



July 28, 2023

RE: City of Vancouver comments for [August 1 County Council hearing](#), in support of proposed adoption of 2045 countywide employment forecast of 269,000 jobs as estimated by WESD Economist Scott Bailey

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


On behalf of the City of Vancouver we recommend adoption of a countywide employment forecast of 269,000 jobs for 2045 as estimated by Scott Bailey based on the adopted 2045 population forecast of 718,154 persons.

- The 269,000 jobs forecast for 2045 is technically sound and well documented. The [Bailey memo](#) demonstrates that the 269,000 jobs estimate for 2045 was arrived at using a detailed set of reasonable assumptions stemming from the chosen population forecast of 718,154 persons. The memo also demonstrates that the estimate is sound on a jobs per household basis.
- The forecast is for ample and increasing job growth. A 2045 forecast of 269,000 jobs is an increase of 88,100 jobs from the 2022 total of 180,900 indicated in the [hearing materials](#). This increase over the next 23 years would be **30% more** than the actual gain of 67,700 jobs experienced countywide in the past 23 years.
- The forecast can be adjusted upward in the near future if needed, but not downward. Like population forecasts, GMA requires revisiting employment forecasts at least every 10 years, and allows sooner adjustments if needed. A UGA expansion could be considered even for a single large user if the need arises. However, like population forecasts, UGA expansions to meet employment forecasts cannot effectively be reversed once they are adopted.
- The forecast is not the only tool for job growth. Parcel assembly, capital facility and service provision, placemaking (to attract businesses and employees) and permitting are among the various land use policy levers that can and should be used for economic development. Measures such as recruitment, education, training, and others also play an important role. We recommend against adopting a higher employment forecast beyond what is needed on the basis that it will automatically improve our local economies. Doing so will likely trigger the need for ever larger UGA expansions well beyond our existing boundaries and capital facilities funding capacities, for new lands that may remain undeveloped or be converted to residential use.

- In order to be consistent with the countywide population forecast which was adopted by the Council as a total population for the year 2045, the employment forecast should also be adopted as the 2045 total of 269,000 jobs rather than a new growth increment as indicated in the resolution. The resolution figure of 88,100 *new* jobs is the difference between the 2045 total countywide estimate from Scott Bailey of 269,000 jobs, and the most recent 2022 countywide total of 180,900 jobs. As such the 88,100 new jobs figure is effectively a 23-year (2022 to 2045) estimate, whereas GMA requires 20-year forecasts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. With adoption of a countywide employment forecast, important discussions about allocating countywide growth to the UGAs can begin, as noted in the County staff issue paper for this hearing. The maximum amount of growth that can be allocated to the cities and existing UGAs is effectively set by the VBLM capacity model. The last available model results a year ago indicated very limited growth capacity in Vancouver and other cities. This is deeply inaccurate in our view and effectively forces most of the burden of accommodating growth to the VUGA and other unincorporated areas, including the obligations to accommodate set numbers of housing units and affordable housing units under HB 1220. We look forward to upcoming conversations to address these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "Erik W. Paulsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Erik Paulsen, Vancouver City Councilmember