The strategies presented in the 1997 draft RWSP were developed using wastewater flows estimated out to the year 2050. These flows were based on two different methods of population and employment forecasts. The first method, used for the period 1997 to 2020, relied on population projections from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). Because PSRC projections were not available past 2020, King County used a second method to forecast population from 2020 through 2050. This method used an “exponential growth function” that estimated population growth at the high end of the spectrum. This method is considered conservative because it prepares a utility to meet the challenges posed by the demands from a rapidly-increasing population, although these demands may not materialize as quickly as the forecasts predict.

Following the release of the draft RWSP, King County received comments that the forecasting methodology should be reviewed because the rate of growth and projected population from 2020 to 2050 appeared very high. In response, the County evaluated other alternatives and selected a less conservative method to estimate wastewater flows for the Executive’s Preferred Plan. The method selected was a “linear trend function” and this straight-line approximation had the effect of lowering population projections after 2020. Figure 13 shows the differences in sewered population estimates between the draft RWSP and the Executive’s Preferred Plan.

This revised method yielded a seven percent decrease in estimated sewered population for the wastewater service area in 2030. The effect of this change was to reduce the total projected number of gallons of additional treatment capacity required over the planning period. As a result, some of the major conveyance improvements originally proposed in the draft RWSP were downsized, delayed, or eliminated in the Executive’s Preferred Plan. Table 4 shows the differences in the size and phasing of capital improvements for each service strategy between May 1997 (using the exponential growth function) and April 1998 (using the linear trend function).

The corresponding capital facility costs for each of the four strategies are shown in Table 5.

Another minor change in flow estimates resulted from updating the King County Wastewater Service Area boundaries to match Snohomish County’s current urban growth boundary. This change lowers the projected wastewater flow to King County facilities by 1 percent in 2030.

Population forecasting is a planning tool that is revised periodically. King County will continue to revisit population growth assumptions when designing wastewater facilities to ensure that wastewater facilities are available to serve growth, but are not built too soon or too large. During the planning process, King County examined a number of different population and growth scenarios to assess our ability to adjust to different population forecasts.

![FIGURE 13 – Revised Sewered Population Projections](image)