

Population Allocation Forecast Accuracy and New Proposal

By Dan Dunne

For the July 22 2025 Joint County Council / Planning Commission Meeting

Hi Guys,

It is important that we forecast the population as accurately as possible in the comp plan. To that end, I analyzed the accuracy of our past forecasts, and created a new population proposal based on that analysis.

Over the weekend, I put together a dataset of how accurate our past predictions have been. I used population forecasts from the Whatcom County Comp Plans of 2009 and 2016, Bellingham Resolution 2003-39, and GMA projections from the Washington State Office of Financial Management from 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017, and 2022. For the actual population numbers to compare to, I used the OFM 2024 Small Area Estimate Program for cities and UGA, and OFM April 1 2025 estimates for countywide. I have attached short versions of these documents, the actual docs are all available online.

Please check my data and math and let me know where I am wrong.

My summary of the data, titled "Population Forecasting Accuracy 2003 to 2005," should be fairly self explanatory, but here is a description of the first row as an example.

To determine how accurate a 2009 forecast for Blaine was, I started with the population estimate for Blaine from chapter 1 of the 2009 Whatcom County Comp Plan. The forecast was made in 2009, for the time period of 2008 to 2029 (the time periods are described in the Notes, if there is no time period noted, the forecast number was stated in the source). I divided the total growth forecast for Blaine in the time period, 4249, by the years in the time period, 21, for a yearly growth forecast of 202.3. Then I found the number of years between 2008, the start of the period, and 2024, the target year, which is 16, and multiplied that by the growth forecast per year, which resulted in 3236.8. Then I added that number to the starting population given in the estimate, which was 4667, and rounded to the nearest whole number, to get a population forecast of 7904 for 2025.

To get the Target Year Actual Population, I used the Office of Financial Management's 2024 Small Area Estimate Program which includes yearly estimates for the cities plus their UGA for 2010 through 2024.

For Countywide population actuals, I used the Office of Financial Management's April 1 2025 Population of Cities, Towns, and Counties, which was published in June of 2025 and includes estimates for Whatcom County, Bellingham, and the small cities (but NOT their UGA) for 2021 through 2025. This source is defined in RCW 43.62.030 and is used in allocating State revenues and is, I feel, fairly accurate.

For an accuracy percentage, I divided the forecast, 7904, by the actual population, 6897, for a result of 114.6%. A score over 100% means that the forecast was higher than the actual, and a score of less than 100% means the forecast was lower than the actual. In this case, we overestimated the actual population of Blaine by 1007 people.

My takeaways from this dataset:

- The OFM middle projection has been very accurate in predicting Whatcom County's overall population.
- We overestimated Bellingham in the 2003 forecast by 10,000 people, but the forecasts in 2009 and 2016 were accurate.
- We overestimated most of the small cities, except for Lynden, by numerically small amounts.

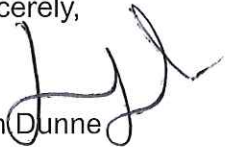
From this analysis, I am proposing a new population projection for the county and small cities based on the accuracy of our historical population forecasts.

I propose that we:

- Use the OFM middle projection of 56,915 for the County overall population.
- Reduce Bellingham to the Leland tech report of 24,158
- Reduce the small cities and rural lands by about 11% across the board from the Multi-Jurisdictional Resolution.

Please see the following pages for my documentation. I look forward to an energetic discussion on tuesday.

Sincerely,

 7/22/25
Dan Dunne

Attachments:

1. Population Forecasting Accuracy 2003 to 2025
2. Population Allocation Summary July 22 2025
3. OFM 2002 Forecast
4. OFM 2007 Forecast
5. OFM 2012 Forecast
6. OFM 2017 Forecast
7. OFM 2022 Forecast
8. OFM April 1 2025 Estimate
9. OFM 2024 Small Area Estimate Program
10. Bellingham Resolution 2003-39 population projection table
11. Whatcom County 2009 Comp Plan population projection table
12. Whatcom County 2016 Comp Plan population projection table

