

## Section 13

# MOVING FORWARD

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This 2001 Outlook Report illustrates the necessity for critical water resource management decisions to be made soon, so that needed supply options can be planned and implemented in a timely manner. One of the Forum's main goals is to help meet the water resource needs of the growing Central Puget Sound area by working with water suppliers, local governments, the state, area tribes, and other interested stakeholders to develop and implement a sustainable and adaptive water resources management program by 2010.

In order to develop a sustainable water resources program for the region, a collaborative water resource management decision-making process is needed now. The Forum and the region's water utilities want to actively help develop and participate in this process. Forum members recognize that they do not represent all water resource interests. Others, such as federal and state agencies and tribes, are principally responsible for shaping the future of the state's fisheries. The Forum is open to considering various approaches for achieving success, and will work with others who have a goal of attaining a sustainable water resource management program.

To initiate this process, the Forum has developed a series of "Next Steps" to support and expand regional planning efforts, improve how water resource management decisions are made, and jointly implement future municipal supply options that best meet the needs of the region. These are the Forum's near-term next steps, which are part of a continuously evolving strategy:

### Next Steps for the Forum

1. Building on previous work (the Outlook), collaboratively develop several alternative regional concepts to address future water resource needs for fish and people in the Central Puget Sound area.
2. Work on the Governor's Water Strategy (January 25, 2001) to solve issues the Forum has identified in the Outlook.
  - Accept the charge to be a leader in developing a strategy for Central Puget Sound in accordance with the Governor's Water Strategy.
  - Work to address specific institutional constraints identified in the Outlook as part of the Governor's Water Strategy process.
3. Continue a dialog with other stakeholders to discuss key issues identified during the Outlook process and work toward the resolution of issues of mutual interest. Encourage water resource management decision making.
  - Identify issues that the Forum would/could address within their framework.

- Prioritize issues.
  - Identify approaches to address these issues.
  - Assure follow-up.
4. Seek development of a process to better coordinate growth and availability of water within the region.
  5. Seek to coordinate water supply decision making by individual utilities with a regional water resources planning process.
  6. Continue dialog with stakeholders that participated in the Conservation Workgroup.
    - Participate in a grassroots effort to explore forming a new regional conservation group.
    - Continue to explore ways to promote conservation concepts.
  7. Address ways to remove impediments that prohibit the effective and efficient sharing of existing water supplies between utilities.
  8. Continue coordinating, through utility participation, with Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) planning groups in the three-county area as watershed plans are developed.
  9. Develop a process for periodic Outlook updates.
  10. Work with Washington State Department of Health, utilities, counties, local governments, and other stakeholders to coordinate more consistent demographic projections, demand forecasts, water supply yield, and data reporting.
  11. Coordinate future water shortage response.
  12. Support further development of non-traditional sources of supply (e.g., reclaimed water and stormwater).
  13. Determine overall water use characteristics for the Central Puget Sound Region.

The Forum is confident that the challenges faced by the Central Puget Sound, in meeting the water needs for people and fish habitat can be overcome. The state, the Forum, and other stakeholders must work cooperatively to overcome institutional constraints and pursue alternative municipal supply options in order to move forward in their efforts to provide the three-county region with a long-term, sustainable supply of water to meet the needs of people and fish.

## The Forum's Continuing Role in Regional Water Supply Planning

With the completion of this Water Supply Outlook, the Forum has conducted a regional assessment of existing and forecasted municipal water supply demands, assessed new municipal supply opportunities, and reported on initial aquatic habitat issues, as described by watershed planning groups, that may affect existing and future municipal supply options. This information begins to provide direction and a foundation for future decision making.

Beyond the completion of the Outlook the Forum will continue to assist local governments and others in developing and implementing sustainable water resource management that embraces the objectives incorporated in the Growth Management Act and instream resource and habitat management initiatives within the Central Puget Sound Region. Forum members

have a responsibility to protect the public health and the environment, anticipate and respond to growth, foster a strong economy, and make the region a better place to live.

### Future Outlook Updates

Planning for the future is not a static, one-time activity, and the Forum intends to periodically update the Outlook with information from utilities, planning agencies and other stakeholders. A key piece of information that will help ensure the accuracy of population and demand forecasts is the 2000 census results, which will be incorporated into future Outlook updates. Consistency and accuracy of the Outlook can also be improved by using a common data reporting format, as described in the next section.

