

Seattle's Comprehensive Plan Growth Targets – do you calculate yours using Citizen Math or City Math?

As the city and neighborhoods prepare to enter a cycle of updating Neighborhood Plans, an important consideration is progress to growth targets. However, it seems that there are two different ways to calculate that growth, which we're calling Citizen Math and City Math.

Citizen Math assumes that a neighborhoods plan is baselined from the estimated households in their neighborhood in 1994, the year of the first Comprehensive Plan estimates for proposed urban villages. All growth after 1994 is added to that base line and measured against the planning targets published by the city.

City Math strikes a new baseline with each Comprehensive Plan update. The new baseline rolls in all growth that has occurred since the last Comprehensive Plan update. City Math then calculates progress towards each updated growth target from that new baseline.

Why does this matter? As a part of the planning process, each Neighborhood Plan was created and evaluated based on capacity studies of capital facilities in that neighborhood. With the City Math method of calculating, a neighborhood can not tell when their original capacity threshold has been crossed. This spreadsheet shows what those numbers were in both 1994 and 2004, and has the progress to date as of April, 2008. It compares "progress to growth targets" using both Citizen Math thinking and City Math thinking.

This comparison was sponsored by the City Neighborhood Council Neighborhood Planning committee, in response to questions at several workshops about Neighborhood Planning.

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