Population Forecasting Accuracy 2003 to 2025

By Dan Dunne July 22 2025

Year Forecast Was Made	Target Year	Jurisdiction Forecast Was For	Target Year Population Forecast	Target Year Actual Population	Accuracy	Forecast Source	Actual Population Source	Notes
2009	2024	Blaine	7904	6897	114.6%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2008 to 2029 projection
2016	2024	Nooksack	1908	1676	113.9%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2013 to 2036 projection
2009	2024	Nooksack	1856	1676	110.8%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2008 to 2029 projection
2003	2022	Bellingham and UGA	113,055	103,444	109.3%	Bellingham Res. 2003-39	OFM SAEP 2024	2002 to 2022 projection
2009	2024	Ferndale	18206	16836	108.1%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2008 to 2029 projection
2009	2024	Everson	3331	3176	104.9%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2008 to 2029 projection
2016	2024	Blaine	7151	6897	103.7%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2013 to 2036 projection
2009	2024	Sumas	1883	1835	102.6%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2008 to 2029 projection
2016	2024	Everson	3259	3176	102.6%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2013 to 2036 projection
2002	2025	Whatcom County	246,636	240,500	102.6%	OFM 2002 Projection	OFM April 1 2025	
2007	2025	Whatcom County	246,406	240,500	102.5%	OFM 2007 Projection	OFM April 1 2025	
2017	2025	Whatcom County	245,610	240,500	102.1%	OFM 2017 Projection	OFM April 1 2025	
2016	2024	Sumas	1867	1835	101.7%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2013 to 2036 projection
2016	2025	Whatcom County	242,139	240,500	100.7%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM April 1 2025	2013 to 2036 projection
2016	2024	Bellingham	107,510	106,820	100.6%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2013 to 2036 projection
2012	2025	Whatcom County	241,138	240,500	100.3%	OFM 2012 Projection	OFM April 1 2025	
2003	2022	Whatcom County	231,928	231,650	100.1%	Bellingham Res. 2003-39	OFM April 1 2025	2002 to 2022 projection
2022	2025	Whatcom County	240,321	240,500	99.9%	OFM 2022 Projection	OFM April 1 2025	
2009	2024	Bellingham	106,409	106,820	99.6%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2008 to 2029 projection
2009	2025	Whatcom County	236,011	240,500	98.1%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM April 1 2025	2008 to 2029 projection
2016	2024	Ferndale	16026	16836	95.2%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2013 to 2036 projection
2016	2024	Lynden	15934	16886	94.4%	WC 2016 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2013 to 2036 projection
2009	2024	Lynden	15556	16886	92.1%	WC 2009 Comp Plan	OFM SAEP 2024	2008 to 2029 projection

Population Allocation Summary July 22 2025

	OFM middle	Leland tech report middle	Hanson Scenario 2	Multi jurisdictional	Dunne Scenario
Bellingham City and UGA		24,158	34,110	30,310	24,158
Birch Bay UGA		2,313	965	2,662	2,334
Blaine City and UGA		2,774	2,400	3,500	3,071
Cherry Point UGA		0	0	0	0
Columbia Valley UGA		988	615	1,137	996
Everson City and UGA		933	1,060	1,408	1,234
Ferdale City and UGA		7,262	7,320	10,961	9,621
Lynden City and UGA		6,665	3,165	6,665	5,849
Nooksack City and UGA		352	410	995	872
Sumas City and UGA		697	885	1,000	878
Rural and Resource Lands		10,773	5,985	9,000	7,902
Population growth to 2045	56,915	56,915	56,915	67,638	56,915
Note: OFM does not make GMA population projections for cities					

OFM 2002 Forecast

PROJECTIONS OF THE TOTAL RESIDENT POPULATION FOR THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT
MEDIUM SERIES: 2000 TO 2025 (Released January 2002)

