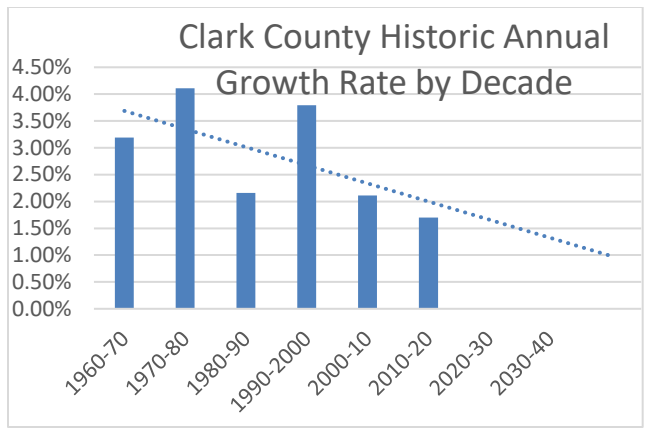
Chair Bowerman, and Councilors Yung, Belkot, Medvigy and Marshall:

RE: City of Vancouver comments for May 2 continued County Council public hearing, in support of selection of the OFM medium 2045 countywide population forecast of 698,416 persons

Thank you very much for continuing the April 18 public hearing on this important matter to allow further consultation with the state Office of Financial Management (OFM). We appreciate that this was done to better understand aspects of OFM's forecasting, rather than simply proceeding ahead. We also appreciate your decision to keep the public hearing open, and anticipate testifying at the continued hearing based on the information that OFM provides in their meeting with you which we understand will take place on May 1. A pause for more information on this critical decision can benefit us all.

We offer the following additional information:

- **Clark County migration patterns are not completely different than elsewhere, and are not ignored in OFM forecasting.** Over the past 20-years 69% of Clark County's total growth was through in-migration, a smaller percentage than several Washington counties and only modestly higher than the statewide total of 62%. OFM officials also confirm in recent correspondence that their modeling takes into account Clark County's specific historical migration patterns, and does not rely solely on statewide averages as suggested at the April 18 hearing. OFM's 2045 medium forecast projects Clark County's share of total growth through in-migration to reach 86%.^{i ii}
- **GMA and local planning are based on 20-year totals, not incremental rates.** Countywide population forecasts and the land use plans that must accommodate them are all based on 20-year totals, not annual average rates which were the overwhelming focus of discussion at the April hearing. As noted by County staff, the total population growth encompassed in the OFM's 20-year medium forecast is consist with total population growth experienced by Clark County in the past.
- **Incremental growth rates typically decrease in the long term as total population grows.** Discussion so far has assumed that the rate of growth in an area may fluctuate yearly but will generally continue in the longer term future. In fact, historic growth data confirms that as they grow, Clark County, comparable large and prosperous Western Washington Counties, and the state as a whole all show clear long term trends of decline of their rate of increase.ⁱⁱⁱ



This data does not mean that short term growth rates won't vary in the future, or that the long term declines will follow the exact linear trend lines shown, or that growth will stop. However, it does highlight an unmistakable tendency over time towards slower rates of increase as popular areas grow. It likely reflects local and national demographic trends, such as declining birth rates and an aging population which impacts in-migration as well as mortality, and also on-the-ground factors in urbanizing counties where there is less readily developable land over time as areas grow. The data also likely reflect the mathematical reality that rates of increase are difficult to sustain over the long term as baseline totals increase.

We would respectfully request that the critical population forecast decision be based on the full range of information available, not just some of it. Evaluation of OFM's track record should be based on their forecasting record over 20 years, not select short periods. Concerns that OFM is forecasting a modest slowing in the rate of future growth increases should address the visible trends in historic population growth, and the visible trends in demographics. The premise that Clark County has completely unique in-migration patterns should be based on data which demonstrates that uniqueness, and on data that demonstrates that OFM's forecasting is not capturing it. We have not seen any data that supports these assertions.

The choice of a forecast should also address the full range of policy issues involved, since the forecast drives land supplies, which in turn will drive the amount of growth that can occur. We are concerned that there has been no Council discussion on any of the following:

- The increased capital facilities and service costs for local jurisdictions, and busier schools, roads and other services for local residents, that higher population forecasts would create.
- The increased challenges for improving or even maintaining the ratio of jobs to housing in our communities that higher population forecasts would create.
- The fact that forecasts must be updated in 10 years and can be increased in the shorter term if needed, but cannot realistically be decreased at any time.
- The finite supply of countywide land suitable for urban development in future updates, given environmental constraints.

The need for housing has been raised, but with no discussion of how a higher forecast would significantly improve housing affordability in practice. As previously noted, in 2007 Clark County adopted a higher than medium forecast and 19 square miles of UGA expansions, only to see local housing prices increase much faster than statewide. A similar choice now would also likely result in UGA expansions at the edge of existing urban areas far from existing cities. Small city UGA expansions require future annexation to develop at urban densities, which may not occur in those areas in the upcoming planning cycle. Vancouver UGA expansions may require extensive capital facilities and services to urbanize, to the point where they are not developed, or are developed at lower densities which may not significantly improve overall housing affordability.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Vancouver as well as the small cities support adoption of the OFM medium forecast, which is projected as most likely to occur, and is

consistent with long term County historical growth trends. It is already being used for long term planning by the Regional Transportation Council, and it provides for population increases consistent with the past, and increases in housing units and affordable housing units that are significantly greater what has been added in the past. If the County Council chooses to overrule expert opinion and local agency consensus, we respectfully ask that you do so only after a discussion and weighing of all the technical and policy information and data before you.

Sincerely,



Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor
City of Vancouver

ⁱ [ofm_april1_components_of_change_1960_to_present.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

ⁱⁱ [gma_2022_components_med.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [ofm_april1_components_of_change_1960_to_present.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)