

Land Use Appendix

Key Facts

- Current population: 215
- Average annual population rate of change since 1990: -1.7%
- Average annual population rate of change since 1997: 2.6%
- Range of projected total population in 2025: from 145 to 389

Introduction

This is a compilation of information to be used to support the goals and policies of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Incremental population changes within the Town and in the region constantly changes the baseline existing conditions described here. The purpose here is to provide a “snapshot” of the Town that can be updated on a regular basis to incorporate new information.

Population Trends

An analysis of population trends is an important part of the comprehensive planning process. These trends tell us a great deal about potential future growth in a community. The demand for residential and non-residential land is driven by the market that responds to a complex set of variables such as proximity to jobs and services, congestion, quality of life, economics, and local visions.

Is Skykomish Shrinking or Growing?

Over the last several decades the population of Skykomish has fluctuated up and down. At incorporation in 1909 the town included 238 people and grew through the first few decades of the twentieth century. The highest Census population for Skykomish was recorded in 1930 at 568 persons. In 1968 the population was still as high as 365, but declining steadily to 209 in 1980. During the 1980s the population grew, peaking at 273 in 1990. The population dropped again to an historic low of 190 in 1997, and since then the population has grown again, reaching 215 this year.

Since 1990, the population of the town has decreased from 273 to 215 people, with an average annual rate of change of -1.7%. However, population has grown since 1997 and the average annual growth rate for the last five years is 2.6%.

While Skykomish has experienced long periods of declining population with limited periods of growth, its incorporated neighbors to the west have grown substantially in

recent years as regional growth pressure has moved eastward. Between 1990 and 2000, Gold Bar grew from 1,078 to 2,014 (average annual rate of 5.6%), Sultan grew from 2,236 to 3,344 (average rate of 3.3%), and Monroe grew from 4,275 to 13,795 (average annual rate of 6.9%). It is possible that as buildable land becomes scarce in areas to the west that similar growth could affect Skykomish.

Population growth in Skykomish, if regional pressure does move eastward, would be limited by lacking infrastructure (no sanitary sewer system), transportation capacity, and environmental regulations protecting streams, rivers, floodplains, steep slopes, aquifer recharge areas, and endangered species, although similar limitations also affect Gold Bar.

**Table LU-1
Population 1990-2002**

Year	Population	Annual Percent Change	5 year Percent Change	10 year Percent Change
1990*	273	--	--	--
1991	251	-8.1%	--	--
1992	251	0.0%	--	--
1993	250	-0.4%	--	--
1994	233	-6.8%	--	--
1995	215	-7.7%	--	--
1996	231	7.4%	--	--
1997**	190	-17.7%	-24.3%	--
1998	192	1.1%	--	--
1999	215	12.0%	--	--
2000*	214	-0.5%	--	--
2001	214	0%	--	--
2002	215	0.5%	13.2%	-14.3%
Average Annual Growth Rate 1990-2002		-1.7%		
Average Annual Growth Rate 1997-2002		2.6%		

*1990, 2000 population based on the Census

**Historic low

Source: Office of Financial Management;

Population Compared to the County

During the 1990's King County's population grew from 1,507,305 to 1,737,034, for an annual average rate of 1.3 percent, and some communities within the county grew at substantially higher rates. However, Skykomish was one of only a handful of cities (including Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, and Normandy Park) to show a decline in population. (Source: Office of Financial Management; 1990, 2000 Census)

The Town's 2002 total population of 215 people comprises less than 0.001% of the county's total population of 1,774,300.

Population Forecasting

The State Office of Community Development handbook "Predicting Growth and Change in Your Communities: A Guide to Sub-county Population Forecasting" outlines methods for projecting and allocating population to sub- areas within a county, including the "Trend Extrapolation" and "Share of the County" methods. These methods have been applied to the Town of Skykomish population in the sections below.

Trend Extrapolation Method

This type of population projection involves the calculation of an average rate of growth (or change) of the total population over some period of years, and then applies the average rate to the future period. Extending the average annual declining rate for the Town's population from the past 12 years results in a total population of only 145 by the year 2025, questioning long-term viability (**Table LU-2**). However, if the recent growth rate of the past five years is applied, the 2025 population estimate is 389. These calculations assume that the future growth will continuously reflect these average rates. From historic records, it is more likely that Skykomish's rate of population growth or reduction will continue to vary.