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
State	5,894,121	6,233,345	6,648,112	7,096,501	7,545,269	7,975,471
Adams	16,428	17,458	18,502	19,724	20,919	22,063
Asotin	20,551	21,466	22,582	23,569	24,650	25,671
Benton	142,475	151,522	161,236	169,528	177,388	184,818
Chelan	66,616	71,169	75,993	81,056	85,864	90,461
Ciallam	64,179	64,969	67,754	70,769	74,349	77,749
Clark	345,238	391,264	432,479	473,674	509,876	544,809
Columbia	4,064	3,914	4,000	4,150	4,126	4,092
Cowlitz	92,948	98,764	107,903	117,163	126,797	136,114
Douglas	32,603	36,257	39,196	42,302	44,920	47,428
Ferry	7,260	7,901	8,384	8,827	9,429	10,008
Franklin	49,347	52,642	56,392	60,216	64,687	68,997
Garfield	2,397	2,436	2,510	2,596	2,668	2,734
Grant	74,698	82,397	88,331	92,806	95,715	98,395
Grays Harbor	67,194	66,490	68,878	71,761	74,605	77,269
Island	71,558	74,738	80,650	87,416	94,365	101,079
Jefferson	26,299	28,308	30,892	34,067	37,483	40,807
King	1,737,034	1,786,803	1,861,042	1,940,385	2,018,824	2,092,390
Kitsap	231,969	236,403	257,841	281,883	307,113	331,571
Kittitas	33,362	34,314	36,742	39,451	41,776	43,999
Klickitat	19,161	20,338	21,626	23,071	24,493	25,855
Lewis	68,600	73,005	77,493	81,251	86,070	90,678
Lincoln	10,184	10,095	10,386	11,004	11,918	12,802
Mason	49,405	53,789	58,604	64,007	69,635	75,088
Okanogan	39,564	41,458	44,061	46,315	47,920	49,410
Pacific	20,984	20,957	21,257	21,725	22,228	22,678
Pend Oreille	11,732	12,679	13,674	14,711	15,706	16,662
Pierce	700,820	740,838	788,580	840,557	892,454	942,157
San Juan	14,077	15,480	17,316	19,168	20,877	22,534
Skagit	102,979	113,136	123,807	135,717	150,449	164,797
Skamania	9,872	10,483	11,068	11,731	12,344	12,927
Snohomish	606,024	666,735	728,957	793,720	862,599	929,314
Spokane	417,939	441,068	466,417	496,981	529,958	561,627
Stevens	40,066	42,105	46,585	52,102	58,154	64,057
Thurston	207,355	234,053	258,687	286,449	312,029	336,825
Wahkiakum	3,824	3,906	4,169	4,406	4,745	5,072
Walla Walla	55,180	57,475	60,030	62,398	64,856	67,158
Whatcom	166,814	180,463	195,504	213,246	230,228	246,636
Whitman	40,740	40,445	41,149	42,342	43,651	44,856
Yakima	222,581	225,622	237,435	254,257	269,401	283,884

OFM 2007 Forecast

Final Projections of the Total Resident Population for Growth Management
Medium Series: 2000 to 2030

	Census		Estimate		Projections					
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030			
State	5,894,121	6,256,400	6,792,318	7,255,672	7,698,939	8,120,510	8,509,161			
Adams	16,428	17,000	18,376	19,568	20,761	21,905	22,926			
Asotin	20,551	20,900	22,290	23,241	24,321	25,341	26,222			
Benton	142,475	158,100	168,839	176,854	184,704	192,131	198,528			
Chelan	66,616	69,200	75,093	80,031	84,833	89,428	93,523			
Clallam	64,179	66,800	69,008	71,910	75,485	78,884	81,852			
Clark	345,238	391,500	436,391	476,850	513,010	547,922	579,768			
Columbia	4,064	4,100	4,103	4,096	4,096	4,096	4,088			
Cowlitz	92,948	95,900	107,974	117,053	126,676	135,987	144,531			
Douglas	32,603	34,700	39,222	42,262	44,877	47,384	49,627			
Ferry	7,260	7,400	8,117	8,547	9,148	9,727	10,250			
Franklin	49,347	60,500	70,038	80,348	90,654	100,666	109,861			
Garfield	2,397	2,400	2,412	2,494	2,566	2,632	2,683			
Grant	74,698	79,100	88,389	92,719	95,623	98,303	100,449			
Grays Harbor	67,194	69,800	71,945	74,710	77,550	80,213	82,448			
Island	71,558	76,000	80,703	87,334	94,275	100,985	107,126			
Jefferson	26,299	27,600	30,912	34,035	37,447	40,769	43,858			
King	1,737,034	1,808,300	1,934,124	2,029,053	2,114,415	2,192,868	2,262,977			
Kitsap	231,969	240,400	249,050	262,052	283,242	299,073	314,610			
Kititas	33,362	36,600	39,783	42,426	44,748	46,970	48,942			
Klickitat	19,161	19,500	21,640	23,049	24,470	25,831	27,049			
Lewis	68,600	71,600	77,544	81,175	85,988	90,593	94,696			
Lincoln	10,184	10,100	10,393	10,994	11,907	12,790	13,601			
Mason	49,405	51,900	58,643	63,947	69,588	75,018	80,043			
Okanogan	39,564	39,600	42,739	44,923	46,526	48,016	49,239			
Pacific	20,984	21,300	21,271	21,705	22,207	22,657	22,985			
Pend Oreille	11,732	12,200	13,683	14,697	15,691	16,646	17,509			
Pierce	700,820	785,900	836,888	899,190	947,923	999,657	1,050,953			
San Juan	14,077	15,500	17,327	19,150	20,857	22,513	24,041			
Skagit	102,979	110,900	123,888	135,589	150,305	164,643	178,036			
Skamania	9,872	10,300	11,075	11,720	12,332	12,915	13,426			
Snohomish	606,024	655,800	725,963	786,476	844,541	898,715	950,066			
Spokane	417,939	436,300	466,724	496,513	529,451	561,102	589,623			
Stevens	40,066	41,200	46,616	52,053	58,098	63,997	69,527			
Thurston	207,355	224,100	256,113	286,180	311,730	336,511	359,383			
Wahkiakum	3,824	3,900	4,172	4,402	4,740	5,067	5,366			
Walla Walla	55,180	57,500	60,840	63,139	65,593	67,895	69,828			
Whatcom	166,814	180,800	195,633	213,046	230,008	246,406	261,416			
Whitman	40,740	42,400	43,151	44,274	45,581	46,786	47,743			
Yakima	222,581	229,300	241,446	257,867	272,992	287,468	300,362			

