



## Puget Sound Regional Council

### **ACTION ITEM**

March 16, 2017

**To:** Executive Board

**From:** Charlie Howard, Director of Planning

**Subject:** **Recommendation to Reclassify Bonney Lake and Covington from Small City to Larger City**

### **IN BRIEF**

At its December 15 meeting, the Executive Board tabled the recommendation to reclassify Bonney Lake and Covington from Small City to Larger City. At the March meeting, the board will have the opportunity to consider the motion.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

A motion is before the board, which was moved and seconded (Backus/Stokes) at the December 15, 2016 meeting, to approve the Growth Management Policy Board recommendation that the Executive Board adopt a minor technical amendment to VISION 2040 to reclassify Covington and Bonney Lake from Small City to Larger City.

This change will amend Appendix I-C of the Regional Growth Strategy (attached) to reclassify the two cities.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Growth Management Policy Board reviewed the requests by the two cities and voted to recommend reclassification of Covington and Bonney Lake from Small City to Larger City.

VISION 2040 recognizes four categories of cities:

- Metropolitan – central city and economic hubs
- Core – major cities with regional growth center
- Larger – important subregional job and housing centers
- Small – small cities and towns

Reclassifications are relevant to the review of targets and potential other actions that may be taken by the countywide planning bodies. Reclassification also recognizes the actual growth of cities through both population growth and annexation. VISION 2040 states that city

reclassification would appropriately be considered through a technical amendment. The plan clarifies the purpose of a technical amendment (p.16):

*The Regional Council recognizes that as cities continue to grow, both through net increase and through annexation of unincorporated areas, their population and employment levels may change significantly. To reflect these changes, it is anticipated that the Regional Council's Executive Board will make a technical amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy to potentially reclassify cities before the region's counties undertake the next round of Growth Management Act target-setting work.*

The PSRC Executive Board adopted earlier technical amendments in 2009 and 2011. Five cities changed to Larger City in 2009; an additional city in 2011. These amendments accounted for changes that had occurred to date in terms of city boundaries and growth in population and jobs.

Larger Cities are defined in VISION as home to important local and regional transit stations, ferry terminals, park-and-ride facilities, and other transportation connections. Each Larger City is expected to become a more important subregional job, service, cultural, and housing center over time and have a current combined population and employment total over 22,500. (The page from VISION 2040 describing Larger Cities is attached.)

Bonney Lake and Covington both surpass the numeric threshold of 22,500 used to define Larger Cities. Sumner, Port Orchard and Gig Harbor are also shown below for reference; those cities are not seeking reclassification.

<b>County</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>2016 Population Estimate</b>	<b>2014 Jobs</b>	<b>Pop 16 + Jobs 14</b>
<b>Pierce</b>	<b>Bonney Lake</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>4,347</b>	<b>24,347</b>
<b>King</b>	<b>Covington</b>	<b>18,750</b>	<b>4,768</b>	<b>23,518</b>
<b>Pierce</b>	Sumner	9,705	13,217	22,922
<b>Kitsap</b>	Port Orchard	13,810	7,336	21,146
<b>Pierce</b>	Gig Harbor	9,065	8,973	18,038

The new classification results in a shift in regional guidance regarding the future role that city/community will play in implementing the Regional Growth Strategy. However, reclassification by itself does not change the adopted targets (which are adopted by counties) or remove the conditional certification. The board could factor reclassification into its decision on whether the either of the cities meets the conditional expectations when they resubmit for certification.

A minor amendment (in contrast to a full Technical Amendment) results in no change to the

numeric population and employment growth allocations in the regional growth strategy at this time. The minor amendment simply recognizes when a regional geography reclassification occurs.

GMPB reviewed the requests at their meeting on November 3. Some board members raised questions about the process for reclassification and whether it should include all eligible cities rather than only select cities at this time. It is hoped that the process for reclassification is clarified in the next update of VISION 2040 to better address how mid-cycle reclassifications should be handled. Some board members noted that the update of VISION 2040 would be a more ideal time to reassess city classification so as to relate it to regional objectives and the desired pattern of growth. However, both of the cities in question are part of the contiguous urban growth area and it was recognized that these cities would have been reclassified with the other cities in 2009 if they had met the criteria then. Reclassifying them today is holding them to the same standard as the other cities.

During the upcoming VISION 2040 update PSRC will undertake a full analysis of the Regional Growth Strategy and at that time will perform the necessary recalculations to reflect current population, employment and political boundaries across all jurisdictions.

Over the years since VISION 2040 was adopted a number of members have raised questions about the distinction between Small City and Larger City, including the threshold of 22,500. In the upcoming update of VISION 2040 the board may seek significant modifications to how cities are classified and their role within the Regional Growth Strategy. It may be important to note that any reclassification at this time does not preempt the board's analysis of amending the Regional Growth Strategy during the update.

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