## Improving Coordination in Individual Utility Planning

The Outlook is the first time that detailed municipal water supply planning information has been brought together for the entire King, Pierce, and Snohomish County area. Some of the major challenges to compiling information for future regional planning came to light during the preparation of this report. Two key challenges were inconsistencies between individual utility and regional demographic forecasts and inconsistencies in how utilities keep track of and report planning information. The Forum has developed some options for improving consistency in both of these areas, as described below.

### Improving Consistency in Demographic Forecasts

Demographic forecasts provide the foundation for demand forecasts and municipal water supply planning. Many separate agencies are responsible for preparing local, county, regional, and state forecasts of population, households, employment, and other demographics. These forecasts are prepared with the common goal of planning for the future, but they are based on a wide variety of methods and are prepared for different purposes. Because of these differences, it has been difficult to reconcile demographic forecasts prepared at different scales, and therefore difficult to reconcile demand forecasts prepared at different scales.

Here are some of the types of forecasts prepared:

- **Statewide.** At the state level, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) is responsible for preparing demographic forecasts. One of the main purposes OFMs forecast is used for is estimating future tax revenues, so to be conservative, this forecast tends to err on the side of underestimating future growth. OFMs forecast is broken down into separate forecasts for each county, which are then used as the basis for planning under the Growth Management Act.
- **Regional.** In the Central Puget Sound area, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) takes forecasts from OFM and the Counties and combines them with other economic and land use information to develop a regional forecast by transportation analysis zone (TAZ). This forecast is less conservative than simply adding up individual local or

county forecasts. The regional forecast prepared by PSRC is reviewed by cities and counties prior to distribution.

- **County.** In accordance with the Growth Management Act, counties are responsible for defining and assigning growth to urban growth areas (UGAs). Counties are also responsible for working with local planning agencies to define allocation of future growth.
- **Local.** Municipalities are responsible for planning within their boundaries, and also for coordinating planning efforts with County efforts and with water suppliers. Local forecasts are based on detailed land use information and are used for sizing and timing infrastructure to meet the needs of growth. Therefore, local planning estimates should be conservative by overestimating anticipated growth.

Future Forum planning efforts will include identification of mechanisms to improve consistency between local, regional, and state demographic forecasts and coordination with the appropriate agencies.

### Improving Consistency in Tracking and Reporting Water Supply Planning Data

Identifying regional water resource needs and solutions can only be done with the participation of individual water utilities. This report was prepared using detailed municipal supply and demand information provided by most of the utilities in the three-county area, who each record and maintain planning data differently. A significant effort was required to bring this variety of information together to develop a regional assessment of municipal water supply and demand. Improved consistency in tracking and reporting local utility water system information could significantly enhance future planning efforts.

The specific types of information used in the Outlook are the same as utilities present in their comprehensive water plans, namely:

- Historic and planned demographics, including population, single-family and multifamily households, employment, and different types of service connections,
- Historic water use by customer class, and the resulting historic water use per connection, per capita, and per single-family and multifamily household, and
- Municipal water supply information such as water rights, interties, supply capacities, and resource limitations.

To help improve consistency in municipal water supply planning data, the Forum currently plans to develop a Suggested Utility Data Reporting Format (Format). This Format would be used in whole or in part, on a strictly voluntary basis by utilities that want to improve coordination for future regional planning efforts. The Format will likely be a set of tables that are preformatted to show the types of information described above in a consistent manner.

There are good reasons why some utilities track certain kinds of information differently from their neighbors. For instance, larger utilities may have more customer classes than small utilities, due to the wider variety of commercial and industrial customers within their service area. Because there are important differences between utilities, the Format will provide a common starting point that can accommodate changes in these areas of difference.

Although the Format will be flexible to accommodate different approaches, the goal is to improve consistency in data reporting in general. Some utilities may want to change how they track and report information to be consistent with the suggested Format, which can help them:

- Determine water use per connection and per single-family and multifamily household,
- Calculate non-revenue water,
- Estimate the affects of past, current, and future conservation on per unit water use, and
- Describe their supplies.

The Forum will work with utilities, the Department of Health, the counties, and other interested parties to develop the Suggested Utility Data Reporting Format and make it accessible to users.