Note: Differences in 2000 figures compared to other tables due to census corrections.
Data may not add due to rounding; unrounded figures are not meant to imply precision.

OEM 2012 Forecast

PROJECTIONS OF THE TOTAL RESIDENT POPULATION FOR THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT
MEDIUM SERIES: 2010 TO 2040 BY FIVE YEAR INTERVALS

	Census		Projections							
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040			
Washington	6,724,540	7,022,200	7,411,977	7,793,173	8,154,193	8,483,628	8,790,981			
Adams	18,728	20,257	21,640	22,964	24,289	25,690	27,205			
Asotin	21,623	21,818	22,033	22,196	22,313	22,358	22,356			
Benton	175,177	184,882	197,806	210,803	223,689	236,007	247,856			
Chelan	72,453	75,180	78,586	81,885	84,778	87,168	89,246			
Clallam	71,404	71,868	73,616	75,022	76,112	76,786	77,224			
Clark	425,363	447,201	477,884	508,124	536,717	562,207	585,137			
Columbia	4,078	4,047	4,013	3,968	3,895	3,800	3,700			
Cowlitz	102,410	105,130	108,588	111,706	114,158	115,798	116,897			
Douglas	38,431	40,603	43,619	46,662	49,583	52,256	54,762			
Ferry	7,551	7,619	7,706	7,751	7,754	7,740	7,692			
Franklin	78,163	87,755	100,926	115,142	130,284	146,103	162,900			
Garfield	2,266	2,238	2,220	2,210	2,202	2,175	2,143			
Grant	89,120	95,822	104,078	112,525	121,204	129,779	138,337			
Grays Harbor	72,797	73,575	74,408	75,529	76,428	76,905	77,070			
Island	78,506	80,337	82,735	85,073	87,621	90,239	93,205			
Jefferson	29,872	30,469	32,017	33,678	35,657	37,914	40,093			
King	1,931,249	2,012,782	2,108,814	2,196,202	2,277,160	2,350,576	2,418,850			
Kitsap	251,133	262,032	275,546	289,265	301,642	311,737	320,475			
Kittitas	40,915	42,592	45,255	47,949	50,567	53,032	55,436			
Klickitat	20,318	20,606	20,943	21,225	21,430	21,492	21,439			
Lewis	75,455	77,621	80,385	82,924	85,165	87,092	88,967			
Lincoln	10,570	10,616	10,707	10,800	10,865	10,862	10,817			
Mason	60,699	63,203	67,545	71,929	76,401	80,784	84,919			
Okanogan	41,120	42,230	43,163	43,978	44,619	45,127	45,707			
Pacific	20,920	20,860	20,990	21,261	21,495	21,736	22,042			
Pend Oreille	13,001	13,289	13,692	13,977	14,129	14,149	14,116			
Pierce	795,225	831,944	876,565	923,912	967,601	1,006,614	1,042,341			
San Juan	15,769	15,907	16,256	16,606	16,939	17,216	17,443			
Skagit	116,901	121,624	128,249	136,410	144,953	153,632	162,738			
Skamania	11,066	11,282	11,548	12,014	12,447	12,816	13,082			
Snohomish	713,335	750,358	805,015	857,939	908,807	955,281	997,634			
Spokane	471,221	489,491	513,910	537,428	558,614	576,763	592,969			
Stevens	43,531	44,262	45,212	46,447	47,834	49,340	50,929			
Thurston	252,264	266,224	288,265	307,930	326,426	343,019	358,031			
Wahkiakum	3,978	3,931	3,877	3,830	3,772	3,716	3,669			
Walla Walla	58,781	60,015	61,685	63,368	64,978	66,378	67,655			
Whitcom	201,140	210,050	225,307	241,138	256,643	271,142	284,901			
Whitman	44,776	46,139	47,826	49,346	50,577	51,563	52,504			
Yakima	243,231	256,341	269,347	282,057	294,445	306,636	318,494			

Note: Differences in 2010 figures compared to other tables due to census corrections.
Data may not add due to rounding; unrounded figures are not meant to imply precision.