Table LU-2
Estimated Growth Projection:
Trend Extrapolation Method

Year	Town Population -1.7 Percent Decline	Town Population 2.6 Percent Growth
2002	215	215
2010	188	264
2015	172	300
2020	158	342
2025	145	389

Shares of the County Method

This type of population projection method involves calculating the Town's current share of the total County population (0.00012 percent) and applying that fractional share to the countywide population forecasts over the next 23 years. As required by

the Growth Management Act the countywide population projections are provided by the state Office of Financial Management and include a low, intermediate, and high projection. **This method results in a total 2025 population estimate for Skykomish that ranges between 230 and 281** (Tables LU-3 through LU-5).

**Table LU-3
Estimated Growth Projection:
Share of the County Method (low series)**

Year	County Population Low Series	Share of County Population (.00012 Percent)
2002	1,774,300	215
2010	1,766,129	214
2015	1,813,290	220
2020	1,857,318	225
2025	1,894,659	230

**Table LU-4
Estimated Growth Projection:
Share of the County Method (intermediate series)**

Year	County Population Intermediate Series	Share of County Population (.00012 Percent)
2002	1,774,300	215
2010	1,861,042	226
2015	1,940,385	235
2020	2,018,824	245
2025	2,092,390	254

Table LU-5
Estimated Growth Projection:
Share of the County Method (high series)

Year	County Population High Series	Share of County Population (.00012 Percent)
2002	1,774,300	215
2010	1,961,538	238
2015	2,080,093	252
2020	2,200,518	267
2025	2,318,368	281

It is important to note that this population projection method assumes that future growth in the county will be distributed throughout the county in the same proportions as the current population distribution, and that the cities will grow at the same rate as the county as a whole. As indicated by past trends, this assumption is unlikely.

Existing Land Use Inventory

King County geographic and mapping data for Skykomish is very limited. Table LU-6 represents a consolidation of the data listed in various land use classifications into similar groupings (**Figure LU-1**, Existing Land Use). Unfortunately, because of the inaccurate classifications, it is difficult to use this data to reach meaningful conclusions. The Town zoning map (**Figure LU-2**, Zoning) shows generally the existing land uses in the Town.

**Table LU-6
Existing Land Use Inventory**

	Acres	Percent Total
Multi-family	0.23	0.14
Unknown/ Residential	128.84	79.30
Commercial	5.32	3.27
Institution	0.11	0.07
Public	2.48	1.53
Transportation	25.39	15.63
Other	0.11	0.07
TOTAL	162.48	100 %

Source: King County GIS data, consolidated to approximate estimated land use distributions and quantities.

Capacity for Growth

Residential Land Capacity

Data collected in King County Buildable Lands project provides the basis for establishing whether the Town of Skykomish currently has enough land to satisfy its future (20-year) land use requirements or whether an expanded Urban Growth Area (UGA) will be needed to ensure capacity to accommodate the estimated growth. That inventory, estimated acreage of residential and vacant lands within the Town.

The analysis of vacant land and redevelopment potential provides an estimate of the capacity to accommodate new growth. Residential land capacity in the Town is calculated by multiplying the available acreage available for development by the assumed future development density. The King County Buildable Lands Report for Skykomish records 62.81 acres of available land. With 49.06 acres constrained by critical areas and a 10% market factor applied, there are 12.38 adjusted net acres available for development in Skykomish. Using an assumed future density of 3.14 dwelling units per acre, the estimated residential capacity is determined to be 39 new housing units.

Using a residential capacity of 39 new housing units and an average household size of 2.06, **the Town is capable of accommodating about 80 additional people within the Town limits.** Using the Town's average annual growth rate of the past five years of 2.6%, the Town's residential build-out capacity would be reached by 2015. Of course, if the long-term trend of declining population holds, capacity is irrelevant.

Urban Growth Area

Under the provisions of the Growth Management Act cities and counties must identify Urban Growth Areas (UGA) to accommodate planned urban growth. A UGA defines the area around the Town that is available for its expansion during the 20 year

planning period. It is based upon the notion that development that is urban in type and intensity is most appropriate within and adjacent to existing urban areas. The criteria that are used to establish UGAs includes projected housing, industrial, and commercial needs, existing land uses and density, and availability of utilities.