OFM 2017 Forecast

Projections of the Total Resident Population for Growth Management
2017 GMA Projections - Medium Series

	Census			Estimate			Projection					
	2010	2015	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040				
State	6,724,540	7,061,410	7,310,300	7,638,415	8,085,043	8,503,178	8,894,306	9,242,022				
Adams	18,728	19,410	19,870	20,633	21,666	22,832	24,241	25,062				
Asotin	21,623	22,010	22,290	22,657	23,227	23,579	23,826	23,928				
Benton	175,177	188,590	193,500	201,563	215,740	228,162	239,987	250,524				
Chelan	72,453	75,030	76,830	78,868	82,335	85,359	88,014	90,509				
Cllallam	71,404	72,650	74,240	74,707	76,847	78,683	80,123	80,928				
Clark	425,363	451,820	471,000	499,400	540,344	576,879	611,968	643,552				
Columbia	4,078	4,090	4,100	4,052	3,962	3,913	3,875	3,809				
Cowlitz	102,410	104,280	105,900	108,885	112,267	114,611	116,485	117,882				
Douglas	38,431	39,990	41,420	43,883	46,807	49,362	51,779	54,449				
Ferry	7,551	7,710	7,740	7,821	7,882	7,951	7,972	7,925				
Franklin	78,163	87,150	90,330	99,712	113,781	127,443	143,087	158,574				
Garfield	2,266	2,260	2,200	2,217	2,175	2,157	2,116	2,059				
Grant	89,120	93,930	95,630	102,634	111,014	118,645	126,072	132,995				
Grays Harbor	72,797	73,110	72,970	73,613	74,617	75,794	75,865	75,589				
Island	78,506	80,600	82,790	84,044	87,297	89,848	92,133	94,461				
Jefferson	29,872	30,880	31,360	32,646	34,211	36,253	38,609	39,889				
King	1,931,249	2,052,800	2,153,700	2,231,408	2,355,571	2,474,625	2,589,545	2,689,938				
Kitsap	251,133	258,200	264,300	275,910	290,344	303,528	313,420	322,859				
Kittitas	40,915	42,670	44,730	46,958	49,927	52,493	54,918	57,040				
Klickitat	20,318	21,000	21,660	21,667	21,882	22,189	22,145	21,930				
Lewis	75,455	76,660	77,440	80,220	83,425	85,438	87,449	89,178				
Lincoln	10,570	10,720	10,700	10,765	10,897	10,926	10,912	10,848				
Mason	60,699	62,200	63,190	67,621	72,339	76,530	80,985	84,976				
Okanogan	41,120	41,860	42,110	43,084	44,149	44,824	45,335	45,621				
Pacific	20,920	21,210	21,250	21,311	21,532	21,670	21,758	21,857				
Pend Oreille	13,001	13,240	13,370	13,919	14,369	14,493	14,656	14,630				
Pierce	795,225	830,120	859,400	901,251	956,682	1,002,412	1,046,915	1,086,201				
San Juan	15,769	16,180	16,510	16,743	17,545	18,193	18,789	19,160				
Skagit	116,901	120,620	124,100	130,705	138,184	146,880	155,309	164,760				
Skamania	11,066	11,430	11,690	12,034	12,573	13,007	13,393	13,704				
Snohomish	713,335	757,600	789,400	841,998	899,527	955,910	1,009,774	1,058,113				
Spokane	471,221	488,310	499,800	516,807	539,816	564,538	583,078	598,663				
Stevens	43,531	44,030	44,510	45,830	47,337	48,441	49,388	51,050				
Thurston	252,264	267,410	276,900	294,333	316,508	335,965	354,414	370,699				
Wahkiakum	3,978	3,980	4,030	4,006	3,902	3,811	3,745	3,709				
Walla Walla	58,781	60,650	61,400	62,049	63,695	65,052	66,541	67,457				
Whatcom	201,140	209,790	216,300	230,450	245,610	261,996	275,405	287,369				
Whitman	44,776	47,250	48,640	49,124	50,125	51,219	52,118	52,734				
Yakima	243,231	249,970	253,000	262,887	274,932	287,567	298,162	307,591				

OFM 2022 Forecast

Projections of the Total Resident Population for Growth Management
2022 GMA Projections - Middle Series

	OFM Adj.		Estimate		Projection	
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
State	7,706,310	7,766,975	7,864,400	8,000,000	8,100,384	8,100,384
Adams	20,613	20,900	21,100	21,300	21,500	21,570
Asotin	22,285	22,500	22,600	22,700	22,800	22,760
Benton	206,873	209,400	212,300	215,200	218,100	220,889
Chelan	79,141	80,000	80,650	81,300	81,950	82,483
Ciallam	77,155	77,750	77,625	77,500	77,375	79,459
Clark	503,311	513,100	520,900	528,700	536,500	543,507
Columbia	3,952	3,950	3,950	3,950	3,950	3,855
Cowlitz	110,730	111,500	112,350	113,200	114,050	114,123
Douglas	42,938	43,550	44,000	44,450	44,900	45,336
Ferry	7,178	7,250	7,300	7,350	7,400	7,218
Franklin	96,749	98,350	99,750	101,150	102,550	105,837
Garfield	2,286	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,260
Grant	99,123	100,800	101,800	102,800	103,800	105,140
Grays Harbor	75,636	76,050	76,400	76,750	77,100	76,417
Island	86,857	87,100	87,400	87,700	88,000	90,153
Jefferson	32,977	33,100	33,350	33,600	33,850	34,586
King	2,269,675	2,287,050	2,317,700	2,348,350	2,379,000	2,377,737
Kitsap	275,611	277,700	280,900	284,100	287,300	286,241
Kittitas	46,468	45,225	44,000	42,750	41,500	49,234
Klickitat	22,735	23,000	23,150	23,300	23,450	23,625
Lewis	82,149	82,700	83,400	84,100	84,800	84,957
Lincoln	10,876	10,900	11,050	11,200	11,350	11,094
Mason	65,726	65,750	66,200	66,650	67,100	69,262
Okanogan	42,104	42,350	42,700	43,050	43,400	42,897
Pacific	23,365	23,425	23,600	23,750	23,900	24,009
Pend Oreille	13,401	13,475	13,625	13,775	13,925	13,922
Pierce	920,393	928,200	937,400	946,600	955,800	967,558
San Juan	17,788	17,850	18,150	18,450	18,750	18,891
Skagit	129,523	130,000	131,250	132,500	133,750	136,028
Skamania	11,604	11,750	11,900	12,050	12,200	12,079
Snohomish	827,957	837,800	847,300	856,800	866,300	881,083
Spokane	539,339	542,100	550,700	559,300	567,900	563,048
Stevens	46,445	46,725	47,050	47,375	47,700	48,314
Thurston	294,793	297,800	300,500	303,200	305,900	313,985
Wahkiakum	4,422	4,475	4,525	4,575	4,625	4,581
Walla Walla	62,584	62,100	62,625	63,150	63,675	63,714
Whatcom	226,847	226,300	231,650	237,000	242,350	240,321
Whitman	47,973	44,600	47,800	50,700	53,600	48,649
Yakima	256,728	258,100	259,950	261,800	263,650	263,562

April 1, 2025 Population of
Cities, Towns and Counties
Used for Allocation of Selected State Revenues
State of Washington