Typically, the agreed upon UGA is an area surrounding a town or city capable of accommodating 20 years of potential expansion and annexations and the expansion of urban development, such as sanitary sewer, is limited to the UGA. For Skykomish, the UGA is coincident with its town limits.

Critical Areas

Critical areas are lands that are subject to natural hazards, contain significant renewable resources, support unique, fragile, or valuable elements of the natural environment, or contain valuable cultural resources and protective buffers necessary to protect the public health, safety, and well-being of residents. Five types of critical areas are defined by the Growth Management Act: wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, geologically hazardous areas, aquifer recharge areas, and frequently flooded areas. This section identifies the types of critical areas and their known locations in the Skykomish area. This inventory is not exhaustive and other critical areas may exist in Skykomish that have not been identified. **Figure LU-3** (Topography), **Figure LU-4** (Shoreline Environment), **Figure LU-5** (Habitat Conditions), **Figure LU-6** (Frequently Flooded Areas), and **Figure LU-7** (Wellhead Protection) graphically depict this environmental information.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas

The Skykomish area has a variety of habitats for fish, including the Skykomish River. Wooded areas that completely surround the community, but that are largely outside the town, provide habitat to various wildlife species.

Wetlands

Wetlands are generally defined as lands that are under water or that are saturated for long periods of time. Generally, those areas near and adjacent to water bodies, such as the Skykomish River and Maloney Creek, may contain wetlands.

Geologic Hazardous Areas

These areas are classified as having moderate, high, or very high landslide potential or that could be particularly hazardous during earthquakes. While Skykomish is surrounded by steep hills, the only area of town significantly affected by slopes is located on the north side of SR 2. This area and limited other parcels of land may be prone to erosion or seismic hazards, due to drainage patterns and soil types.

Frequently Flooded Areas

The Skykomish River flows generally east/west along SR 2, largely running contiguous with the town limits on the north. Much of the town is contained within the 100-year floodplain, which has been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

(FEMA) to provide the base flood location for the purposes of floodplain management. This flood hazard area is considered a “frequently flooded area.”

Aquifer Recharge Areas

Aquifer recharge areas are those areas that are critical to protecting the quantity and quality of ground water. These areas include areas within the ten-year time-of-travel¹ of the town’s wells, wellhead protection areas, and other areas that affect groundwater.

Critical areas have not been fully mapped in the Skykomish area.

Essential Public Facilities

The Growth Management Act requires local governments to include within their comprehensive plans a process for siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities include airport, state education facilities, state and local correctional facilities, substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities and group homes.

Skykomish’s location, size, and lack of a sewage disposal system make it unlikely that essential public facilities on a large scale will be constructed in or near the community. Nevertheless, the Town of Skykomish remains aware of this GMA requirement and will continue to address it in its annual review of this comprehensive plan.

Parks and Recreation Areas

Access to park, trail, and recreation areas is an important aspect of Skykomish’s quality of life. These areas not only contribute to the Skykomish residents’ quality of life, they also attract visitors to the town. The ability to capture some of the recreational tourist trade will assist Skykomish in meeting some of its economic development goals.

While park land within the Town is limited, with the Skykomish Ball Park providing the greatest resource for in-town recreation, as well as a site for regional activities or other special events. In addition, Skykomish residents and visitors can take advantage of the range of recreational resources and activities located within the Skykomish area. Development of additional recreational opportunities, and expansion of associated economic opportunities, may be best served by regional coordination focusing on common natural resources, such as the Skykomish River, trails, and skiing opportunities.

Future Land Use

¹ The time-of-travel is the time a solution requires to travel a specified distance. For example, liquids added to the ground within a 10-year time-of-travel (TOT) boundary surrounding a well, will generally reach and infiltrate the well water within 10 years.

The future land use proposed in this Comprehensive Plan is as shown in **Figure LU-2, Zoning**. No changes in land use are recommended in this update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Consistency

The Town of Skykomish has developed the Land Use Element of its Comprehensive Plan after careful review of the Countywide Planning Policies, and the multi-county land use policies of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).