OFM 2025 Estimate

County Municipality	Census 2020	Estimate 2021	Estimate 2022	Estimate 2023	Estimate 2024	Estimate 2025
Thurston	294,793	297,800	300,500	303,400	307,000	309,100
Unincorporated	144,856	145,255	143,760	143,980	145,735	146,645
Incorporated	149,937	152,545	156,740	159,420	161,265	162,455
Bucoda	600	595	610	620	620	630
Lacey	53,526	54,850	58,180	59,430	60,210	60,380
Olympia	55,382 \$	55,960	56,370	56,900	57,450	57,970
Rainier	2,369	2,440	2,510	2,555	2,565	2,590
Tenino	1,870	2,010	2,030	2,045	2,070	2,075
Tumwater	25,573 \$	26,050	26,360	27,100	27,470	27,680
Yelm	10,617	10,640	10,680	10,770	10,880	11,130
Wahkiakum	4,422	4,475	4,525	4,550	4,550	4,550
Unincorporated	3,862	3,915	3,965	3,975	3,970	3,970
Incorporated	560	560	560	575	580	580
Cathlamet	560	560	560	575	580	580
Walla Walla	62,584	62,100	62,625	63,100	63,375	63,800
Unincorporated	17,084	17,110	17,200	17,340	17,290	17,325
Incorporated	45,500	44,990	45,425	45,760	46,085	46,475
College Place	9,902	9,775	9,855	9,890	9,945	10,050
Prescott	372	370	370	375	375	375
Waitsburg	1,166	1,165	1,180	1,185	1,185	1,200
Walla Walla	34,060	33,680	34,020	34,310	34,580	34,850
Whatcom	226,847	226,300	231,650	235,800	238,000	240,500
Unincorporated	92,660 \$	92,730	93,130	94,175	94,465	94,810
Incorporated	134,187	133,570	138,520	141,625	143,535	145,690
Bellingham	91,482	89,860	93,910	95,960	97,270	98,340
Blaine	5,884	6,020	6,130	6,310	6,480	6,585
Everson	2,888	2,935	3,060	3,135	3,140	3,245
Ferndale	15,048	15,570	15,970	16,330	16,430	17,020
Lynden	15,749	15,930	16,150	16,520	16,710	16,840
Nooksack	1,471	1,515	1,560	1,560	1,670	1,825
Sumas	1,665 *	1,740	1,740	1,810	1,835	1,835
Whitman	47,973	44,600	47,800	48,100	48,750	49,450
Unincorporated	5,929	5,880	5,920	5,930	5,955	5,965
Incorporated	42,044	38,720	41,880	42,170	42,795	43,485
Albion	550	545	545	540	550	545
Colfax	2,782	2,765	2,785	2,785	2,785	2,790
Colton	401	400	405	410	400	385
Endicott	312	310	310	310	310	310
Farmington	131	135	140	140	135	135
Garfield	562	565	565	565	565	565
LaCrosse	297	300	300	295	295	290
Lamont	79	80	80	85	85	85
Malden	216	110	135	135	125	130
Oakesdale	395	400	400	400	400	400
Palouse	1,015	1,020	1,035	1,050	1,055	1,060
Pullman	32,901	29,690	32,790	33,060	33,680	34,380
Rosalia	598	600	590	585	585	585
St. John	599	600	600	605	605	605
Tekoa	817	810	810	805	820	820
Uniontown	389	390	390	400	400	400

OFM SAEF 2024

Estimates of Total Population for Census 2020 Urban Growth Areas Washington State Office of Financial Management, Small Area Estimate Program (SAEP)

By using these data the user agrees that the Washington State Office of Financial Management shall not be liable for any activity involving these data with regard to lost profits or savings or any other consequential damages; or the fitness for use of the data for a particular purpose; or the installation of the data, its use, or the results obtained.

Estimates are approximations, use these data with caution. The estimates in these tables are typically presented for very small areas. To increase statistical stability, we recommend that users aggregate small area populations into larger geographic units of about 4,300 people, the size of the average census tract. Some changes to the 2020 census data were made to ensure reliability. This table includes the 2020 census data from the Public Law 94-171 and OFM's adjusted 2020 figures so users can compare the values. All estimates are based on OFM adjusted figures. See the SAEP User Guide for more information.

Urban Growth Area Name	Urban Growth Area	SAEP Version	2020 Census (P.L. 94-171) Total Population	OFM Adjusted Total Population 2020	Estimated Total Population 2021	Estimated Total Population 2022	Estimated Total Population 2023	Estimated Total Population 2024	Numeric Change in Population 2020 to 2024	Percent Change in Population 2020 to 2024
Bellingham	05280	19, 2024	101,062	101,058	99,393	103,444	105,519	106,820	5,762	5.70%
Birch Bay	06190	19, 2024	8,685	8,685	8,678	8,702	8,911	8,973	288	3.31%
Blaine	06505	19, 2024	6,300	6,300	6,436	6,545	6,728	6,897	597	9.48%
Cherry Point	12020	19, 2024	68	68	68	68	61	58	-10	(15.415%)
Columbia Valley	14140	19, 2024	3,353	3,353	3,403	3,481	3,577	3,627	274	8.17%
Everson	22745	19, 2024	3,012	3,012	3,059	3,096	3,171	3,176	164	5.43%
Ferndale	23620	19, 2024	15,475	15,474	15,994	16,400	16,763	16,836	1,362	8.80%
Lynden	40805	19, 2024	15,927	15,927	16,105	16,327	16,697	16,886	959	6.02%
Nooksack	49275	19, 2024	1,484	1,484	1,528	1,573	1,573	1,676	192	12.97%
Sumas	68330	19, 2024	1,583	1,665	1,740	1,740	1,810	1,835	170	10.21%

Whatcom County total (OFM

April 1)

226,847 226,300 231,650 235,800 238,000

Unincorporated (implied)

69,821 69,897 70,276 70,991 71,217

Bellingham Resolution 2003-39

Section 2. That the City Council has reviewed the findings and recommendations of the City and County Planning Commissions and concurs with both Commission's recommendation to use a modified version of Econorthwest's baseline 20-year growth forecast for the City of Bellingham and its UGAs as shown below.

City Council Recommended Population Growth Forecasts:

	2002 Population	2022 Population	Forecast	Total 20-Year Growth	Percent of Total County Growth
Greater Bellingham	81,454	113,055	Between Econorthwest Baseline and High	31,600	54%
Whatcom County	173,471	231,928	Econorthwest Baseline	58,457	100%

Section 3. The Council hereby recommends that the Whatcom County Council adopt these population growth forecasts to be used in the updates to the city and county comprehensive plans.

PASSED by the Council this 8th day of December, 2003.



Council President

2009 Comp Plan

November 24, 2009, Council Action

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Table 45. Whatcom County Population Projections and Distribution

	2000 Population (Based on 2000 City Limits)	20080 Population (Cities and unincorporated include UGAs)	Projected 2022 2029 Population (Cities include UGAs)	20080-2022 2029 Net Growth (Cities include and unincorporated UGAs)
Bellingham	67,174	<u>89,284</u> 78,040	<u>111,761</u> 113,055	<u>22,477</u> 35,015
Birch Bay		<u>5,290</u>	<u>8,529</u>	<u>3,239</u>
Blaine	3,770	<u>4,667</u> 4,779	<u>8,916</u> 7,942	<u>4,249</u> 3,163
Columbia Valley		<u>3,924</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>1,076</u>
Everson	2,035	<u>2,395</u> 2,256	<u>3,623</u> 3,912	<u>1,228</u> 1,656
Ferndale	8,758	<u>12,019</u> 9,934	<u>20,140</u> 17,322	<u>8,121</u> 7,388
Lynden	9,020	<u>11,613</u> 9,604	<u>16,788</u> 16,900	<u>5,175</u> 7,296
Nooksack	854	<u>1,137</u> 895	<u>2,081</u> 1,884	<u>944</u> 986
Sumas	978	<u>1,279</u> 995	<u>2,072</u> 1,669	<u>793</u> 674
Subtotal	92,583	<u>131,608</u> 106,503	<u>178,910</u> 162,684	<u>47,302</u> 56,178
Unincorporated Rural Whatcom County	74,234	<u>59,392</u> 60,344	<u>67,692</u> 72,236	<u>8,300</u> 11,925
Total Whatcom County	166,814	<u>191,000</u> 166,844	<u>246,602</u> 234,917	<u>55,602</u> 68,103

Source: *Whatcom County Population and Economic Forecast* (ECONorthwest, May 2002), Washington Office of Financial Management (July 28, 2002/April 1, 2009) and County Council (January 2004).

It is also projected that, by the year 2022, the Birch Bay UGA will have 9,619 people, the Columbia Valley UGA will grow to 5,000 people, and Point Roberts will have 1,743 people. These three areas are all located within unincorporated Whatcom County. It is projected that other unincorporated areas (rural, agriculture, etc.) will have 55,874 people.

To avoid tightening urban land supply, the county is using a projection of 234,917 for land use and facility planning purposes.

1 **Table 4. Whatcom County Population Projections and Distribution**

	2013 2008 UGA Population- (Cities and unincorporated-UGAs)	Projected 2036 2029 Population	2013- 2036 2008-2029 Net Growth
Bellingham	92,660 89,284	123,710 111,761	31,050 22,477
Birch Bay	7,540 5,290	12,822 9,115	5,282 3,825
Blaine	5,171 4,667	9,585 8,916	4,414 4,249
Columbia Valley	3,103 3,924	4,448 5,000	1,345 1,076
Everson	2,665 2,395	3,907 3,623	1,242 1,228
Ferndale	12,758 12,019	19,591 20,707	6,833 8,688
Lynden	12,872 11,613	19,275 16,788	6,403 5,175
Nooksack	1,435 1,137	2,425 2,081	990 944
Sumas	1,449 1,279	2,323 2,072	874 793
Subtotal	139,696 131,608	198,129 180,063	58,433 48,455
Area outside UGAs			
Unincorporated			
Rural	66,104	77,321	11,217
Whatcom County	59,392	67,692	8,300
Total Whatcom County	205,800 191,000	275,450 247,755	69,650 56,755

2 Source: The 2013 total Whatcom County population is from OFM. The Cherry Point UGA, which is not shown in the chart
3 above, had an estimated 2013 population of 43 people. Source: Washington Office of Financial Management (April 1, 2009)
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